



November 29, 2019

To: Distribution

**Re: Status Update for Fraser River Late-Run Summer Steelhead**

The monitoring time frame for Interior Fraser Steelhead in the Albion test fisheries concluded on November 20. Catches over the entire monitoring time frame in 2019 suggest that Fraser River Late-Run Summer Steelhead stocks are at extremely low levels of abundance and in a state of **Extreme Conservation Concern**.

There is a **95%** chance that the status will be classified as an Extreme Conservation once spawning population abundances are estimated in the spring of 2020. Conservation classifications are described in the Provincial Framework for Steelhead Management in BC (2016) and supporting technical documents.

Fraser River Late-Run Summer Steelhead is a group of stocks comprised of 10 spatially discrete spawning stocks distributed in the Fraser watershed upstream of Hell's Gate. The aggregate commonly referred to as "Thompson and Chilcotin Steelhead" comprises 7 out of these 10 spawning stocks. The current spawning population forecast for the **Thompson** watershed is **134** and the current spawning population forecast for the **Chilcotin** watershed is **62**. The forecast for the Thompson represents the lowest observed over a 43-year monitoring time frame. The forecast for the Chilcotin represents the lowest over a 49-year monitoring time frame.

The aggregate run of Thompson, Chilcotin and other Fraser River, late-run, summer Steelhead stocks occurs over about a 12 week period and normally peaks in the Johnston Straits and in Juan de Fuca Strait in late September. In the lower Fraser test fishing area near Fort Langley, the run normally begins in late August and continues into the latter half of November, peaking around October 10.

This report concludes a series of 4 reports issued over the course of October and November on the status of Fraser River Late-Run Summer Steelhead. An update will be provided in the summer of 2020 following the completion of population abundance assessments in the spawning areas.

Robert Bison  
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Fish & Wildlife Section

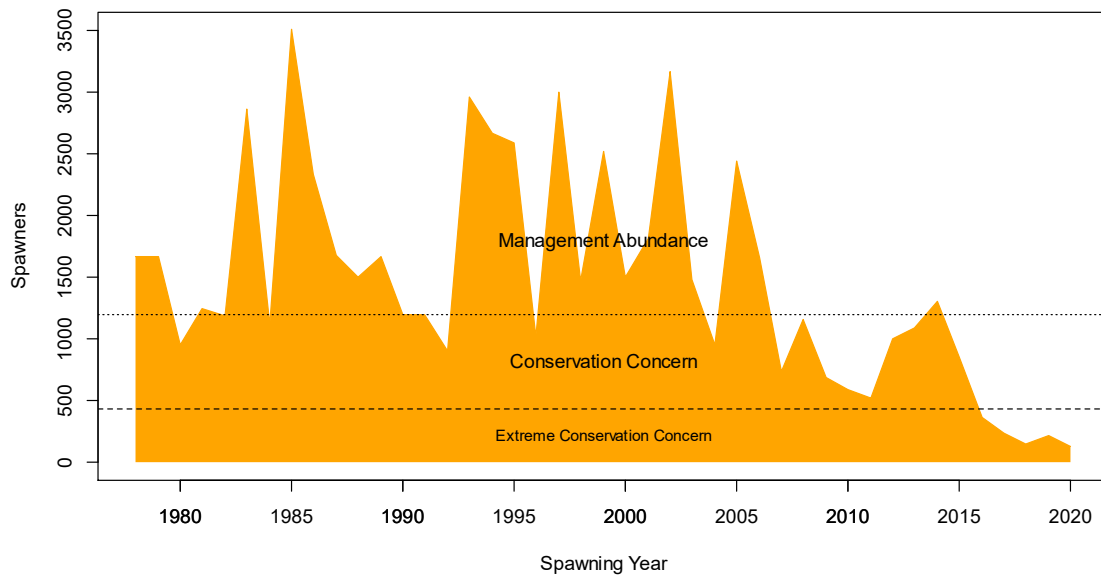
For your information, the following data are attached:

**List of Figures:**

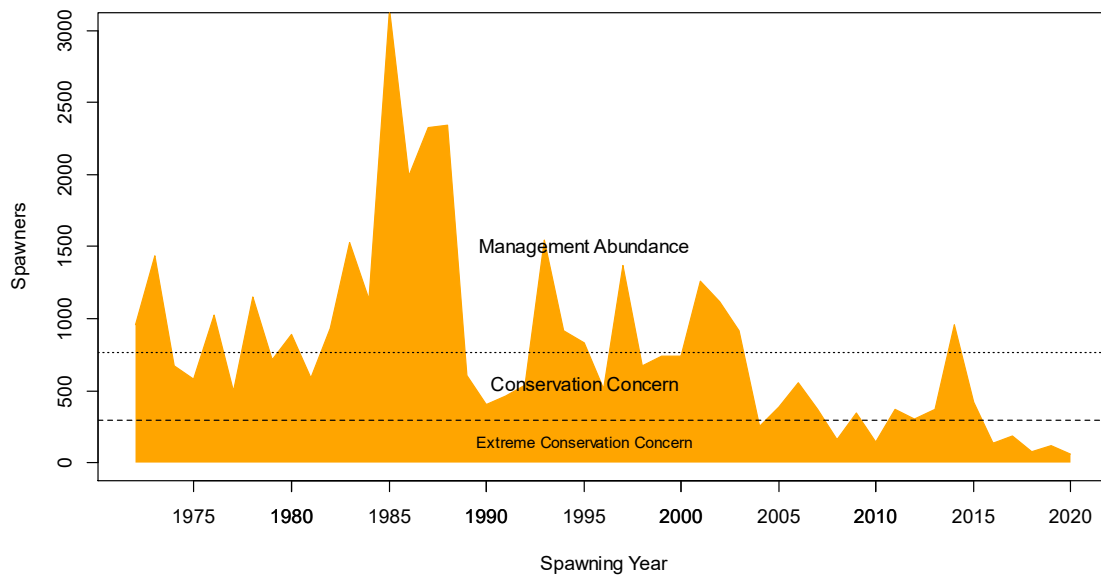
Figure 1. The estimated spawning abundances of Thompson River steelhead in relation to conservation reference points. The last data point illustrates the expected spawner abundance for this season's return which will spawn in the spring of 2020.

