

SOUTH-CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA STEELHEAD ESU RECOVERY PLAN

THREATS ASSESSMENT

Explanation for Workbook Sheet 1 – Assessing Life History Viability

- Please specify the County, stream/river, and stream reach for which you are providing information. Be as specific as possible.
- This sheet is organized by steelhead life history stage.
- Indicators are measures of environmental, habitat, or population quality that are important to the viability of each life history stage. Note that several indicators repeat for two or more stages.
- A major on-going effort for us is to identify viability limits for these indicators (Poor vs Very Good). Ideally, and over time, we hope to identify a set of benchmarks or boundaries for the four rating increments for each indicator (and hence, for each key attribute). Eventually, these thresholds will state clearly where the indicator being measured would fall within each level of the rating scale. The scientific information needed to establish these benchmarks is often lacking or inadequate. In these instances, we must rely on general ecological concepts, comparisons to other similar systems, well-informed expert opinion, or professional judgment in order to determine a “credible first iteration” of the benchmarks and assessment of the current rating. For the initial iteration, it is often sufficient to describe the benchmarks for Good and Fair, since this distinction is the most important for determining the need for management actions.
- We are asking for your help in supplying information on the current status of these indicators in particular watersheds or reaches of watersheds. Please note that we have provided qualitative categories in which you can rank existing conditions for particular indicators. These categories are defined as:

Poor = allowing current conditions to remain in this state for an extended period of time will make restoration or preventing extirpation practically impossible.

Fair = current conditions are marginal for viability and require significant human intervention to prevent serious loss of resource.

Good = current conditions permit viability and may require some human intervention to prevent degradation.

Very Good = current conditions are at an ecologically desirable level and require little or no human intervention.

- Fill out as many cells for which you have verifiable information. We expect that most of the information you will supply will be qualitative (poor, fair, good, very good).
- Almost all of the indicators vary widely depending on season and location, and this presents a major challenge in extrapolating conditions to a large context. This is why it's important that you note when and where the observations upon which you base your assessment of the current status of an indicator were made.
- If you have quantitative information for a particular indicator, please note this. It is essential that you specify the circumstances on which your qualitative or quantitative assessment of a particular indicator is based. These references and your contact information should be appended to the sheet when you submit it.
- There will be many gaps in these worksheets, but identifying gaps and weaknesses in existing knowledge can be useful in helping spur investigations to improve the state of knowledge about particular life history stages or steelhead conservation in general in this region.