



# Indigenous Perspectives and Roles in Atlantic Salmon Conservation

A Special Session of the Council of NASCO

Thursday 8 June 2023







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## **Steering Committee**

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# CNL(23)88

## Indigenous Perspectives and Roles in Atlantic Salmon Conservation

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# Executive Summary

In 2016, the NASCO Council held an International Year of the Salmon (IYS) in partnership with the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC) to raise awareness of the factors driving salmon abundance, the environmental and anthropogenic challenges they face and the measures being taken to address these. For NASCO, the focal event of the IYS in the North Atlantic was a two-day Symposium held in Tromsø, Norway entitled '*Managing the Atlantic Salmon in a Rapidly Changing Environment – Management Challenges and Possible Responses*'. Commencing from the Symposium were a number of recommendations to the NASCO Council on possible responses that NASCO can take to help conserve Atlantic salmon in a rapidly changing environment. In 2022, the Council of NASCO discussed the recommendations arising from the 2019 IYS Symposium in Tromsø and concluded that, of the recommendations, enhancing the participation of Indigenous peoples in NASCO was a priority that NASCO should act on urgently. Canada strongly expressed support for this and requested that there be a Special Session at the Annual Meeting in 2023 on Indigenous perspectives on Atlantic salmon. The Council agreed to the Special Session with the direction that Canada would liaise with the Secretariat and other interested Parties to assemble a steering committee to do this.

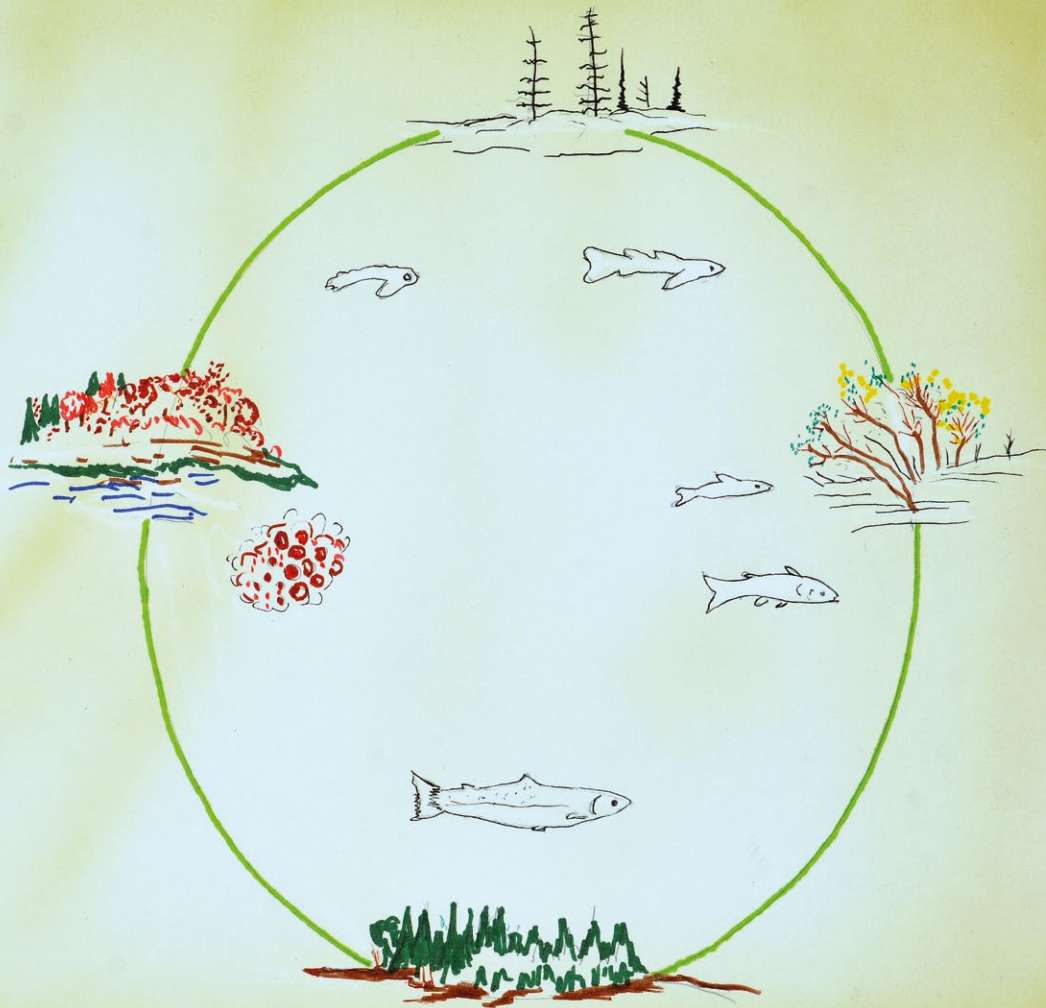
Under the leadership of Canada, the Steering Committee organized a three-hour Special Session titled: '*Indigenous Perspectives and Roles in Atlantic Salmon Conservation*'. The Special Session brought together nine Indigenous guest speakers and panellists from North America and Europe. The overarching objective was to launch a dialogue between NASCO and Indigenous peoples by increasing NASCO delegates' understanding of Indigenous peoples' connections to, and experience with, wild Atlantic salmon, including the legal, social, cultural and governance challenges that they face in their respective regions.

Upon conclusion, the Special Session provided the Parties to NASCO the necessary knowledge and perspectives of Indigenous peoples for the Council to make informed decisions regarding the future of NASCO and the participation of Indigenous peoples in its work. A common message from all the Indigenous speakers was to emphasise that partnering with Indigenous peoples and including them in discussions is an essential and necessary element, not only for the future preservation of wild Atlantic salmon but for the future success of NASCO as a conservation organization. Being treated as distinct partners with a common goal to work together to develop solutions to preserve salmon was mentioned repeatedly.

Many statements and suggestions were made by the speakers and Parties both during the presentations and the Panel Discussion that are emphasised throughout the Report. Below, the Committee has brought forward and synthesised some of these statements and suggestions for the Parties' extra consideration in their efforts to decide how best to increase participation of Indigenous peoples into NASCO. These are:

- 1. Indigenous people have historically been excluded from many important discussions that impact their livelihood, land and rights. Indigenous involvement that is sustainable, institutionalised and ongoing is actually reconciliation in action. As such, it should be self-evident to NASCO why Indigenous peoples should be more integrated into its committees and business: it should not be the obligation of Indigenous peoples to justify themselves to NASCO but rather NASCO's duty, as an effective modern-day international organization, to effectively incorporate Indigenous peoples and their perspectives into its policies, guidelines, committees, business and strategies.**
- 2. Incorporating Indigenous knowledge into NASCO's discussions and policies regarding Atlantic salmon will allow each country to make better informed conservation decisions in their borders for marginalised populations, who are significantly affected by salmon migration and fishing patterns. Participation of Indigenous attendees would also allow for discussions around concerns and interest, including outcomes of scientific assessments, local knowledge, values, perspectives, implications of conservation measures, and discuss conservation measures that may potentially differ from those discussed during NASCO and offer different perspectives.**





## Introduction



# Introduction

The journey of Indigenous peoples towards the recognition and protection of their distinct identities, way of life and ancestral rights continues to be a challenge around the world. In light of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)*, NASCO is among the very few regional fisheries management organizations attempting to take concrete steps to consider appropriate inclusion of Indigenous peoples and knowledge into its work.

In [2019](#), the International Year of the Salmon Symposium held in Tromsø, Norway, entitled ‘Managing the Atlantic Salmon in a Rapidly Changing Environment – Management Challenges and Possible Responses’ resulted in a number of recommendations encouraging NASCO to consider ways to enhance the participation of Indigenous peoples in the NASCO organization.

In its report to Council in 2019, the Symposium Steering Committee stated:

*‘Most of the issues facing wild salmon are the result of human activities, either directly (e.g., overfishing; aquaculture; habitat destruction, etc.) or indirectly (e.g., climate change). In many cases, existing scientific knowledge of these issues is sufficient to develop potential solutions. However, as many speakers pointed out, our inability to implement timely and effective solutions is often hampered by socio-economic factors. These include conflict of interest, lack of consensus, mistrust, diversity of environmental values and ethics, ineffective governance, failure to consider alternative perspectives (e.g., Indigenous perspectives), and difficulties in motivating governments, communities, and individuals to take appropriate action. Thus, restoration and conservation of Atlantic salmon require attention to the human dimensions from both scientific (i.e., understanding human values, attitudes, and behaviours) and management perspectives (i.e., applying human dimensions knowledge to developing and implementing solutions).’*

It also noted that addressing human dimensions

*‘would help to strengthen the relationship between wild salmon and people and enhance our capacity to develop solutions, address constraints, take action, and increase the resilience and adaptive capacity of social-ecological systems in support of salmon conservation.’*

Additionally, the Symposium Steering Committee noted that representatives for Indigenous peoples in Canada and Norway spoke at the Symposium and that:

*‘indigenous peoples’ knowledge systems capture generational data that can include detailed observations about changes in environmental conditions, species abundance, and species behaviour. Given limits to government resources for data collection and monitoring, these additional knowledge systems make significant contributions to salmon restoration, conservation, and management.’*

It also noted that:

*‘addressing human dimensions requires incorporation of traditional and local knowledge and indigenous perspectives in activities related to salmon science, conservation and management.’*

On the basis of these comments, the Tromsø Steering Committee made two recommendations, as follows:

#### **Recommendation 4**

*‘Given the advances in the understanding of human dimensions and the importance of incorporating indigenous and local knowledge into salmon conservation, NASCO should update and modernize its 2004 ‘Guidelines for Incorporating Social and Economic Factors in Decisions under the Precautionary Approach’. This update should include recent advances in human dimensions and the incorporation of traditional and local knowledge and indigenous perspectives.’*

#### **Recommendation 5**

*‘Recognizing the importance of salmon to indigenous peoples and the role that indigenous peoples play in salmon conservation, NASCO should improve the participation of indigenous people in NASCO.’*

In [2022](#), the Council of NASCO discussed the recommendations arising from the 2019 IYS Symposium in Tromsø, to decide how they would be addressed. During the meeting, the President informed delegates that the Parties had identified enhancing the participation of Indigenous peoples in NASCO as a potential priority area and indicated that there was a willingness to act on this urgently. Canada noted support for this and requested that there be a Special Session at the Annual Meeting in 2023 on Indigenous perspectives on Atlantic salmon. In conclusion, the Council agreed that:

*‘there would be a Special Session on indigenous perspectives on Atlantic salmon during the 2023 Annual Meeting. Canada would liaise with the Secretariat and other interested Parties on this.’*

Following the 2022 Annual Meeting Canada led the assembly of a Steering Committee supported by the NASCO Secretariat to organize the Special Session to be held at the 2023 Annual Meeting. The Steering Committee included Indigenous representatives from Canada and long-time NASCO delegates Carl McLean and Shelley Denny; Doug Bliss, Nadia Hamoui and Isabelle Morisset from Canada; and Dan Kircheis from the United States.

