



United States Department of the Interior



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Pacific Southwest Region
2800 Cottage Way, Room W-2606
Sacramento, California 95825-1846

In reply refer to:

February 2, 2016

To: Regional Director, Pacific Region, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

From: Regional Director, Pacific Southwest Region, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Subject: Delta Smelt Voluntary Protective Action to Address Wind Driven Turbidity Event

Reclamation and DWR are proposing to operate at an Old and Middle River (OMR) flow of -2500 cfs for 2-3 days beginning February 2. Reclamation and DWR have reported that there is a wind driven turbidity event causing elevated turbidity in the Old River corridor between Holland Cut and Bacon Island. There is concern turbidity could spread further south. Reclamation and DWR are proposing to reduce exports to hold OMR flow at -2500 cfs until the turbidity settles. The Service appreciates Reclamation and DWR's proactive approach in proposing and implementing Delta Smelt protective actions and we agree that the voluntary action is prudent.

The Service believes conditions are consistent with an elevated risk of entrainment of Delta Smelt. Based on current conditions, we believe an OMR flow of -2500 cfs is protective of Delta Smelt and reduces the risk of entrainment. The Service requests that if Reclamation desires to operate to an OMR flow more negative than -3500 cfs, please notify us of your desire at least one working day prior to the desired start in change of operations. This will allow us to assess risk based on real time conditions, work with our partners, and make a new determination. If at any time conditions indicate a change in risk of entrainment, we will consult with the Principals and, if needed, we will issue a new determination as called for in Component 1, Action 2 of the 2008 Coordinated Long-term Operation of the Central Valley Project and State Water Project Biological Opinion.

Again, thank you for your proactive actions to protect Delta Smelt and for your collaborative efforts in this difficult water operations season.