

Service Decision February 27, 2009

The Service has determined that the SWG's recommended action will be protective of delta smelt. The Project's proposed action would be for the proposed CVP/SWP operations to increase combined export pumping to a combined 7000 to 7200 cfs. The Service concurs with this plan provided the 5-day trailing moving average, or, preferably, daily OMR remains less negative than -5000 cfs. The Service recommends that pumping ramp up by 500 cfs/day or wait to increase pumping at the CVP until Saturday.

Also, if any adult delta smelt salvage occurs at either the Jones or Banks facilities between February 27 and March 1, that combined pumping be maintained at or reduced to no more than 6100 cfs (the value reported for February 26th).

These flows are needed to protect delta smelt for the following reasons:

1) Delta water temperatures are currently at 12.9 degrees C (three station average of Mossdale, Rio Vista and Antioch) which is within the range of delta smelt spawning, which is 12-18 degrees C. With the three station average water temperature above 12 degrees C, Component 2 of the BO's RPA (Action 3 in Appendix B) has been triggered. This Component requires OMR flows between -1,250 and -5,000 cfs on a 14-day average, with the SWG recommending to the Service what flow should be required to protect delta smelt. Spawning is likely occurring throughout the delta and there are likely larval delta smelt as well as adult delta smelt in the system. To date, no larval delta smelt have been caught at the salvage facilities, but this is probably due to the difficulty in catching small sized larval delta smelt. As these fish get larger, sampling efforts will become more effective at sampling larval delta smelt and will help give a more detailed picture of the current delta smelt distribution in the delta.

2) The goal remains to prevent delta smelt from becoming entrained into the south delta where they can become entrained at the facilities or succumb to high water temperatures later in the season. Even though only 6 delta smelt were salvaged (expanded salvage) at the export facilities over the past week, there may be delta smelt in the central delta which could become entrained if actions to minimize OMR flows are not taken.