## **Objectives of the Special Session**

The overarching objective of the Special Session was to launch a dialogue between NASCO and Indigenous peoples about their perspectives on wild Atlantic salmon, in view of informing future decisions regarding the participation of Indigenous peoples in NASCO. The session aimed to increase understanding of Indigenous peoples’ connections to and experience with wild Atlantic salmon, including the challenges that they face. Additionally, the importance of Indigenous peoples’ participation in the conservation and sustainable management of Atlantic salmon was explored, to set the stage for a meaningful discussion to inform a potential approach toward better engagement of Indigenous peoples at NASCO. The individual objectives were:

- 1. Understanding the importance of wild Atlantic Salmon for Indigenous peoples through international and regional perspectives.**
  - a. Presentations on the Indigenous relationship with Atlantic salmon, including the challenges that declining salmon populations and current management practices pose on Indigenous peoples.**
- 2. Understanding the current role of Indigenous peoples in Canada in the conservation and management of wild Atlantic salmon.**
  - a. Examples of successful Indigenous collaboration and / or leadership in Atlantic salmon conservation and management initiatives.**
- 3. Discussing areas where Indigenous peoples could enhance NASCO’s objectives, as well as how Indigenous peoples’ participation in NASCO might be enhanced, considering the legal impediment in the NASCO Convention.**
  - a. This objective was delivered through a panel discussion, building on the presentations under the first and second objectives.**

# Opening Prayer

A prayer was given by Keptin Stephen Augustine of the Mi'kmaq Grand Council, Siksniit District, New Brunswick, Canada.

## Opening Remarks from Chief Terry Richardson, Chief of Pabineau First Nation, New Brunswick, Canada

Hello, my name is Chief Terry Richardson, and I'm the Chief of Pabineau First Nation, a little community in northern New Brunswick.

Thank you so much for the invitation to come here. Welcome. Welcome to the unceded, unsundered territory of the Mi'kmaq, Wolastoqiyik and Peskotomuhkati people, in the province of New Brunswick, a land that we have shared for hundreds of years, and we continue to share.

In that message, I want you to understand that we have to be partners. I love seeing a crowd here, a diverse crowd, and everybody has one common goal. That common goal is to save our Atlantic salmon, our wild Atlantic salmon. What can we do to ensure that our salmon are going to be here for, not only our generation, but in our First Nation culture, our next seven generations, and your next seven generations as well to enjoy?

It's not only a First Nation issue, it's everybody's issue and we have to address it. Now, people will say, well, the Atlantic salmon are okay, but trust me, Mother Earth is hurting right now. I don't know if you've had a talk about climate change recently. We all know it's changing. Trust me. I was just at an energy symposium for four days on nuclear energy. People say, well, how does that go with Atlantic salmon? Well, because it's all part of the environment. We have to look outside the box. We have to start looking for solutions to get rid of fossil fuels. We have to do something to address those issues. And SMNR<sup>1</sup> technology is one of the things that we're looking at.

But getting back to Atlantic salmon, people say, well, how do you know that salmon are hurting? How do you know there's an issue with Atlantic salmon? One only has to look within our First Nation communities. We have rivers that no longer have Atlantic salmon in them. I have rivers in my area that no longer have Atlantic salmon, who used to have Atlantic salmon. We go to our elders, which are our source of our knowledge, and I thank Elder Augustine for opening us up in a good way with that opening. Thank you, Elder. That's so important.

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<sup>1</sup> Small module nuclear reactor

But we have rivers that no longer have salmon. So, how are we going to address that? What do we have to do? We have to work together. What are the solutions? We could sit here and talk about, let's just put a moratorium on salmon. But is that really the solution? Then we've got the First Nation rights to access. We have a bunch of other issues to deal with. So, how do we address it?

Well, one of the things that I was always taught in my 25 years in the military is, don't only come with a problem, come with a solution. So, in my First Nation community, what we're doing is we've started to say, how can we ensure that my next seven generations in my community are going to be able to enjoy this resource? We've started a program with streamside fertilisation. I know people here will say, what is that? Well, what we do, instead of sending our broodstock to hatcheries where females are stripped of their eggs and the eggs fertilized in the hatchery, we do it right on the side of the river in a very safe environment, and there's no mortality to the salmon.

That way, all we're transporting is eggs. So, we're not losing our salmon through mortality. Because that's what was happening. We were transporting our salmon to hatcheries and we were always losing a couple of salmon in that process. So, we said that was unacceptable. So, how can we reduce that? So, we've done streamside fertilisation. We went from introducing 30,000 to 40,000 parr to this year, 150,000 parr into our river. That may seem like a small amount, but it's a start.

We have a vision, and my brother always says this to me, if you don't know where you're going, you'll never get there. Our vision in our community is to have a salmon interpretation centre along with a hatchery. But the whole idea is to educate future generations about the importance of Atlantic salmon. And in our community, Atlantic salmon are very important. It's something that we need.

I put my business card up there to show our attachment to the river because salmon is on our business card. Plamu<sup>2</sup> are very important to us. it's part of who we are as a people, and it's always been in our culture, and it's always been part of our diet. So, it's very important that we're doing something to help bring and ensure future generations are going to be able to enjoy Atlantic salmon.

We work closely with the Foundation for the Conservation of Atlantic Salmon<sup>3</sup>. So, we work closely with them in projects that we can do. We work with our Nepisiguit Salmon Association. We can't be myopic and look inside and work inside those silos anymore. We've got to all work together. And globally, we have to do that same thing. We have to work together to ensure that this resource is going to be there, not only for First Nations, but for future generations of non-First Nation peoples to enjoy as well.

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<sup>2</sup> salmon in Mi'kmaq language

<sup>3</sup> In 2023 the Atlantic Salmon Conservation Foundation changed its name to the Foundation for the Conservation of Atlantic Salmon.

So, in closing, I would just say I'm excited to hear some of the panel today. I believe there are some great minds here. Mind you, I can say, I was already in a nuclear symposium where I was really underwhelmed. I felt like I was talking to people that were way over my head. But they dumbed it down enough that I understood it.

So, hopefully, you'll do some of the same thing because I'm not quite sure on the technical side, but I can tell you that partnership is a key to success. And by working together, we can all address this issue and ensure Atlantic salmon are there for future generations to enjoy.

So, thank you so much for this opportunity to be here. And welcome, again, to our territory.

**Steering Committee Note:** *The Committee acknowledges that the talks and presentations in the following section diverge from the traditional report format often used for NASCO's Theme-Based Special Sessions where submitted papers with citations are often presented in the body of the report, while presentations and / or transcripts are either appended to the report or archived elsewhere. In this particular case, many of the talks were delivered as stories sharing experiences and traditions, which do not lend themselves to reporting in the same way that other Sessions are reported on. As such, the Committee agreed that it would include content for each of the speakers in whichever form was the most comprehensive and complete.*





## Contributed Papers

*Understanding the importance of  
wild Atlantic salmon for Indigenous  
peoples through international and  
regional perspectives*



# Eastern Atlantic

Anne Nuorgam, Sámi Parliament Finland, CNL(23)80



## Fishing Cases

### Indigenous Perspectives and Roles in Atlantic Salmon Conservation

- The Sámi are the only recognized indigenous people of the European Union
- There are about 10,000 Sámi in Finland. The total Sámi population is estimated to be over 75,000, with the majority living in Norway
- Since 1996, the Sámi have had constitutional self-government in the Sámi Homeland in the spheres of language and culture. This self-government is managed by the Sámi Parliament, which is elected by the Sámi
- The Sámi Parliament represents the Sámi in national and international connections, and it attends to the issues concerning Sámi language, culture, and their position as an indigenous people
- The Sámi Parliament can make initiatives, proposals and statements to the authorities and negotiates with state authorities

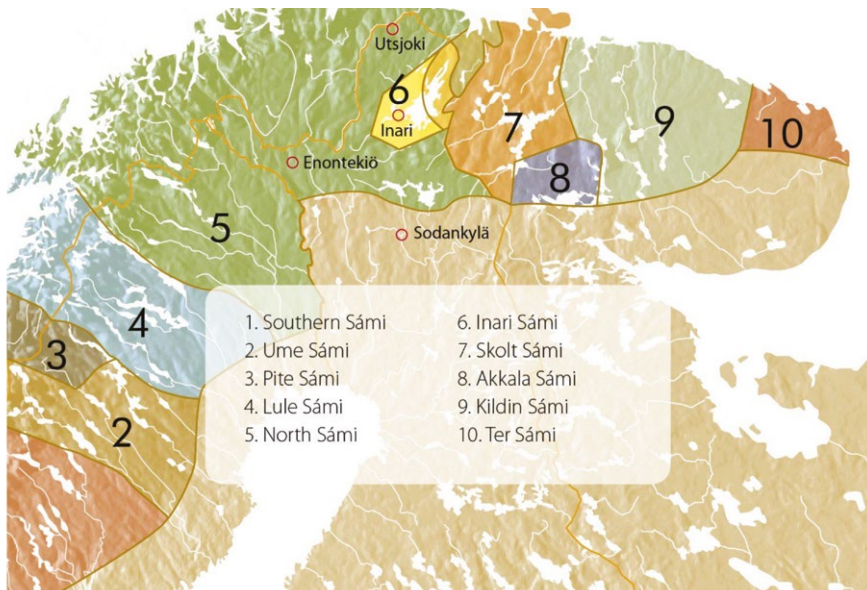
### Background

- The Sámi are recognized in the Nordic constitutions:
  - Finland: The Sámi, as an indigenous people, have the right to maintain and develop their own language and culture (Art 17.3)
- The States implement the constitutional clauses by enacting legislation on Saami
  - Separate acts: Saami Parliament, Saami language, reindeer herding acts in Norway and Sweden
  - Sections on Saami (rights) merged into national legislation: education, social and health, mining acts, environmental, etc. acts

