



## **2025-2026 ATLANTIC SALMON, PLAMU, CONSERVATION HARVESTING PLAN**

Effective June 1, 2025 to May 31, 2026

### **Mi'kmaq, Salmon, and Traditional Practices**

The Mi'kmaq continue to rely on Atlantic salmon for food. Over time, 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 remains an important part of the Mi'kmaw way of life.

The principles of *Netukulimk* guide the harvest of salmon. In particular, taking what is needed, preventing waste and wasteful use of salmon, treating salmon with respect, and giving back to Mother Earth what is not consumed. Traditional Mi'kmaw management of Atlantic salmon was flexible and based on a balance of life stage and watershed harvest strategies. 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'kmaw 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 (Denny & Fanning, 2016a).

Current allocations of Atlantic salmon are insufficient or not available for many of the Mi'kmaq in Nova Scotia. At present, the Mi'kmaw communities of Nova Scotia have salmon allocations that are inadequate for a population of over 16,245 Status Mi'kmaq registered to Nova Scotia bands. The Mi'kmaq propose to promote salmon fishing in areas that can support a Food, Social and Ceremonial (FSC) fishery while respecting the conservation needs of the salmon populations in Nova Scotia. The Mi'kmaq will continue to conservatively harvest MSW salmon in rivers exceeding the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) determined conservation requirement to preserve the delicate balance between small and large salmon, and maintain the opportunity to use salmon eggs for food or ceremony.

The Conservation Harvest Plan (CHP) proposed for 2016-2017 was a reflection of such input and a new proposal from DFO in March 2016 for a regional allocation for Salmon Fishing Area (SFA) 18 (Fig. 1) of 1,244 salmon, and again adopted for 2022-2023. The equivalent regional allocation for the communities participating under the plan is 655 salmon as 469 large ( $\geq 63$  cm fork length, also referred to as MSW) and 186 small ( $< 63$  cm fork length, also referred to as grilse) for the communities of Annapolis, Bear River, Eskasoni, Glooscap, Membertou, Potlotek, Wagmatcook, Wasoqopa'q, and We'koqma'q. In addition, an allocation of 16 large and 5 small salmon will be available and held in trust by the community of Eskasoni, as specified on page 4 and in Table 1, bringing the total allocation to 676 salmon. This value represents 54.3% of the regional allocation for 69% of the Mi'kmaw communities in Nova Scotia. A smaller allocation of 120 salmon (50 large and 70 small) to SFA 19 (Fig. 1) is provided to Eskasoni, Membertou, Potlotek, Wagmatcook and We'koqma'q communities. There are no salmon allocations for SFA 20, 21 and 22.

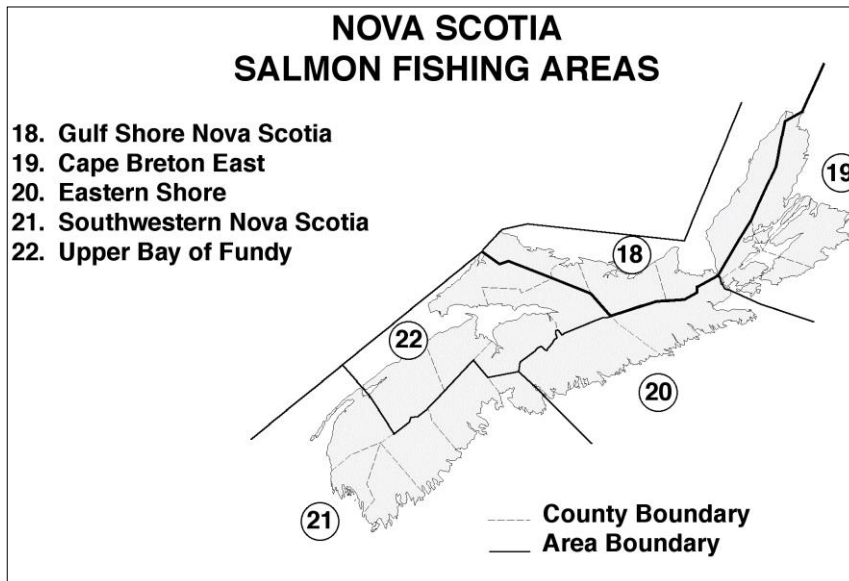


Fig. 1. Salmon management fishing zones in Nova Scotia. (Source: DFO. Retrieved from <http://novascotia.ca/fish/documents/regulations/salmonanglingseasons2015-e.pdf>)

The Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Chiefs (ANSMC) provided the ability to the Lead Chief(s) of the Fisheries portfolio to amend the CHP which may alter allocations as necessary based on recommendations by the newly established collaborative management advisory body (further information is provided under 'Governance'). The CHP is a plan for the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia (communities listed above) and the salmon harvested are for the sole benefit of the Mi'kmaq. Kwilmu'kw Maw-klusuaqn (KMK) is the administrative body working on behalf of the ANSMC. Currently, KMK does not represent Sipekne'katik and Millbrook First Nations 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*.

### Reconciliation

In recognition and honour of the Indigenous-Crown's special constitutional relationship and the Government of Canada's commitment to achieving reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, the principles outlined in *Respecting the Government of Canada's Relationship with Indigenous Peoples* (Department of Justice Canada, 2018) are fundamental to the implementation of the Conservation Harvest Plan for Atlantic Salmon (Plamu).

### United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Action Plan

The UN Declaration Act reinforces

measures to implement the UN Declaration in Canada must take into account the diversity of Indigenous peoples and, in particular, the diversity of the identities, cultures, languages, customs, practices, rights and legal traditions of First Nations, Inuit and the Métis and of their institutions and governance structures, their relationships to the land and Indigenous knowledge (Department of Justice, 2023, p.23).

As a shared priority, the relationship and effort to collaborate on the management and governance of Atlantic Salmon expressed in CHP reflects Action Item 37:

In a manner that is measurable, enhance collaborative tools agreements and transparent

approaches to better deliver on the collaborative design, development, delivery and management of fisheries, as well as conservation and protection of fish habitat. Fisheries and Oceans Canada and Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada will continue to pursue fisheries-related collaborative governance opportunities through nation-to-nation, Inuit-Crown and government-to-government negotiations. (Fisheries and Oceans Canada)

## **Objectives**

The objectives of the conservation harvest plan are to:

- To respect conservation concerns for Atlantic salmon in Nova Scotia while balancing cultural needs of the Mi'kmaq and traditional management of salmon;
- At minimum, maintain current allocations negotiated by communities;
- Provide allocations for Mi'kmaw communities who currently do not have access to Atlantic salmon in Nova Scotia and stabilize that access into future submissions;
- Re-establish salmon access in SFA 18 rivers where Atlantic salmon are known to exist based on recreational fishery data and historical access prior to imposed measures by DFO in which there were no recent allocations for the Mi'kmaq;
- To align salmon harvest with recommendations provided by the Minister's Advisory Committee A Special Report on Wild Atlantic Salmon in Eastern Canada (2015) as Mi'kmaw commitment to sustainable harvesting of Atlantic Salmon; and
- To continue to pursue delivery and management of Atlantic salmon in Nova Scotia.

## **Estimated 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 to 2018 were among the lowest of the time series following historical peak values observed in 2011, for both large and small salmon. The retention limits of small (grilse) salmon in the recreational fishery was reduced from eight to four per licence in 2008 (Breau & Chaput, 2012), four to two in 2014, to zero retention in 2015 to 2018.

The Margaree River has consistently met conservation requirements from 1987 to 2022 (DFO, 2023a). Prior to 1996, recreational catch and effort data was used in conjunction with a mark-recapture experiment to generate adult return estimates for the Margaree. Since 1997, only recreational catch and effort data has been inputted into the model. There has been no successful mark-recapture experiment to validate the catchability coefficient, or the quality of the recreational data inputted into the model. a fisheries-independent estimate has yet to be produced. At present, returns of salmon in rivers on the mainland Nova Scotia are unknown (Breau, 2012; Biron & Breau, 2015).

