

# KMK Newsletter

November 2025



## MESSAGE FROM KMK

We're working to continue our quarterly newsletters with this being our last issue of 2025. Our newsletters provide updates on what our team has been working on over the past few months, so if you see anything that you'd like to learn more about, as always, please feel free to reach out to our team!



## Eagle Feather Ceremony

On September 18, Members of the Assembly came together with, Provincial representatives, and members of the Judiciary for a ceremony in Millbrook where 25 eagle feathers were blessed for use in Nova Scotia's courts.

Since 2018, Indigenous witnesses, accused individuals, victims and others appearing in the Nova Scotia Courts have had the option to take legal affirmations with an eagle feather. Those testifying may hold the eagle feather, or have it placed in front of them, while affirming to tell the truth. Individuals are also permitted to bring their own eagle feathers with them to court.

Eagle feathers, prepared by Jacklyn Paul and beaded by Ashley Augustine, Lesley Knockwood and Samantha Aubert, were blessed by Elder Patsy Paul-Martin and will be distributed to courthouses across Nova Scotia. Ceremony speakers included Assembly's Justice Co-Leads, Chief Sidney Peters and Chief John Bernard, Jacklyn Paul, Associate Deputy Minister Michelle Higgins, and Chief Judge Perry Borden. Each reflecting on the cultural significance of eagle feathers and the importance of Mi'kmaw culture being reflected in court processes.



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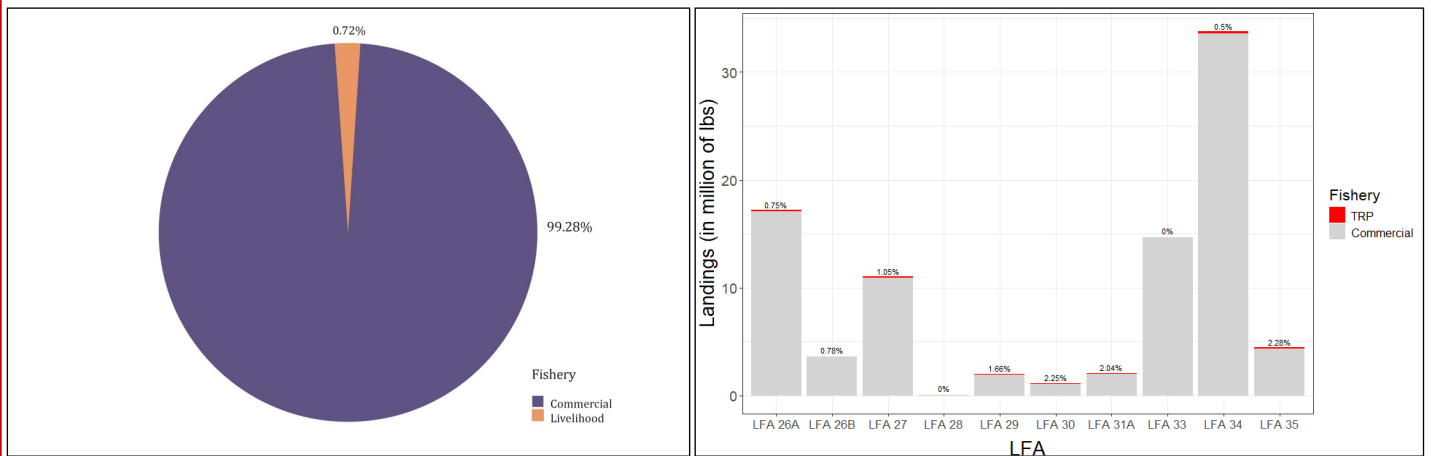
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# TRP Fisheries Update

Our Fisheries Implementation Team has created charts to compare lobster landings from the Treaty Rights Protected (TRP) harvest with the larger commercial lobster industry in Nova Scotia. In the 2024-2025 season, commercial landings totalled about 90 million pounds, while the TRP harvest was about 644,000 pounds. This means the TRP harvest makes up less than one percent of the overall fishery. These numbers show how small the current TRP activity is and why more access is needed for our communities.

