

October 13, 2015

To: Distribution

At the present time, catches of steelhead in the Albion chinook and chum test fisheries suggest that Fraser River late-run summer steelhead stocks are at extremely low levels of abundance and in a state of Extreme Conservation Concern.

Fraser River late-run summer steelhead is a group of stocks that is mainly comprised of 10 spatially discrete spawning stocks distributed in the Fraser watershed upstream of Hell's Gate. At the present time, the inseason spawner abundance forecast for the 7 spawning stocks that make up Thompson and Chilcotin steelhead is 420. This level of abundance is about 40 % of what was expected pre-season. The inseason forecast for the 4 stocks that make up Thompson steelhead is 300 at the present time and the inseason forecast for the 3 stocks that make up Chilcotin steelhead is 120 at the present time. These forecasts represent record low abundances over 33 and 45 year monitoring time frames for Thompson and Chilcotin steelhead, respectively (Figure 3 & 4). The previous record lows are the predominant brood years for this seasons' return. For Thompson stocks, the previous record low is the 2011 spawning year when 520 steelhead are estimated to have spawned. For Chilcotin stocks, the previous record low is the 2010 spawning year when 140 spawners are estimated to have spawned.

Forecasts of spawning population abundance are conditional on the assumption that fishing patterns and intensity in the Fraser and Thompson rivers will be similar to those since the 1998 fishing season (Figure 4).

Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations Thompson Okanagan Region Telephone: (250) 371-6200 Facsimile: (250) 828-4000 Mailing Address & Location: 1259 Dalhousie Drive, Kamloops, B.C. V2C 5Z5 The aggregate run of Thompson, Chilcotin and other Fraser River late-run summer steelhead stocks normally peaks in Johnston Straits and Juan de Fuca Strait in late September. The peak of the run in the lower Fraser test fishing area near Fort Langley is expected on October 10 and the run normally extends through the month of October and into mid-November at that location. Further updates will be provided as the season progresses.

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For your information, the following data are attached:

List of Figures:

Figure 1. Observed catches of steelhead in the Albion chum and chinook test fisheries to date, illustrated by the diamonds and squares, respectively. The lines illustrate the "average" pattern expected for the balance of the season, given the observed catches to date, the historical data on run timing and the historical data on the efficiency of the two gillnets.

Figure 2. Trends in the estimated pre-fishery abundance (squares) and spawning abundance (diamonds) of Thompson River Steelhead. The last data point in the spawning abundance series illustrates the expected spawner abundance for this season's return.

Figure 3. Trends in the estimated pre-fishery abundance (squares) and spawning abundance (diamonds) of Chilcotin River Steelhead. The last data point in the spawning abundance series illustrates the expected spawner abundance for this season's return.

Figure 4. Trends in fishing mortality of Interior Fraser Steelhead updated to last season's return.



Figure 1. Observed catches of steelhead in the Albion chum and chinook test fisheries to date, illustrated by the diamonds and squares, respectively. The lines illustrate the "average" pattern expected for the balance of the season, given the observed catches to date, the historical data on run timing and the historical data on the efficiency of the two gillnets.



Figure 2. Trends in the estimated pre-fishery abundance (squares) and spawning abundance (diamonds) of Thompson River Steelhead. The last data point in the spawning abundance series illustrates the expected spawner abundance for this season's return which will spawn in the spring of 2016.



Figure 3. Trends in the estimated pre-fishery abundance (squares) and spawning abundance (diamonds) of Chilcotin River Steelhead. The last data point in the spawning abundance series illustrates the expected spawner abundance for this season's return which will spawn in the spring of 2016.



Figure 4. Trends in fishing mortality of Interior Fraser Steelhead updated to last season's return, 2014-15.