

# Salmon Monitoring Team (SaMT) Weekly Meeting

12/18/25 at 11:00 a.m.

## Actions

- SaMT members review the contact list and notify Kearns & West if there are any corrections/additions from your agency.
  - Add David Custer (CDFW)
  - Add Jeff Jenkins (DWR)
- Kearns & West noted CDFW's question about pulse flows on Clear Creek and will provide an answer if available.
- CDFW (Crystal) will share the most recent results from the updated runs of the Winter-Run machine learning model.

## Participants

- California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW)
- California Department of Water Resources (DWR)
- State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB)
- U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR)
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
- National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)
- Kearns & West (K&W).

## Welcome & Housekeeping

- SaMT meetings have been rescheduled to Tuesdays at 11am.
- The notes process remains the same as before: Kearns & West will distribute the notes as soon as possible after Tuesday meetings and with edits due by Thursdays the same week.

- Meeting summaries, spring-run assessments, and other documents will be available to SaMT members via the SharePoint link here: [WY 2026 Meetings \(Shared Folder\)](#) which can also be found in the calendar invitation.
- The communications process with WOMT remains unchanged:
  - Any SaMT participant may draft a recommendation using the [briefing template](#) ahead of the meeting for review by SaMT members. A briefing template can also be drafted in the meeting if necessary.
  - Recommendations will continue to be reported agency by agency.
  - K&W facilitator will send to WOMT for review.

### ***Questions/Discussion on Announcements***

- CDFW asked about the edit process of the Weekly Water Operations Outlook for today's meeting (12/18).
  - Kearns & West hopes to clarify this process and provide direction during the next SaMT meeting. As the document has already been finalized for the week based on the regular finalization schedule, there will be no live edits during the SaMT meeting for today (12/18).
  - CDFW stated that per the 2024 SWP ITP an operations outlook would need to be made available and able to edit for the SaMT meetings moving forward.

## **Meeting Summary**

### **Updates on Biological Conditions**

#### ***Biological Context***

#### **Relevant Actions & Triggers**

- **Delta Cross Channel (DCC) Gate operations (PA 4.10.5.3):** Gates are currently closed.
- **OMR Management Season (PA 4.10.5.10.1, COA 8.3):** OMR Management for WY 2026 may begin in November, December, or January depending on what biological triggers are met.
- **SWP ITP Natural-origin Winter-run Chinook Salmon Early Season Weekly Loss Thresholds (COA 8.2.1):** DWR will operate OMRI consistent with COA 8.2.1 of the ITP. These values are based on the December 1 – December 31 threshold of a 7-day rolling sum of Chinook Salmon winter-run loss of 231.64. Loss will be tracked 6 days prior to this COA being in effect and be included in the 7-day rolling sum. If the threshold is exceeded, a 7-day average OMR index of -5,000 cfs will be operated for 7 days.

- **SWP ITP Winter-run Chinook Salmon Annual Loss Thresholds (COA 8.4.3):** DWR will operate Banks Pumping Plant consistent with COA 8.4.3 of the ITP. These values will be based on the BY 2025 juvenile production estimate (JPE), which will be finalized in January 2026.
  - The natural-origin Winter-run Chinook salmon Annual Loss Threshold for this year is based on the initial length-at-date (LAD) identification of natural-origin older juvenile Chinook salmon and the thresholds described above. If genetic analysis of natural-origin older juvenile Chinook salmon observed in salvage at the SWP or CVP subsequently confirms that any given Chinook salmon is not genetically identified as a CHNWR that fish will not count towards the loss threshold. This threshold is loss of natural-origin winter-run Chinook salmon from the CVP and SWP greater than or equal to 0.5% of the winter-run Chinook salmon JPE (loss threshold = TBD). If cumulative loss of natural-origin CHNWR in a brood year exceeds 50% of the annual loss threshold (loss > TBD), then Permittee shall, in coordination with Reclamation, adjust south Delta exports to achieve a 7-day average of the OMR index no more negative than -3,500 cfs for 7 consecutive days. If a CHNWR is salvaged during the 7-day action, the action will be extended for another seven days. At the conclusion of the action, Permittee, in coordination with Reclamation shall revert to the weekly distributed loss threshold until the 75% threshold is reached or throughout the end of the OMR Management season. If the 75% loss threshold (loss > TBD) is exceeded AND the Winter-Run Chinook salmon Machine Learning Model predicts that an OMR index of -2,500 cfs would shift the model output to a classification of CHNWR absence with a minimum probability of absence prediction of 0.559 for 1 of 30 sub-models for any of the 7 most recent prediction days, then a 7-day average OMRI index of -2,500 cfs will be operated to for 7 consecutive days. Thereafter, each winter-run observed in salvage will trigger a 7-day OMR index of -2,500 cfs for 7 consecutive days IF the Winter-Run Chinook salmon Machine Learning Model predicts that an OMR index of -2,500 cfs would shift the model output to a classification of CHNWR absence with a minimum probability of absence prediction of 0.559 for 1 of 30 sub-models for any of the 7 most recent prediction days.
  - The hatchery-origin Chinook salmon Annual Loss Threshold for WY 2026 is loss of both LSNFH and Battle Creek clipped CWT winter-run Chinook salmon from the CVP and SWP greater than or equal to 0.12% of the winter-run Chinook salmon hatchery-origin JPE (loss ≥ TBD and loss > TBD, respectively). If the 50% and 75% thresholds are exceeded, the same process will occur as what occurs for the natural-origin winter-run Chinook salmon (as discussed in above bullet).
- **SWP ITP Spring-run Chinook Salmon Protection Action and Surrogate Annual Loss Thresholds (COA 8.4.5):** From 10/1/2025–6/30/2026, DWR will operate Banks Pumping Plant consistent with COA 8.4.5 of the ITP. The ITP Hatchery Surrogate Loss