The TRP fishery is managed through a shared understanding between eight Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq communities and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. We have a constitutional and Treaty Right to earn a livelihood from fishing, but the current share to the industry is far below what is needed to support that. Our estimates suggest that meaningful access would require about four percent of total landings, compared to the current 0.72%. Expanding access and allocation is essential to ensure we can fully exercise our Rights.



## SPECIES AT RISK

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**PROTECTING SPECIES THROUGH MI'KMAQ KNOWLEDGE AND STEWARDSHIP**  
Species at risk are plants, animals, and other organisms that are threatened, endangered, or extinct in the wild.

### WISQOQ (Black Ash)

**WHAT IS IT?**  
Wisqoq is a slow-growing, moderately long-lived deciduous tree.

**WHERE DOES IT GROW?**  
It thrives in wetlands, mixed woodlands, and disturbed areas with nutrient-rich, loamy or moisture-retaining soils. It doesn't tolerate shade.

**WHEN IS IT HARVESTED?**  
Due to its status as a species at risk, harvesting is avoided unless absolutely necessary. Traditionally, Mi'kmaq would harvest in spring or late fall for weaving.

**HOW IS IT HARVESTED?**  
If harvesting is required, boles are selected, bark is removed for various uses, and the wood is pounded—following traditional practices.

### MIKJIKJ (Wood Turtle)

**WHAT ARE THEY?**  
Wood turtles, a representation of wisdom, longevity, and connection to the environment, are one of four species of turtles found in Nova Scotia. They are known to have reddish-orange coloring on the undersides of their throats, tails, and legs with scaly carapace backs that represents tree-bark.

**WHERE ARE THEY FOUND?**  
Wood turtles inhabit wetlands, streams, and rivers, as well as meadows, forests, and farmlands adjacent to water and while they have geographic concentrations, wood turtles are found all throughout Nova Scotia.

**WHAT ARE THEIR KNOWN THREATS?**  
While climate change is a factor in the decline of most species, human activity and loss of habitat are the two main causes of the decline of this species.

### PLAMU (Atlantic Salmon)

**WHAT ARE THEY?**  
Plamu (Atlantic salmon) are migratory fish native to the North Atlantic and its nearby rivers. They hatch in freshwater, migrate to the ocean, and return upstream to spawn in the same rivers where they were born. These fish play a crucial role in both ecosystems and the cultural heritage of Indigenous and coastal communities.

**WHERE ARE THEY FOUND?**  
Atlantic salmon thrive in cold, clear freshwater rivers and coastal waters in eastern Canada. Atlantic salmon once were found in several rivers flowing into the Inner Bay of Fundy, but now survive in only a few monitored rivers like Big Salmon River, Gaspereau River and those in Fundy National Park.

**WHAT ARE THEIR KNOWN THREATS?**  
Atlantic salmon face significant challenges, including habitat loss, climate change, overfishing and the impacts of farmed salmon on wild populations.

### PIPING PLOVER

**WHAT ARE THEY?**  
Piping plovers are small, sand-colored shorebirds that use camouflage to protect themselves. They're biocultural indicators of healthy coastal ecosystems, which are also important to the Mi'kmaq for resource use. During breeding season, they display a black breast and forehead band, orange legs, and a short bill with a black tip.

**WHERE ARE THEY FOUND?**  
In Nova Scotia, Piping plovers arrive in late April to breed and migrate south by early September. They nest on wide, sandy or gravel beaches and often return to the same sites each year, making it easier to identify and protect their core habitats.

**WHAT ARE THEIR KNOWN THREATS?**  
Habitat loss, vehicle traffic, and predation are the leading causes of this species decline.

### APUKSIKN (Canada Lynx)

**WHAT ARE THEY?**  
Traditionally used for clothing and supplemental food, Apuksikn is a medium-sized wild cat recognized by its long black ear tufts, short black-tipped tail, and large snowshoe-like paws. As a keystone predator, Apuksikn plays a vital role in maintaining balance in snowshoe hare populations.

