

# Memorandum

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
California Department of Fish and Wildlife  
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation  
California Department of Water Resources

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**Date:** July 1, 2021

**To:** Requestors of cultured Delta Smelt originating from the University of California Davis Fish Conservation & Culture Laboratory from the 2022 year-class

**From:** Culture and Supplementation of Smelt Steering Committee

**Subject:** Annual process to request Delta Smelt from the University of California Davis Fish Conservation & Culture Laboratory from the 2022 year-class

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This memorandum provides information on how to request cultured Delta Smelt from the 2022 year-class, including an updated request form (see attached) and information on criteria that will be used to evaluate proposals received.

Please note, **there will only be one solicitation for proposals for 2022 brood year fish**. Requests must be submitted to the director of the FCCL, Dr. Tien-Chieh Hung at [thung@ucdavis.edu](mailto:thung@ucdavis.edu) on or before **September 30, 2021**.

A remote **informational meeting** will be held on **July 30, 2021**, at **12 pm** to provide information regarding research priorities and to answer questions regarding the solicitation. Access to the meeting will be available via:

Microsoft Teams meeting  
Join on your computer or mobile app  
[Click here to join the meeting](#)  
Or call in (audio only)  
[+1 860-241-5247,727514242#](tel:+18602415247727514242) United States, Hartford  
Phone Conference ID: 727 514 242#

The primary intent of this solicitation is **to solicit research proposals that address priority management needs**, as outlined below. Requests for other uses of cultured Delta Smelt such as education will be considered, but are a secondary priority and will only be approved if fish are available after all research requests are accommodated.

## *What is the CASS?*

In October 2019, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, and the California Department of Water Resources established the Culture and Supplementation of Smelt (CASS) Steering Committee (SC); a charter is available upon request. The purpose of the CASS SC is to implement science-based activities to secure and stabilize the wild Delta Smelt population through a coordinated propagation and supplementation program. To facilitate cooperative and consensus-driven recommendations to agencies, the CASS SC will receive guidance from working groups (WG) charged with providing technical guidance concerning: (1) Captive Propagation (CPWG), (2) Research (RWG), and (3) Regulation Coordination (RCWG).

The CASS SC identified an early need for improved documentation and prioritization of the usage of cultured Delta Smelt propagated at the University of California Davis Fish Conservation & Culture Laboratory (FCCL) for optimal information gain and high management relevance. To this end, the CASS SC has established a process for soliciting, evaluating, and approving requests of cultured Delta Smelt from the 2022 year-class. Before undertaking a study that incorporates cultured Delta Smelt, requestors must submit a Cultured Delta Smelt 2022 year- class Fish Request Proposal (see page 4) and any additional documentation.

Please note the CASS is not a regulatory entity and does not issue state and federal permits. If the CASS recommends that fish should be allocated for a study, permit-granting agencies may coordinate and prepare to permit the study. However, investigators still need to pursue regulatory agency permits separately. Permits required may include California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) scientific collection permits for CESA species and associated memorandums of understanding (MOU), and US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) 10(a)1(A) recovery permits. For more information regarding state regulatory requirements, please contact Jeff Holt at [Jeffrey.Holt@Wildlife.ca.gov](mailto:Jeffrey.Holt@Wildlife.ca.gov). For more information regarding federal regulatory requirements, please contact Angela Galarreta at [jazmine\\_galarreta@fws.gov](mailto:jazmine_galarreta@fws.gov).

## *Proposal evaluation by the CASS*

To ensure that cultured Delta Smelt can be used to maximal information and conservation management gain, the CASS has developed a list of priority study categories based upon the USFWS Delta Smelt Supplementation Strategy (available upon request from Bay Delta Fish and Wildlife Office) as well as the Delta Smelt Hatchery and Genetic Management Plan (HGMP; available soon). These categories, in priority order are:

1. Experimental Release and Supplementation Implementation Practices
2. Hatchery Practice Improvements
3. Studies to Inform Management Decisions

4. Mechanistic Understanding and Monitoring of Survival and Growth
  - a. Genetic
  - b. Habitat
  - c. Pathogen
  - d. Entrainment
5. Fundamental Biology and Physiology
6. Other

Proposals requesting the use of cultured Delta Smelt will be evaluated based upon whether they address one or more of the above management priorities. Proposals will also be evaluated based on:

- Management need
- Urgency of the information need
- Quality of the Fish Request Proposal
- Study objectives and methods
- Communication plan (required)

If the proposal involves co-project investigators or collaborators, please ensure that these investigators have reviewed the proposal and are familiar with the proposal requirements and evaluation criteria.

