



DELTA SMELT ENHANCEMENT

2019 Biological Opinions for Central Valley Project and California's State Water Project

Identifying ways to conserve and bolster the remaining populations of Delta smelt is critical to the species' survival. Federal fish agencies reviewed the Bureau of Reclamation's proposed operations for the Central Valley Project and provided recommendations that could improve conditions for Delta smelt while meeting the water needs of farmers, cities and industry.

Key Takeaways

- Reclamation would fund the expansion of the existing Delta smelt production capacity at the UC Davis Fish Conservation and Culture Laboratory. In addition to bolstering the number of fish, this investment will allow for more scientific studies that improve understanding of the species' biological needs.
- Wild population of Delta smelt would be supplemented with captive-bred Delta smelt in the next 3 to 5 years. This effort aims to stabilize and help recover populations of Delta smelt in the wild.



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- Reclamation and the State of California would share the cost of building a new, larger hatchery facility in the Delta by 2030. This will further ensure the long-term survival of Delta smelt.
- In 2019, scientists began placing delta smelt produced at the UC Davis lab into net pens in various locations in the Delta to test whether the fish could survive in the wild. Results have been very successful, giving us confidence that delta smelt can be released into the wild.