



2018 Draft IFMP – Key Changes - Steelhead Window Closure -

First Nations Forum: March 27-29, 2018
Kamloops, BC



Interior Fraser Steelhead - Background

- Spawning escapement of Interior Fraser Steelhead has been on a downward trend for many years, with recent years' escapements reaching the lowest on record.
- February 13, 2018 COSEWIC's Emergency Assessment Subcommittee assessed both the Thompson River and Chilcotin River Steelhead Trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) as *Endangered* (background information at: https://www.sararegistry.gc.ca/document/default_e.cfm?documentID=3290)
- Emergency listing process is underway to determine whether or not to list the DUs under SARA on an emergency basis
- Threats to steelhead include:
 - poor ocean survival
 - bycatch release from fisheries targeting Pacific salmon
 - predation on juveniles
 - declines in freshwater habitat quality
 - release mortalities from other fisheries



Interior Fraser Steelhead – 2018 Proposal

- For 2018, Department proposes implementation of rolling window closure for times/areas where IFR steelhead likely to be present (similar to that used for Early Stuart sockeye and Interior Fraser River coho)
- **Assuming average run timing and migration speed for the IFR steelhead return, the length of the closure required to protect a 90% of the steelhead migration is approximately four weeks with the peak at around Oct 11th at Albion**
- In implementing a rolling window closure, the Department will consider:
 - Salmon allocation priorities
 - Previously demonstrated selectivity of gear with regard to steelhead
- Fisheries which have higher allocation priority or with demonstrated high degree of selectivity may be provided allowances for a shorter closure period.



Interior Fraser Steelhead – Ideal Dates

Idealized window closure dates to protect 90% of the IFR steelhead migration given average peak timing, spread of the run, and migration speed

Fishery Location	Start Date	End Date
Area 11	Sep/11	Oct/07
Area 12	Sep/12	Oct/08
Area 13	Sep/17	Oct/13
Area 21/121	Sep/18	Oct/14
Subareas 29-6, 29-7, 29-9 and 29-10	Sep/28	Oct/24
Fraser River – Below Mission	Sep/28	Oct/24
Fraser River – Mission to Hope	Sep/29	Oct/29
Fraser River – Hope to Sawmill Creek	Oct/03	Oct/31
Fraser River – Sawmill Creek to Lytton	Oct/05	Dec/31
Fraser River – Lytton to Williams Lake River	Oct/12	Dec/31
Thompson River – D/S of the confluence of the North and South Thompson Rivers	Oct/12	Dec/31

Idealized dates are based on statistical properties of the run timing distribution and may be adjusted to reflect operational considerations and feedback from consultations.



Interior Fraser Steelhead - Questions

Questions to Consider:

1. Does the proposed plan provide the appropriate level of protection for Interior Fraser River Steelhead?
2. Should selective fishing for salmon be permitted during the steelhead window closure? If so, what fisheries / gears should be considered?
3. Are there additional measures that should be considered?



Southern Chum

Due to significant overlap in migration timing of IFR steelhead with chum salmon, a rolling window closure designed to protect IFR steelhead will have considerable impacts on all fisheries targeting chum in 2018.

Johnstone Strait – Outlook is *near target*. Abundance appears below average in most systems surveyed in 2017. Link to poor ocean conditions in 2014 entry year? Chum returns remain highly variable.

Strait of Georgia - Outlook is *near target*. For 2018, returns expected to improve for some stocks in southern SoG, such as Cowichan, but decrease for others, such as Jervis Inlet stocks. Mid-Island stocks and Nanaimo River are expected to decrease based on below average brood year escapement in 2014.

- Management plan based on 20% exploitation rate in mixed-stock Johnstone Strait fishery.
- In other areas, harvest opportunities primarily in terminal areas based on decision rules and escapement targets.



Fraser Chum

- Fraser chum – Outlook is for an *abundant* return. However, warm ocean “Blob” persisted through spring 2015, when fry from 2014 escapement entered marine environment. Impact of these environmental conditions on Fraser Chum productivity and returns in 2018 is unknown.
- Expectation for returns that can support fisheries for all groups
- In-season of run size using information from Albion test fishery:
 - 800,000 escapement target for the Fraser River chum