Conservation requirements in SFA 18 were based on preserving large salmon, also referred to as Multi-Sea Winter (MSW), to contribute eggs to meet river specific egg requirements for the conservation of the salmon population. This conservation egg requirement was developed as a formal definition of conservation for Atlantic Salmon following the 1990 *Sparrow* Decision (Chaput, 2015). A framework to establish limit reference points for rivers in the Gulf Region was established based on

stock recruitment analysis (DFO, 2015), consistent with the precautionary approach (DFO, 2009). The limit reference point in the Gulf Region was defined as the abundance of spawners resulting in less than 25% probability that recruitment will be less than half the maximum recruitment. An egg deposition of 1.52 eggs/m<sup>2</sup> was defined as the LRP for SFA 18 rivers (DFO, 2018). In its update of indicators of Atlantic Salmon in the Gulf Region SFAs 15-18 for 2018 (DFO, 2019), DFO Gulf Region assessed status relative to the LRP of 1.52 eggs/m<sup>2</sup>. Previous assessments were assessed relative to a conservation requirement of 2.4 eggs/m<sup>2</sup>.

In 2022 DFO Gulf Region produced an estimate of egg density for the Margaree River for 2020 and 2021. However, the recreational effort, used to produce the stock update remains significantly lower than in years when the model was parametrized, which poses a concern for the accuracy of the estimate. The science advice provided by DFO is to rely on long-term trends to assess the salmon population in the Margaree River. The estimated egg density consistently exceeded the LRP (DFO 2023a).

The warm water protocol established for the Margaree River does not apply to Mi'kmaw food, social, and ceremonial fisheries.

For the Maritimes Region, an egg deposition of 2.4 eggs/m<sup>2</sup> is considered to be a Limit Reference Point in the context of DFO's Precautionary Approach Framework (DFO, 2009; DFO, 2012; Gibson and Claytor, 2012) for DFO's Maritimes Region and conservation objective of maximizing freshwater production (DFO, 2015). 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 2022, abundance in Eastern Cape Breton was assessed in 3 index rivers (Middle, Baddeck and North rivers). Middle and Baddeck Rivers did not meet river specific conservation requirements; the North River was estimated to be slightly above CER in 2022 (DFO, 2023b). 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 or Mi'kmaw fisheries for salmon in SFAs 20-23.

The International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) advises fishing to only take place on rivers where stocks are at "full reproductive capacity" (ICES, 2025, para 2). It is the understanding of the Mi'kmaq that at minimum, the Margaree River meets this expectation.

### **Mi'kmaw Knowledge**

Mi'kmaw experiential observations indicate that salmon abundance was higher in 2017 than 2016 with noticeable higher returns of small salmon to Margaree River. Also observed were salmon covered with white spots in the Margaree River. Similar spots were noticed in SFA 19 rivers (Middle, Baddeck and North Rivers). Concern is expressed for these salmon, especially those in the Margaree River as lethal gear is used to

effectively retain fish but Mi'kmaw fishers are releasing salmon that are infected with lesions, pus pockets, and other marks.

In 2018, Mi'kmaw fishers experienced challenges in capturing salmon due to fluctuating water levels and loss of traditional fishing areas. An increased effort was undertaken to locate other fishable pools. This poses some difficulty in maintaining continuity of Mi'kmaw Knowledge as new fishing locations are being identified while others are disappearing.

It was noted that algae growth in the Sanctuary in July and August 2018 was concerning, as were concerns for higher water temperature and questionable water quality that deterred fishing. Observations of increased removal of forested buffer, increased debris (logs) in Middle River, and sediments in North River were noted in 2018.