Figure 2. The estimated spawning abundances of Chilcotin River steelhead in relation to conservation reference points. The last data point illustrates the expected spawner abundance for this season's return which will spawn in the spring of 2020.

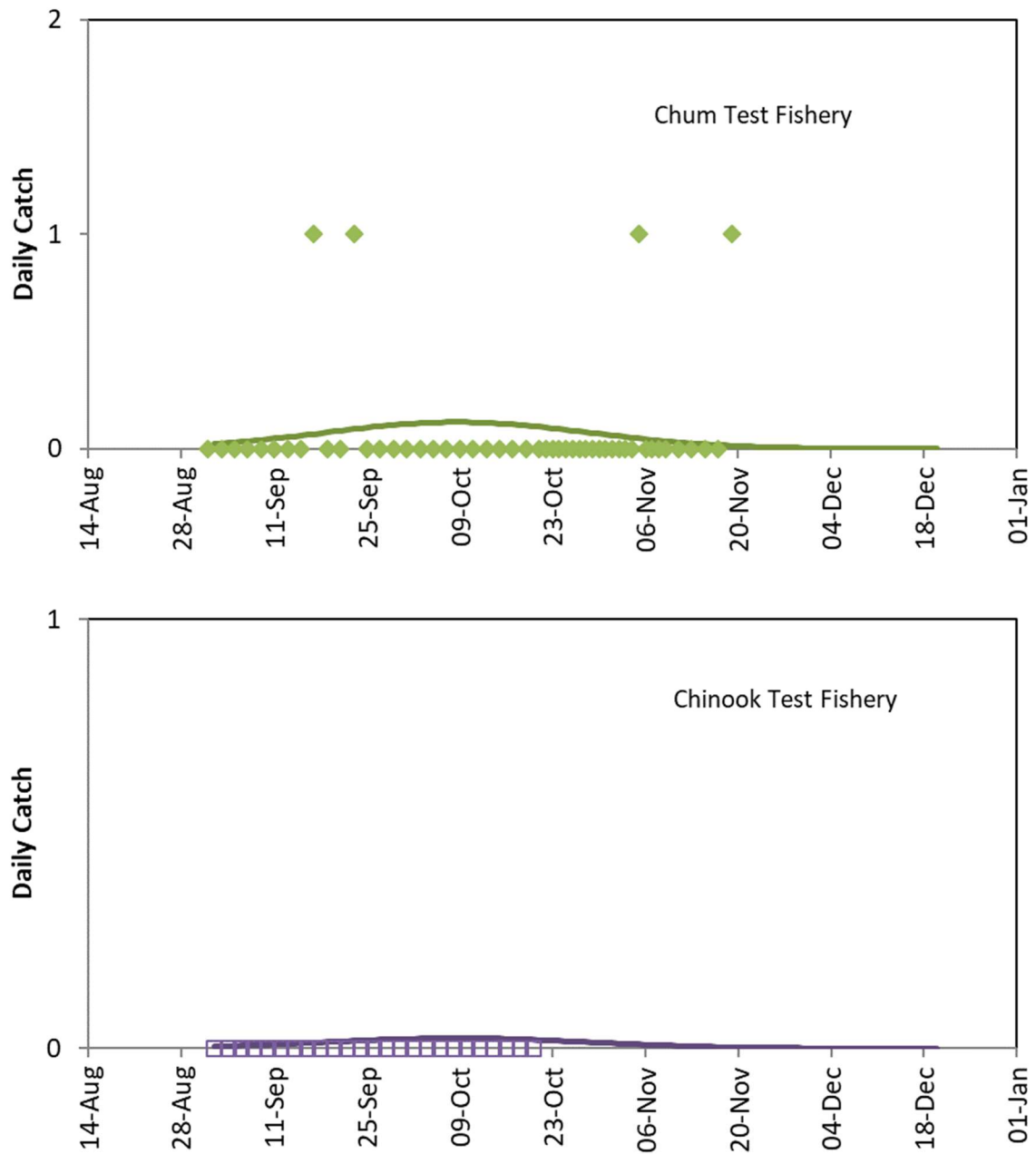
Figure 3. Observed catches of steelhead in the Albion chum and chinook test fisheries to date, illustrated by the diamonds and squares, respectively. The lines illustrate the "average" pattern expected for the balance of the season, given the observed catches to date, the historical data on run timing and the historical data on the steelhead catching efficiency of the two gillnets.



**Figure 1. The estimated spawning abundances of Thompson River steelhead in relation to conservation reference points. The last data point illustrates the expected spawner abundance for this season's return which will spawn in the spring of 2020.**



**Figure 2. The estimated spawning abundances of Chilcotin River steelhead in relation to conservation reference points. The last data point illustrates the expected spawner abundance for this season's return which will spawn in the spring of 2020.**



**Figure 3. 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 steelhead catching efficiency of the two gillnets.**