



United States Department of the Interior



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Pacific Southwest Region
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In reply refer to:

February 26, 2013

Subject: Determination of Actions Required Under Component 1 of the 2008 OCAP Biological Opinion

The Service has determined that as of February 26, 2013, OMR flows should be no more negative than -3500 cfs on a 14-day running average, with a simultaneous 5-day running average no more negative than -4375 cfs (within 25 percent). If no delta smelt are salvaged at either the state or Federal facility between 0001 hours on February 25 and 2400 hours on February 28, then beginning on March 1, 2013, OMR flows shall be no more negative than -4000 cfs on a 14-day running average, with a simultaneous 5-day running average no more negative than -5000 cfs (within 25 percent). If delta smelt are salvaged over the period of February 25 through 28, then OMR flows shall remain at -3500 cfs until after updated advice is provided by the Smelt Working Group (SWG) on Friday, March 1, 2013 and the Service considers the available information. OMR flow limits of -3500 cfs and -4000 cfs are within the range of allowable net daily OMR flows for Action 2, which is -1250 to -5000 cfs. The Service will continue to monitor Delta conditions on a daily basis and will consider the import of any new information that is received.

The Service has considered Delta conditions information provided by participants of the Delta Conditions Team (DCT) on February 25, 2013, and also the SWG recommendation received on February 25, 2013.

Turbidity data presented at the DCT indicate there was an increase in turbidity in Old River at Holland Cut over the weekend. This increase to above 20 NTUs appears to have occurred due to a wind-driven resuspension of sediment. Turbidity on Old River at Bacon Island also increased during this time, but remained at approximately 8 NTUs and below. Turbidities in the south and central Delta are expected to fall as sediment settles out.

On Tuesday, February 25, 2013, the SWG reviewed adult delta smelt distribution and salvage data, current Delta conditions, and projected operations. Two adult delta smelt were salvaged on February 21, 2013; this was the first salvage of delta smelt since February 6, 2013. There has been no delta smelt salvage at either facility since February 21. The cumulative seasonal total of adult delta smelt for Water Year (WY) 2013 is 230. The SWG was informed that the revised WY 2013 adult delta smelt incidental take limit is 362; the WY 2013 adult delta smelt incidental take concern level is 272.

The SWG reviewed daily OMR flows, which have been fluctuating between approximately -1100 cfs and -3200 cfs since February 18, 2013. The 5-day and 14-day OMR flows were

reported as -2090 cfs and -2021 cfs, respectively. The projects have been targeting -3500 cfs OMR since Wednesday, February 20, 2013; however, combined exports of 6000 cfs did not begin until later in the day on February 22, 2013. The SWG noted that the reported daily OMR of -3218 cfs on Sunday, February 24, 2013 was the most negative daily OMR that had been observed in the last two weeks. Therefore, the SWG notes that effects of implementing an OMR of -3500 cfs on salvage may not yet have been realized.

The SWG also discussed that warming air temperatures over this week may result in increased water temperatures providing preferential delta smelt spawning conditions that could potentially lead to delta smelt spawning and additional interior-Delta spawning movement. The coincident recent increases in turbidity in the central Delta over the weekend, and negative QWEST could result in an increased risk that pre-spawn adult delta smelt would move into the south Delta.

The Service has determined that an OMR flow of no more negative than -3500 cfs is necessary to protect delta smelt from entrainment. If there continues to be no salvage through Thursday, February 28, 2013, as described above, the Service has determined that an OMR of no more negative than -4000 cfs will be protective of adult delta smelt.

The Bureau of Reclamation and the Service have reinitiated consultation on the 2008 OCAP biological opinion. During this reinitiation period, the Bureau, Service, California Department of Water Resources, and California Department of Fish and Wildlife are conferring on measures needed to protect delta smelt while providing for the water security of California.