



Fraser Coho, Chum, and Steelhead 2021/22:

Planning Priorities and Updates



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Presented to:
Fraser and Approach
Salmon Forum



Photo by: Shane Kalyn

Interior Fraser River (IFR) Coho Stock Status & Updates

- Ongoing poor marine conditions continue to hamper rebuilding.
- Escapement assessments for 2020 are not yet available, but qualitatively the return appears to be strong relative to the brood year. A formal forecast of the 2021 return will be produced in the spring. (preliminary Outlook Category is 1 – Well Below Average)
- Additional work required to develop status determination framework Strait of Georgia and Lower Fraser Coho management units.
- Several projects proposed/underway to address current data limitations and inform management.



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Interior Fraser River (IFR) Coho Fisheries Planning

- Abundance-based management framework in place for Interior Fraser River Coho.
 - 2021: *LOW* status expected as escapement and marine survival need to be above the Low/Moderate threshold in 2018, 2019, and 2020. This will be formally determined in March.
- *LOW* status: 20% ER cap for US and Canada combined (10% CAN and 10% US)
- Each country's share may be managed to lower ERs based on domestic planning needs.
- Canada implemented 3-5% ER on Interior Fraser River MU in 2020.

Interior Fraser River (IFR) Coho

PST Reference Points and ER Caps

	Low	Moderate	Abundant
Survival	$S \leq 0.03$	Three consecutive years $0.03 < S \leq 0.06$	Three consecutive years $S > 0.06$
		and	and
Escapement	Monitored in CU's and subpops but no thresholds	Three consecutive years: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Half of subpops in each CU > 1000; or • Aggregate MU esc. objective (e.g., 27,000) 	Three consecutive years: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All IFR subpops in each CU > 1000; or • Aggregate MU esc. objective (e.g., revised 40,000)
ER cap (US/Can)	0.20 (0.10/0.10)	0.30 (0.12/0.18)	0.45 (0.15/0.30)

Previous approach included ER caps of 20% for low status; 40% for moderate and 65% for abundant

Fraser Chum

Stock Status & Updates

- Returns in 2021 will be dominated by 4-year-old brood from the 2017 escapement (~660,000 spawners).
- With the exception of the unusually high escapement in 2016 (1.98 mil spawners), spawning escapement has trended down since the 2012 return.
- 2020 in-season estimate of the Fraser Chum terminal return was 1.08 million fish
 - 80% probability the terminal return would be between 0.70 and 1.7M Chum.
- In-season observations suggest the terminal return will be close to the lower end of the predicted range.
- Estimate of the 2020 spawning escapement will be available later this spring.

Fraser Chum Fisheries Planning

- The current Interior Fraser Steelhead window closure overlaps with the majority of the Fraser Chum return.
- When TAC is available fishing opportunities are focused on the tail end of the run.
- There is a need for consideration to potential long-term consequences of fishing pressure on the tail end of the run.



Fraser Chum Fisheries Planning

- Further discussion is required on appropriate access to available TAC to better align with the available return prior to any 2021 Chum fisheries.
- In the event of commercial TAC DFO would like to work with all harvesters on scheduling to ensure orderly and manageable fisheries (including ITQ fisheries).
- The Department would like to discuss with First Nations and stakeholders the potential of an end date to fisheries directed on Chum in the Fraser watershed.
- Considerations for the potential end date should include the timing of Chum returning to the Fraser and their associated availability to fisheries, as well as the timing of peak Chum spawning.

Interior Fraser River Steelhead Fisheries Planning

- On July 11, 2019 it was announced that Cabinet had decided not to list Thompson and Chilcotin Steelhead under SARA, opting to recover these stocks under the Fisheries Act.
- This decision terminated the Emergency Listing Process, these populations are *not currently* under consideration for listing under SARA.
- COSEWIC reassessed the status of Thompson and Chilcotin Steelhead in November 2020, with a COSEWIC Annual Report expected in October 2021.
- This assessment determined that these populations are *Endangered*, which will trigger a regular SARA Listing Process
- Prior to the new 2021 COSEWIC report, DFO is consulting with First Nations and stakeholders protections to IFR Steelhead through the regular IFMP planning process.

Interior Fraser River Steelhead Fisheries Planning

- The IFR Steelhead 2020 window closures will form the basis for 2021 fisheries planning discussions. These included:
 - 42-day closures for commercial gill net and seine fisheries (marine and Fraser River) and recreational fisheries in the Fraser River
 - 27-day closures for troll fisheries (marine and Fraser River) and FSC fisheries in the Fraser River. Following the closure window, set gillnet gear restricted to operate during daylight hours only, and nets attended at all times.
 - Marine recreational and marine FSC fisheries remained open with Steelhead release.
- Feedback will be sought throughout the IFMP planning process.
- A Ministerial Decision will be sought on the final suite of measures to be implemented in 2021.
- Any modifications in 2021 to be consistent with the degree of conservation required to protect stocks returning at very low abundance.

Feedback and Questions?



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