### Sámi Rights

- The right to self-determination In reality:
  - Finland: right to cultural autonomy

- Norway: right to self government
- Sweden: both a publically elected parliament and a State agency (dual role)
- Non-discrimination
- Free, prior and informed consent
  - Finland: Saami Parliament Act the Finnish authorities have consult the Sámi Parliament in all matters that's concern the Sámi people
  - Norway: New Act Consultations Act earlier Agreement on Procedures for Consultations between State Authorities and the Sámi Parliament (2005)
    - Based on Article 6 on ILO 169, the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention
  - Sweden 2022 new legislation En lag om konsultation i ärenden som kan få särskild betydelse för det samiska folket
- Recognition of right to land, territories and natural resource two options to recognize Indigenous land rights: land claim settlements or court rulings
  - Norway: Finnmark Act 2005 (only Finnmark ) + Fosen ruling 2021
  - Sweden: no recognition, just usufruct rights + Girjas ruling
  - Finland: no recognition, just usufruct rights + two Supreme Court Rulings on Fishing 2022



## Traditional Saami livelihoods

- Reindeer herding, fishing, hunting, gathering and handicrafts (Sámi Duodji)
- Livelihoods have an important role in preserving and maintaining Saami culture and languages
- Livelihoods are based on sustainable use of nature
- Livelihoods support Saami language
- Both men and women practice Saami livelihoods

## Fishing Case

- Sámi people have maintained continuous occupancy to their lands
- In Finland the Sámi have just usufruct rights to their lands
- So called State owned land covers about 95 % of the Sámi homeland
- Sámi fishing rights were criminalized by the new Fishing Act 2015 in so called State waters when fishing salmon – came into force in 2017
- According to the section 10(2) of the Fishing Act, fishing of the salmon and trout migration areas had required the purchase of a separate permit, where as in other fishing area the permit was for free
- Sámi had to compete with other people for the fishing licenses because of restricted number of quata of licenses
- [https://www.facebook.com/pg/samihumanrights/videos/?ref=page\\_in\\_ternal](https://www.facebook.com/pg/samihumanrights/videos/?ref=page_in_ternal)



## Strategic litigation

- Three possible court systems in Finland:
  - The General Court of the European Union
  - The Administrative Court of Finland leading to the the Supreme Administrative Court
  - The District Court leading to the Supreme Court
- International legal team
- Media plan
- Choice of advocate
  - The best criminal lawyer in Finland who has long term experience in litigating in the European Court of Human Rights
    - Did not have any knowledge of Indigenous Law
- High costs should be taken into account when planning

## Fishing Case

- The public prosecutor charged four local Sámi for a game offense
- The Sámi reported themselves
- They were fishing by means of lures and rods in River Veahčajohka, a tributary to the Deatnu/Tana/Teno, which is so called state owned water area governed by Metsähallitus (national forest administration) on 29 July, 2017

## Ruling – Court of 1. Instance

- District Court on 6 March 2019 acquitted the Sámi of all criminal charges
  - It had been substantiated that fishing in the manner spesified in the charge in the defendants' home river is an essential element of the right of the Sámi as an Indigenous people to maintain and develop their own culture, protected by Section 17 paragraph 3 of the Constitution of Finland
  - It remained unsubstantiated that the defendants exceeded their fishing right based on the Constitution, because fishing in the manner spesified in the charge, at least one's home river, represents the type of fishing to which they as Sámi have a constitutional right
  - The defendants did not fish without authorization of exceed their fishing right when fishing in the River Veahčajohka
  - We resorted to the constitution of Finland: the Sámi have a right to their own culture of which fishing is an important part. The Court confirmed that the accused did not commit a violation when they fished according to their customary law

- “The restriction of basic rights must be based on acceptable criteria. In this case, no acceptable reasons for restricting basic rights have been found.”
- The UNDRIP was referred: Articles 8, 14, 20, 26, 34, 40, 43
  - Fishing is collective and part of Sámi culture
- State Prosecutor had filed on 2 April 2019 an appeal against the judgment
- The Prosecutor asked for a criminal conviction through a precedent issued by the Supreme Court in order to guide the future application of the law
- The Supreme Court granted certiorari 30th of October, 2019

### **Ruling of the Supreme Court**

- The issue: whether four Sámi had committed a game offence, considering their rights as local Sámi under the Constitution of Finland and in international human rights treaties
- The Supreme Court held that the separate fishing permit required for salmon migration areas under the Fishing Act in force at the material time in 2017, and the relevant permit procedure, gave rise to such severe restrictions to local Sámi that the application of the provision would be in evident conflict with their constitutionally protected rights (Section 106 of the Constitution). Also in this case, the Supreme Court declined to apply the provision in the Fishing Act and, accordingly, dismissed the charges for a game offence
- The Court noted that constitutionally protected fishing rights of the local Sámi were not absolute, but that these rights could be restricted under section of the Constitution to protect migratory fish stock
- Notice – 2017

### **Impacts of Rulings in the Supreme Court**

- Social justice struggle
- Sámi society
  - Hope
- Application of law
  - more than 30 laws enacted on Sámi livelihoods and use of nature in the Sámi Home Rule Region to implement the constitutional clause on Sámi culture
- How is a Sámi defined in the legislation?
  - The Constitutional Committee of Parliament of Finland stated that no reference to the Act of Sámi Parliament of section 3 is allowed
  - The Bill of Natural Parks - A

**Giitu beroštumis**

**Thank you for interest Giitu!**





# Western Atlantic

## *Clarissa Sabattis, Chief of the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians, Maine, United States*

Who is Clarissa Sabattis? Good morning. My name is Clarissa Sabattis. And as you've heard, I'm the Chief of the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians, and we are Metahksonikewiyik. We live along the Meduxnekeag River. It is a very difficult word. So I just want to start to talk a little bit about where I'm from. So we're the only Maliseet or Wolastoqiyik tribe that's on the United States side of the border.

But I've had the privilege of working closely with all of our sister tribes in New Brunswick for most of my term. I think my first meeting in this role as Tribal Chief was at an event held regarding transboundary issues because we're trying to look at Atlantic salmon, and how we can make sure they're surviving in our rivers, and fish passage is a big focus of that.

We've lived for time immemorial along the banks of the Meduxnekeag and along the Saint John watershed. It's a privilege for me to be able to represent our people in doing the work that we're doing. My father was here for 12 years. Another leader, 20 years after that. And I'm I think in my seventh year. And that's how long we've been doing this work.

That's how long we've been doing this work that's documented by the Canadian government and with other governments, but I think that this is something that we've been doing forever. For us, we're a riverine people, and I still witness a lot of our citizens who rely on the river for sustenance. That's something I talk about a lot in the United States and how important it is for us to restore our river.

Our natural resources department works in Canada as well. So they go back and forth along the border, and it's a little frustrating, but we do have salmon in our river but it's on the Canadian side. I joke a lot that I'm going to come over and just toss them over. So it creates some challenges for us because they're not present on the United States side. Resources can't be designated to try to help us restore them to their habitat.

However, we've been creative in restoring the river for other reasons, and for making sure that when they do come back, that it's ready for them, and it's healthier.

Our tribe works with local and state and federal governments to do restoration, to take care of culverts, to try to cool the river a little bit more such as by placing logs and stuff along the riverbed and putting rocks in the river.

We do work along the river to decrease the runoff from the fields because we have a lot of farmland. And we were having issues with when we had big rains, the water would turn brown, and the whole river would be brown. We worked

with our local water treatment facilities because we were having algal blooms in the river. So, we've cleaned up the river where we live quite significantly, and that's work that we're just continuing to do, working with partners.

I think that the Chief mentioned partnerships, and to me, that's way up here. That's the really most important thing. Whether it's between tribal nations, other governments, organizations that are doing work, to me, that has been the most important.

And I actually want to go back because I should've said this to begin with. I want to thank our Elder for the opening prayer. It was very beautiful, and your words resonate with what I wanted to talk about today. I'm trying not to repeat, but I thank you for your prayer. And thank you for the Chief, for your opening remarks, too. So back to this.

So, a little bit more about the transboundary work. I think you're going to hear from Patty, who's been phenomenal in doing the work between the United States and Canada, all the tribes and the Canadian government. I've learnt a lot through that work. And I think that for me, it's been a wonderful experience to learn what other tribes are doing, what other organizations are going and trying to tie those things together.

In the United States right now, I'm working with the White House staff and the Environmental Protection Agency to try and establish an International Joint Commission (IJC) so that we have our tribal voice when it comes to things that are transboundary related, outside of just the tribes, but within each of the Canadian and American governments. I think that using our voices is very important, and being in rooms like this is definitely something that we have to do.

For myself, you talked about me being a registered nurse. So, this is all so far outside of my wheelhouse. I try to relate sometimes to the things that I know, and I... As a nurse, you learn about pathophysiology and all the systems of the body, and how they're all related. And when you disrupt one, it causes a chain reaction, and it takes so much to put your body back into its cycle and its rhythm and to heal. And I think about Atlantic salmon that way, and our environment and our ecosystems. So, for me, that's how I relate.

And our, as the Chief said, our Mother Earth is sick. We've disrupted cycles. We've disrupted the physiology in our ecosystem, and we have to figure out ways and come up with new ways to take care of those.

