

September 2025



Maw-lukutijik **Saqmaq**
Assembly of Nova Scotia
Mi'kmaq Chiefs

Moose Update

The Maw-lukutijik Saqmaq (Assembly), with recommendations from the Moose Management Team, Mi'kmaq organizations, harvesters, and community members **will extend the moratorium on moose harvesting for another year.**

This decision reflects the continued concern for the moose population and a strong, ongoing commitment of the Mi'kmaq Nation to conservation and protecting the species. This year's moose survey shows a slight recovery of the population, but the numbers are still below sustainable levels.

This summer, we held a webinar on the population numbers with Mi'kmaq community members, and we thank those who participated and shared their thoughts. During that session, we heard strong support for conservation and how important our Treaty and Aboriginal Rights are. Many saw the need to continue to prioritize recovery now, so that harvesting can continue in the future.



2025 Moose Survey Results

- Population shows signs of growth, now estimated at approximately 1,900 moose – up from 835 in last year's survey.
- Survey indicates more calves and bulls in the population.
- Moose were seen across a wider area, including areas further south.

The 2025 aerial moose population survey was conducted from in all five Moose Management Zones and the Cape Breton Highlands National Park. KMK, UINR, CMM, Parks Canada and the Department of Natural Resources and Renewables all took part in the survey.

“Wela'liek to all our community members who helped us last year to ensure that not a single moose was taken off the mountain. This demonstrates to all those in the province of Nova Scotia that the Mi'kmaq will always take the recovery of our species very seriously,” said Chief Cory Julian, Assembly's Natural Resources Co-Lead.

One year without hunting has made a difference—but recovery takes time. In order to have a sustainable harvest, the population needs to be around 3000 - 3600 animals. We are not there yet. But this does give us time to figure out what our next steps will be when the population has recovered to sustainable levels.

While the root causes of the decline are still not fully understood, the Moose Management Team hopes that this gives us more time to better understand what is happening in the highlands and to our moose population.



“As co-managers of the land, we have a responsibility to prioritize protection of the species and long-term planning. We all agree that opening the harvest now would be premature. But we’re excited for the opportunity to open discussions on Mi’kmaw-led stewardship and what steps we can take as a nation to ensure that the moose population stays healthy, once fully recovered,” said Chief Gerald Toney, Assembly’s Natural Resources Co-Lead.

Affirmed by the 1990 Sparrow Decision, Aboriginal Rights come after conservation. With Rights comes the duty to protect the species—not only for today, but for future generations. In the coming year, outreach will be done in the Mi’kmaw communities to help the Nation build and lead a plan - grounded in our knowledge, values, and traditions – on how the Mi’kmaw harvest will look in the future.

“We heard from those on the webinar that it is important, now more than ever that we develop a L’nu’-led, community-based moose recovery plan—one rooted in stewardship, culture, and accountability. This plan will need the input of Mi’kmaw harvesters and community members. Only the Mi’kmaq can determine when and how Treaty and Aboriginal Rights harvesting will resume,” said Chief Toney.

Together, we are working to protect a species important to the Mi’kmaq and to Nova Scotia. Wela’liek for your continued support and commitment to moose conservation.

Detailed Population Numbers

The Greater Highlands Ecosystem (GHE) is made up of the Cape Breton Highlands National Park and Moose Management Zones 1, 2, 5, and most of 3.

GHE moose population estimates:

- **2025:** 1900 (+/-)
- **2024:** 835 (+/-)
- **2023:** 1,552 (+/-)
- **2020:** 2,158 (+/-)
- **2015:** 4,777 (+/-)

These numbers tell us that the population is still far below sustainable levels.



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