

Salmon Monitoring Team (SaMT) Weekly Meeting

12/23/25 at 11:00 a.m.

Actions

- Kearns & West will inquire with DWR if there were plans to increase Feather River releases this week and provide an update to SaMT. **-Complete**
- Kearns & West to give Travis Apgar (CDFW) SharePoint access for the Weekly Operations Outlook document.

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

- 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.

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 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 \geq 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.

Questions/Discussion on the Operations Review

- CDFW asked if there were plans to increase Feather River releases this week.
 - Kearns & West will inquire with DWR for a response.

Part 3. Salvage Reports

- CDFW provided a salvage update for the period of December 15-21, 2025.
 - Ad-clipped Chinook were observed at the CVP salvage facility over the past weekend.
 - Associated tag codes were from a San Joaquin River Restoration Program Salmon Conservation and Research Facility (SCARF) release, meaning they're Spring-Run origin salmon.
 - An outage occurred at the CVP on December 18 from 09:00 – 16:30 for a primary channel dive inspection.
- There was a large number of salmon salvaged at the CVP on Monday, December 22. (which will be reported officially next week).
 - By Length-at-date, all fish were unclipped with most Fall-run sized Chinook Salmon (range: 32-37 mm FL) and spring run sized Chinook Salmon (range: 38-41 mm FL) were collected on 12/22.

- Also a clipped late-Fall-run sized collected at Skinner Fish Facility, close to the size range of the fish salvaged over the weekend. The salmon collected on 12/22 was 170 mm FL, which is similar in size to the salmon collected on 12/20-12/21 (165-181 mm FL). Clipped late-Fall-run Chinook Salmon loss is approximately 17. All values are still preliminary.
- CDFW shared that Tuolumne River flows increased from 250 cfs to 6,000 cfs over the weekend. This increase is a result of releases from LeGrange Dam. A previously installed screw trap has been catching length-at-date natural origin spring-run. It's possible some of these fish came from the Tuolumne River and are at the cutoff between Spring-run and Fall-run sized fish.
 - Usually in the spring there is an early pulse of Fall-run sized fish coming out of the Stanislaus River during pulse flows. An increase of water flow at that level would likely be associated with increased salvaged based on historic patterns.
- CDFW asked DWR if there are plans to run genetic testing on the three Spring-run salvaged from the CVP.
 - Following the assumption of past protocols, DWR expects USBR will likely do a standard analysis, which is every 2 weeks to get results back.

Part 4. Species Distribution

- No updates.

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

- CDFW indicated increased anticipated flows from this storm might see more salvage; however no changes for now to the Spring-run Chinook Assessment.

Items to Raise to WOMT

- The agencies had no items to raise to WOMT.

Next SaMT Meeting

- The next SaMT Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, 12/30/25 from 11am-12pm.