



2015-2016 ATLANTIC SALMON, PLAMU, CONSERVATION HARVESTING PLAN

Effective June 1, 2015 to May 31, 2016

Mi'kmaq, Salmon, and Traditional Practices

The Mi'kmaq continue to rely on Atlantic salmon for food. Over time, the Mi'kmaq developed an intimate and sacred relationship with the salmon and sought ways to manage populations while sustaining themselves. This relationship continues today and the species is still an important part of the Mi'kmaq way of life.

Traditional Mi'kmaq management of Atlantic salmon was flexible and based on a balance of life stage and watershed harvest strategies. The Mi'kmaq would harvest a balance of large and small salmon, in open waters and in rivers. For example, some harvesters would harvest large salmon as they felt they were nearing the end of their lives, while other harvesters would harvest smaller salmon to let the larger ones reproduce. A key component of traditional Mi'kmaq management of salmon is based on which salmon are at hand during the time of harvest. If more large salmon are present than small, then more large salmon would be taken than small. The delicate balance in nature must be respected and is reflected when harvesting.

Current allocations of Atlantic salmon are insufficient or not available for many of the Mi'kmaq people in Nova Scotia. At present, 12 of the 13 Mi'kmaq communities of Nova Scotia have salmon allocations totaling 732 MSW, 490 grilse, and kelt for 17 rivers and 2 harbors Nova Scotia. There are over 14,958 status Mi'kmaq registered to Nova Scotia bands and the population continues to grow. The Mi'kmaq propose to promote salmon fishing in areas that can support a FSC fishery while respecting the conservation needs of the salmon populations in Nova Scotia. The Mi'kmaq will continue to conservatively harvest MSW salmon to preserve the delicate balance between small and large salmon, and maintain the opportunity to use salmon eggs for food or ceremony.

The Mi'kmaq have constitutionally protected Aboriginal Rights to fish for food, social and ceremonial species, such as salmon, and these rights take priority, after conservation, over other uses of the resource. The proposed 2015 Conservation Harvesting Plan (CHP) for Atlantic Salmon in Nova Scotia is ***an interim CHP*** to serve as a benchmark for which to develop future requests for access, allocation and input into sustainable harvest plan. Future conservation harvest plans will be developed after the completion of Mi'kmaq to Mi'kmaq community consultations for input into sustainable harvest measures and will be based on available Mi'kmaq ecological knowledge and annual population status assessments. The CHP proposed in 2015-2016 will likely be revised in all, or in part, for future harvesting plans.

The Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Chiefs has provided the ability to the Lead Chief of the Fisheries Portfolio to amend the CHP which may alter allocations as necessary. The CHP is a plan for the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia and the salmon harvested are for the sole benefit of the Mi'kmaq. No other groups shall benefit from this plan other than the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia.

Kwilmu'kw Maw-klusuaqn Negotiation Office (KMKNO) is the administrative body working on behalf of the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Chiefs. Currently, KMKNO does not represent Sipekne'katik First Nation in negotiations under the Made-In-Nova Scotia Process or consultations under the [Terms of Reference for a Mi'kmaq - Nova Scotia - Canada- Consultation Process](#).

Objective: The objectives of the conservation harvest plan are to:

- Maintain current allocations negotiated by communities;
- Provide allocations for Mi'kmaq communities who currently do not have access to Atlantic salmon in Nova Scotia;
- Increase salmon allocations in SFA 18 rivers where Atlantic salmon are known to exist (based on 2013 recreational fishery data) in which there were no previous allocations for the Mi'kmaq; and
- To respect conservation concerns for Atlantic salmon in Nova Scotia while balancing cultural needs of the Mi'kmaq and traditional management of salmon.



