



NEWS BULLETIN – THOMPSON STEELHEAD UPDATE

It's shaping up as another very troubled year for Thompson and Chilcotin river steelhead populations. An October 16, 2018 report from the BC government says catches to date of steelhead in test fisheries suggest that late-run summer steelhead stocks in the Fraser River are at "extremely low levels of abundance and in a state of Extreme Conservation Concern." The province forecasts a 2018 spawning population of just 250 steelhead to the Thompson River watershed and just 115 to the Chilcotin River. These returns are only marginally better than last year's record low return.

POUND TRAPS COULD REDUCE STEELHEAD INTERCEPTIONS

Exciting news about a new conservation campaign targeting mixed-stock interceptions of endangered Interior Fraser steelhead and other salmonids: SSBC is joining forces with the Pacific Northwest-based Wild Fish Conservancy, a science-based organization that's studying the effectiveness of pound net traps in reducing by-catch mortalities. Pound traps could be the key to a vibrant, sustainable salmon fishery while facilitating recovery of endangered steelhead, chinook and southern resident killer whales. [Check out this video to learn more.](#)

PUB NIGHT FUNDRAISER UPDATE

SSBC is advancing the date for our annual Pub Night fundraiser to February 20, 2019. Pub Night has traditionally been a fall event, and a very effective way to ensure SSBC can continue engage in projects supporting wild steelhead. We believe the change in date will enable even more members and SSBC supporters to attend.

Please consider donating an auction or raffle item. Connect with Brian Braidwood at Sea Run Fly & Tackle in Coquitlam or Gillian Steele at Highwater Tackle in North Vancouver to drop off items.

The location is the same as last year:

Mickey's Irish Public House
170 Golden Drive, Coquitlam

Start time is 7 pm

Please check our Facebook page and the next edition of our newsletter for updates.

AGM 2019 UPDATE

Mark this date on your calendar and make plans to attend! SSBC's 2019 Annual General Meeting will take place January 26 at the BCGEU office, 8555 198a St, Langley. Please check SSBC Facebook page and the next edition of our newsletter for updates regarding guest speakers, event start time. New and prospective members are welcome to attend.

SARA STEELHEAD REVIEW UPDATE

The department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada has initiated consultations on a possible Species At Risk Act (SARA) listing for Thompson and Chilcotin river steelhead. As part of consultations, DFO is holding a webinar on November 7, 2018, for recreational fishery stakeholders and another November 22 for environmental non-government organizations (ENGOS).

Meanwhile, SSBC is working with the US-based Wild Fish Conservancy to investigate the viability of alternative fishing methods which could reduce steelhead interceptions during summer and fall commercial fisheries in Johnstone Strait as well as during net fisheries in the Fraser River.

ERIC CARLISLE BURSARY AWARD WINNERS

An uncommonly dedicated angler, conservationist and author, Eric Carlisle's devotion to steelhead lives on after his untimely passing in 2016. SSBC is continuing his legacy with the establishment of an annual bursary for two students in the fisheries program at BCIT. This year's winners of the Eric Carlisle Bursary are Maya Meron and Shane Steele. Please join us in congratulating them.

NORTHERN BRANCH UPDATE

- Steelhead and salmon salvage efforts were necessary again this year at the Exstew River borrow pit. A total of 1,600 fry were salvaged from the pit during summer and fall operations.
- A fundraiser at Sherwood Mountain Brewhouse, featured renowned blues musician Keith Scott, raised \$2,500 for Northern Chapter conservation work.

VANCOUVER ISLAND BRANCH UPDATE

Here are some quick updates on the SSBC Vancouver Island Chapter's recent activity:

- Salmon River. The diversion dam is gone and coho, steelhead and chinook have access to upper reaches.
- There has been some success for salmon, and probably steelhead, moving through the cascades obstructions on the Campbell/Quinsam river system.
- There is concern that the destruction of Gold River habitat through logging may have degrade the river beyond the point of recovery.

FUNDING FOR STREAM RESTORATION

SSBC directors voted at the September 11, 2018 board meeting to contribute \$5,000 to a BCIT Rivers Institute stream restoration project that's creating more habitat for juvenile salmon, trout and char in the lower reaches of North Vancouver's Lynn Creek. The project is expected to cost \$45,000.