Proposals will be reviewed and prioritized by the CPWG, RWG, and RCWG and each working group will provide a recommendation as to whether to approve or deny the request to the SC. Requestors may be contacted by the working groups if there are minor questions or concerns about the request. Requesters will receive notification of fish allocation decisions by December 15, 2021.

#### *Courtesy review*

If a letter of support from the CASS is required for investigators to apply for funding, a Fish Request Proposal (see pages 4-6) should be submitted three months in advance of the funding solicitation due date. The CASS will return written documentation (an email) of the recommendation after the proposal has been reviewed for hatchery feasibility, scientific merit, and permissibility by the CPWG, RWG, and RCWG chairs, respectively, and the SC has been updated. The courtesy review is a red flag review only and does not preclude the submission of the Fish Request proposal for fish allocation; a Fish Request Proposal must still be submitted before the annual CASS deadline.

#### *Out-of-cycle proposals*

The submission of out-of-cycle (OOC) proposals should be avoided as the CASS cannot guarantee timely evaluation and the return of decision and fish are unlikely to be available. If an OOC proposal is required, the requestor should submit (1) a Fish Request Proposal (see page 4), and (2) a <1 page justification letter detailing why the requestor could not meet the annual deadline and why the study cannot be postponed to the next year. Additional information regarding out-of-cycle requests can be obtained by contacting Bruce DiGennaro at [bruce@essexpartnership.com](mailto:bruce@essexpartnership.com).

## CULTURED DELTA SMELT 2022 YEAR-CLASS FISH REQUEST PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS

Describe the proposed study by filling in the following sections (expected length is approximately 3-5 pages). All elements are required or a proposal may be returned and if resubmitted, considered as an OOC proposal. However, if the proposal is for non-research activities such as education, it is not necessary to reply to items f3, f4, h, i, or j.

- a. Title of the Fish Request Proposal
- b. Names, email addresses, and phone numbers of the Project Investigator and all Co-Investigators
- c. Introduction and relevant background, including cited literature
- d. Project need
- e. Objectives
- f. Methods
  1. Describe the fish needed (minimum and maximum) for the proposed study;
    - i. Life stage (approximate range)
    - ii. Number
    - iii. Sex (if applicable)
    - iv. Other (e.g., desired number of families)
    - v. Date needed
  2. Describe the study location (if applicable)
  3. Describe the study design
  4. Describe the experimental techniques and equipment
  5. Describe the planned disposition of fish specimens upon completion of the study
- g. Study timeline
- h. Anticipated results
- i. Redundancy

1. Describe how the project will answer questions not answered by earlier research
  2. Explain how the proposed project will be coordinated with past and ongoing research studies
- j. Management implications
1. Describe how the study will inform Delta Smelt population supplementation; **identify biological opinion, Supplementation Strategy, or HGMP tasks by number and name, if applicable**
  2. Describe the relevance of the study to management; identify management document tasks by number and name, if applicable
- k. Funding
1. Identify contracts and agreements held for the proposed study (attach copy or give title, funding organization name and address, date of signature, and duration of contract)
  2. State whether full funding will be available for the completion of the proposed activity
- l. Student support
1. State whether the study will be done for a student project, the name and school affiliation of the student, and the nature of the work (i.e., senior thesis, master's thesis, Ph.D. dissertation, or postdoctoral project).
- m. Permitting
1. Has this study been authorized under (1) a USFWS 10(a)1(A) recovery permit, and (2) a CDFW MOU? YES\_\_\_ NO\_\_\_
  2. If yes, provide permit numbers.
  3. If no, have you submitted a permit application to USFWS and CDFW?  
YES \_\_\_ NO \_\_\_ Date submitted: FWS\_\_\_\_\_ CDFW \_\_\_\_\_
  4. Would a change/addition in the List of Authorized individuals under (1) a USFWS 10(a)1(A) recovery permit be needed? YES\_NO \_\_\_

n. Communication plan (required)

1. To assist with adaptive management decision making, the communication plan should include regular and timely contact with management agencies; describe how study results will be communicated to management agencies (e.g., emails, meetings, phone calls, presentations, reports, publications) and approximate time frame.
2. A one paragraph abstract on study progress (or final reports or publications) should be submitted to the CASS twice yearly on March 31 and September 30, provided fish have been received. Reports should be emailed to Bruce DiGennaro (bruce@essexpartnership.com).
3. Describe how study results will be disseminated to the public and stakeholders (e.g., presentations, reports, publications) and approximate time frame for when dissemination will happen.
4. Describe whether and how study data will be made publicly accessible.

o. Literature cited