Interior Fraser Steelhead

Fast Facts: Population Trends and Risk

Population levels are foundational to determining the required management actions for Interior Fraser Steelhead (IFS).

Unlike other salmonids, IFS can vary the amount of time they spend in freshwater and marine habitats. The Province's long-term data set is a critical source of information.

IFS returns are estimated based on the catch per effort in specific locations, such as the Albion Test Fishery in the lower Fraser River. Modelling methods are then used to predict the total abundance of steelhead migrating. Spring spawning ground surveys determine the final estimate of spawners.

With so few fish, the modelling results have large error bars, meaning there is uncertainty in the abundance estimates. What is clear is that IFS abundance has been declining for many years and these stocks are deemed to be in "Extreme Conservation Concern".

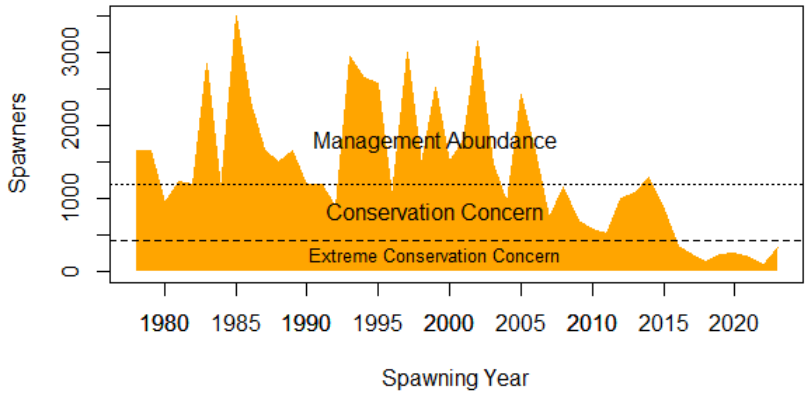

Figure 1. Estimated spawning abundance of Thompson River steelhead in relation to conservation reference points.

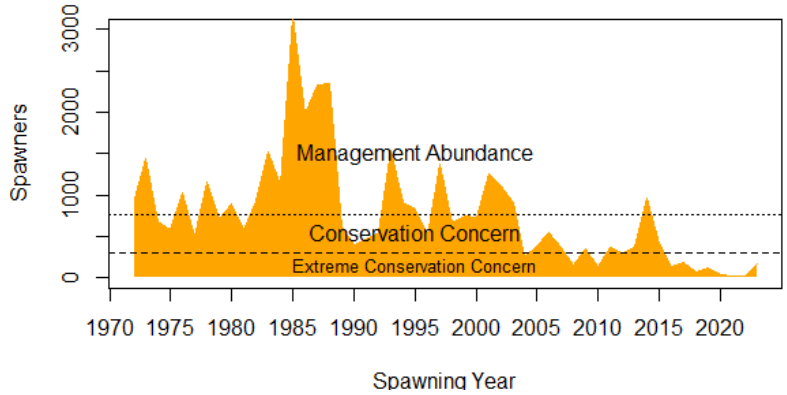

Figure 2. Estimated spawning abundance of Chilcotin River steelhead in relation to conservation reference points.

Population by Year

Spring	Chilcotin	Thompson
1981	586	1247
1982	936	1190
1983	1531	2857
1984	1133	1120
1985	3149	3510
1986	1992	2330
1987	2328	1680
1988	2342	1500
1989	610	1670
1990	403	1200
1991	466	1200
1992	542	900
1993	1546	2960
1994	917	2660
1995	830	2590
1996	518	1020
1997	1373	3000
1998	672	1470
1999	744	2520
2000	739	1500
2001	1258	1810
2002	1114	3160
2003	917	1480
2004	254	950
2005	384	2440
2006	552	1660
2007	374	740
2008	158	1160
2009	350	690
2010	144	590
2011	374	520
2012	307	1000
2013	374	1090
2014	955	1300
2015	418	850
2016	134	360
2017	187	240
2018	77	150
2019	120	240
2020	38*	257
2021	19	203
2022	19	104
2023+	166	339

*2020 Chilcotin estimate may be biased low due to modified field methods relating to COVID-19.

+2023 estimates are preliminary predictions, based on Albion test fishing