CHEAKAMUS RIVER STUDY

The Cheekye River has been a concern for decades due to its tendency to move large amounts of material such as rock and gravel downstream to the river's confluence with the Cheakamus River. The alluvial fan of the Cheekye is filling the riverbed of the Cheakamus mainstem with substrate materials that are diminishing the river's capacity

to support steelhead. SSBC has funded an assessment by Northwest Hydraulic Consultants and is now seeking to share results with the Squamish Nation and local government.

MICHAEL & YOUNG SPEYCLAVE

The annual Michael & Young SpeyClave, held April 7, 2018 at Cultus Lake was a great opportunity for SSBC to promote the protection of wild steelhead stocks across the province as well reach out to potential new members. The event's raffle raised \$2,850 for SSBC, which will put the money towards steelhead habitat restoration or projection projects around British Columbia.

Once again SSBC would like to thank Michael & Young Fly Shop for inviting the Steelhead Society to be a part of their Clave and everyone who attended and spent/donated their time and money! The SSBC looks forward to working with Michael & Young Fly Shop at future claves and events!

THOMPSON RIVER PETITION DELIVERED

An e-petition initiated by SSBC director Poul Bech was delivered to the Fisheries Minister in the House of Commons on April 30, 2018 by NDP Fisheries Critic Fin Donnelly. The e-petition attracted 1,732 signatures. It called upon the Fisheries Minister to suspend henceforth all gill net and purse seine chum salmon fisheries in the Fraser River and approach areas including Johnstone Strait during the annual Interior Fraser River Steelhead migration in the months of September, October and November; and to work with gill net and purse seine fishers to establish alternative, sustainable, fully selective and fully monitored fisheries practices during the annual Interior Fraser River steelhead migration.

Here's a clip from the government's response:

"The Department of Fisheries and Oceans is currently developing a Recovery Potential Assessment as part of the Species at Risk Act emergency listing process. This assessment will consider the impacts of threats to Thompson and Chilcotin Steelhead populations."

CHANGES TO BC STEELHEAD HATCHERY PROGRAMS

The BC Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations announced it will be shutting down these programs in Region 2, Lower Mainland

- Coastal Cutthroat trout in the Fraser Valley
- Chehalis River summer run Steelhead
- Chapman Creek winter steelhead
- Little Campbell River cutthroat trout

DFO RESPONDS TO MCNAB CREEK LETTER FROM SSBC

SSBC sent a letter to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and the Minister of Fisheries urging that final consent for the proposed Burnco gravel mine adjacent to McNab Creek in Howe Sound be withheld. The government's reply is that the environmental assessment for the project, which has the support of both the fisheries department and the Squamish First Nation, has determined that the gravel mining operation can proceed.

COQUIHALLA RIVER PROJECT A SUCCESS

SSBC contributed \$5,000 to a successful project removing a large rock barrier that was obstructing summer steelhead migration through the Coquihalla River canyon. The barrier was removed in September 2017. A summer 2018 swim count in the river spotted 146 summer runs above the barrier, and 60 below. Other funding participants were the BC Habitat Conservation Fund, Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC, Kingfishers Rod & Gun Club, and the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations.

2018 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The SSBC held this year's Annual General Meeting (AGM) on January 27, 2018, and we were thrilled to reconnect with long-time members, while also welcoming a good number of new members to the Steelhead Society!

After hearing reports from the Northern and Main branches (more on this below), we also heard from guest speakers Dr. Marvin Rosenau and Bob Hooton.

Dr. Rosenau gave a great presentation on the migration of salmonid smolts through the Strait of Georgia, as well as the correlation to the location of BC's coastal fish farms. Bob Hooton then discussed his new book, "Days of Rivers Past" which examined the changes he has personally witnessed on many of BC's great rivers.

Speaking of which, the SSBC continues to raise money and work towards better habitats on many of our rivers, both famous and lesser-known. We thank the many generous donors who have given time, money, or auction prizes to our group over the past year!

NEXT ISSUE:

Stay tuned for more details about our 2019 AGM

You can always reach us through our website (www.steelheadsociety.org) and on Facebook (www.facebook.com/SSBCMain). You can also purchase hats, shirts, crests, and other swag in our online store. Please visit our store at <http://steelheadsociety.org/catalog>

Thank you once again for your support of our goal to preserve Wild Fish and Wild Rivers in beautiful British Columbia.

Kindest Regards,

The SSBC