BRITISH COLUMBIA

September 8, 2025

To: Distribution

Re: Status Update for Interior Fraser Steelhead

Preliminary spawning population estimates for the 2024/25 run of Interior Fraser Steelhead were recently completed. Results suggest that the Thompson population is near the reference point that delineates Extreme Conservation Concern from Conservation Concern while the Chilcotin population remains in a state of **Extreme Conservation Concern**.

The status assessment is based on population abundances in the Thompson and Chilcotin watersheds which combined have comprised the majority of Interior Fraser Steelhead since monitoring began in the 1970's. Other watersheds that also support populations of Interior Fraser Steelhead include the Bridge, Seton, Stein and Nahatlatch River watersheds, however there are no continuous annual estimates of spawner abundance from the Seton, Stein and Nahatlatch and estimates from the Bridge River are intermittent and limited to more recent years.

The preliminary estimate of Thompson River Steelhead spawning in the spring of 2025 is 384. This is the tenth lowest spawning population estimate in 48 years, since monitoring began in 1978. It is similar to spawning abundances observed since 2016 which have been about 10-fold lower than observed between 1978 when monitoring began to about 2006. The 2025 estimate of 384 is lower than the test-fishery-based forecast of 536 reported on November 20, 2024, but the 95% credible intevals are similar (213-1273 for the 2025 spawner estimate versus 283-1103 for the forecast based on salmon test

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fisheries). Thompson River Steelhead is classified as an Extreme Conservation Concern if the spawning population estimate fails to exceed 430. It is classified as a Conservation Concern if the spawning population is between 430 and 1200 (Figure 1). The results from both test-fishery-based estimates and spawner estimates suggest that Thompson River Steelhead were near the reference point that delineates Extreme Conservation Concern from Conservation Concern. Prelimnary estimates by tributary watersheds are as follows: Deadman 130, Bonaparte 43, and Nicola 211.

A preliminary population estimate for Steelhead spawning in the Chilcotin watershed in spring 2025 is 154. Like Thompson River Steelhead, this is the tenth lowest estimate in 54 years, since monitoring began in 1972. The 2025 estimate is lower than the test-fishery-based forecast of 188 reported on November 20, 2024, but within the 95% credible interval of 113-636). Chilcotin River Steelhead is classified as an Extreme Conservation Concern if the spawning population fails to exceed 300. It is classified as a Conservation Concern if the spawning population is between 300 and 760 (Figure 2). Both the test-fishery-based estimates and spawners estimates suggest that Chilcotin River Steelhead remain an Extreme Conservation Concern.

This update concludes a series of monitoring reports since October 2024 on the status of the 2024/25 run of Interior Fraser Steelhead. Reports on the status of the 2025/26 run will commence by early October 2025.

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Biologist

The following figures are attached:

List of Figures:

Figure 1. The estimated spawning abundances of Thompson River steelhead in relation to conservation reference points.

Figure 2. The estimated spawning abundances of Chilcotin River steelhead in relation to conservation reference points.

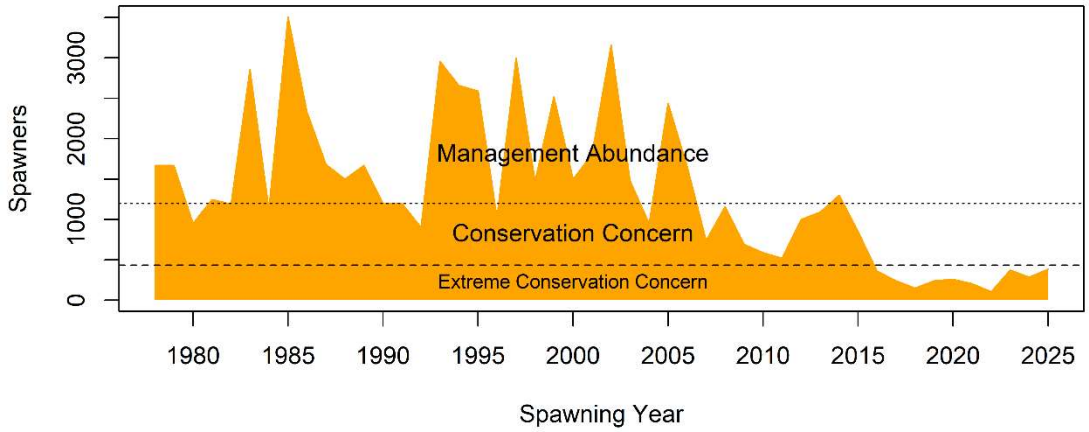

Figure 1. The estimated spawning abundances of Thompson River steelhead in relation to conservation reference points.

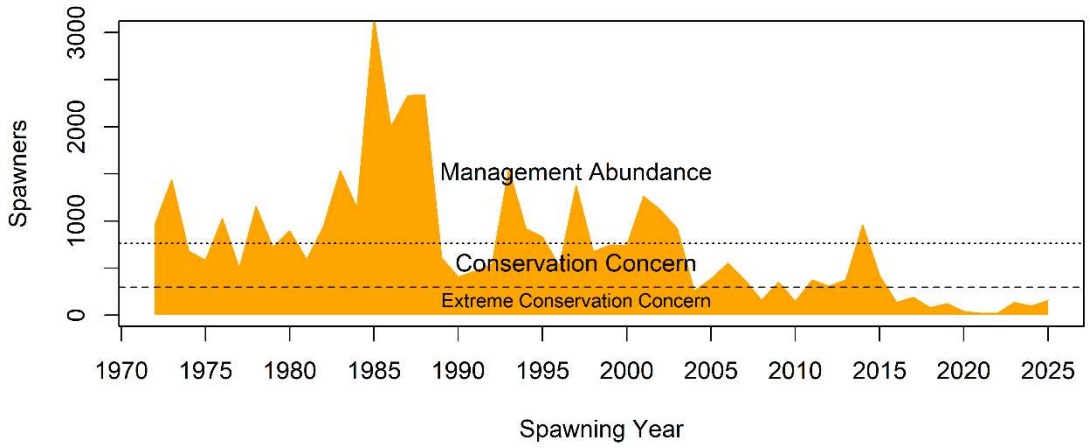

Figure 2. The estimated spawning abundances of Chilcotin River steelhead in relation to conservation reference points.