For us, land ownership was not our way – Psiw ntolonapermok. That means all my relations. And that envelops all the clans, the water, earth. The two-legged family are not my only family. Those who are in the water are also. So just like our Elder said, we belong to the land. It does not belong to us. But it's our job to take care of it.

And we have to move forward into contemporary times and figure out how to do that, but also I think keeping our foot in the world of ceremony and our

traditions as well. So, it's an interesting co-mingling of worlds, I feel like, when it comes to what we're doing and trying to take care of the rivers and have a healthier environment so we can bring back Atlantic salmon and make them healthy again.

I guess I'll close this with just saying that, first of all, I appreciate the opportunity to come and talk. I don't have the technical background. I think you might hear from other people that have more of that. But I think, for me, it's important as a tribal leader to support our cultural practices and our traditions when it comes to salmon, but it also is important for me to look at policies, policy development, supporting policies that are going to help make changes.

For myself as a tribal leader, I'm trying to balance those two things, and it's not just what's in our own backyard. I think it's important to be present. And I want to thank you for the opportunity to come and talk today. Thank you.

# Western Atlantic

*Patricia Saulis, Wolastoqiyik / Maliseet, Negotkuk First Nation,  
CNL(23)81*

**The Lonliest Salmon in the World or if you could see through  
my fish eyes - A salmon's tale from a Wolastoqiyik / Maliseet  
Perspective**

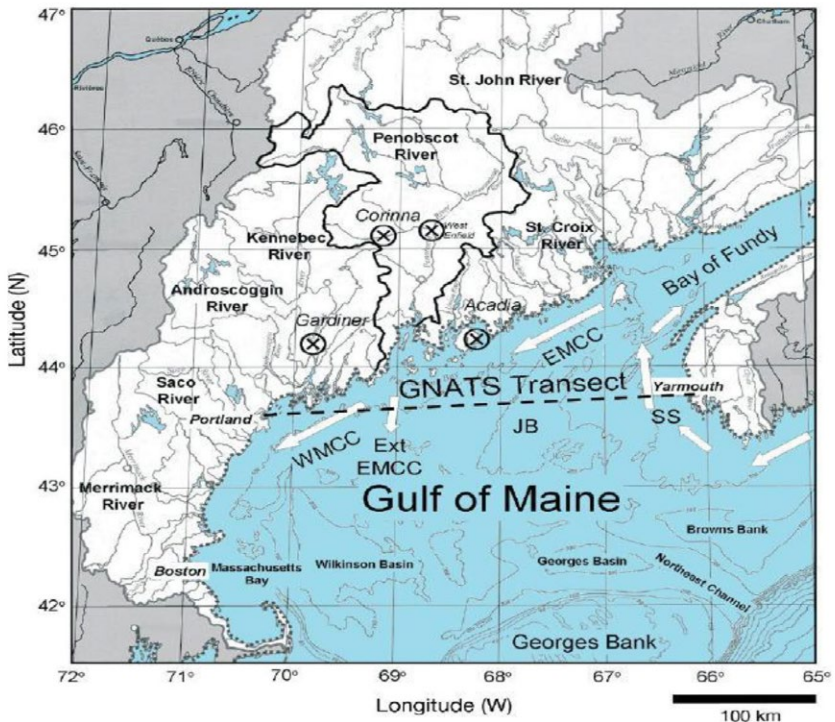


## **Two eyed seeing**

- Acknowledgement that there is a combined vision necessary to understand the plight of life today; some Wolustoq Elders have stated that what happens to the salmon will happen to us
- Acknowledgement that what humans are doing to their surroundings is having a devastating and lasting impact to all life on our earth
- Acknowledgement that climate change does exist and that it is man made
- Acknowledgement that it is going to take a connecting of vision between 2 competing world views to fully understand where we are at and what needs to change; take the best of both: Indigenous and Western Knowledge systems
- Acknowledgement that this is a story about life and death and there is great grief, sorrow and anger in the telling of this story. My ancestors have been here since time immemorial and for the past 500 years, we have seen devastation and ecocide because of genocide of our Wabanaki peoples
- Indigenous led conservation is a key to reversing biodiversity loss vis a vis revitalizing Indigenous languages and ecosystem wide approaches to sustaining what is now left. UNDRIP respect!

## Narrative style

- Speaking for those that can not speak for themselves
- Reciprocity of role and responsibilities, who am I responsible to? What is my role? How do I take on my role and exercise my responsibilities?
- Oral tradition and the importance of maintaining what is left for the sake of sustaining life
- Cultural practice of speaking from the non-human centered worldview
- Allowing voice and giving importance to empathy, especially in times of suffering
- Creating visibility where it has been erased (erasure) as a way of silencing spirit
- Providing a space for spirit to speak out and bring attention to what matters
- Reminding from non human relatives who teach us what is healthy and unhealthy through relationships, kinships and connections that reach out to the universe/creation



## My story

- I have been here for millennium and I have enjoyed my home, the Wolustog, where my ancestors laid their eggs
- I have seen less of my relatives travelling the waterways where we always called home because we can't get through because of the dams that were made without concern for our health or safety
- While we were in the millions at one time, now these are approximate numbers on my existence:

Mactaquac Dam	192
Tinker Dam	6
Nashawaak River Counting Fence	45

- There have been many reasons given why I am dying: major hydro dams with no way for me to get through and for those that do that are trapped and trucked, they are lost in a system that only sees them relocated without connection to their ancestral imprinting and for those that survive that, trying to come back down the river, river flows that don't provide enough current or suddenly too much, or too little cool waters or a lack of oxygen or certain death through turbines that eat up our bodies
- Some of the people still cry for me even through many don't know my name in their language, don't sing songs at the shore for our arrival, aren't provided in feasts and ceremonies and don't remember how much medicine we bring to keep the people healthy. We don't see their children coming to fish us with their old ones and we don't hear their words of praise for our lives and how important we have always been. Their river has been closed to fishing for us and us providing to them for over 20 years

## Climate change

- Some have blamed climate change for our demise, the warming of our waters, the lessening of water level, the black box of our marine journey and how ocean currents are changing
- Some have used the excuse of climate change to do nothing claiming that now that our numbers are so low that there is no point in trying to do anything, that it would be a waste of resources as some of them call us no longer viable
- We heard there was a study done to see what effect was happening in the river because of climate change, the study found that because of the effect of the Dams over the past 52 years, that it has been a climate change catalyst, mimicking climate change effects over that period of time. Now that rapid climate change is happening in our river, there is a doubly devastating effect on our home, why can't someone do something about that?

## Climate Change Study

- The study was created to understand the river, my home better and what effect is happening to the people living along the river
- In 2017, Maliseet Nation Conservation Council (MNCC) engaged One Sky International (OSI), a Mi'kmaq owned and operated company, to complete a climate change risk assessment evaluation utilizing the Public Infrastructure Engineering Vulnerability Committee protocol (PIEVC)
- OSI utilized this particular protocol, developed by Engineers Canada, for climate change risk evaluations for three major reasons: a) it is very comprehensive in evaluative procedure b) it weaves together climate change knowledge, engineering knowledge and traditional Indigenous knowledge equally and c) it provides a clear analysis of infrastructure risk and recommendations. The process is guided by Community Advisory Committees (CAC) which are chosen by community leadership, and are formed through a mix of community expertise including housing and infrastructure, Elder participation, community representation and other expertise as determined by leadership. These CAC directs the team on community inclusion, as well as participating and reviewing risk data and scoring
- To complete the phases of PIEVC, climate change data is researched and then vetted for correction through our Community Advisory Committees (CAC) as well as through broader community meetings, to ensure data represents their real world experience. This is important as historical and available climate change data is sometimes not site specific
- To highlight the Cultural understanding of impacts, MNCC also undertook the Cultural Values and Vulnerability Mapping in communities
- It was found that varying geologic influences are present from community to community; having community input ensures that the risk analysis takes into account the specific pressures in a specific community, as well as in depth knowledge contained in that community
- The engineering assessment is based on site visit and document analysis related to identified areas of risk. When these are evaluated, information is then taken back to the CAC to determine risk assessment to the community based on a numerical scale
- It is important to note that in the case of New Brunswick Maliseet communities, concerns regarding climate change risk were heightened due to hydroelectric dam activity which, on a regular basis, imitates climate change events in terms of drought and flood patterns, thereby potentially exacerbating actual climate change trend impacts

## As part of the Climate Change Study: Cultural Values and Vulnerability Mapping (CVVM)

- The CVVM piece allows researchers to study the place attachment and landscape values of any community at multiple scales and sites. Using history circles and survey methods to create the data and GIS and spatial analysis to process it, this project helps us identify and understand the areas that are culturally significant to an entire community or to representative groups within it. Phase 2 of the CVVM project conducted some of this research among three Maliseet communities on the upper Wolastoq (St. John River valley). It demonstrated that riparian landscapes and river islands are critically important to the local community's sense of place and place attachment. Since these are ecologically sensitive areas and susceptible to some of the harmful effects of climate change, communities would benefit from further studies on the cultural importance and climate vulnerability of groups in these communities

### Special Places, Sample Woodstock First Nation



- Special Places in these communities seemed to indicate special natural features and wetlands. In Woodstock the Special Places were more heavily clustered along the St. John River than any other value. In Tobique virtually all of the Special Place values appeared on the banks of the St. John and Tobique Rivers. In Madawaska, the Special Places were more dispersed, and rather than the river front, the highest concentrations (5 values) appeared on the Snake Stream wetland and walking trails
- This serves to remind where these places are and the nature of how important our relationship remains to our home



## What can be learned by using these tools?

- Salmon is regarded by many to be an indicator species of health in a river and the relationship with the river is still in the minds and hearts of the Wolustog People
- Salmon have been choked off of the Wolustog by Dams and other impediments to their volitional passage
- The government has not pressed for fish passage that works with crown owned hydro facilities, told it is too costly
- MNCC commissioned a study through its Coastal Restoration Fund project to look at habitat restoration for salmon and other species on the Wolustog and the options for volitional fish passage, it is possible
- It takes will and resources to meaningfully address the fish passage on the Wolustog and climate change is only going to exacerbate a worsening situation, action is needed now
- MNCC and the Houlton Band of Maliseets have been bringing the US and Canadian governments to the table to talk about the transboundary river that is the Wolustog and to bring attention to the plight of our salmon and other species at risk dependent on volitional fish passage like the American eel which is also culturally significant to Wolustog People
- Other than an Interim Statement on Cooperation that was signed by both Governments and Wolustog First Nations and Tribal Government, we are still in the process of establishing what needs to be done to help salmon and other species survive the hydro development before its too late