In 2020 and early 2021, interviews and in-person sessions were held to discuss fishing experiences. Discussions focused on low water levels, observation of dead salmon in the river (10+ noted), and the delay in the catch and release closure for the Margaree River. While there is literature to support the impacts of temperature on mortality and morbidity, the impacts of catch and release fishing were noted in areas where salmon were aggregating. For example, hooking of salmon on other parts of their body and the behaviour of the fish when that does occur, such as trying to escape regardless of low water conditions. Low water levels as an equal criterion for closing the river to catch and release should also be considered, as well as observations of dead salmon in the river. Understandably, low water levels and high summer temperatures are not normally the case. Given the impact of changing climate and potential impacts to freshwater availability, enhancing the protocol to include other decision-making criteria may prevent future mortality of Atlantic salmon. Furthermore, there is an interest to develop Mi'kmaw harvest rules for the North River should the river continue to exceed the CER.

In 2021, large white lesions on brook trout were observed at Margaree Hatchery pool in the fall. The lesions progressively worsened as the season progressed.

For 2022-2023, Mi'kmaw harvesters have observed that, in the Highlands, snow hasn't accumulated as it had in the past. As such there are concerns with potential for low water and impacts to salmon. Also, the impact of increased flooding events on survival of juvenile salmon because of hurricanes is also a concern. Given the uncertainty around annual climate events, habitat restoration, protection, and alterations must be prioritized to ensure stability of spawning and juvenile rearing habitats. Consideration of low water levels could be incorporated as primary decision-making criteria for consideration in the warm water protocols. Fishers observed are increased abundance in beaver dams in the larger rivers and otter abundance and an increased in seals in and around Baddeck. Beaver dams are known to provide habitat for otters. Other standing concerns are introduced species on natural salmon populations. Particularly concerning are introduced species to the

Margaree River, which is a consistent, salmon producing river that supports Mi'kmaw harvests.

It is noted that that the Margaree River, the only river supporting most salmon harvests in Unama'ki, is located 1.5 to 2 hours from three of the five communities. However, the distance and the rising cost of fuel is a barrier to fishers, especially when providing for community ceremonies, feasts, or providing for Elders. Unama'ki salmon harvesters are interested in learning if, and to what extent, the impact of a small harvest to the North River CER. Information provided by DFO indicate that there would be less impact to the CER if salmon were removed from larger rivers such as the Middle River. Current allocations to Middle River, however, are to Wagmatcook and not to other Mi'kmaw communities in Unama'ki. Recent examination of Middle River (Cape Breton) using Lidar technology revealed there may be differences in the amount of fluvial habitat available to Atlantic salmon. The Mi'kmaq are interested to know if this difference has an impact to CER estimate for Middle Rive and will continue to an update to fluvial habitat in Middle River.

Harvesters noted that striped bass were abundant in the Margaree River and appear to be moving further upriver. Overall, salmon run was observed to be later in the season and harvested in quantities to meet their food, social, and ceremonial needs. In particular, the Hatchery Pool contained many salmon later in the 2024 season, however, it was noted that more salmon were observed in 2023 than 2024. Other pools were observed to have many, aggregated fish. Harvesters also noted that salmon were caught in areas where they would not normally find them. The Swimming Hole, normally an area used for harvest, was a 'bad spot' for spearing as the bottom was no longer visible. It was acceptable for fly fishing but inadequate for spearing due to its depth and darkness. Harvesters attribute this change to the restoration along the bank that created a deeper pool. Changes in sediment, now mud, was observed in Nelson Pool but not in other places. Also observed was foul odor resembling sewage at Little McDaniels Pool. The banks were slippery, and the rocks were slimy and covered with moss. Also noted in 2024 was fungus on salmon in Middle River.

### **Exploitation Rate**

Ideally, equal exploitation of both large and small salmon may be “the soundest conservation measure” (Chaput, 2015, p. 16) and is a similar traditional harvesting strategy used by the Mi'kmaq as harvesting that are offered by Mother Earth (Denny & Fanning, 2016a). However, scientific information on river specific relative abundances of salmon is lacking. Rivers in SFA 18 are described as dominated by large salmon that are mostly female. Small salmon are predominantly male, with females occurring in much smaller proportions (Breau & Chaput, 2012). For SFA 18, conservation requirements are based on the number of large salmon needed to produce a set amount of eggs within the river system.

