

SMELT WORKING GROUP  
Friday, February 27, 2009

**Recommendation for February 27, 2009:**

The SWG was asked to consider a proposal from the CVP/SWP to increase combined export pumping to a combined 7000 to 7200 cfs. The SWG provisionally concurs with this plan provided the 5-day trailing moving average, or, preferably, daily OMR remains less negative than -5000 cfs. The SWG recommends that pumping ramp up by 500 cfs/day or wait to increase pumping at the CVP until Saturday. The SWG will re-evaluate conditions on Monday. The workgroup requests particle tracking modeling be conducted to inform our near-future advice. The PTM should use the particle insertion points used last year and should run three pumping scenarios: 1) hold exports at the current proposed pumping rate of 7000-7200 cfs; 2) pumping at rates the operators will consider in the next two weeks if these are higher than 7200 cfs; and 3) pumping rates that would achieve OMR flow no more negative than -3,500 cfs given forecasted Delta inflows. In addition, the SWG would like the Reclamation OMR flow webpage that was available last year to be made available again this year and updated daily.

The SWG also recommends that 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 26<sup>th</sup>) pending a new review by the SWG.

1) Current environmental data.

Temperatures for the 3 station average are now 12.9 C. Therefore, RPA Component 2 (Action 3) per the new BO has been triggered. The provisional OMR estimate by the projects as of February 27 is -3113 cfs for 14 day average, -3719 cfs for 5 day average. No salvage has been reported for longfin smelt through February 22. Expanded salvage for delta smelt through February 26 is 8.

2) Discussion for Recommendation

At present the best available distributional data indicate that adult delta smelt are on the Sacramento River side of the estuary, and therefore at reduced risk of entrainment. However, these data were collected by the Spring Kodiak Trawl survey before rains in February increased Delta outflow and turbidity, so there is some uncertainty whether they accurately represent the current distribution of smelt. The working group is concerned that high negative daily OMR values may result in delta smelt moving into the Central and South Delta, which will make future balancing of exports and larval fish protection more difficult. Maintenance of daily OMR less negative than -5000 cfs and slow ramping of exports will reduce the likelihood of this occurring and allow for any effect to be lessened. The working group also would like re-evaluate the proposed pumping at our meeting next week and to have PTM runs conducted to further inform the group.

**Longfin smelt advice:**

Long fin smelt were not discussed by the SWG. LFS larvae are the life-stage of concern. Increased Delta inflows, Qwest flows and outflows have all been increasingly favorable for larvae during the last two weeks. No advice is offered relative to the proposal described above.