



November 23, 2017

To: Distribution

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

The test fishing period for monitoring the abundance of Fraser River Late-Run Summer Steelhead was recently completed. Catches to the completion of the monitoring time frame (September 1 to November 20) suggest that the status Fraser River late-run summer steelhead stocks remains classified as a state of **Extreme Conservation Concern**.

The chance that the status will be classified as an Extreme Conservation Concern is currently estimated at 95%. Conservation classifications are described in the Provincial Framework for Steelhead Management in BC (2016) and supporting technical documents.

Fraser River late-run summer steelhead is a group of stocks comprised of 10 spatially discrete spawning stocks distributed in the Fraser watershed upstream of Hell's Gate. The aggregate commonly referred to as "Thompson and Chilcotin Steelhead" comprises 7 out of these 10 spawning stocks. The final in-season abundance estimate of Thompson and Chilcotin Steelhead, prior to fishing mortalities, is **294**. Twenty percent (20%) is expected to be lost from fishing mortality effects in the fall of 2017. The current spawning population forecast for the **Thompson** watershed is **177** and the current spawning population forecast for the **Chilcotin** watershed is **58**. These forecasts represent record low spawning abundances for Thompson and Chilcotin steelhead over monitoring time frames of 41 and 47 years, respectively.

The aggregate run of Thompson, Chilcotin and other Fraser River, late-run, summer steelhead stocks normally peaks in the Johnston Straits and in Juan de Fuca Strait in late September. The peak of the run in the lower Fraser test fishing area near Fort Langley is expected on October 10 and the run normally extends through the month of October and into mid-November at that location.

This is the final status update based on test fishery catches for the 2017/18 return of Fraser River Late-Run Summer Steelhead. Abundance estimates of the various individual spawning populations will be conducted in the spring of 2018. These spawning population estimates are expected to be available during the summer of 2018 following completion of the various operations and analyses.

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Fish & Wildlife Branch

For your information, the following data are attached:

List of Figures:

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 2018.

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 2018.

Figure 3. Observed catches of steelhead in the Albion chum and chinook test fisheries to date, illustrated by the diamonds and squares, respectively. The lines illustrate the "average" pattern expected for the balance of the season, given the observed catches to date, the historical data on run timing and the historical data on the steelhead catching efficiency of the two gillnets.

