



August 10, 2018

To: Distribution

**Re: Status Update for Interior Fraser Steelhead**

Preliminary spawning population estimates for the 2017/18 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 abundance in the Thompson and Chilcotin watersheds which comprise the majority of Interior Fraser Steelhead.

Spring-time spawning population estimates for 2018 are consistent with test-fishery-based forecasts reported last October and November in which record low spawning populations were predicted. The 2018 Chilcotin estimate is 57% of the previous low observed in 2016. The 2018 Thompson estimate is 63% of the previous low observed in 2017.

Estimates of Thompson River Steelhead, spawning in the spring of 2018, sum to a total of 150. Estimates by tributary watershed areas are as follows: Deadman 30, Bonaparte 27, Coldwater 55, Spius 33, and Lower Nicola (including tributary creeks) 5. These are the lowest spawning population estimates of Thompson River Steelhead observed since monitoring began in 1978. The Thompson River Steelhead population aggregate is classed as a Conservation Concern if the spawning population is between 430 and 1200. The stock is considered to be in a state of Extreme Conservation Concern if the spawning population fails to exceed 430 (Figure 1).

The estimate for steelhead in the Chilcotin watershed is 77, the vast majority of which is expected to have spawned in the Chilko River (~80%) and the minority expected to have spawned in the Taseko watershed. This estimate of 77 spawners for Chilcotin River Steelhead is the also lowest observed since monitoring began in 1972. The Chilcotin River Steelhead population aggregate is classed as a Conservation Concern if the spawning population is between 300 and 760. The stock is considered to be in a state of Extreme Conservation Concern if the spawning population fails to exceed 300 (Figure 2).

This update concludes a series of status monitoring reports, beginning in October 2017, for the 2017/18 Interior Fraser Steelhead run.

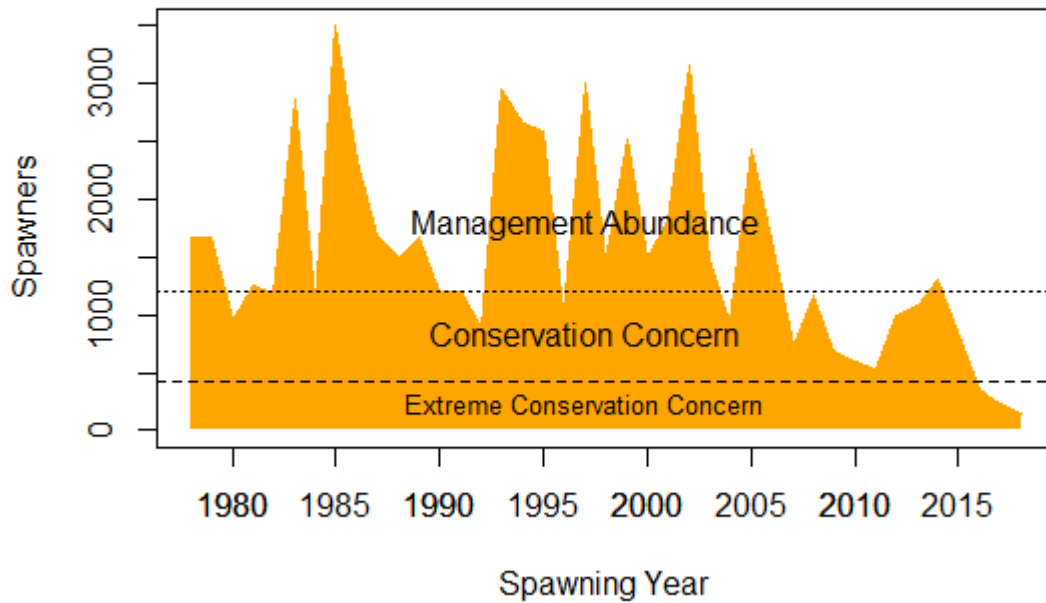
Robert Bison  
Fisheries Stock Assessment Biologist  
Fish & Wildlife Branch

The following data are attached:

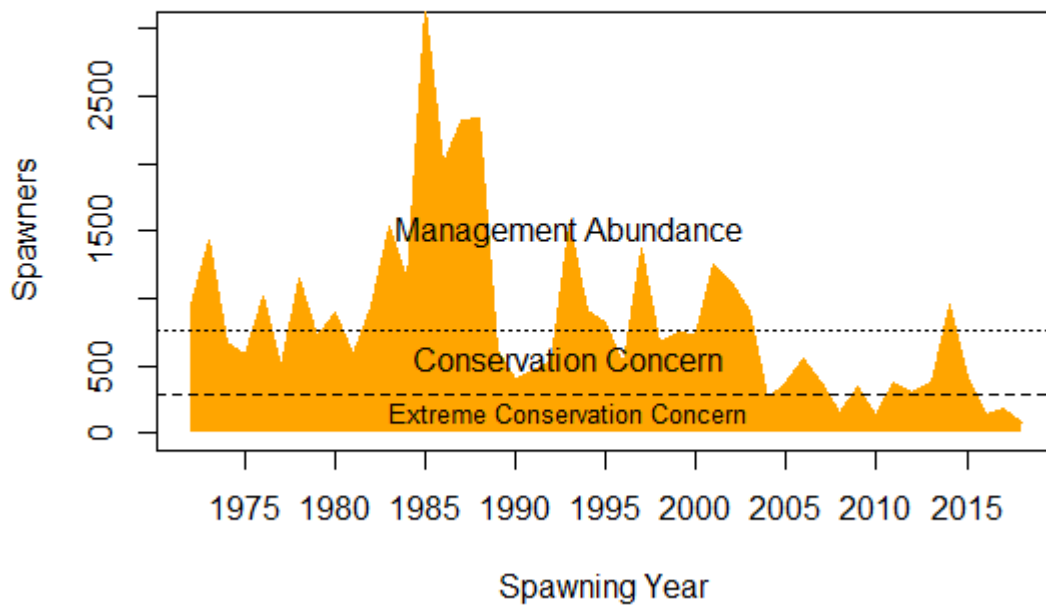
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Figure 1. The estimated spawning abundances of Thompson River steelhead in relation to conservation reference points.

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.**