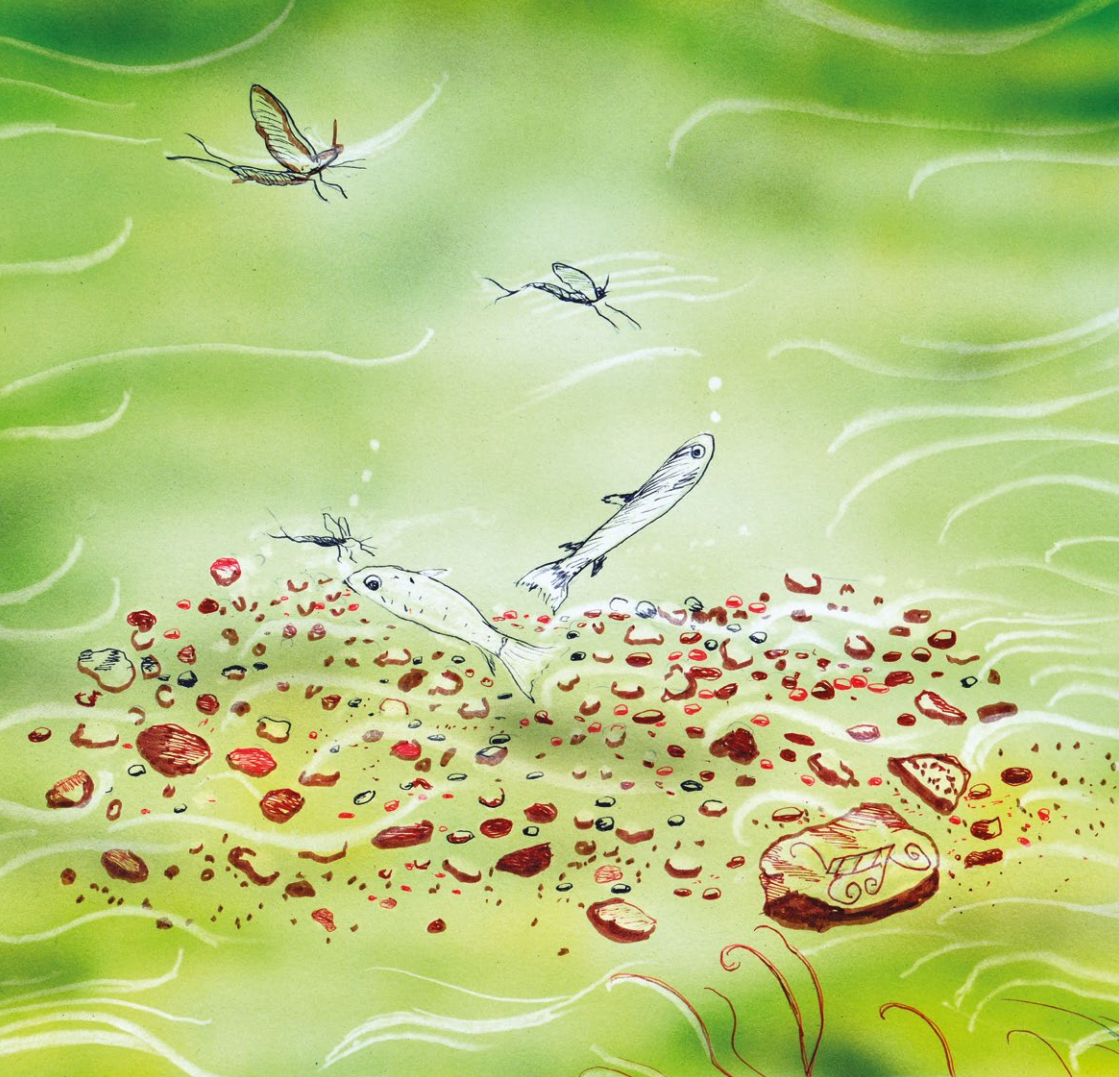


## **Much work left to do**

- Salmon have been and remain to be a culturally iconic species for the Wolustaq People; what happens to them, will happen to us, as long as we remain, we must seek their survival. The best of science, technology and innovation is needed here
- Salmon do not have a voice to intercede in the decision making, we must speak. We need to have a voice in the NASCO process, we need a seat at the table
- Devastating sense of loss at a cultural and spiritual level is pervasive and significant in Wolastoqiyik/Maliseet communities
- Loss of Wolustaq language tied to the loss of salmon and other relations that we traditionally relied on for sustenance like caribou which is extinct in our Territory
- Decision making is being driven by the need for profits and energy even though the impending reality of climate change can not be denied
- OBOF Atlantic Salmon have not been listed as endangered under the Canadian Species At Risk Act (SARA) yet were listed as endangered under the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) which is a scientific and independent Advisory Panel to the Canadian Minister of the Environment

## **Where there is life, there is hope**

- We are told by our Elders to speak for those with no voice, through our treaties, we are shown what our Ancestors valued which was our way of life, our lands, our waters, our relatives who gave us sustenance and our continued survival
- One such Maliseet Elder who passed on over 20 years ago today, gave a prophecy to his family. Before he died, he told his family that God had come to him in a vision. In that dream, God asked the man if there was anything he wanted to ask. The Elder said yes, and asked, why are we here? God said that is an easy question to answer...to be happy. God then showed the Elder a river full of salmon and asked the man, do you see those salmon? The Elder said yes. God said that is how man is to be happy, like the salmon in the river. God then told the man, the Salmon will save the world. That man was my father, and I live by those words
- I am honoured to sit with you to share this work to make our world a happier, better place for our children
- Woliwon, Psiw ntolnapenok, All my Relations



## Contributed Papers

### ***Understanding the current role of Indigenous peoples in Canada in the conservation and management of wild Atlantic salmon***

Examples of successful Indigenous collaboration and / or leadership in Atlantic salmon conservation and management initiatives



# Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources (UINR) Consultation Table

Dr Shelley Denny, Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources  
(UINR), Nova Scotia, Canada

Good morning. I will be presenting on an example of successful Indigenous collaboration and/ leadership in Atlantic salmon conservation and management initiatives. I will be highlighting a process that is used in Nova Scotia that we refer to as the Consultation Table for Atlantic salmon, *plamu*.

There are over 60 distinct Indigenous nations in Canada but make up a very small proportion of Canada's population. In eastern Canada, there are several different, distinct nations each with its own culture and language. The population of Mi'kmaq is over 25,000 but only make up less than two percent of the population.

My name is Shelley Denny. I am Mi'kmaq from the community of Eskasoni in Unama'ki, presently known as Cape Breton Island. I am currently senior advisor to UINR. The Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources (UINR) is an organization that represents the five Mi'kmaq communities of Unama'ki (Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia) on natural resources issues.

We strive to be involved in management of natural resources, integrate Mi'kmaq ways of knowing into all we do and to partner with other organizations<sup>4</sup>. I spent the majority of my career in natural sciences and navigating a system that didn't have room for other ways of knowing. I spent the last decade focusing on Mi'kmaw knowledge and the field of interdisciplinary studies to understand how different ways of knowing can improve fisheries governance in Canada<sup>5</sup>.

The Mi'kmaq people are the first peoples of this land. As self-governing society, they lived in harmony with Mother Earth. Guiding behavior was the concept of *Netukulimk*. Fishers describe *Netukulimk* as a way of life. One that respects, honors, shares, and takes what is needed so that future generations have the same provisions as we did<sup>6</sup>. One important aspect to Mi'kmaq way of life was that of co-existence. In the 18th century, treaties were signed with the British to end war and secure trade<sup>7</sup>. These peace and friendship treaties are still in effect today.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> See UINR <https://www.uinr.ca/about/>

<sup>5</sup> See FishWIKS <https://www.dal.ca/sites/fishwiks.html>

<sup>6</sup> Prosper, K., McMillan, L.J., Davis, A.A. and Moffitt, M. 2011. Returning to Netukulimk: Mi'kmaq cultural and spiritual connections with resource stewardship and self-governance. The International Indigenous Policy Journal 2, no. 4.

<sup>7</sup> Wicken, W. 2002. Mi'kmaq treaties on trial: History, land, and Donald Marshall Junior. University of Toronto Press.

<sup>8</sup> Simon, V. 1985. The Queen. CanLII 11 (SCC) [1985] 2 SCR 387, <<https://canlii.ca/t/1fv04>>, retrieved on 2023-10-06

In Canada, the legal landscape for Aboriginal and Treaty rights is complex and evolving.

Indigenous peoples became the responsibility of the Government of Canada without their consent. *The Indian Act*<sup>9</sup> divided Indigenous nations into autonomous First Nations and gave authority over reserve lands. *The Indian Act* displaced traditional forms of governance but did not extinguish it<sup>10</sup>. This has led to challenges over Mi'kmaq jurisdiction in eastern Canada.<sup>11</sup>

Since 1982, there has been positive outcomes in Canadian legislation regarding the recognition and exercise of both Aboriginal and treaty rights.<sup>12</sup> Aboriginal and Treaty rights have distinct legal meaning. Aboriginal rights are those that are based on historical occupancy while Treaty rights are those that are negotiated between nations. The Mi'kmaq have both rights. Both rights are protected in the *Constitution Act*, Canada's supreme law. Here, different legal systems emerge.<sup>13</sup> For example, when s.52 is read with s. 35, Indigenous practices found to be inconsistent with federal or provincial law are of no force or effect.<sup>14</sup> Treaty rights were recognized as in force and effect, and that Indigenous peoples had the right to fish for food, social or ceremonial needs and were priority over other users of the resource AND that federal and provincial jurisdiction was limited, meaning that governments could not unilaterally impose restrictions to the right. Lastly, the duty to consult<sup>15</sup> spurred a movement for Indigenous peoples to organize as collectives for consultation processes with the provincial governments, but there was no process for federal consultation for fisheries.