Mi'kmaw Knowledge indicates that salmon populations have been declining (Denny, Denny, Christmas & Paul, 2013). The exploitation rate of the large (MSW) and small (grilse) salmon will be maintained through

a progressive operational plan implemented by the communities to ensure that this level is not to exceed 27.5%, as recommended by DFO Science (Breau & Chaput, 2012). Current allocations of large salmon are estimated to be at exploitation levels of 15.7% (Breau & Chaput, 2012). Mi'kmaq harvests of salmon were well below the current allocations. In 2022, 33 (27 large and 6 small) salmon were reported to be harvested from the Margaree River; 0 salmon were reported as harvested in the Middle, Baddeck, and North Rivers between June 1, 2023 and December 31, 2023, and again in 2024. Low water levels and high air and water temperatures in 2024 were unprecedented and resulted in aggregations of salmon in pools. A total of 66 salmon harvested (52 large (23 Female, 12 Male, 17 Unknown) and 14 small (6 Male, 8 Unknown) between Jun 1 to Dec 31, 2024. Most of the harvest took place in August and September; over 40 families/events/people were provided with salmon. The Mi'kmaw salmon harvest was higher in 2024 than 2023.

### **SFA 18 TAC**

A total maximum allowable harvest of 655 salmon as 485 large (MSW) (Margaree River and Estuary) and 191 small (grilse) (Margaree River, tributaries, and Estuary and Mabou River and tributaries), and kelt as required (Margaree River only) are permitted (Jan. 1 to May 31). Allocations of large and small salmon for communities that did not have previous access were calculated based on the proportion currently held by the Unama'ki communities. As Mabou River and the Northeast Mabou did not have recent community allocations and the status of that population is currently unknown, only small salmon (grilse) will be permitted to be harvested from the Mabou River (recommendation 2.2. Minister's Advisory Committee on Atlantic Salmon, 2015). Harvests will not be encouraged on the Northeast Mabou River until further assessments have confirmed greater numbers of adult and/or juvenile salmon presence.

The Mi'kmaw kelt fishery is predominantly a by-catch fishery when fishing for trout in the Margaree River. Fishers, however, will retain kelt if the meat content and quality is determined to be consumable, as with recently spawned salmon. Fishers will also retain salmon if it may not survive because of the stress of the fishing activity. The reasons for retaining kelt are based on Mi'kmaw values expressed in *Netukulimk* and fishers do not want to waste salmon (UINR [Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources, 2017]).

The number of large (MSW) and small (grilse) salmon permitted to be harvested in the following rivers/estuaries by the following communities are specified in Table 1. A small allocation of 16 large and 5 small are held in trust by the community of Eskasoni for ceremonial uses such as the annual salmon feast following the cleaning of the statue of St. Anne's held during the annual Mission, or for other events as required.

Table 1. MSW and grilse allocations of SFA 18 Rivers. AR indicates “as required.”

<b>River System</b>	<b>Salmon</b>	<b>Communities</b>	<b>Total Maximum Allocation</b>
Margaree River, tributaries & Estuary	Large (MSW) $\geq 63$ cm fork length	Eskasoni (65 +16 in trust for ceremonial use) Membertou (65) Potlotek (65) Wagmatcook (65) We’koqma’q (65) Acadia (36) Annapolis (36) Bear River (36) Glooscap (36)	485 Large (MSW)
Margaree River and tributaries; Mabou River and tributaries	Small (Grilse) $< 63$ cm fork length	Eskasoni (26 + 5 in trust for ceremonial use) Membertou (26) Potlotek (26) Wagmatcook (26) We’koqma’q (26) Acadia (14) Annapolis (14) Bear River (14) Glooscap (14)	191 Small (Grilse)
Margaree River	Kelt	Eskasoni Membertou Potlotek Wagmatcook We’koqma’q Acadia Annapolis Bear River Glooscap	As required

**SFA 19 TAC**

A total maximum allowable harvest of 50 MSW and 50 grilse is allocated to the Mi’kmaw communities of Eskasoni, Membertou, Potlotek, We’koqma’q and Wagmatcook (Table 2). The Mi’kmaq request that this allocation be maintained and will decide whether fishing will occur for 2023 following on DFO summer and fall counts, Mi’kmaw Knowledge and meeting of the Unama’ki Mi’kmaw Salmon Advisory Committee. Communication regarding the status at that time will be directed to Mi’kmaw salmon fishers following the summer and fall surveys.

