



August 6, 2021

To: Distribution

Re: Status Update for Interior Fraser Steelhead

Preliminary spawning population estimates for the 2020/21 run of Interior Fraser Steelhead were recently completed. Results indicate that these populations remain 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 for these watersheds.

For the Thompson watershed, spring-time spawning population estimate for 2021 is slightly higher than the test-fishery-based forecasts reported last October and November. For the Chilcotin watershed, the 2021 spring-time spawning population estimate is lower than forecasted.

Estimates of Thompson River Steelhead, spawning in the spring of 2021, sum to a total of 203. This is the second lowest spawning population estimate of Thompson River Steelhead since monitoring began in 1978. The lowest spawner abundance is 150, estimated in the spring of 2018. The Thompson River Steelhead population aggregate is

classified as an Extreme Conservation Concern if the spawning population fails to exceed 430. The stock is classified as a Conservation Concern if the spawning population is between 430 and 1200 (Figure 1). Estimates by tributary watersheds are as follows: Deadman 63, Bonaparte 30, Coldwater 42, Spius 34, and Lower Nicola (including tributary creeks) 34.

The population estimate for Steelhead spawning in the Chilcotin watershed in spring 2021 is 19. This is the lowest estimate since monitoring began in 1972. The Chilcotin River Steelhead population aggregate is classified as an Extreme Conservation Concern if the spawning population fails to exceed 300. The stock is classified as a Conservation Concern if the spawning population is between 300 and 760 (Figure 2).

This update concludes a series of status monitoring reports, beginning in October 2020, for the 2020/21 Interior Fraser Steelhead run.

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The following data 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.

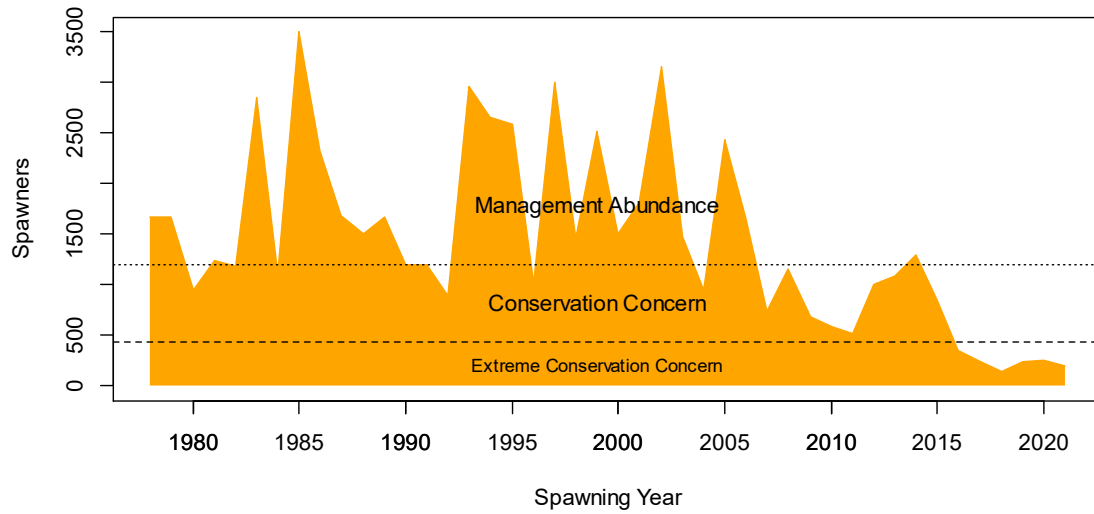


Figure 1. The estimated spawning abundances of Thompson River steelhead in relation to conservation reference points.

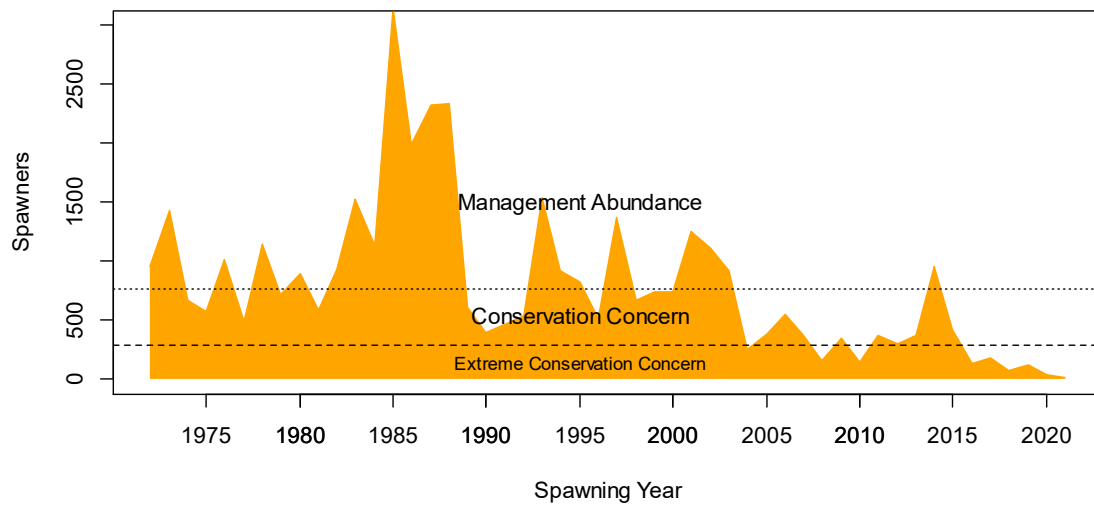


Figure 2. The estimated spawning abundances of Chilcotin River steelhead in relation to conservation reference points.