**Meeting Date:** October 2, 2017  
**Agenda Item No.:** 2C  
**Agenda Item:** Harvest limits, Steelhead Fishery  
**Bureau Chief Approval:** ____  

**Prepared by:** Lance Hebdon, Anadromous Fish Manager

**Background:**
This agenda item concerns a change to the harvest and possession limits for fisheries targeting hatchery-origin adipose fin-clipped steelhead on the Salmon, Clearwater, Snake, and Boise Rivers.

The Director issued an emergency closure order which reduced the harvest and possession limits of adipose fin-clipped steelhead to zero (0) on August 14. Catch and release fishing for steelhead remained open under a harvest limit of (0) zero.

The harvest restrictions were put into place in response to staff recommendations following extremely low counts of steelhead at Bonneville Dam on the Columbia River. Through September numbers increased steadily with proportional increases in both wild and hatchery steelhead. The return is currently on track to meet or exceed the pre-season forecast.

Steelhead returns projected to Idaho are now sufficient to provide a harvest fishery for adipose fin-clipped hatchery origin steelhead under reduced harvest limits. Length limits will conserve broodstock needed for the Clearwater River Hatchery programs.

Clearwater Hatchery steelhead returns (managed as B-run steelhead in Columbia River Fisheries) are primarily composed of fish which spent 2 or 3 years in the ocean with the majority of these fish being larger than 28 inches. The length restriction on the Clearwater and Lower Snake will allow harvest of steelhead destined for the Salmon River (managed as A-run steelhead in the Columbia River Fisheries) and the more abundant 1 ocean hatchery returns to the Clearwater River.

Harvest and retention of adipose fin-intact (non-clipped) steelhead is zero (0) under existing rules. All other rules regarding steelhead fishing remain (see Idaho Fishing Seasons and Rules 2016-2018).

**Statutory Authority and/or Policy issues:**
Idaho Statute 36-104(b)2 gives the Commission the authority to set fishing seasons. Rules governing fish are provided in IDAPA 13.01.11

**Public Involvement Process:**
Staff have received numerous comments directly from the public following the steelhead harvest closure.

**Staff Recommendation:**
Approve the proposed Harvest and Bag Limit proposal for the 2017 Steelhead fishery on the Salmon, Clearwater, Snake, and Boise rivers.

**Justification:**
Steelhead mitigation hatcheries were built to mitigate or compensate for fishing opportunity lost as a result of hydropower development. The proposed seasons would provide anglers the opportunity to harvest steelhead returning to the hatcheries.
2017 STEELHEAD HARVEST AND BAG LIMIT PROPOSAL FOR THE SNAKE RIVER AND BOISE RIVER

2 OCTOBER, 2017 IDFG COMMISSION MEETING

I. SEASONS – STEELHEAD

A. Opening Dates

1. The following areas open to harvest and retention of adipose fin-clipped Steelhead on October 15, 2017:

   Snake River - from the Washington State line at the confluence of the Snake and Clearwater Rivers upstream to Couse Creek Boat Ramp at river mile 156.6 (approximately 17 miles upstream of the ID/WA border).

   Snake River – Upstream from Couse Creek Boat Ramp to Hells Canyon Dam.

   Snake River – from Hells Canyon Dam to Oxbow Dam

   Boise River- from its mouth to Barber Dam

B. Closing Dates


II. LIMITS

A. Bag and Possession limits for the Snake River from the Washington State line at the confluence of the Snake and Clearwater Rivers upstream to Couse Creek Boat Ramp are:

1. Bag (Daily): Two (2) adipose fin-clipped Steelhead, none over 28 inches in total length
2. Possession: Six (6) adipose fin-clipped Steelhead, none over 28 inches in total length
3. All other rules apply- see Idaho Fishing Seasons and rules 2016-2018, pages 39-44.

B. Bag and Possession limits for the Snake River Upstream of Couse Creek Boat Ramp, Snake River from Hells Canyon to Oxbow Dam and the Boise River are:

1. Bag (Daily): Two (2) adipose fin-clipped Steelhead,
2. Possession: Six (6) adipose fin-clipped Steelhead,

C. Season, statewide: No person may take more than twenty (20) Steelhead statewide during 2017 steelhead seasons occurring from October 15 to December 31, 2017.

D. All other rules apply- see Idaho Fishing Seasons and Rules 2016-2018
I. SEASONS – STEELHEAD

A. Opening Dates

1. The following areas open to harvest and retention of adipose fin-clipped Steelhead on October 15, 2017:

Salmon River - from its mouth upstream to the posted boundary approximately 100 yards downstream of the weir and trap at Sawtooth Hatchery south of Stanley.

Little Salmon River – from its mouth to the U.S. Highway 95 bridge near Smokey Boulder road.

B. Closing Dates


II. LIMITS

A. Bag and Possession limits for the Salmon River and Little Salmon River are:

1. Bag (Daily): Two (2) adipose fin-clipped Steelhead
2. Possession: Six (6) adipose fin-clipped Steelhead

B. Season, statewide: No person may take more than twenty (20) adipose fin-clipped Steelhead statewide during 2017 steelhead seasons occurring from October 15 to December 31, 2017.

C. All other rules apply - see Idaho Fishing Seasons and Rules 2016-2018
2017 STEELHEAD HARVEST AND BAG LIMIT PROPOSAL FOR THE MAINSTEM CLEARWATER, NORTH FORK CLEARWATER, MIDDLE FORK CLEARWATER, SOUTH FORK CLEARWATER

2 OCTOBER, 2017 IDFG COMMISSION MEETING

I. SEASONS – STEELHEAD

   A. Opening Dates

      1. The following areas open to harvest and retention of adipose fin-clipped Steelhead on October 15, 2017:

         **Mainstem and Middle Fork Clearwater River** - from its mouth upstream to Clear Creek

         **North Fork Clearwater River** – from its mouth upstream to Dworshak Dam

         **South Fork Clearwater River** – from its mouth upstream to the Confluence of American and Red Rivers

   B. Closing Dates


II. LIMITS

   A. Bag and Possession limits for the Mainstem Clearwater, North Fork Clearwater, Middle Fork Clearwater and South Fork Clearwater are:

      1. **Bag (Daily)**: Two (2) adipose fin-clipped Steelhead, none over 28 inches in total length

      2. **Possession**: Six (6) adipose fin-clipped Steelhead, none over 28 inches in total length

      3. **All other rules apply**- see Idaho Fishing Seasons and rules 2016-2018, pages 39-44.

   B. **Season, statewide**: No person may take more than twenty (20) adipose fin-clipped Steelhead statewide during 2017 steelhead seasons occurring from October 15 to December 31, 2017.

   C. **All other rules apply**- see Idaho Fishing Seasons and Rules 2016-2018