



Reference: 267596

November 30, 2021

VIA EMAIL: louisepedersen@orcbc.ca

Louise Pedersen, Executive Director
Outdoor Recreation Council of BC
PO Box 673
Revelstoke, British Columbia
V0E 2S0

Dear Louise Pedersen:

Thank you for your letter of September 10, 2021, to Premier Horgan, regarding your concerns about steelhead stocks in British Columbia. I have been asked to respond.

As mentioned in your letter, 2021 spawning estimates indicate that Interior Fraser Steelhead (IFS) remain in a state of Extreme Conservation Concern. The primary causes for the decline are poor marine survival, pinniped predation, and bycatch mortality in salmon fisheries. Early estimates for IFS, Skeena, and several other populations indicate that 2022 steelhead spawner abundances will also fall within the range of Extreme Conservation Concern.

We remain committed in our efforts to restore IFS populations. The recently released [Interior Fraser Steelhead BC Action Plan and Activities Report](#) (August 2021) provides a detailed account of the actions the Province has taken regarding IFS and our priorities moving forward. Furthermore, we are in the process of reviewing and updating the [2016 Provincial Framework for Steelhead Management in BC](#), which applies to all steelhead in BC including Skeena steelhead and stocks on Vancouver Island. We expect to complete this review in 2022, but in the meantime are taking immediate actions to protect those stocks.

Government continues to take management action on all areas under provincial jurisdiction. Fishing for IFS has been closed for many years, and we closed recreational catch and release fishing for steelhead in the Skeena, Heber, and Upper Gold Rivers in 2021. We also continue a rolling closure for all trout fishing along the IFS migratory route to avoid possible bycatch of IFS.

As bycatch of steelhead often occurs in salmon fisheries, which are under the jurisdiction of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), the Province has requested that the federal department increase protection measures for IFS in its Integrated Fisheries Management Plans and fisheries.

Page 1 of 2

Louise Pedersen, Executive Director

The Province continues to advocate for a transition to selective fishing methods as well as moving fisheries into tributaries where stocks of concern are less likely to be encountered. We are also working collaboratively with First Nations and DFO to address declining steelhead populations.

Again, thank you for writing to share your concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Laura Plante".

Laura Plante
Executive Director

pc: Honourable John Horgan, Premier of British Columbia
Honourable Katrine Conroy, Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations
and Rural Development
Jennifer Davis, Director, Fish and Aquatic Habitat Branch
Trevor Rhodes, Associate Director, Fish and Aquatic Habitat Branch