



APR 12 2022

Ms. Louise Pedersen
Executive Director
Outdoor Recreation Council of BC
< louisepedersen@orc.bc.ca >

Dear Ms. Pedersen:

Thank you for your correspondence of January 27, 2022, regarding steelhead. I note that you have also addressed your letter to British Columbia's former Minister of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries, for her consideration.

I share your concern about conserving and protecting Interior Fraser River and Skeena steelhead.

The Province of British Columbia is the primary agency responsible for the management of steelhead, and therefore, would be the appropriate lead on a provincial steelhead management plan. DFO works closely with the Province on steelhead management through a Memorandum of Understanding with regard to management plans and objectives for this important species. DFO officials communicate regularly with provincial officials throughout the year. A response to the steelhead concern for 2022 and beyond may include short- and long-term measures, such as in-season management strategies and steelhead recovery planning.

DFO and the Province jointly developed, and are now implementing, the 2019 Steelhead Action Plan for Thompson and Chilcotin steelhead to respond to the threats facing these populations. The action plan will reduce mortality and increase survival of these returning steelhead, improve freshwater conditions through habitat protection and restoration, and increase science and monitoring activities.

The Department continues to take action to reduce the impacts of salmon fisheries on co-migrating steelhead stocks of concern, with measures having increased over the years. Specific details on conservation measures are described in the annual Northern and Southern British Columbia Pacific Salmon Integrated Fisheries Management Plans (IFMPs).

IFMPs are developed annually for salmon and guide the conservation and sustainable use of salmon stocks. They integrate the expertise and activities of the Department's sectors in fisheries management planning, led by DFO's Resource Management officials. The IFMP development process also provides opportunities for input from partners, resource users, other stakeholders, and First Nations, to help inform decision making about management and conservation measures that affect a fishery. Consultation with the recreational community occurs through the Sport Fishing Advisory Board process with input from the local Sport Fishing Advisory Committees. This pre-season planning process closely involves the Province to ensure that a coordinated approach to protecting steelhead is identified within the IFMP.

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DFO considers the ecosystem context when making management decisions and bases them on the precautionary approach and best available information, including peer-reviewed science and Indigenous knowledge.

I recognize that fisheries management measures alone are not enough to address conservation concerns for steelhead. Issues that may affect fish habitat and water quality, such as land and water use, must also be addressed. Through the Pacific Salmon Strategy Initiative, the Government of Canada is committed to improving collaboration with the Province to take action, within our respective jurisdictions, to support the conservation and restoration of Pacific salmon populations and their ecosystems.

Thank you for writing. I hope that this information clarifies my position on this matter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JM', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

The Honourable Joyce Murray, P.C., M.P.

c.c.: The Honourable Josie Osborne, M.L.A.
Minister of Land, Water and Resource Stewardship
Government of British Columbia
Mr. Fin Donnelly, M.L.A.
Coquitlam–Burke Mountain
Government of British Columbia