Biomass:

In 2010, the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) identified the rivers in the southern Gulf of St. Lawrence including rivers in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and the Gaspé Peninsula, as a Designatable Unit (DU) and assessed it as “Special Concern.” Returns of Atlantic salmon to SFA 18 in 2012 and 2013 were among the lowest of the time series following historical peak values observed in 2011. A recreational retention fishery (2 grilse per license) is proposed for 2015, down from 4 grilse per license.

For the Maritimes Region, COSEWIC assessed the Eastern Cape Breton (SFA 19), and Southern Upland, Inner Bay of Fundy and Outer Bay of Fundy DUs (SFAs 20-23) as ‘Endangered’ in 2010. In 2013, abundance in eastern Cape Breton was assessed in 3 index rivers (Middle, Baddeck and North rivers). The Middle River population was estimated to be at 88% of the conservation requirement; the Baddeck River population was estimated to be at 50% of the conservation requirement; and the North River population was estimated to be at 105% of the conservation requirement. For SFA 19, only the North River is estimated to be slightly above (105%) the conservation requirement. A recreational salmon catch and release fishery exists in SFA 19 in the Middle, North, and Baddeck rivers. Salmon populations for rivers in SFAs 20-23 are at very low abundance. There are no recreational fisheries for salmon in SFAs 20-23.

Exploitation Rate:

N/A

SFA 18 TAC

A total maximum allowable harvest of 839 grilse, 1097 MSW, and 84 grilse or MSW and kelt as required (river specific) is permitted. Allocations for communities that did not have access were calculated based on **10% of the lowest current allocation of grilse and MSW in each river**. For rivers that did not have previous allocations, a balance of 2 grilse and 2 MSW per community were added.

Table 1. Proposed allocations for 12 Mi'kmaq communities. AR indicates ‘as required’. Shaded and bolded numbers indicate current community allocations.

SFA	River	Salmon Group	Proposed Allocations (Red - no current allocation before plan)											TOTAL		
			Eskasoni	Membertou	Potlotek	We'koqma'q	Wagmatcook	Millbrook	Pictou Landing	Paqtneke	Annapolis Valley	Glooscap	Acadia		Bear River	
SFA 18B Cape Breton NS	Margaree and Estuary	Grilse (1SW)	26	26	26	26	26	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	151
		MSW	65	65	65	65	65	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	367
		Kelt	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	
	Cheticamp	Grilse (1SW)	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	24
		MSW	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	24
	Mabou	Grilse (1SW)	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	24
MSW		2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	24	



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			Eskasoni	Membertou	Potlotek	We'koqma'q	Wagmatcook	Millbrook	Pictou Landing	Paqtnkek	Annapolis Valley	Glooscap	Acadia	Bear River	
SFA 18A Mainland NS	Phillip	Grilse (1SW)	5	5	5	5	5	50	5	5	5	5	5	5	105
		MSW	9	9	9	9	9	90	9	9	9	9	9	9	189
		Kelt	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR
	Pugwash	Grilse (1SW)	1	1	1	1	1	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	21
		MSW	1	1	1	1	1	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	21
	Wallace	Grilse (1SW)	2	2	2	2	2	20	2	2	2	2	2	2	42
		Kelt	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR
	Waugh	Grilse (1SW)	2	2	2	2	2	20	2	2	2	2	2	2	42
		Kelt	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR
	West (Pictou Co.)	Grilse (1SW)							25						25
		MSW							37						37
		1SW or MSW	2	2	2	2	2	20	2	2	2	2	2	2	42
	West (Antigonish Co.)	Grilse (1SW)	1	1	1	1	1	10	1	45	1	1	1	1	65
		MSW	1	1	1	1	1	10	1	45	1	1	1	1	65
	Shiminicas	1SW or MSW	1	1	1	1	1	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	21
	East (Pictou Co.)	Grilse (1SW)	3	3	3	3	3	3	30	3	3	3	3	3	63
		MSW	7	7	7	7	7	7	70	7	7	7	7	7	147
	Barney's	Grilse (1SW)	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	15	2	2	2	2	37
		MSW	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10	1	1	1	1	21
	French (Pictou Co.)	Grilse (1SW)	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	15	2	2	2	2	37
		MSW	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10	1	1	1	1	21
	Pomquet, Afton, Monastery (Tracadie)	Grilse (1SW)	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	30	3	3	3	3	63
		MSW	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	15	2	2	2	2	37
		Kelt								10					10
	South (Antigonish Co.)	Grilse (1SW)	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	5	1	1	1	1	16
		MSW	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10	1	1	1	1	21
	River John	Grilse (1SW)	2	2	2	2	2	2	20	2	2	2	2	2	42
		MSW	1	1	1	1	1	1	10	1	1	1	1	1	21
Merigomish & Pictou Hbrs	Grilse (1SW)	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	10	
	MSW	0	0	0	0	0	0	30	0	0	0	0	0	30	
French (Colchester Co.)	1SW or MSW	1	1	1	1	1	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	21	
Middle (Pictou Co.)	Grilse (1SW)	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	24	
	MSW	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	24	
Sutherlands	Grilse (1SW)	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	24	
	MSW	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	24	
Wright	Grilse (1SW)	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	24	
	MSW	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	24	
Pictou Co., Inverness Co., and Antigonish Co.	Kelt	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	