Threshold for WY 2026 will include three late fall-run release groups from Coleman National Fish Hatchery (CNFH), and six spring-run release groups from either Feather River Fish Hatchery (FRFH) or CNFH. If cumulative loss from CVP and SWP is greater than 0.25% for any release group, the required response is to reduce SWP exports by its proportional share, according to COA 8.7, that would be required to reach an OMRI of -5,000 cfs for 7 consecutive days in November and December, or an OMRI of -3,500 cfs for 7 consecutive days if the action is exceeded from January-June.

## **Weekly Fish and Water Operations Outlook, Current Operations**

- SaMT reviewed the Fish and Water Operations Outlook document.
- The DWR operator provided up to date operational changes as of 12/18. These changes will be reflected in the 12/22 Weekly Operations Outlook.

## ***Questions/Discussion on the Operations Review***

- DWR inquired about the document editing process.
  - Kearns & West informed the SaMT group that coordination is needed to decide on the timing of the document editing process. While the documents can be reviewed and updates captured in the note's summary today, edits will not be made until next week.
- CDFW asked about why the operations ranges changed and whether the changes were to adjust for the storm that is forecasted for this week.
  - DWR replied that initial forecasts informing operations were predicted through Monday 12/22, but as of today (12/18) additional forecasts were made to account for operations over the next 6 days. Therefore, Freeport flows will increase later in the week.
- CDFW asked whether Clear Creek releases on December 19 are due to a pulse flow.
  - CDFW offered reasoning for the range of releases on the American River, explaining that the releases will increase from 1,000 cfs to 5,000 cfs for flood management; noting something similar might be happening on Clear Creek.
- CDFW asked if there are any updates on the upcoming precipitation event, when the updated forecast was made, and whether it was discussed on Tuesday's, 12/16.
  - Kearns & West relayed that the storm was not discussed with respect to operations.
- CDFW asked if there are any operations changes besides the American River increases due to the storm.
  - DWR informed the group that Freeport next week we may go as high as 36,000 cfs because of upcoming storm.

- CDFW asked about the distinction between the storm event discussed on Tuesday earlier this week (12/16) and the upcoming storm event.
  - DWR clarified the storm event is all one of the same being discussed, the one starting on Monday 12/22 which will inform operations over the next week.

### **Part 3. Salvage Reports**

- CDFW shared that there was no salvage of listed species this week, but it is likely that there will be salvage next week due to the storm.

### **Part 4. Species Distribution**

- CDFW shared updates for the American River:
  - The weekly tempt average was 53.5 degrees F (Dec 8-12).
  - 5,400 carcasses had been observed.
- Pre-spawn mortality was 0% of those carcasses, meaning 100% of them (32 females) had spawned. CDFW provided salvage updates for their monitoring sites at Wallace Weir, and Knights Landing RST. RSTs are planned to be taken out of the water as higher inflows are anticipated as a result of the storm; the traps will operate through Saturday and then remain out until December 26<sup>th</sup> or 27<sup>th</sup>, meaning there will not be a lot of data next week. The same is likely true for the lower Feather River RST and RSTs on other watersheds.

### **Part 5. ITP Assessments**

#### ***Spring-run Assessment***

- DWR shared an updated version of the Spring-run Chinook Assessment document.

### **Part 6. Other Assessments**

- No updates.

#### ***Questions/Discussion***

- DWR asked if there are plans to run the Winter-run machine learning model given the continuing storm event; it might be appropriate for the first pulse action.
  - CDFW replied that the model is currently being updated; there are a few data source links that are no longer working, and the code is being updated to pull the data from a different link on SacPAS so it can continue to be ran. CDFW believes that that had been completed prior to the SaMT meeting today so it will be shared if it has been fixed

## **Next SaMT Meeting**

- The next SaMT Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, 12/23/25 from 11am-12pm.