IDAHO FISH AND GAME GOLDSHEET

November 2026 Commission Meeting ***Agenda Item No.:*** *5E*
Agenda Item: *Spring Season Modifications, Steelhead Fisheries* ***(Action)*** ***Supervisor Approval:*** *LH*
Presented by: *Chris Sullivan*
Position/Title: *Anadromous Fisheries Coordinator*

Background:
This agenda item concerns an update on steelhead returns, ongoing fall fisheries, and proposed changes to bag limits for spring steelhead fisheries. Fisheries staff will update the Commission on fall salmon and steelhead fisheries and current forecasted estimates for steelhead in the 2026-27 return year. Bag limit reductions were implemented in the fall 2026 fisheries via emergency order. Changes were needed to minimize impacts to natural-origin steelhead and ensure hatchery broodstock needs are met.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:
Idaho Statute 36-104(b)2 gives the Commission the authority to make a rule or proclamation establishing seasons and methods for the taking of fish. Fishing Rules are provided in IDAPA 13.01.11

Public Involvement Process:
Public meetings and online solicitation to seek input on the 2025-2027 fishing seasons and rules were conducted statewide in 2024 as part of the triennial season setting process.

Justification:
Salmon and steelhead mitigation hatcheries were built to mitigate or compensate for fishing opportunity lost as a result of hydropower development. The proposed season would provide anglers the opportunity to fish for returning adult hatchery steelhead produced at Idaho mitigation hatcheries.

Staff Recommendation:
The Department recommends the Commission approve the proposed bag limit changes to the spring 2027 steelhead fisheries. Those changes are highlighted in red in the supplemental steelhead rules table and include restricting fisheries in the Clearwater basin to catch-and-release only, while reducing the bag and possession limits on the Snake, Salmon, and Little Salmon rivers from three (3) daily nine (9) in possession, to two (2) daily six (6) in possession.

Suggested Motion:
I move the Commission adopt the steelhead bag limit modifications as recommended by the Department.