

CALFED Operations Group
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Bruce Oppenheim - National Marine Fisheries Service

Winter-run chinook salmon: Loss of juvenile chinook salmon in the winter-run size length is rapidly increasing (3,353 YTD) at the Delta Fish Facilities this week. Daily losses at the State Water Project are ranging from 50 to 446 salmon, with density (salmon/TAF) the highest reported in the last four years. Incidental take was set by the NMFS on January 31st based on the Juvenile Production Estimate (JPE) at 3,702 for the Yellow Light level, and 7,404 for Red Light level. These levels are higher than the take limits set last year. Several export reductions have been initiated this month using the Environmental Water Account (EWA) to decrease winter-run chinook losses at the pumps. Biologists expect that high losses of winter-run length salmon will continue for the next two weeks.

Livingston Stone National Fish Hatchery released 166,000 winter-run juvenile chinook on February 1st at Caldwell Park in Redding (RM 300). All hatchery produced winter-run are marked with an adipose fin clip and coded wire tag.

Steelhead and Spring-run Chinook: Yearling spring-run size chinook are still being observed leaving Mill and Deer Creek, although in low numbers. The Knights Landing and Sacramento Catch Index have dropped to less than one this week. GCID observed catch is low. Export reductions to decrease losses of winter-run size salmon have also helped to decrease losses of juvenile spring-run chinook and steelhead. Coleman Hatchery late-fall surrogates for spring-run emigration remain under the Yellow Light levels. Monitoring of fish numbers by the Data Analysis Team continues with a special conference call this Thursday.

Steelhead salvage at the Delta Fish Facilities continues to increase (20-30 non-clipped daily average) with 899 being the cumulative non-clipped total since December 1st. Last year's incidental take level for non-clipped steelhead was 3,400. Most of the state and federal hatcheries released their entire production of hatchery ad-clipped steelhead in January, accounting for high numbers of ad-clipped steelhead in the traps and at the pumps this month.

A draft CVP/SWP - OCAP interim biological opinion for spring-run chinook and Central Valley steelhead is due to be completed by March 1st. This opinion will cover operations for the entire year from March 2001 through March 2002. This Friday work will begin on a long-term CVP/SWP-OCAP opinion covering the five listed fish species with a framework due to the Water Operations Management Team by March 6th.