SFA	River	Salmon Group	Proposed Allocations (Red- no current allocation before plan)											TOTAL	
			Eskasoni	Membertou	Potlotek	We'koqma'q	Wagmatcook	Millbrook	Pictou Landing	Paqtnkek	Annapolis Valley	Glooscap	Acadia		Bear River
		TOTAL	163	163	163	163	163	315	300	276	81	81	81	81	2030
		Grilse (1SW)	60	60	60	60	60	136	117	138	37	37	37	37	839
		MSW	99	99	99	99	99	139	179	124	40	40	40	40	1097
		Grilse or MSW	4	4	4	4	4	40	4	4	4	4	4	84	
		Kelt (Pomquet, Afton, Monastery)								10				10	
		Kelt (Margaree, Phillip, Wallace, Waugh)	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	

SFA 19 TAC

A total maximum allowable harvest of 50 MSW and 50 grilse is allocated to the Mi'kmaq communities of Eskasoni, Membertou, Potlotek, We'koqma'q and Wagmatcook (Table 2). Preliminary 2013 catch data from 4 out of 5 Mi'kmaq communities indicated that 0 MSW, 0 grilse, and 0 Kelt were harvested from the North River. The Mi'kmaq request that this allocation be maintained until further assessments have been completed.

Wagmatcook will retain the allocation of 10 grilse for food, social and ceremonial purposes for Middle River.

Table 2. MSW and grilse allocations of for North and Middle Rivers. *Indicates "as required."

River	Eskasoni	Membertou	Potlotek	Wagmatcook	We'koqma'q
North River	10 MSW	10 MSW	10 MSW	10 MSW	10 MSW
	10 Grilse	10 Grilse	10 Grilse	10 Grilse	10 Grilse
	Kelt*	Kelt*	Kelt*	Kelt*	Kelt*
Middle River	0	0	0	10 Grilse	0

ANSMC Fisheries Lead Chief The Chief with the Fisheries Portfolio, under the direction of the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Chiefs may authorize changes to be made in this management plan due to the current status populations of salmon in any designated river system or region in Nova Scotia. The Portfolio Lead will take into consideration Mi'kmaq scientific advice, traditional knowledge and information from other sources as required.

Individual Quota: Within community and river specific allocations, communities will determine allocations for individual community members. Communities who wish to engage in ecotourism can allocate tags for this purpose provided the salmon stays within the community for consumption.

Catch Limitations the community will determine catch limitations.

Tag Distribution: Each community will be responsible for the distribution of tags within the community. Given the conservative allocations for many of the rivers, tags will be distributed by river so that the harvest does not exceed the maximum limit in each river.



