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Steelhead

2024 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS
PREPARED FOR THE FRASER FORUM
MARCH 6, 2024 - NANAIMO



Interior Fraser River Steelhead: 2023 Status

- In-season projections of spawning escapements for Thompson and Chilcotin Steelhead that returned in 2023 (spawning in Spring of 2024) are 228 and 108, respectively.
 - These estimates are produced by BC FLNRORD based on encounters of Steelhead at the DFO Albion Chinook/Chum Test Fishery on the Fraser River. The Albion test fishery encountered 11 Steelhead between late August and early November.
- Final Steelhead spawning escapement estimates will be available in Summer of 2024.

Population	Spawning Locations	Recommended Recovery Target**	Escapement (number of spawners)									
			Pre - 1995	1995 to 2004	2005 to 2014	2017 2016 RY	2018 2017 RY	2019 2018 RY	2020* 2019 RY	2021 2020 RY	2022 2021 RY	2023 2022 RY
Thompson River	Deadman, Nicola, Bonaparte Rivers	938 spawners	1880	1840	1110	260	150	216	257	203	104	371
Chilcotin River	Chilko, Taseko, Little Chilcotin Rivers	562 to 744 spawners	1150	850	400	187	77	120	38*	19	19	134

*2020 Chilcotin escapement estimate is biased low due to COVID-based changes to assessment programs.

**From 2018 RPA Science Advisory Report



IFR Steelhead: 2024 Planning

- Management measures including the suite of window closures described in the 2023/24 Southern BC Salmon IFMP, which have been in place since 2019, remained in place for the 2023 season.
- These measures are expected to be in place for the 2024 season.
 - Given the ongoing expectation of low IFR Steelhead abundance, measures to protect IFR Steelhead are expected to continue for some time.
- DFO remains committed to the Canada-BC Joint Steelhead Action Plan
- DFO will be working with First Nations and stakeholders to ensure that all our programs, including hatchery and habitat management, are aligned to support IFR Steelhead recovery



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Fisheries Management Measures to Support Recovery of Steelhead

- In the coming year, DFO will protect IFR Steelhead from incidental fishing mortality occurring in salmon fisheries using the window closure approach implemented since 2019
- With additional restrictions applied to set gill net fisheries in the Fraser River.
- Moving window closures will apply to most salmon fisheries located along the migratory route of Thompson and Chilcotin River Steelhead, including southern BC marine waters and the Fraser River mainstem downstream of Thompson and Chilcotin River Steelhead spawning areas.



FSC Fisheries

Marine FSC

- Marine FSC salmon fisheries remain open with a requirement for Steelhead release.
- Any salmon fisheries occurring in terminal areas that are not considered to overlap with the migratory pathway of Thompson and Chilcotin Steelhead will not be subject to these closures.

Freshwater FSC

- First Nations' Food, Social, and Ceremonial (FSC) salmon fisheries occurring within the Fraser River mainstem downstream of Thompson and Chilcotin River Steelhead spawning areas are closed for a 27-day moving window.
- Following the closure window, set gill net gear will be further restricted to operate during daylight hours only, while attended by a harvester at all times.



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Marine Recreational Fisheries

- Recreational salmon fisheries within the Fraser River mainstem (including areas immediately off the Fraser River mouth), are closed for a moving window period of 42 days.
- Other marine recreational salmon fisheries remain open with a requirement for Steelhead release.



Commercial Fisheries

- Extensive window closures to protect IFR Steelhead from incidental impacts of salmon fisheries are planned for 2023
 - The closure window for commercial gill net and seine fisheries (including purse seine, beach seine, and shallow seine gear) is 42 days
 - Commercial troll fisheries will be closed for 27 days.
- Following the closure window, set gill net gear will be further restricted to operate during daylight hours only, while attended by a harvester at all times.