Of course, Canada's legal and political landscape continues to evolve. The United Nations Declaration on the right of indigenous peoples, also referred to as UNDRIP, was supported in principle by Canada in 2016, after nearly a decade after its development. For those who are unaware of UNDRIP, it is

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<sup>9</sup> Indian Act, RSC. 1985. c I-5, <<https://canlii.ca/t/5439p>> retrieved on 2023-10-06

<sup>10</sup> Paul, D.N. 2022. *We Were Not the Savages, First Nations History: Collision Between European and Native American Civilizations*. Fernwood publishing.

<sup>11</sup> Fanning, L. and Denny, S. 2022. Conflict over Mi'kmaq lobster fishery reveals confusion over who makes the rules. *The Conversation*, Oct 20. 2022. <https://theconversation.com/conflict-over-mikmaq-lobster-fishery-reveals-confusion-over-who-makes-the-rules-148978>

<sup>12</sup> Sparrow, R.V. 1990. CanLII 104 (SCC), [1990] 1 SCR 1075, <<https://canlii.ca/t/1fsvj>>, retrieved on 2023-10-06

<sup>13</sup> Macklem, P. 2014. *Indigenous Peoples and the Ethos of Legal Pluralism in Canada*. Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2403909> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2403909>

<sup>14</sup> See n.5

<sup>15</sup> The duty to consult is a result of three Supreme Court of Canada decisions, *Haida Nation v. British Columbia (Minister of Forests)*. 2004. SCC 73 (CanLII), [2004] 3 SCR 511, *Taku River Tlingit First Nation v. British Columbia (Project Assessment Director)*. 2004. SCC 74 (CanLII), [2004] 3 SCR 550, and *Mikisew Cree First Nation v. Canada (Minister of Canadian Heritage)*. 2005. SCC 69 (CanLII), [2005] 3 SCR 388 whereby the Government of Canada has a duty to consult, and where appropriate, accommodate Indigenous groups when it considers conduct that might adversely impact potential or established Aboriginal or treaty rights.

a comprehensive international human rights instrument on the rights of Indigenous peoples that sets out the minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of Indigenous peoples.<sup>16</sup> This in turn sparked the Principles for Reconciliation which in not law but commitments to reconciliation.<sup>17</sup> Importantly, Canada committed to developing an action plan by developing legislation, the *UNDRIP Act* in 2021. This act commits Canada to develop an action plan for how it will examine its laws and policies so that they are consistent with the declaration.<sup>18</sup> While we do have constitutional protection of Aboriginal and treaty rights, this is a significant step forward as current policies fail to provide guidance for federal employees and Indigenous peoples.<sup>19</sup> Both documents (UNDRIP and Principles for Reconciliation) refer to FPIC – free, prior, and informed consent.

We do have a process for consultation in Nova Scotia<sup>20</sup>. Consultation is not co-management or consent, nor does it mean the parties must come to an agreement. Consultation is a process with foundations in case law. It is more about creating a space for Indigenous perspectives and voices. The process is on record and with prejudice, which means it can be used in court.

The consultation table was established to address impacts of the recreational salmon fishery to the Mi'kmaq. While many communities signed agreements with the federal government for access, there was no opportunity to address concerns about potential impacts to Mi'kmaq rights. To remedy this, a multi-jurisdictional table was established. This included DFO, parks Canada, the province of Nova Scotia, the Assembly of NS Mi'kmaq Chiefs, and two technical based organizations, UINR and the Mi'kmaw Conservation Group.

There definitely were struggles at the onset. Lack of understanding by both parties, the historical significance of salmon, the law and culture all played a role in the complexity surrounding salmon. Not exactly a place for informed learning and creative solutions, but we were able to create another layer we call the working group which was not on record and enabled the participants to learn, discuss and debate. When we switched to learning, we began to see the differences in how we viewed conservation and management. While there were very different approaches, we did agree that conserving salmon was important. Once we understood the need to agree to disagree, collaborating became somewhat easier.

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<sup>16</sup> United Nations Declaration On The Rights Of Indigenous Peoples <https://social.desa.un.org/issues/indigenous-peoples/united-nations-declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples>

<sup>17</sup> Government of Canada, Principles respecting the Government of Canada's relationship with Indigenous peoples.2021. <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/csj-sjc/principles-principes.html>

<sup>18</sup> United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act. SC 2021. c 14, <<https://canlii.ca/t/554bd>> retrieved on 2023-10-06

<sup>19</sup> Denny, S.K. 2022. ANKUKAMKUA'TU;DOING TREATY': AN ALTERNATIVE FISHERIES GOVERNANCE MODEL FOR MI'KMAQ ABORIGINAL AND TREATY RIGHTS TO FISH IN NOVA SCOTIA.

<sup>20</sup> Government of Canada, Terms of Reference for a Mi'kmaq-Nova Scotia-Canada Consultation Process, <https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1100100031918/1529422910174>

Having the shared value for conserving salmon did provide mutual benefits. The process created a relationship which did not exist before. The Mi'kmaq agreed to a regional allocation which is 685 salmon for 9 communities, which means we don't all get to take salmon. We have flexibility in how and when we harvest, which was important tradition for the Mi'kmaq. We have opportunity to integrate our own observations and bring them to the attention of the table. And of course, we are taking responsibility for our fishery, especially for reporting our harvests.

When I reflect on what our role is as Indigenous peoples for salmon conservation and management, I realize we have many roles. First and foremost, we have responsibility. While many equate responsibility to government, the Mi'kmaq understand the reciprocal relationship we have with salmon. The offerings, the respects, and in the way we live in harmony with Mother Earth.<sup>21</sup> But we know we can't do this alone. Our Creation Story<sup>22</sup> tells us that we need strength and understanding; strength to withstand Earth's natural forces, and understanding of the Mi'kmaq world, its animals and the Mi'kmaq. We need understanding and co-operation, so we all can live in peace with one another. We cooperate through collaboration.

Not all organizations have all the capacity and human resources they need. UINR participates in the annual stock assessment swim thrus and uses the information to help fishers understand the status instead of waiting post season to share that knowledge. We also participate in peer reviews of the science responses. Education is needed in non-Mi'kmaq settings and organizations, and we spend a considerable time helping others understand our culture, perspectives and teaching. The salmon ceremony, now an annual event, reinforces our spiritual and cultural connections with salmon and we honor those relations through ceremony. We work with provincial endeavors to help provide the context for training programs. And lastly, while we may not always agree on how to conserve salmon, we respect the beliefs of our neighboring salmon associations.

We are also research partners. Partnering with salmon associations like the Nova Scotia Salmon Association for habitat restoration, other organizations to track salmon movements in the offshore, and our own local partners to contribute to assessment methods by experimenting with echosounder as alternative or complimentary methods for swim thrus.

We are self-governors. Rights holders make decisions. Federal agreements are with communities and there is often no discussion with membership about the impact to the right to fish salmon. As such, many fishers are opposed to imposed restrictions whether they are DFO imposed, or community imposed.

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<sup>21</sup> Denny, S.K. and Fanning, L.M. 2016. A Mi'kmaq perspective on advancing salmon governance in Nova Scotia, Canada: Setting the stage for collaborative co-existence. *The International Indigenous Policy Journal* 7, no. 3.

<sup>22</sup> Mi'kmaq Spirit, Mi'kmaq Creation Story, <https://www.muiniskw.org/pgCulture3a.htm>



Knowledge helps make informed decisions. We have a process for fishers that advises the Mi'kmaq in the consultation table. We also removed barriers to communication with scientists by providing them with opportunities to hear about status updates directly from DFO scientists. Amazingly, we have improved reporting. With fisher input we developed a method for them to contribute to data collection. This includes scale samples as fishers are keen on hearing the story of the salmon they caught. Lastly, communication is extremely important. Fishers need the best knowledge available to them to make decisions. In our conservation harvest plan, we have kept all allocations even for rivers that are not doing well. But we have incorporated adaptive management to review the knowledge prior to harvest, and we develop communication with fishers for fishers. This is shared on our social medial group.<sup>23</sup>

To conclude, while consultation process is not perfect, it is an important piece that created space for Indigenous participation. Indigenous peoples have many roles and contribute to salmon conservation. Over the past decade we have seen improvements, addressed gaps, and taken back our responsibility for our relationship with salmon. We continue to help others understand how we are different, and the law that supports our practices and traditions and continue to form working relationships to further our goals and as foundations for improving governance for Atlantic salmon, *plamu*.

Wela'liq.

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<sup>23</sup> Information is shared in the Facebook group, Unama'ki Plamu Fishing Group.

# Kavisilik in Nunatsiavut

Todd Broomfield, Nunatsiavut Government, CNL(23)90



## Nunatsiavut: Our Beautiful Land

The Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement sets out Inuit fishing, hunting, trapping, and gathering rights in the Labrador Inuit Settlement Area (LISA) and makes specific provisions for those who live outside of the LISA.

- 7,200 Beneficiaries: 1/3 in the LISA 1/3 in ULM
- The settlement area is 72,500 km<sup>2</sup>



## Atlantic Salmon in Nunatsiavut

Canada co-manages a domestic salmon harvest and also monitor salmon returns in 4 Labrador rivers as indicators of the health of the species.

Overall, returns of salmon to Canadian rivers appear to be in decline, although rivers in Labrador appear to be comparatively healthy.

Biological information and samples are collected from Atlantic salmon harvested in the Labrador Food, Social and Ceremonial (FSC) fisheries. Samples are sent to DFO Science for analyses and the information is incorporated into the annual stock assessment process.



*Photo by Geoff Goodyear*



*Photo by Janice Goudie*

With the reduced presence of DFO in Nunatsiavut, NG Conservation Officers monitor the fishery.

NG manages access to the licenses under a Ministerial Directive.