Wagmatcook will retain the allocation of 10 salmon as either MSW or grilse for food, social and ceremonial purposes for Middle River and Baddeck River. The community voluntarily does not fish these allocations and actively discourage their members from harvesting salmon in these rivers. Signs to communicate the status of the salmon population are posted at each river.

Table 2. MSW and grilse allocations of for North, Baddeck and Middle Rivers. \*Indicates “as required.”

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

## Governance

The ANSMC is the governing body for the Mi’kmaq of Nova Scotia that strives to balance collective identity of the Mi’kmaq of Nova Scotia with community autonomy imposed through *Indian Act* legislation (Denny & Fanning, 2016b). The Chief(s) with the Fisheries portfolio, under the direction of the ANSMC may authorize changes to be made in this management plan due to the status populations of salmon in any designated river system or region in Nova Scotia. The Portfolio Lead(s) will take into consideration Mi’kmaw scientific advice, Traditional Knowledge and information from other sources as provided. The primary source of this information will be acquired through a newly created governance process for the Mi’kmaq. As the CHP pertains to rivers in Mi’kmaw district of Unama’kik (Cape Breton), the governance committee is led by Unama’ki Institute of Natural Resources (UINR).

The Unama’ki Mi’kmaw Salmon Advisory Committee consists of representation from UINR, KMK, the Mi’kmaq Grand Council, community fishery managers and salmon fishers. The committee provides a process for community input as the mechanism to advise the Mi’kmaw leadership on observed abundance of adult Atlantic salmon returns to the rivers of Unama’ki, and rivers currently identified in the CHP for Salmon. The goals of the committee are to share harvest information internally and externally, make recommendations to the Portfolio Lead(s) based on the best available knowledge and guiding principle of *Netukulimk*, communicate recommendations to communities in an effective and timely manner, and provide the opportunity for communities to bring their concerns to the attention of UINR. The committee meets four times a year (winter, spring, summer, and fall) to initiate the progressive implementation of this CHP. If the salmon abundance is observed to be very low as compared to experiential knowledge or other sources of information, the group will provide recommendations to the ANSMC that then goes to community leadership for support prior to implementation and/or amendment (Denny & Fanning, 2016b). **This occurs following the summer swim thrus for Middle, Baddeck, and North Rivers. Given the low returns of Atlantic salmon in 2024, the same process will be applied to the Margaree River in 2025 following the summer harvest (late August to early September).**

**Individual Catch Limits**

Communities will set tag and/or catch limits for individual community members. The community may implement such limitations at their discretion.

**Tag Distribution**

Each community will be responsible for the distribution of tags, if they choose to use tags, within the community. Given the conservative allocations for many of the rivers, tags will be distributed in a progressive manner for SFA 19 tags to the North River based on advice from community fishery managers, DFO assessments, and the 'Unama'ki Mi'kmaw Salmon Advisory Committee' established under the Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources (UINR).

**Monitoring**

Communities will be responsible for monitoring of their salmon harvest through community guardian programs or fishery department. UINR will coordinate guardian presence on the SFA 18b rivers during times of fishing as described in Recommendation 5.4 (Minister's Advisory Committee on Atlantic Salmon, 2015).

**Responsibility**

Catch data is important for annual population assessments. Mi'kmaw 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. Efforts have improved in the quantity, quality, and timing of catch statistics provided to DFO for their science assessments.

Improvement in providing catch information is recommended (recommendation 11.2, Minister's Advisory Committee on Atlantic Salmon, 2015). Catch data will be reported to community fishery departments from which the tag was issued. Communities will report catches to their coordinating AAROM body (Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources or Mi'kmaw Conservation Group) or to UINR if not represented by an AAROM organization, as required, which will provide the data to the Mi'kmaw Salmon Advisory Committee for inclusion in DFO's science assessments.

