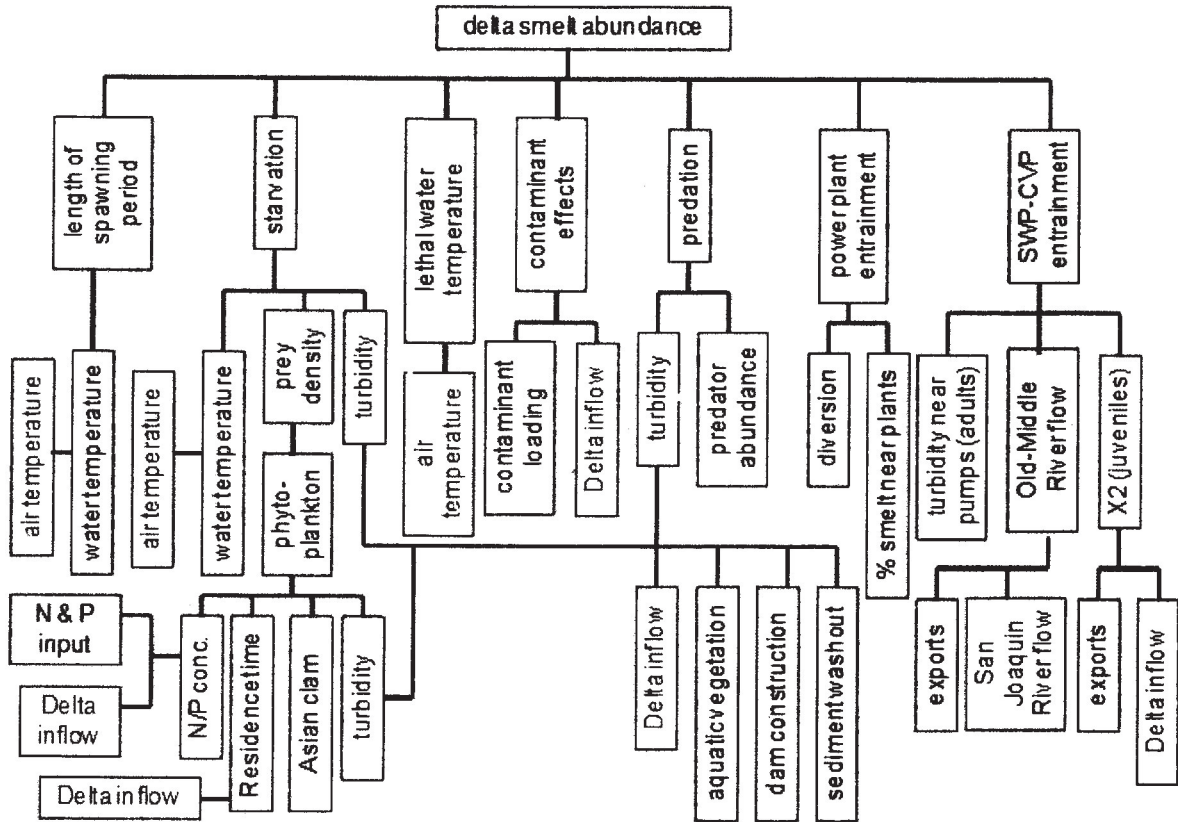


Simplified hierarchy



1
2 FIGURE 6. A hierarchical approach to evaluating effects on delta smelt abundance.

3 E. Summary and Conclusions

4 The conclusions reached after following the process outlined above and after considering the
5 science analysis that follows can be broken into two broad categories. First, the best available
6 science does not support establishing Delta flow criteria without first considering and attempting
7 to understand, for the fish species at issue, whether, how, and why the criteria will address in a
8 positive manner an identified stressor that is impairing the improvement of the year-to-year
9 species population. The flow-centric approaches of the past have failed and will, if continued,
10 fail in the future. Second, any flow criteria that emanate from these proceedings should be
11 narrative in character and should set out or otherwise describe the error bands that reflect the
12 uncertain state of the available science. Pretending that the available science points clearly in
13 only one direction will not make it so and will render the final product useless for providing
14 guidance for future actions.¹ More specifically, the science leads to the following conclusions:

¹ To the extent the State Water Board attempts to establish numeric criteria, the criteria must reflect likely different flow needs in different months or seasons of the year, different flow needs in different water-year types, scientific uncertainties, potential ranges needed to ensure the ability to balance the limited water resources for competing public trust resource needs, and potential range needed to ensure the ability to balance the limited water resources between for public trust resource needs and the needs of other beneficial uses.