**WHERE ARE THEY FOUND?**  
Apuksikn was wiped out from mainland Nova Scotia in the early 1900s, but still lives in Unama'ki. They mostly live in boreal forests and mainly eat snowshoe hares. In fact, how many lynx there are depends on how many hares are around.

**WHAT ARE THEIR KNOWN THREATS?**  
Loss of habitat and forest fragmentation from logging and development have led to Apuksikn's decline. Other threats include competition with bobcats and coyotes, possible overtrapping, and climate change.

### TIA'M (Moose)

**WHAT ARE THEY?**  
Tia'm are sacred to the Mi'kmaq, symbolizing strength, resilience, wisdom, and courage. They've long provided food, clothing, and tools. These brown-black mammals are the largest of the deer family, known for their stocky build and overhanging muzzle. Males are recognized by their throat dewlap and broad antlers used for rutting competition.

**WHERE ARE THEY FOUND?**  
Mi'kma'ki is home to two moose subspecies: the endangered mainland moose and the Alberta subspecies in Cape Breton. Although few in number, mainland moose are spread throughout the province. Their habits vary—some travel vast distances, while others remain in a small area.

**WHAT ARE THEIR KNOWN THREATS?**  
Tiam face decline due to habitat loss, poaching, parasites like brainworm and winter tick, predators, road access, and climate change.

Over the past few weeks, we've highlighted species found right here in Mi'kma'ki to raise awareness and inspire.

Together, let's learn, share, and protect these species at risk, for generations to come.

# Marine Renewables Canada Conference

Marine Renewables Canada (MRC) holds an annual conference to bring together industry, regulators, Indigenous representatives and contractors involved in offshore wind, in-stream tidal and other marine energy sectors. The event focuses on collaboration, networking, and building relationships. This year's conference took place November 12-14 in Halifax.

KMK staff have attended and presented in previous years, and the growing presence of Mi'kmaw representatives reflects the industry's increasing interest in collaboration.

KMK's Energy & Mines Advisor participated in a panel/workshop titled *Stronger Relationships: Netukulimk, Etuaptmumk and the Future of Ocean Energy*, alongside Chief Sidney Peters and Executive Directors of the Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq and FORCE. The panel discussed the Chiefs' recent visit to Kirkwall, Scotland to explore an in-stream tidal project, the integration of Mi'kmaw knowledge in marine energy initiatives, and the need for industry to work collaboratively with the Mi'kmaq.

Premier Tim Houston delivered the keynote address, reiterating his support for offshore wind and in-stream tidal energy and emphasizing Nova Scotia's potential as an energy hub. While many conference sessions highlighted the importance of working with the Mi'kmaq, the Premier did not reference collaboration with Mi'kmaq or Rightsholders in his remarks.



# Species at Risk Symposium

KMK, in collaboration with UNIR and CMM, hosted a gathering on November 19 in Truro to discuss Species at Risk.

The event featured presentations from Malcolm Fenech, who shared a summary of the Maliamu'kik Msit Ko'kqmanaq Project and its collaborative ecosystem management efforts within the Bras d'Or Lakes Biosphere Reserve; Chelsey Whalen and Anthony King provided updates on Black Ash and related projects; Lachlan Riehl shared recent findings from research on St. Croix River plamu; and Sherilyn Young spoke on the importance of doing right by Species at Risk. The gathering also included breakout sessions and an open discussion on key issues facing species at risk. Thank you to all who responded to our survey expressing interest in attending this event!



# Energy and Mining Updates

## Mersey River Wind Farm

Consultation continues on Mersey River Wind Farm Inc.'s Wind Project. Since receiving the Environmental Assessment approval, the proponent has continued working closely with Wasoqopa'q First Nation through the Mersey River Wind Farm Working Group, which meets quarterly with local knowledge holders and Elders. The project has also been approved for \$25 million in funding through the Smart Renewables and Electrification Pathways Program (SREPs).