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Appendix Slides

- Following tables are taken from the Draft 2024/24 Southern Salmon IFMP that describe the window closures in detail



IFR Steelhead Rolling
Window Closures by Area

Fishery Location		27-day window closure (commercial troll fisheries and FSC fisheries occurring in the Fraser River)		42-day window closure (commercial drift and set gillnet, purse seine, beach seine, and shallow seine fisheries and recreational fisheries occurring in the Fraser River)	
		Start	End	Start	End
Fraser River	Area 29: 29-6, 29-7, 29-9, and 29-10	26-Sep	22-Oct	19-Sep	30-Oct
	Mouth to Port Mann Bridge	26-Sep	22-Oct	19-Sep	30-Oct
	Port Mann Bridge to Mission	28-Sep	24-Oct	21-Sep	1-Nov
	Mission to Hope	29-Sep	25-Oct	22-Sep	2-Nov
	Hope to Sawmill Creek	3-Oct	29-Oct	26-Sep	6-Nov
	Sawmill Creek to Lytton (Thompson Confluence)	5-Oct	31-Oct	28-Sep	8-Nov
	Lytton to Texas Creek	8-Oct	3-Nov	1-Oct	11-Nov
	Texas Creek to Kelly Creek	10-Oct	5-Nov	3-Oct	13-Nov
	Kelly Creek to Deadman Creek	13-Oct	8-Nov	6-Oct	16-Nov
	Deadman Creek to Chilcotin River	16-Oct	11-Nov	9-Oct	19-Nov
	Chilcotin River	19-Oct	14-Nov	12-Oct	22-Nov
	Thompson River – Thompson Confluence to Bonaparte	8-Oct	3-Nov	1-Oct	11-Nov
	Thompson River – Bonaparte River to Kamloops Lake	12-Oct	7-Nov	5-Oct	15-Nov



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IFR Steelhead Rolling Window Closures by Area

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		Start	End	Start	End
Strait of Georgia	Area 29: 29-8	28-Sep	24-Oct	21-Sep	1-Nov
	Area 29: 29-1 to 29-5	23-Sep	19-Oct	16-Sep	27-Oct
	Area 28	23-Sep	19-Oct	16-Sep	27-Oct
	Area 18	24-Sep	20-Oct	17-Sep	28-Oct
	Area 17	23-Sep	19-Oct	16-Sep	27-Oct
	Area 16	22-Sep	18-Oct	15-Sep	26-Oct
	Area 15	21-Sep	17-Oct	14-Sep	25-Oct
	Area 14	21-Sep	17-Oct	14-Sep	25-Oct
Johnstone Strait	Area 13	17-Sep	13-Oct	11-Sep	22-Oct
	Area 12	12-Sep	8-Oct	6-Sep	17-Oct
	Area 11	11-Sep	7-Oct	5-Sep	16-Oct
	Area 111	10-Sep	6-Oct	4-Sep	15-Oct
West Coast Vancouver Island	Area 19	22-Sep	18-Oct	15-Sep	26-Oct
	Area 20	19-Sep	15-Oct	12-Sep	23-Oct
	Area 21	18-Sep	14-Oct	11-Sep	22-Oct
	Area 121	18-Sep	14-Oct	11-Sep	22-Oct
	Area 123	16-Sep	12-Oct	9-Sep	20-Oct
	Area 124	13-Sep	9-Oct	6-Sep	17-Oct
	Area 125	11-Sep	7-Oct	4-Sep	15-Oct
	Area 26	8-Sep	4-Oct	1-Sep	12-Oct
	Area 126	8-Sep	4-Oct	1-Sep	12-Oct
	Area 27	6-Sep	2-Oct	30-Aug	10-Oct
Area 127	6-Sep	2-Oct	30-Aug	10-Oct	



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Terminal Fishing Areas exempt from the Steelhead Window Closures

Area	Sub Area Description
11	11-3 to 11-10
12	12-22, 12-23, 12-25 to 12-48
13	13-20, 13-21, 13-22, 13-24, 13-37, 13-38, 13-42, 13-43 portions of 13-3, 13-5, 13-19
14	14-1, 14-8, 14-10, 14-11, 14-14, 14-15 portions of 14-4, 14-5, 14-7 and 14-9
15	15-4, 15-6 portions of 15-1, 15-2, 15-5
16	16-3 to 16-16
17	17-2 to 17-9, 17-13 to 17-21 portions of 17-12
18	18-7 and 18-8 portions of 18-6
19	19-7 to 19-12
20	20-2, 20-6, 20-7
22	Entire Area
23	All Sub-Areas
24	All Sub-Areas
25	All Sub-Areas
26	26-1 to 26-10
27	27-3, 27-7 to 27-11 portions of 27-2
28	28-3 to 28-5, 28-11 to 28-14 portions of 28-2