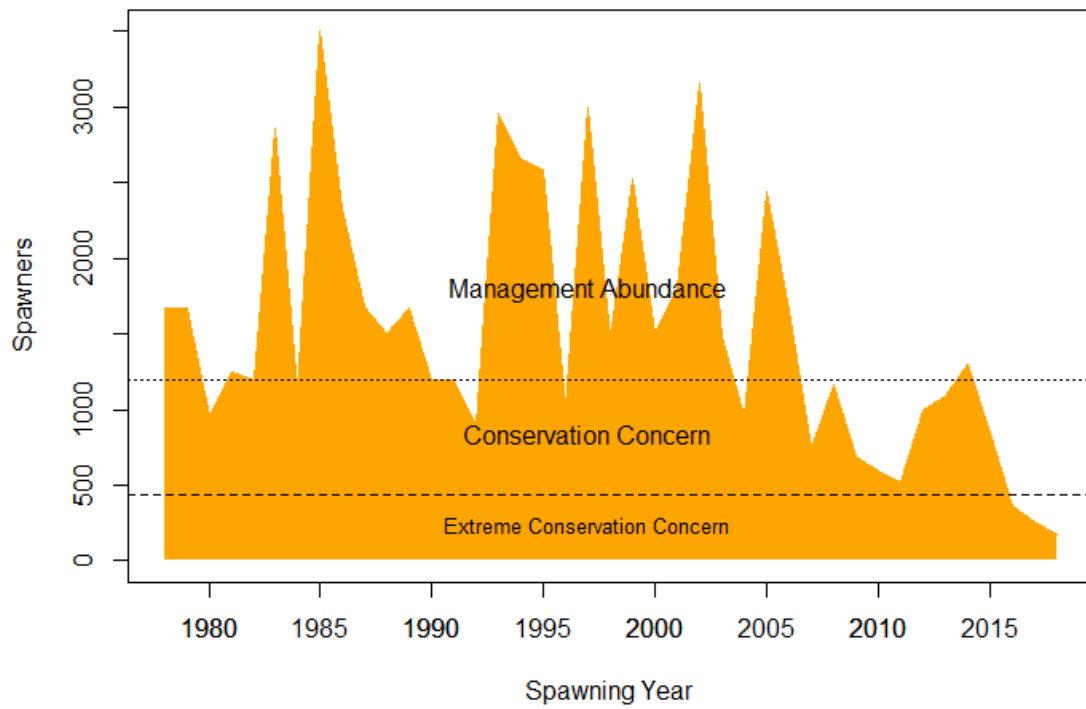


Figure 1. The estimated spawning abundances of Thompson River steelhead in relation to conservation reference points. The last data point illustrates the expected spawner abundance for this season’s return which will spawn in the spring of 2018.

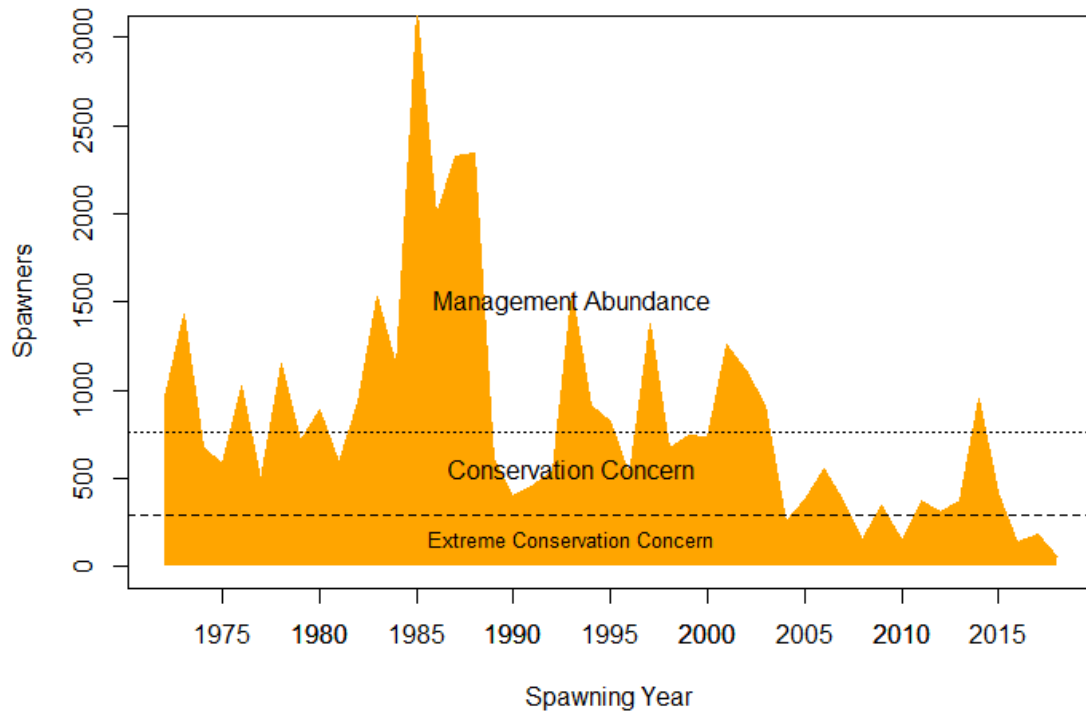


Figure 2. The estimated spawning abundances of Chilcotin River steelhead in relation to conservation reference points. The last data point illustrates the expected spawner abundance for this season’s return which will spawn in the spring of 2018.