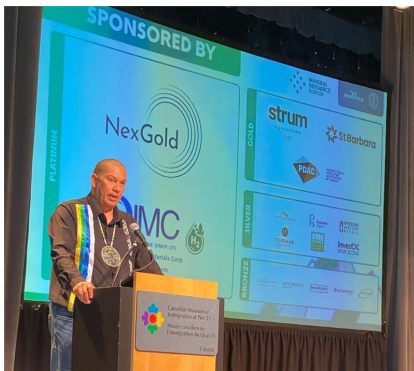


## Nova Scotia Energy Board

KMK and the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Chiefs remain active interveners in several matters before the Nova Scotia Energy Board, including a proposed electricity rate increase for all Nova Scotians. These interventions are important opportunities for the Mi'kmaq to provide insight as significant power consumers in the province.

## Goldboro Gold Project - NexGold

Consultation continues on NexGold's proposed Goldboro Gold Project in Goldboro County. NexGold has now received its *Fisheries Act* Authorization (FAA) from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, the final major approval required for this open-pit gold mine. This approval was fast-tracked through the final stages of consultation, with minimal Mi'kmaq input reflected in the final FAA. Two approvals were issued—one for construction and one for operations. The proponent currently holds a Benefits Agreement with the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Chiefs.



## Mineral Resource Forum

Chief John Leonard Bernard, Assembly Portfolio Co-Lead for Economic Development, attended the 2025 Mineral Resource Forum hosted by the Department of Natural Resources and the Mining Society of Nova Scotia, along with KMK's Energy & Mines Advisor and Benefits Officer. This two-day forum brought together government, industry and First Nations to discuss mineral resource projects taking place in Nova Scotia. Chief Bernard provided opening remarks about the importance of working collaboratively with the Mi'kmaq.

## Community Engagement: L'sitkuk First Nation

KMK's Nova Scotia Power (NSP) Early Engagement Coordinator and the Senior Energy & Mines Advisor were invited to attend the 2025 L'sitkuk Harvest Feast. The event included breakfast, the lighting of the sacred fire, and opportunities to connect with community members. At the event, NSP provided a brief update on ongoing and upcoming projects in the L'sitkuk area. Wela'liek for the invitation!



## Chiefs Meet with Province on Energy and Mining

Earlier this Fall, Assembly's Energy & Mining Portfolio Co-Leads met with the Ministers for Energy, Environment & Climate Change, and L'nu Affairs to discuss the priorities of their respective portfolios, and to build a Nation-to-Nation relationship with these Ministers. After leaving this discussion, the group saw Todd Labrador, a well-known Mi'kmaq artisan from Wasoqpa'q, who stopped to take a picture with the leaders alongside one of the birch bark canoes he made.

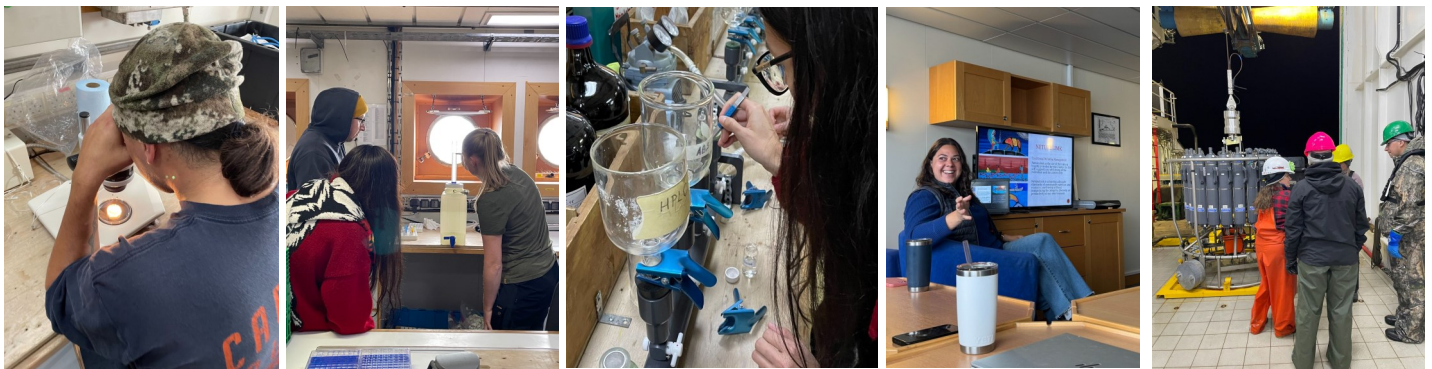
# Advancing Science in the St. Anns Bank MPA

