

SMELT WORKING GROUP
Friday, March 30, 2012

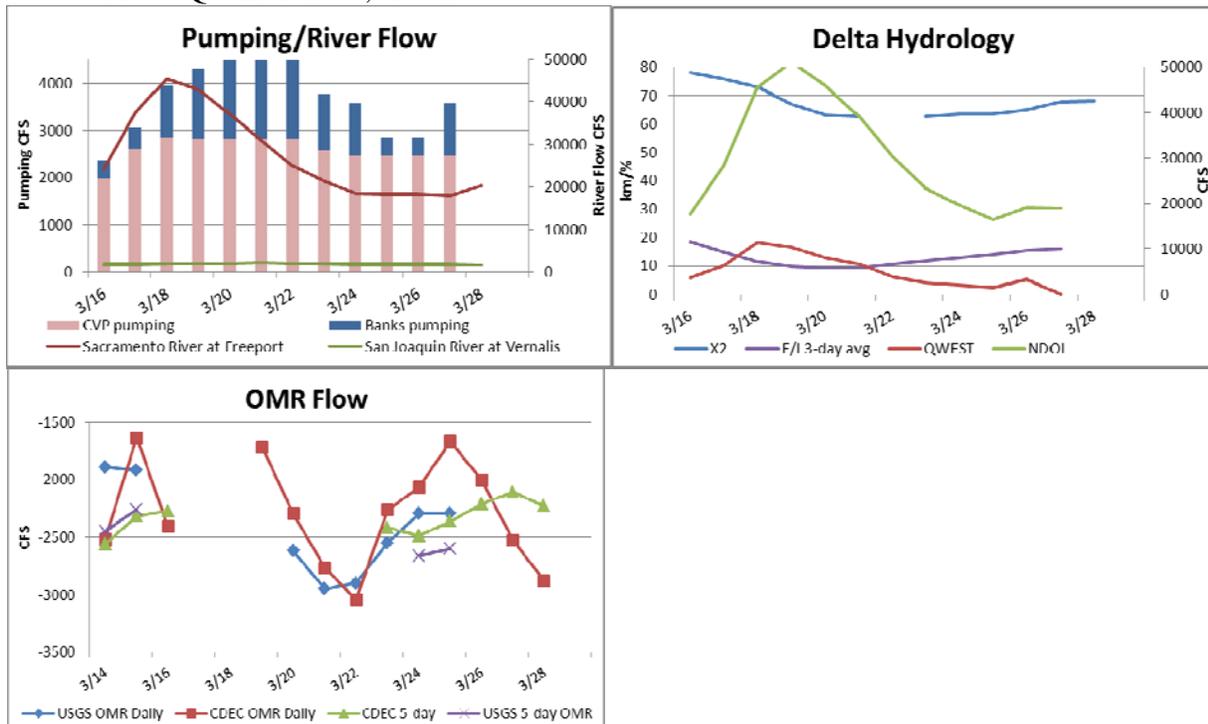
Meeting Summary:

As proposed in its Monday, March 26, 2012 meeting, the Working Group reconvened on Friday, March 30, 2012 to review current Delta hydrological conditions, projected water operations, and updated delta smelt distribution and salvage data. Projected operations are not expected to result in a substantive change in OMR. The most recent survey data indicate that the center of larval distribution is in the lower Sacramento River and confluence area. Larval delta smelt have not been collected at the SWP and CVP export facilities. Based on these data, the Working Group estimated that the risk of entrainment currently remains low, and the recommendation remains unchanged from Monday, March 26, 2012. Distribution may indicate increasing risk in the near-term. The Working Group will continue to monitor smelt salvage, smelt survey data, and Delta hydrological conditions and will reconvene April 2, 2012, at 10am.

