

Meeting Date: 20 August, 2020

Agenda Item No. 3.D.

Agenda Item: Modification of Fall 2020 Steelhead Season

Bureau Chief Approval:



Prepared by: Lance Hebdon, Anadromous Fish Manager

Background:

This agenda item concerns modification to fisheries targeting hatchery-origin Steelhead on the Salmon, Clearwater, and Snake Rivers.

The steelhead forecast for 2020 is projected to be one of the lowest returns in the last 2 decades. Current counts of steelhead at Bonneville Dam are lower than the 10-year average and are tracking similar to the forecast. At the time of preparation of this Gold Sheet, staff were reviewing daily fish passage updates and considering necessary modifications to the fall 2020 season. Potential options to manage the low returns include reduced bag limits and/or implementing length limits to conserve broodstock needed for Hatchery programs.

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:

Public input has been received as part of the three-year season setting process that established the 2019-2021 steelhead seasons and rules.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff will present recommended modifications to 2020 Steelhead season modifications for the Salmon, Clearwater, and Snake Rivers at the August 20 Commission meeting.

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.