BRITISH COLUMBIA

November 19, 2025

To: Distribution.

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

Fraser River Late-run summer steelhead is a group of 10 spatially discrete spawning stocks distributed in the Fraser watershed upstream of Hell's Gate. Four of these stocks spawn in the Thompson watershed, two spawn in the Chilcotin watershed, and the remaining four spawn in other watersheds that are tributaries to the middle reaches of the Fraser River.

Zero steelhead have been captured this year in test fisheries that produce the data used to forecast the abundance of spawners in the spring. This is the lowest catch result ever observed in over 40 years of these test fishing operations. In other test fisheries in southern BC, north Puget Sound and Fraser River, there was one steelhead caught in the Brownsville Bar Test Fishery on August 29 that is probably an Interior Fraser Steelhead. The spawning population forecast for the **Thompson** watershed is **less than 19 steelhead**. This estimate is computed by assuming that 1 steelhead was captured on the expected peak of the run in the test fishery that is currently the least efficient at catching steelhead (the Albion chinook test fishery). The 95% credible interval for this optimistic estimate is 5-435. The probability that Thompson steelhead will be classified as an **Extreme Conservation Concern** is **greater than 97%**, the probability that they will be classified as a **Conservation Concern** is **less than 3%**, and the probability that they will be classified as **Routine Management** abundance is **near-0%**. Reference points for the Thompson watershed that define conservation classifications are the Limit Reference

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Point of 431 and the Conservation Concern Threshold of 1187. Below 431, Thompson steelhead are classified as an Extreme Conservation Concern. Between 431 and 1187, Thompson steelhead are classified as a Conservation Concern.

The current spawning population forecast for the **Chilcotin** watershed is **less than 9 steelhead.** Like the Thompson estimate described above, this estimate is computed by assuming that 1 steelhead was captured on the expected peak of the run in the test fishery that is currently the least efficient at catching steelhead (the Albion chinook test fishery). The 95% credible interval for this optimistic estimate is 2-195. The current probability that Chilcotin steelhead will be classified as an **Extreme Conservation Concern** is **greater than 99%**, the probability that they will be classified as a **Conservation Concern** is **less than 1%**, and the probability that they will be classified as **Routine Management** abundance is also **less than 1%**. Reference points for the Chilcotin steelhead that define conservation classifications are the Limit Reference Point of 296 and the Conservation Concern Threshold of 763. Below 296, the Chilcotin steelhead are classified as an Extreme Conservation Concern. Between 296 and 763, the Chilcotin steelhead are classified as a Conservation Concern.

Conservation classifications are described further in the Provincial Framework for Steelhead Management in BC (2016) and supporting technical documents.

The current forecasted spawner abundance for the Thompson ranks 49th over a 49-year monitoring time frame. The current forecast for the Chilcotin ranks 54th over a 54-year monitoring time frame.

The 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 Johnstone Straits and in Juan de Fuca Strait in late September. In the lower Fraser test fishing areas near Fort Langley, the run normally begins in late August and continues into the latter half of November, peaking in early-to-mid October. Stocks that spawn furthest inland (i.e. Chilcotin watershed) tend to arrive earliest while stocks that spawn furthest downstream

(i.e. Nahatlatch) tend to arrive latest. The remaining stocks which include those that spawn in the Bridge, Seton, Stein, and in the tributaries of the Thompson watershed (i.e. Deadman, Bonaparte and Nicola watersheds), tend to be intermediate in their arrival timing to the Fraser River.

This report is the only one that will be issued this season on the status of Fraser River Late-Run Summer Steelhead for the fall migration period in 2025. These steelhead will overwinter in the Thompson, Chilcotin and Fraser rivers and then complete their upstream migration into spawning tributaries in the spring. An update will be provided in the summer of 2026 following the completion of population abundance assessments in the spawning areas.

Robert Bison
Biologist

The following figures are attached:

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 2026.

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 2026.

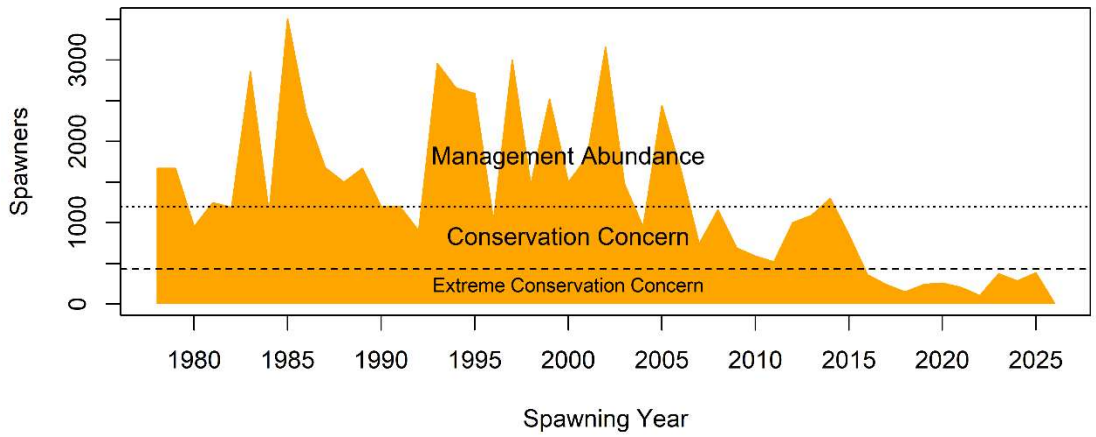


Figure 1. The estimated spawning abundances of Thompson River steelhead in relation to conservation reference points. The last data point illustrates the expected spawner abundance for this season's return which will spawn in the spring of 2026.

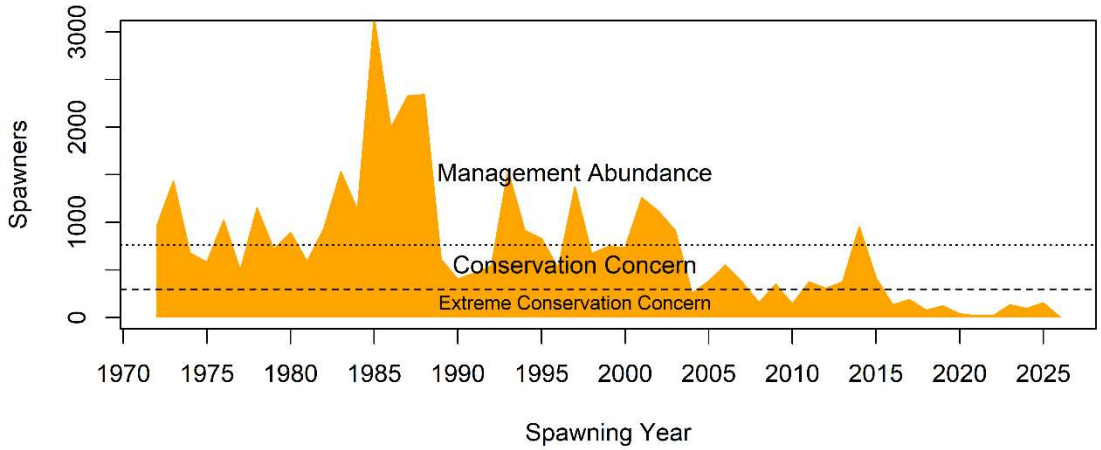


Figure 2. The estimated spawning abundances of Chilcotin River steelhead in relation to conservation reference points. The last data point illustrates the expected spawner abundance for this season's return which will spawn in the spring of 2026.