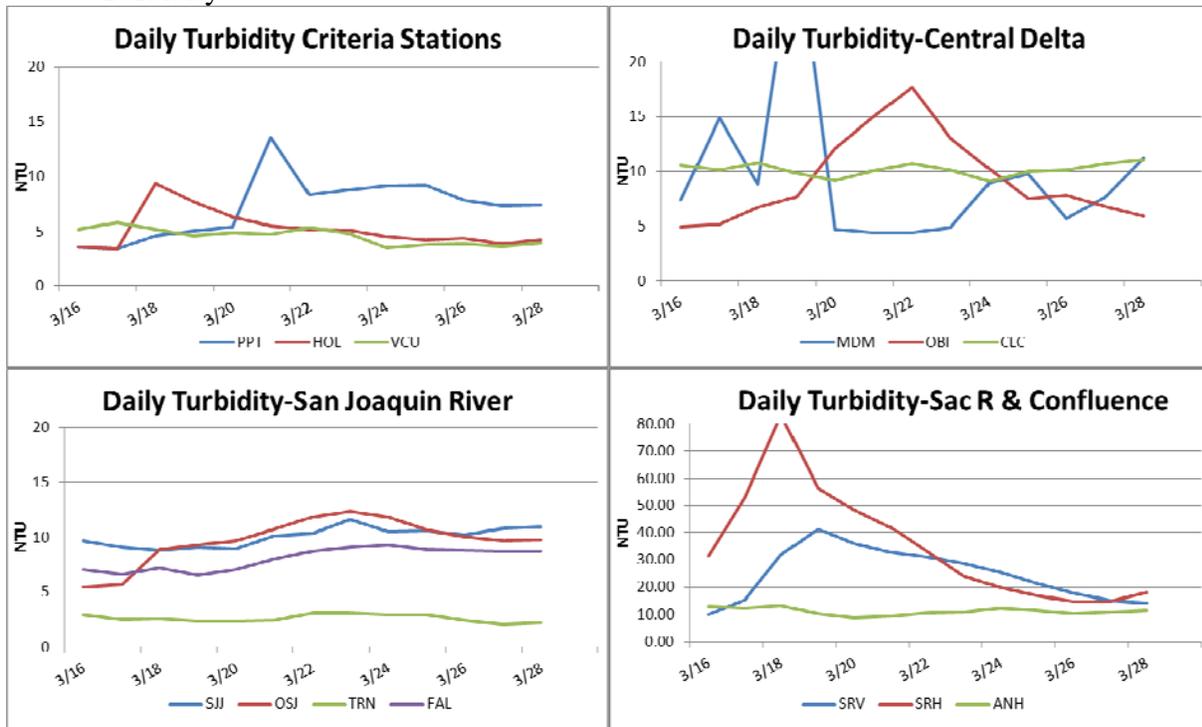
Reported Data:

1) Current environmental data:

- OMR: the CDEC 5-day and 14-day average is -2,063 cfs and -2,342 cfs, respectively.
- Flow: QWEST is +6,414 cfs



- Turbidity:



2) Delta Fish Monitoring:

Survey 6 of the Smelt Larva Survey was conducted on 03/19 and 03/20. Sample processing is ongoing. To date, 214 delta smelt, ranging in length from 5-8 mm, have been collected, including 42 larval delta smelt collected from seven south and central Delta stations. The highest densities of delta smelt were collected in the lower Sacramento River and confluence area.

Survey 2 of the 20-mm Survey was conducted from 03/26 through 03/29. A total of 47 stations were sampled; processing is ongoing. To date, 12 delta smelt ranging in length from 5-10 mm, were collected from 5 stations. Three delta smelt were collected from three south and central Delta stations (stns 815, 901, and 910).

SKT Survey 4 will commence 04/02/2012.

20-mm Survey 3 will commence 04/09/2012.

3) Salvage

Salvage data from 03/27 and 03/28 were reported.

One adult delta smelt was salvaged at the CVO on Tuesday, 03/27. No adult delta smelt have been salvaged at the SWP since 03/13. The cumulative total of salvaged adult delta smelt is 199. No larval delta smelt have been salvaged at either facility this season.

Juvenile longfin smelt continue to be salvaged daily at the SWP at higher numbers than at the CVP. On Wednesday, 03/28, 222 longfin smelt were salvaged at the SWP. The cumulative total of salvaged juvenile longfin smelt as of 03/29 is approximately 1,600.

4) Expected Project Operations

Combined projected exports at Jones and Banks are 6,000 cfs through Saturday 03/31. However, this brief increase in exports is unlikely to significantly change current OMR rates. On Sunday, exports will be reduced to a combined total of 1,750 cfs to target an OMR of -1,800 cfs for 04/01 through 04/07.

5) Particle Tracking Modeling:

The Working Group reviewed PTMs provided on 03/26/2012. The PTM assumptions: -2,500 cfs OMR from 03/20 through 03/31; -2,000 cfs from 04/01 through 04/07; -3,500 cfs from 04/08 through 04/20. No new request for particle tracking modeling runs was made.

6) Assessment of Risk:

The Working Group reviewed and discussed current Delta conditions, projected water operations, and updated delta smelt distribution and salvage data.

The current 5-day and 14-day running average OMR (CDEC) is -2,063 cfs and -2,342 cfs, respectively. Projected operations are expected to increase today (03/30) through Saturday (03/31), and is not expected to result in a substantive change in OMR by Saturday night. Beginning Sunday, 04/01, water operations will be directed to maintain an OMR no more negative than -1,800 cfs, as required by the NMFS BO for 7 days

A review of the most recent delta smelt distribution data demonstrated presence of larval delta smelt in the south and central Delta; however, the center of distribution is away from the south and central Delta, and is concentrated in the lower Sacramento River to confluence area. The number of delta smelt larvae caught in survey 6 of the Smelt Larva Survey was somewhat higher than typical for this early in the year, indicating a good start to the spawning season. There were no larval (< 20 mm) delta smelt observed from daily larval fish samples taken at the state and federal fish collection facilities as of March 28. No juvenile (≥ 20 mm) delta have been salvaged this season. One adult delta smelt was salvaged at the CVO on Tuesday, 03/27, and the cumulative total adult delta smelt salvage as of 03/28 is 199.

Based on a review of these data, the Working Group agreed that the risk of entrainment of delta smelt is low, but likely to increase in the near-term. The recommendation remains unchanged from Monday, 03/26/2012.