

Hi everybody

In my last e-mail, I asked all of you to let me know your opinion on a steelhead rule proposal our Commission was going to deliberate on today (October 13). Before I let you know what they decided, I want to thank all of you for being involved and letting us know your ideas on how to manage our steelhead fisheries. There is no doubt that people are passionate about steelhead, and there are a lot different opinions on how to manage these fish. I received comments from about 700 people from 30 different states and two other countries. If you add in comments provided to the other fish managers, director's office, and commissioners, we received over 1,200 comments about this rule proposal. If you are interested in how people responded, I have included a summary of these responses at the bottom of this e-mail.

Using this input and other information provided to them, our Commission voted to accept the steelhead proposal as written. That means the steelhead rules starting **Oct 15 (this Sunday)** will be as follows:

Clearwater River Basin which includes the Mainstem Clearwater, North Fork Clearwater, Middle Fork Clearwater and South Fork Clearwater

Limits:

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. 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.

Salmon River

Limits:

1. Bag (Daily): Two (2) adipose fin-clipped Steelhead
2. Possession: Six (6) adipose fin-clipped Steelhead
3. 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.

Snake River from the Washington/Idaho state line upstream to Couse Creek Boat Ramp at river mile 156.6 (approximately 17 miles upstream of the ID/WA border).

Limits:

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. 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.

Snake River from Couse Creek Boat Ramp upstream to Hells Canyon Dam

Limits:

1. Bag (Daily): Two (2) adipose fin-clipped Steelhead
2. Possession: Six (6) adipose fin-clipped Steelhead
3. 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.

Summary of Comments Received

The Department sent an email to 19,919 resident steelhead permit holders requesting feedback on the proposal to re-open harvest on hatchery steelhead. Of the 435 which responded, 238 (55%) supported the proposal and 169 (39%) did not. A summary of these comments are provided in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Summary of comments received in response to an e-mail sent to resident steelhead anglers.

Direct Email	Category
53	Don't Support the Proposal - These commenters did not support re-opening harvest and generally provided very little detail on why.
75	Don't Support out of concern for future - This section represents the majority of the "don't support" comments. These comments provided enough detail to provide some insight into their reasons, but they may have been overly optimistic regarding what a harvest closure will accomplish. The theme is that they're willing to sacrifice for a year to help steelhead recover (generally not distinguishing wild from hatchery).
12	Don't Support because they like Catch and Release rules – These comments had a lot of overlap with the above category, but they specified favoring C&R for multiple years or as a fish management preference in general.
29	Don't Support out of concern for wild fish – Again, there was overlap with the above two categories, but these comments had a specific reference to the low return of wild fish or a belief that a harvest fishery on adipose clipped hatchery fish will result in increased mortality of wild fish and jeopardize wild steelhead.
28	Not sure or ambiguous – These comments did not provide a clear preference or an alternative but provided a comment.
189	Support – These commenters indicated they supported the proposal but did not provide specific details.
49	Support but suggest additional restrictions – Some comments expressed support for the proposal but also suggested alternative bag limits (1 fish), size limits, tackle restrictions, season possession limits etc. These commenters may be looking for some sort of "compromise" to allow harvest.

We received 776 comments in response to the IDFG Press Release, Commission Meeting Notice, Clearwater Regional email distribution list, and outreach from NGOs and other advocacy groups. Of the 776 that responded 54% (425) did not support the proposal and 44% (344) did support the proposal.

Table 2. Summary of open comments received.

Directors Office*	Clearwater	Salmon	McCall	Category
17	27	2		<u>Don't Support the Proposal</u> - These comments did not support re-opening harvest and generally provided very little detail on why.
5	38	17		<u>Don't Support out of concern for future</u> - This section represents the majority of the "don't support" comments. These comments provided enough detail to provide some insight into their reasons, but they may have been overly optimistic regarding what a harvest closure will accomplish. The theme is that they're willing to sacrifice for a year to help steelhead recover (generally not distinguishing wild from hatchery).
2	14	2		<u>Don't Support because they like Catch and Release rules</u> – These comments had a lot of overlap with the above category, but they specified favoring C&R for multiple years or as a fish management preference in general.
	296	4	1	<u>Don't Support out of concern for wild fish</u> – Again, there was overlap with the above two categories, but these comments had a specific reference to the low return of wild fish or a belief that a harvest fishery on adipose clipped hatchery fish will result in increased mortality of wild fish and jeopardize wild steelhead.
2	3	2		<u>Not sure or ambiguous</u> – These comments did not provide a clear preference or an alternative but provided a comment.
	266	27	4	<u>Support</u> – These commenters indicated they supported the proposal but did not provide specific details.
	42	2	3	<u>Support but suggest additional restrictions</u> – Some comments expressed support for the proposal but also suggested alternative bag limits (1 fish), size limits, tackle restrictions, season possession limits etc. These commenters may be looking for some sort of "compromise" to allow harvest.

*Majority of Comments to Director/Commission were also CC'd Clearwater Regional Fish Manager. Those comments are included in the Clearwater Column in an attempt to avoid duplicate counts.

Have a good weekend

Joe DuPont
Clearwater Region's Fisheries Manager
Lewiston
208-799-5010