At least 96% of salmon caught in the fishery is from Labrador rivers.

## **Communal Licence**

### ***Labrador Inuit Settlement Area (LISA)***

Labrador Inuit have the right to fish throughout the LISA at all times of the year in such quantities as are required to meet their full needs for food, social, and ceremonial purposes.



Each Beneficiary household is eligible to receive a LISA Aboriginal Communal Licence with the Nunatsiavut Government to harvest trout, char and salmon in the Labrador Inuit Settlement Area.

One Beneficiary per household is eligible to harvest up to seven (7) salmon tags for the duration of the season under a LISA Aboriginal Communal Licence.

### ***Upper Lake Melville 12E Licence***

Atlantic Salmon from Lake Melville (a marine estuary) are a genetically distinct population.

In this region, harvest levels are negotiated annually. There are weekend take-ups as well as a 10 day take-up period from July 9th-19th. This is to allow the peak run of large salmon to return to rivers in the ULM area.



Each Beneficiary household in Labrador outside of the LISA is eligible to receive a 12-E Aboriginal Communal Licence from the Nunatsiavut Government.

One Beneficiary per household is eligible to harvest up to seven (7) salmon tags for their household for the duration of the season under a 12-E Communal Licence.



*Photo by Janice Goudie*

**Cultural Importance**

Atlantic salmon is an iconic species for Labrador Inuit and Indigenous people.

Access to Country foods are critical for food security and fundamental to our Indigenous culture.



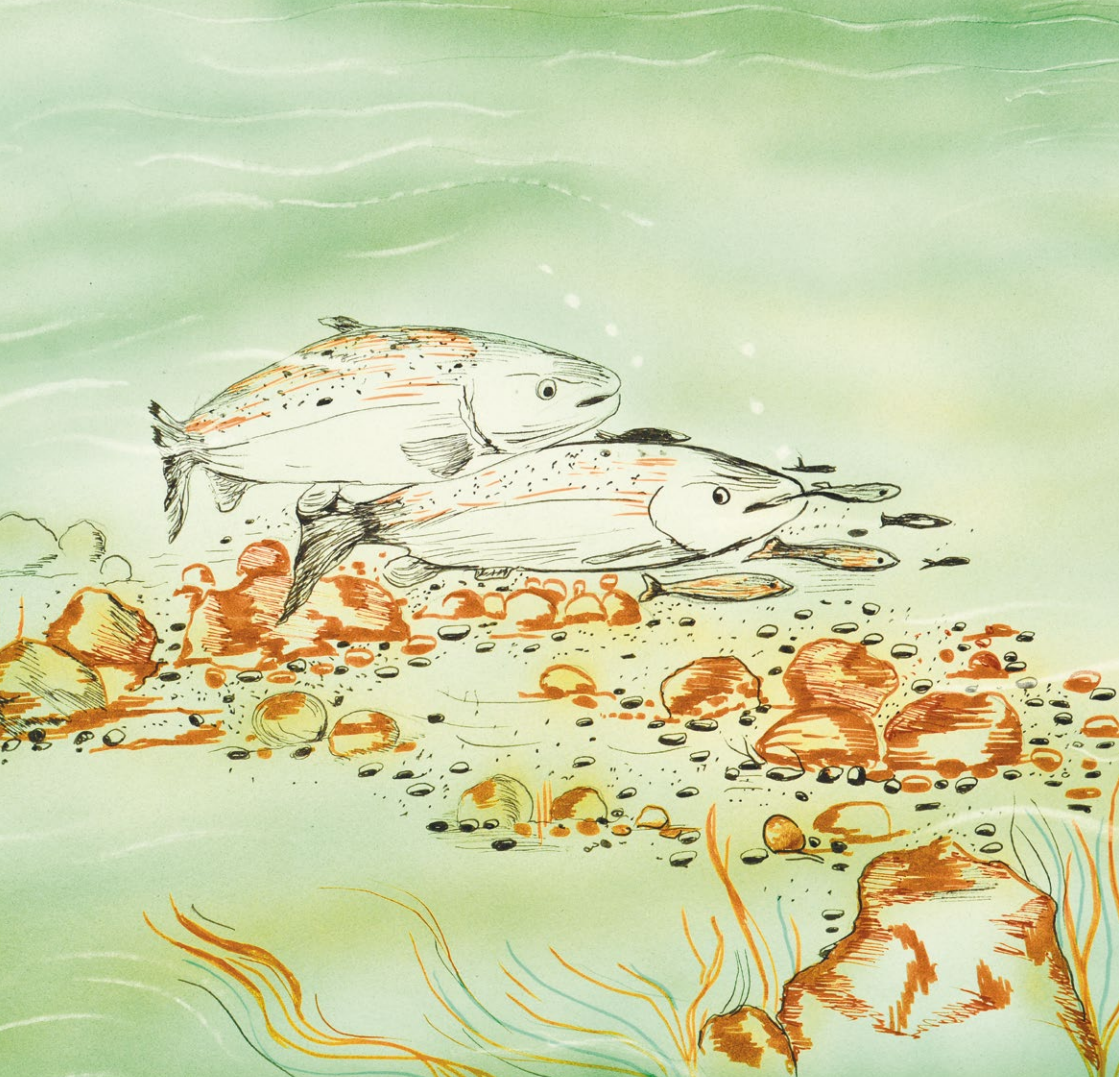
*Photo by Janice Goudie*



*Photo by Janice Goudie*

**Nakummek**





**Panel Discussion Summary:  
Informing Future Possibilities at NASCO**





# Panel Discussion Summary:

## Informing Future Possibilities at NASCO

The Special Session concluding with a panel discussion with panellists Carl McLean, Labrador Inuit; Melissa Nevin, Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs Secretariat; Anne Nuorgam, Sámi Parliament of Finland; and George Russell Jr, NunatuKavut Community Council followed by closing remarks from Doug Bliss and a closing prayer by Keptin Stephen Augustine.

The panel discussion was moderated by Doug Bliss. It focused on each of the panellists responding to two questions, followed by a short question and answer period. Below are the two questions asked of the panellists as well as a summary of some of the key messages shared by them. A full clean edited transcription of the panel discussion can be found in Annex 2.

### **Question 1:** *‘What does NASCO mean to Indigenous peoples? And what can Indigenous peoples provide in support of NASCO’s objectives?’*

In response to question one, some of the key messages were (paraphrased):

- It should be self-evident to NASCO why Indigenous peoples should be more integrated into its committees and business: it should not be the obligation of Indigenous peoples to justify themselves to NASCO but rather NASCO’s duty, as an effective modern-day international organization, to effectively incorporate Indigenous peoples and their perspectives into its policies, guidelines, committees, business and strategies.
- Indigenous knowledge, which does not use the western scientific method, can be and should be acknowledged and incorporated in NASCO’s discussions and policies regarding Atlantic salmon.
- Indigenous people have traditionally been, have historically been, excluded from many important discussions that impact their livelihood, land and rights. So Indigenous involvement that is sustainable, institutionalised and ongoing is actually reconciliation in action.
- Indigenous perspectives in these spaces are critical. They allow each country to make better informed conservation decisions in their borders for marginalised populations, who are significantly affected by salmon migration and fishing patterns.
- Indigenous peoples have a very deep understanding of the interconnectedness between land and water and how they relate to healthy salmon populations.

**Question 2:** *'How could Indigenous people's participation be enhanced within NASCO? What are your suggestions for what we could do to help that?'*

In response to question two, some of the key messages were (paraphrased):

- Participation of Indigenous attendees would allow for discussions around concerns and interest, including outcomes of scientific assessments, local knowledge, values, perspectives, implications of conservation measures, and discuss conservation measures that may potentially differ from those discussed during NASCO and offer different perspectives.
- The role of salmon to Indigenous people's identity, culture, traditions and spirituality is critical to sustain Indigenous ways of knowing and cultural practices. Therefore, conservation and protection of Atlantic salmon is of the utmost importance to Indigenous people. As salmon is critical to Indigenous people, we can enhance the NASCO process and provide an alternative perspective to the conservation and preservation of Atlantic salmon in a meaningful and conducive manner.
- For Indigenous people, the priority of Atlantic salmon recovery strategies will be placed based on identified cultural, social and economic priorities. Thus, the inclusion of Indigenous participation and knowledge may offer more options for alternative measures based on the context of Indigenous fishing and governance.
- It was suggested that NASCO can, within its current decision making and without changing the NASCO Convention, incorporate Indigenous peoples into the governance of NASCO.
- The governance model evolution and inclusion of Indigenous peoples in the Arctic Council could serve as a model for NASCO to consider.
- NASCO should consider how Indigenous peoples be afforded seats, not just as observers, at the science-based committees and working groups, for example the International Atlantic Salmon Research Board and Science Advisory Group.
- Parties to NASCO should more deeply consider Indigenous representation on their national delegations particularly for the senior delegation positions.