Quota Reconciliation:	N/A
Regular Season:	June 1 to November 30, 2015 for bright salmon, and January 1 to May 31, 2016 for Kelt.
Other Regular Closures:	To respect the spawning time of salmon, all rivers will be closed to salmon fishing from December 1 to December 31, 2015.
Closed Areas:	<p>There will be no fishing for salmon for food, social and ceremonial needs for Salmon Fishing Areas 20 (Eastern Shore), 21 (South Shore) and 22 (Bay of Fundy) between June 1, 2015 to May 31, 2016. These areas do not meet conservation requirements for salmon.</p> <p>The Mi'kmaq will respect the current closure upstream of Big Intervale Bridge (Northeast Margaree river and tributaries) in the Margaree River and upstream of the area known as "The Benches" in the North River.</p>
Min / Max Size:	Only salmon equal to and greater than 14 inches (35.6 cm) will be retained. They can be of wild or hatchery (adipose fin clipped) origin. Salmon (wild or hatchery) under the size of 14 inches (35.6 cm) will not be targeted for harvest or retained.
Small Fish Protocols:	Parr and smolt will be carefully released and returned to the water quickly.
By-catches:	When applicable, by-catch (species that are not Atlantic salmon) will be retained by the Mi'kmaq.
SARA:	Atlantic salmon Inner Bay of Fundy (SFA 22) population is currently listed and protected under the Species at Risk Act. Salmon populations in other areas of Nova Scotia were assessed by COSEWIC as endangered (SFA 19, 20, 21) and special concern (SFA 18) and are currently under consultation for SARA listing.
Gear Limit:	<p>No more than one trap net per river permitted.</p> <p>For Pictou Landing ONLY: no more than 1 gill net will be set at any time in Pictou Harbor and no more than 2 gill nets will be set at one time in Merigomish Harbor.</p>
Gear Specifications:	<p>Traditional methods of fishing include spearing, snaring, angling and fly. For community harvesting effort, seining and trap nets are permitted for use in rivers.</p> <p>For Pictou Landing ONLY: Gill nets no longer than 120 feet ($\leq 120'$) are permitted and ONLY in Merigomish and Pictou Harbors. All salmon will be retained; as there is low probability salmon will survive when removed from the gill net.</p>
Transfers / Pooling:	Community to community transfer of allocations must be river specific, documented, and reported.



- Participants:** The CHP applies to status Mi'kmaq from the communities of Acadia, Annapolis Valley, Bear River, Eskasoni, Glooscap, Membertou, Millbrook, Paqtnkek, Pictou Landing, Potlotek, Wagmatcook and We'koqma'q.
- Proof of identity and membership (status cards) must be carried when fishing.
- Vessels:** **For Pictou Landing ONLY:** the use of vessels no greater than 24 ft long (≤ 24 feet) are permitted to harvest salmon in Merigomish and Pictou Harbors.
- Monitoring:** Communities will be in responsible for monitoring of their salmon harvest through community guardian programs or fishery department.
- Logbooks / Data Entry:** Catch data is important for annual population assessments. Aboriginal harvest data is necessary to estimate the number of MSW (large salmon) and number of grilse (small salmon) that reach the spawning grounds to spawn.
- Catch data will be reported to community fishery departments from which the tag was issued.
- Catch data must include tag number, number of grilse (small salmon) and/or MSW (large salmon) caught by November 30, 2015 will be reported by January 30, 2016. Kelt captures (salmon caught between Jan. 1 and May 31, 2016) will be reported by July 31, 2016.
- Observer Coverage:** N/A
- License Fees:** N/A
- Other:** KMKNO, Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources (UINR) and the Mi'kmaq Conservation Group (MCG) will work to develop communication material for the Mi'kmaq communities on the current status of salmon populations in Nova Scotia.
- KMKNO, UINR and MCG will assist communities with the development of harvest report cards for salmon.