

SWP Operational Changes Summary

The objective of SWP Operational Changes was to evaluate the feasibility to comply with interim measure (d) from Condition 3 of the April 9, 2015 NMFS response letter.

In order to reduce pre-screen loss through Clifton Court Forebay per the NMFS 2009 BiOp, DWR proposes shifting of State Water Project (SWP) pumping at Banks Pumping Plant to the Central Valley Project at Jones Pumping Plant when listed species are present. The amount of shifted pumping under Stage 1 Joint Point of Diversion will be limited by the operational or available physical capacity at Jones Pumping Plant. Any SWP pumping greater than what can be shifted to the CVP would still be exported through the Forebay and Banks Pumping Plant. A minimum SWP pumping amount of approximately 300 cfs is required to support Byron-Bethany and South Bay Aqueduct water needs. This action could occur anytime between January 1 and June 15.

On December 12, 2018, DWR and USBR signed an addendum to the Coordinated Operations Agreement (COA). By essence of the updated COA, a shift of pumping is already in place. Exports prior to the amendment were shared equally when under OMR restrictions, whereas with the updated COA, the exports are now split 40/60 (SWP/CVP) during OMR restrictions.

Study Effectiveness

Essentially the shift has begun with the new COA provisions. The shifting of pumping wouldn't necessarily reduce overall predation within the Forebay. It may reduce the number of salmonids entering the Forebay, thereby reducing the take of salmonids at the SWP. However, it may result in increasing take at the CVP. The ongoing salmonid releases as part of the Skinner Efficiency Improvements Study could provide information on the effectiveness of this action once it is implemented by comparing pre- and post-implementation results. Another possibility may be to determine effectiveness by looking at salvage.

Project Effect on Listed Species

As noted above this action has only recently been implemented. While it may reduce salmonids entering the Forebay, it may increase take at the CVP. An evaluation of salvage may provide information on effects on listed species.