



August 15, 2023

## **Re: Skeena Steelhead Recreational Fishery Update – 2023 Season**

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As of August 15, 2023 the Tyee Test Fishery<sup>1</sup> (the main index of Skeena steelhead abundance) indicates:

- The Skeena aggregate run of steelhead will be low for 2023. The test fishery estimates the current run past Tyee is 5,593 steelhead with 55% of the steelhead run enumerated. This represents the 4th lowest year recorded in the last 69 years of monitoring.
- Modeling of the fishery predicts a total return of 10,200 fish to the watershed. The threshold for extreme conservation concern, and major regulatory action, is 8,000 steelhead. As of August 15 there is an 89% chance the run will exceed this conservation threshold.

Under the current Interim Skeena Steelhead Abundance Framework<sup>2</sup>, August 15 is identified as the annual deadline to put forward a regulation recommendation. This date is not arbitrary and represents a balance between fisheries managers having sufficient data to provide reliable information to all user groups, and as early a date as possible to generate greater certainty for those same groups.

As there is a strong (89%) probability of meeting the minimum conservation threshold and no recommendation for major regulatory action (such as early closures) will be put forward. This does not mean that specific time and area closures, or emergency closures might not be considered should conditions shift unexpectedly against the modelling described above, but in light of the current predictions a regular fishing season is forecast. Please observe steelhead conservation and best management practices such as “keeping steelhead wet”.

The Ministry of Forests will continue to work with First Nations in the Skeena watershed, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, the Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship, the Conservation Officer Service and angling stakeholders to support steelhead conservation given the low returns observed in 2021 and again this season.

Mike Ramsay, Associate Director of Fisheries  
Ministry of Forests

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/northcoast-cotenord/skeenatyee-eng.html>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/environment/plants-animals-and-ecosystems/fish-fish-habitat/fishery-resources/region-6-skeena/skeena\\_steelhead\\_interim\\_recommendations\\_framework.pdf](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/environment/plants-animals-and-ecosystems/fish-fish-habitat/fishery-resources/region-6-skeena/skeena_steelhead_interim_recommendations_framework.pdf)