

PRESS RELEASE

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Kwilmu'kw Maw-klusuaqn Negotiation Office

Mi'kmaq Rights Initiative

Our Rights. Our Future.

Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia Steward Management over Salmon Fishery

Since 2012, the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Chiefs (Assembly) and Kwilmu'kw Maw-klusuaqn Negotiation Office (KMKNO) have been developing a Mi'kmaq Salmon Management Plan, balancing the Mi'kmaq Right to harvest salmon, with the need for conservation.

The Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia have a Right for harvesting salmon under the Food, Social and Ceremonial (FSC) fishery, as guaranteed by the Supreme Court of Canada in the 1990 *Sparrow* Decision. The Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Chiefs recognized the need to maintain that Right, all the while, ensuring that Salmon would be around for years to come.

"We must respect traditions and understand the role we have as protectors of the environment," said Chief Terrance Paul, Assembly Co-Chair and Lead Chief of the Fisheries Portfolio. "Our Plan looks at proper salmon management - how we can maintain a Right to harvest, as well as make certain the conservation of this sacred species."

The Assembly has engaged community members in conservation through a river-specific tagging system and by asking Mi'kmaq fishers to report catches to the Mi'kmaq-operated conservations groups, Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources and Mi'kmaw Conservation Group.

Over the past number of years, provincial harvesters were able to catch and retain four salmon annually. Based on the 2500 licenses that were issued for salmon fishing, harvesters were legally allowed, under DFO's rules, to harvest upwards of 10,000 salmon in any given year. According to records, some years saw more than the 2500 licenses issued. These recreational harvests were also taking place in rivers that the Mi'kmaq were excluded from fishing in. This year in Nova Scotia, any licensed recreational and sports-angled salmon fished must be re-released

"It's important for us to have our own science and data on traditional species," continued Chief Paul. "We are co-managers of the resources in Nova Scotia and we want to ensure that everyone, including ourselves, is taking a proactive role."

The Assembly will be rolling out and implementing the 2015 – 2016 Mi'kmaq Salmon Management Plan for Nova Scotia starting this week.

The Kwilmu'kw Maw-klusuaqn Negotiation Office/Mi'kmaq Rights Initiative works on behalf of the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Chiefs in the negotiations and consultations between the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia, the Province of Nova Scotia and the Government of Canada. KMKNO was developed by the Mi'kmaq, for the Mi'kmaq. The purpose of these negotiations and consultations is to implement our Aboriginal and treaty rights from the treaties signed by our ancestors in the 1700's. For further information visit our website at www.mikmaqrightrights.com.

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