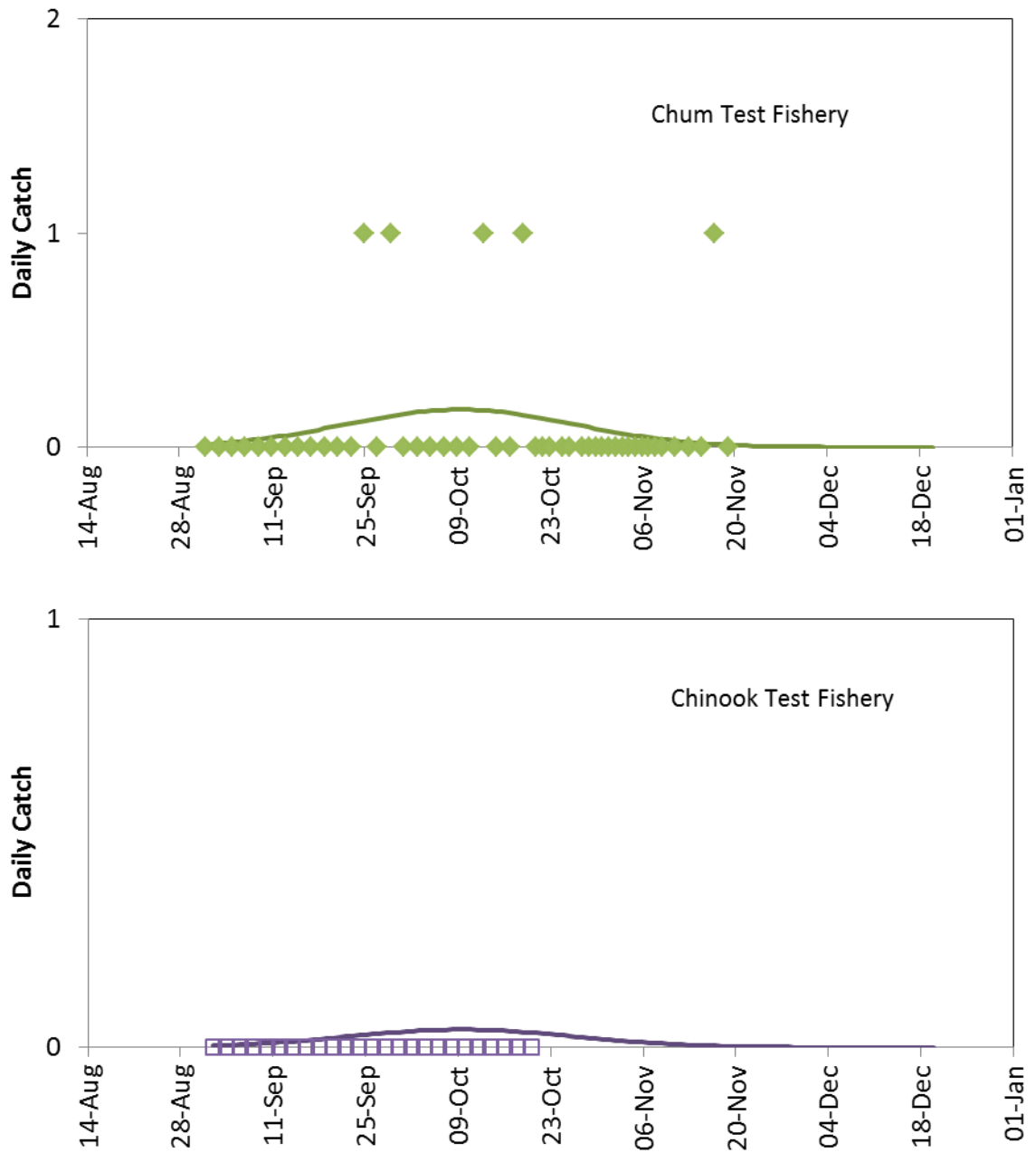


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