In season reporting will be an essential part of the progressive advice coming from the AAROMs and the 'in-season advisory committee' with respect to tag distribution within each community. ***Should a low estimate of salmon return to Middle River in 2025, a working group meeting will be coordinated following the fall swim-thrus. This meeting will review the number of observed salmon to discuss if further conservation measures for the recreational catch and release fishery are required.***

Catch data must include river fished, number and sex of grilse (small salmon) and/or MSW (large salmon) caught between June 1, 2025 and December 31, 2025, to be reported to DFO by January 30, 2026. Kelt captures (salmon caught between Jan. 1 and May 31, 2026) will be reported to DFO by July 31, 2026. Additional information can be provided such as spawning condition, fishing days, methods, and other observations.

River Name	Month of Capture	# Large Salmon (≥63 cm)			# Small salmon (<63 cm)		
		Female	Male	Unknown	Female	Male	Unknown

**Quota Reconciliation**

N/A

**Regular Season**

June 1 to December 31, 2025 for bright salmon, and January 1 to May 31, 2026 for Kelt.

**Other Regular Closures**

As allocations divided into large (MSW) and small (grilse) are the primary conservation measure, there will be no additional restrictions on timing of the fishery.

**Closed Areas**

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, 2025 to May 31, 2026. **These areas do not meet conservation requirements for salmon and salmon populations remain at critically low levels (DFO 2023b).**

The Mi'kmaq will respect the current closure upstream the area known as “The Benches” in the North River despite the salmon population slightly exceeding the conservation egg requirement in previous years.

There will be no fishing for salmon for food, social and ceremonial needs in the Cheticamp River, which is under the jurisdiction of Parks Canada. KMK is currently negotiating access once a science assessment is completed. It is anticipated that Mi'kmaq will take part in the assessment.

**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**

No more than one trap net per river permitted.

<b>Gear Specifications</b>	Traditional methods of fishing include spearing, snaring, dip netting, angling and fly. Night fishing with a light source is permitted. For community harvesting effort, seining, weirs, and trap nets are permitted for use in rivers.
<b>Participants</b>	<p>The CHP applies to status Mi'kmaq from the communities of Annapolis Valley, Bear River, Eskasoni, Glooscap, Membertou, Potlotek, Wagmatcook, Wasoqopa'q, and We'koqma'q.</p> <p>Proof of identity and membership (valid Status Cards) must be carried when fishing. Should non-Mi'kmaq assist Mi'kmaw members of the communities of Annapolis Valley, Bear River, Eskasoni, Glooscap, Membertou, Potlotek, Wagmatcook, Wasoqopa'q, and We'koqma'q, documents issued and signed by either the community's Chief or Fishery Manager must accompany the fisher.</p>
<b>Vessels</b>	The use of small vessels is permitted when fishing from a trap net or weir.
<b>Observer Coverage</b>	N/A
<b>License Fees</b>	N/A
<b>Other</b>	<p>This plan is not intended to reduce community allocations.</p> <p>Since 2007, the Nova Scotia Department of Fisheries &amp; Aquaculture carried out an Atlantic Salmon stocking program to benefit the sport fishery and to offset mortalities from the catch and release fishery. In Cape Breton, four rivers are stocked: Margaree, Mabou, Middle and Baddeck.</p> <p>KMK, UINR and Mi'kmaw Conservation Group (MCG) will work to develop communication material for the Mi'kmaw communities on the status of salmon populations in Nova Scotia.</p> <p>KMK, UINR and MCG will assist communities with the development of harvest report cards for salmon.</p> <p>UINR, KMK, and MCG will assist DFO to conduct surveys to determine the status of salmon populations for rivers in question.</p> <p>UINR will work collaboratively with DFO to develop a model to estimate Mi'kmaw salmon harvest.</p> <p>UINR will pursue relationship-building opportunities with the recreational fishery such as attending annual association meetings to provide updates, improve communication, and enhance understanding of Mi'kmaw salmon fishing in Unama'ki (Cape Breton).</p>

## References

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