



- Bay-Delta Management Report

Summary

This report provides a summary of activities related to the Bay-Delta for January 2015.

Purpose

Informational

Detailed Report

Near-Term Delta Actions

Operating Criteria and Plan Biological Opinions

Staff continues to participate in the Collaborative Science and Adaptive Management Process and Collaborative Adaptive Management Team (CAMT), which is charged with developing a robust science and adaptive management program to inform the development of the Operating Criteria and Plan biological opinions. The CAMT teams are currently focused on developing proposed investigations to address Delta smelt entrainment, fall outflow/X2, fish surveys, and identifying data and scientific gaps regarding the effects of the water projects on salmon (Gap Analysis). The Delta Science Program (DSP) organized an independent science review panel to review a proposal for investigations on *Understanding Population Effects and Factors that Affect Entrainment of Delta Smelt at the State Water Project and Central Valley Project*, and to provide input on the scientific quality of the proposed investigations. The independent review panel report was submitted to the DSP on December 15 and was transmitted to the CAMT. The independent review panel found that the investigations will increase the understanding of processes controlling Delta smelt entrainment and stated support for the collaborative and integrated nature of the project. Proposed investigations for fish surveys and the Gap Analysis are currently being revised after initial review. The proposal on fall outflow/X2 will be submitted in March 2015.

Turbidity Forecasting and Water Project Operations

On January 9, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) accepted a proposal by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) to modify the method of calculating the adult Delta smelt cumulative salvage index and incidental take limit (ITL). The determination more than doubles the ITL from 78 to 196 for water year 2015. USFWS evaluated the proposal in light of a report prepared by the Independent Review Panel to the Delta Science Program and concluded that the proposed method, with modification, represents a viable interim approach to addressing incidental take. The increased ITL is based primarily upon a method developed by Bay-Delta Initiatives staff, and it will reduce the frequency with which salvage at the export pumps represents a constraint on operations.

As reported last month, USBR and DWR voluntarily reduced pumping for several days in mid-December in an attempt to avoid establishing a turbidity “bridge” across the Delta. In 2012, it is believed that a similar “first flush” condition allowed Delta smelt to move into the south Delta; their presence resulting in months of pumping restrictions. The expectation was that by disrupting the movement of turbidity into the south Delta, pumping later in the season will be less constrained. In spite of several high wind events that exacerbated turbidity conditions, the voluntary pumping reductions appear to have averted significant Delta smelt salvage and thus averted triggering the USFWS Biological Opinion Reasonable and Prudent Action during the “first flush”.

Fish trawling data continue to indicate few Delta smelt in the south Delta. Trawl and turbidity monitoring will continue to be closely watched. The Delta Conditions Team will continue to hold weekly calls and closely monitor trawl and turbidity data and evaluate turbidity forecast information. The water contractors are collaborating to develop an estimate of water savings associated with the preemptive action taken by USBR and DWR. In addition to these already realized savings, the action could potentially stem the loss of a significant

Board Report (Bay-Delta Management Report)

amount of water over the coming months if rains continue. State and federal water project operations have been constrained by the National Marine Fisheries Service Biological Opinion's calendar-based restriction on reverse flows in Old and Middle River since January 1.

Delta Emergency Preparedness

Delta Flood Emergency Management Plan

A DWR department-wide exercise will be conducted in April 2015 to evaluate response to Delta levee failures resulting from a major earthquake on the Hayward fault. The exercise will complement recent exercises focusing on flood-initiated emergencies. DWR has advised that interagency review comments to the Delta Flood Emergency Management Plan (DFEMP), along with results of the April 2015 Delta emergency exercises, will be incorporated into the DFEMP by mid-2015.

In 2015, a construction contract will be awarded by DWR at the Stockton storage site to augment rock stockpiles, build all-weather access and a major warehouse, and recondition two existing warehouses. A temporary barge loading and off-loading facility is available at the Stockton storage site, but will be replaced by a permanent facility in 2016. At the Rio Vista storage site, a contract will be awarded in 2015 to augment rock stockpiles, and build loading ramps and all-weather access. Grant programs to local and county emergency response agencies are focusing on emergency planning, communications, and training.