BRITISH COLUMBIA

July 29, 2026

To: Distribution

Re: Status Update for Interior Fraser Steelhead

Preliminary spawning population estimates for the 2025/26 run of Interior Fraser Steelhead were recently completed. Results suggest that the Thompson and Chilcotin 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 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 2026 is 132. This is the second lowest spawning population estimate in 49 years, since monitoring began in 1978. It is like spawning abundances observed since 2018 which have been about 10-fold lower than observed between 1978 and 2006. The 2026 estimate of 132 is higher than the test-fishery-based estimate of 18 and the associated 95% credible inteval of 0-102 forecasted last November. 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

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spawner estimates suggest that Thompson River Steelhead remains classified as an Extreme Conservation Concern. Prelimnary estimates by tributary watersheds are as follows: Deadman 28, Bonaparte 23, and Nicola 81.

A preliminary population estimate for steelhead spawning in the Chilcotin watershed in spring 2026 is 34. Similar to Thompson River Steelhead, this is the third lowest estimate in 55 years, since monitoring began in 1972. The 2026 estimate is higher than the test-fishery-based estimate of 8 but within the associated 95% credible interval of 0-41 forecasted last November. 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 two reports since November 2025 on the status of the 2025/26 run of Interior Fraser Steelhead.

Robert Bison
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.

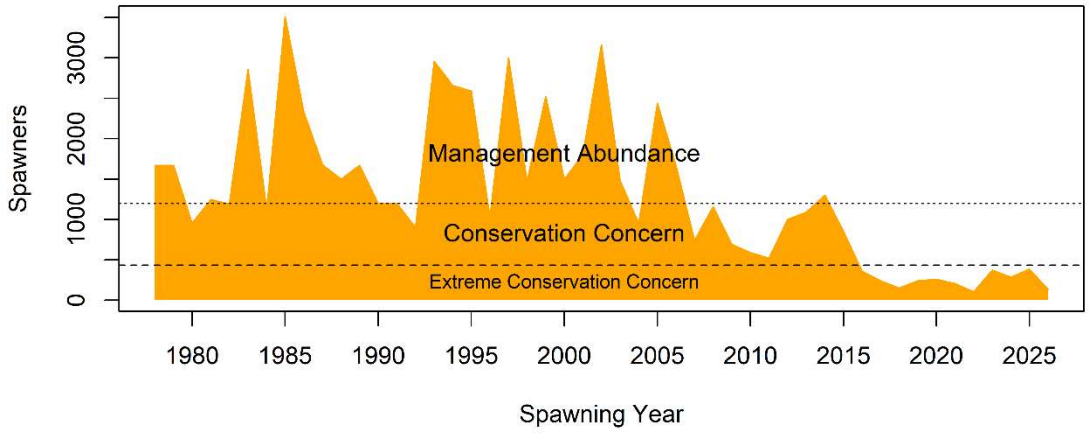

Figure 1. The estimated spawning abundances of Thompson River Steelhead in relation to conservation reference points.

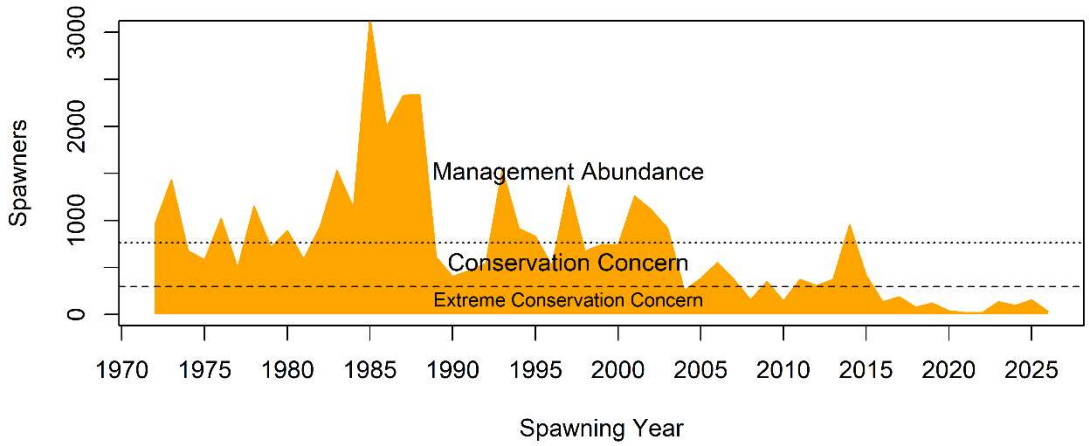

Figure 2. The estimated spawning abundances of Chilcotin River Steelhead in relation to conservation reference points.