In 2023, the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia and the Government of Canada reaffirmed their commitment to a Nation-to-Nation relationship and to collaborative governance of the St. Anns Bank Marine Protected Area (MPA). Located off the northeast coast of Unama'ki, this area holds shares important meaning for the Mi'kmaq and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO).

This fall, Mi'kmaw partners joined DFO scientists aboard the *RRS James Cook* for a science mission from Dartmouth to Newfoundland. The at-sea operations focused on knowledge sharing through storytelling and hands-on learning, while recovering six passive acoustic monitoring moorings and collecting oceanographic data and samples from stations in the Cabot Strait and within the St. Anns Bank MPA.

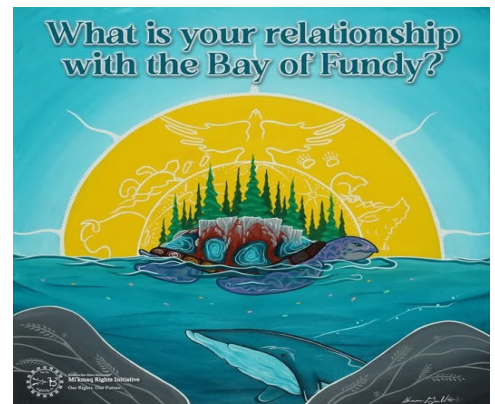
The Cabot Strait is a busy and ecologically vital waterway, with significant vessel traffic including commercial shipping and a major ferry route. It also serves as a movement corridor for whales entering and leaving the Gulf of St. Lawrence, including the endangered North Atlantic right whale. Because vessel strikes pose a serious risk to these whales, passive acoustic monitoring is essential. By detecting whale calls, researchers can determine when and where whales are present and support more informed decisions about how to protect them.

Our team contributed to marine mammal and seabird data collection throughout the region. The survey concluded in the collaboratively managed St. Anns Bank MPA, where we gathered data and samples to support ongoing work to better understand the physical, chemical, and biological oceanographic conditions of this important area. Mi'kmaw Earth Keepers shared their knowledge of the region and gained experience with complex laboratory procedures while at sea. We also collected environmental DNA (eDNA) samples to help evaluate species diversity within the MPA. The skills and relationships strengthened during this voyage will support ongoing monitoring of the collaboratively governed MPA and will be applied to other marine areas significant to the Mi'kmaw of Unama'ki.



We are creating an inspiring video about the importance of protecting the **Bay of Fundy**. We need your stories and invite you to share your love for the important place. Whether it's a captivating photo, heartfelt poem, creative art piece or fun video, let your creativity shine!

Together, we can make a powerful statement about why this special place needs protection for future generations. The most thoughtful and creative submissions will receive a gift from KMK as a thank you! Send contributions to [tdunne@mikmaqrights.com](mailto:tdunne@mikmaqrights.com) and help us spread the message.



# Moose Survey

We want to hear from you!

The moose population has seen significant changes in recent years, and we want to know how this impacts you, your family and your community. This survey is designed to gather Mi'kmaw perspectives around moose harvesting and its impact on Treaty Rights, food security and cultural practices.

Your voice matters. Help shape the future of moose harvesting by sharing your thoughts.



# KMK Holiday Shutdown

All KMK offices will be closed from December 18, 2025 to January 5, 2026 for our holiday shutdown.



*Wti-Nipi-Atasutma  
aq Puzuit Puna'ine*

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year from Maw-lukutijik Saqmaq & Kwilmu'kw Maw-klusuaqn. Wishing you peace & prosperity ahead.

[www.mikmaqrighs.com](http://www.mikmaqrighs.com)



# N'multis aqq Wela'lin

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