**Conclusions from the Special Session  
Steering Committee**



# Conclusions

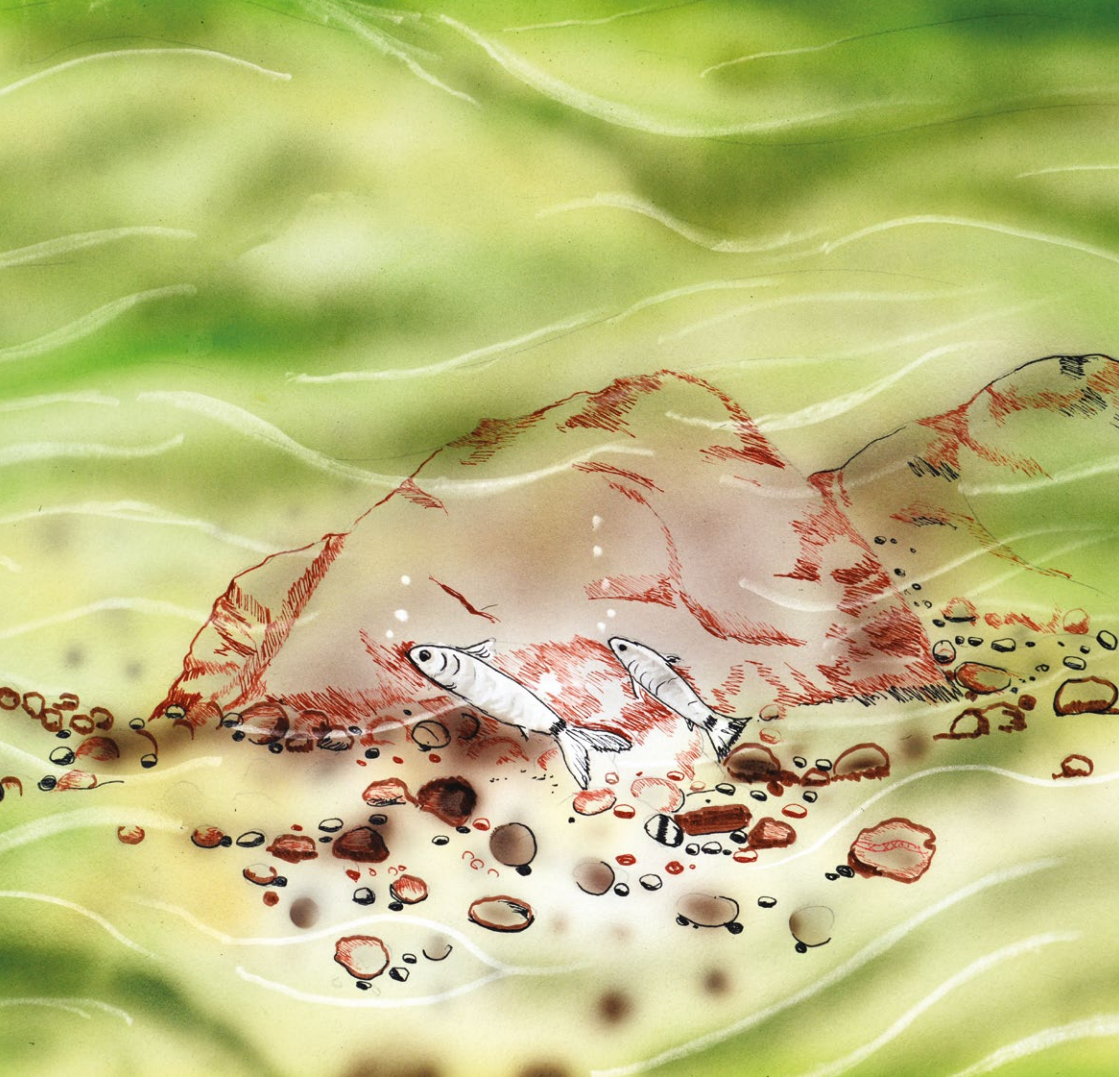
The 2023 NASCO Special Session on 'Indigenous Perspectives and Roles in Atlantic Salmon Conservation' was the first Special Session and dedicated discussion on Indigenous perspectives regarding wild Atlantic salmon within NASCO. It is appropriate and timely that this discussion was held during NASCO's [40<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting](#) when the NASCO Council was considering the recommendations from the third performance review and contemplating its future role and work in preserving wild Atlantic salmon in the face of unprecedented change to Atlantic salmon, the planet and its ecosystems. This Special Session, conducted over three hours, had nine invited Indigenous speakers and panellists from North America and Europe. The overarching objective was to begin a dialogue between NASCO and Indigenous peoples. The Special Session was designed to allow NASCO delegates to increase their understanding of Indigenous people's connections to, and experience with wild Atlantic salmon, including the challenges that they face – legal, social, cultural and governance. Two presenters shared examples from Canada of positive co-management of wild Atlantic salmon fisheries. To conclude the Special Session a panel of Indigenous representatives was convened, for delegates to hear perspectives, observations or advice by knowledgeable representatives on how Indigenous peoples can support NASCO's objectives and how NASCO could allow for more meaningful engagement of Indigenous peoples in its work.

The conclusion from this Special Session does not provide recommendations to NASCO but summarises the messages and perspectives shared as well as a few specific suggestions offered during the Special Session. A common message from all the Indigenous speakers was to emphasise that partnering with Indigenous peoples and including them in discussions is an essential and necessary element not only for the future preservation of wild Atlantic salmon but for the future success of NASCO as a conservation organization. Being treated as partners with a common goal to work together to develop solutions to preserve salmon was mentioned repeatedly. The case studies in co-management of wild salmon fisheries supported this view.

The relationship that Indigenous peoples have, and have had, with wild Atlantic salmon for time immemorial was said in different ways by all the speakers. The special knowledge that Indigenous peoples have by virtue of living on the land and relying on Atlantic salmon for food, even today, and the role this iconic fish has in their societies was underscored. Indeed there was a feeling from a number of the speakers that given the pressures imposed by modern industrial societies, and their systems of governance and law, it seems that it is Indigenous peoples who can best represent salmon and try to speak for them and their needs. Traditional Indigenous knowledge, which does not solely rely on the western scientific method, can be and should be acknowledged and incorporated in NASCO's discussions and policies regarding Atlantic salmon. Two-eyed seeing, conceived by the Mi'kmaq of Canada, was presented as a way to bridge these seemingly isolated knowledge systems.

A number of speakers observed that in many countries the legal governance and regulatory systems in place have historically excluded Indigenous peoples from many important decisions about Atlantic salmon that impact their livelihood, land and rights. The legal landscape of Indigenous rights continues to evolve. However, in some NASCO countries current day changes to such governance and regulatory systems are slow to proceed and sometimes done through legal challenges in the courts. It was noted that there is a global movement underway in other international organizations such as the United Nations and the Arctic Council where significant progress has already been made in incorporating Indigenous peoples into discussions and decisions. A speaker suggested that through the application of the principles and commitments of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), both by Parties and by NASCO, the evolution of appropriate governance and regulatory measures for Atlantic salmon and the relationship and indeed the partnership with Indigenous peoples could improve.

In summary, this Special Session launched the dialogue between NASCO and Indigenous peoples with Indigenous representatives sharing stories of their observations, experiences, traditions and culture. Every speaker and panellist offered a message of gratitude and hope and the importance of being partners. There was appreciation that NASCO had this dialogue, hope that this dialogue will continue and expand, hope that Indigenous peoples will be considered and treated as participants by NASCO and hope that by working as partners Atlantic salmon can be preserved for generations to come. The panel discussion noted that NASCO can, within its current decision making and without changing the NASCO Convention, incorporate Indigenous peoples into the governance of NASCO. The Steering Committee supports the proposal from Canada, [CNL\(23\)72](#), that NASCO could, as an equitable first step, do this by creating a new category of NASCO observers called 'Indigenous Observers' which would be granted the same status that NGOs currently enjoy in Council, Commissions, the International Atlantic Salmon Research Board and other NASCO Groups and Committees. A revision of the 'Conditions for Attendance by Observers at NASCO Meetings', [CNL\(06\)49](#), could then include the new category 'Indigenous Observers'.



## **Annex 1: Programme for the Special Session**





# Annex 1

## Indigenous Perspectives and Roles in Atlantic Salmon Conservation

Thursday 8 June 2023

### Programme

Time	Title	Contributors
<i>Opening</i>		
<i>Session Chair: Doug Bliss</i>		
09:00-09:30	Opening of the Special Session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Active prayer by Keptin Stephen Augustine of the Mi'kmaq Grand Council, Siksniqt District</li><li>• Opening remarks by Chief Terry Richardson, Pabineau First Nation</li><li>• Offerings by Canadian Head of Delegation Doug Bliss</li></ul>
<b>1. <i>Understanding the importance of wild Atlantic salmon for Indigenous peoples through international and regional perspectives.</i></b>		
<i>Session Chair: Wenona LaBillois</i>		
09:30-9:45	Presentation by an Indigenous people in Northern regions (East Atlantic)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Anne Nuorgam, Member of the Sámi Parliament of Finland</li></ul>
9:45-10:15	Presentation by Indigenous peoples in North-Eastern North America (Canada + United States)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Chief Clarissa Sabattis, Houlton Band of Maliseets</li><li>• Patricia Saulis, Knowledge Carrier, Wolastoqiyik / Maliseet, Negotkuk First Nation</li></ul>
10:15-10:30	<b>Coffee Break</b>	
<b>2. <i>Understanding the current role of Indigenous peoples in Canada in the conservation and management of wild Atlantic salmon</i></b>		
<i>Session Chair: Wenona LaBillois</i>		

10:30-10:45	Examples of successful Indigenous collaboration and / or leadership in Atlantic salmon conservation and management initiatives: <b>Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources (UINR) consultation table</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr Shelley Denny, Director and Senior Advisor, Aquatic Research and Stewardship, UINR</li> </ul>
10:45-11:00	Examples of successful Indigenous collaboration and / or leadership in Atlantic salmon conservation and management initiatives: <b>Nunatsiavut co-management system for food fishery.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Todd Broomfield, Director of Renewable Resources at Nunatsiavut Government</li> </ul>
<b>3. Panel Discussion: Informing Future Possibilities at NASCO</b>		
<b>Session Chair: Doug Bliss</b>		
11:00-11:10	Q&A from Sessions 1 and 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All guest speakers</li> </ul>
11:10-11:50	Panel Discussion and Questions from the Audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carl McLean, Labrador Inuit</li> <li>• Melissa Nevin, Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs Secretariat</li> <li>• Anne Nuorgam, Sámi Parliament of Finland, and</li> <li>• George Russell Jr, NunatuKavut Community Council</li> </ul>
11:50-11:55	Closing Remarks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Doug Bliss</li> </ul>
11:55-12:00	Closing Prayer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keptin Stephen Augustine</li> </ul>



**Annex 2: Panel Discussion:  
Informing Future Possibilities at NASCO**



## Annex 2

### Panel Discussion: Informing Future Possibilities at NASCO

**Moderator:**

Doug Bliss, Special Session Steering Committee

**Panellists:**

Carl McLean, Labrador Inuit (Canada)

Melissa Nevin, Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs Secretariat (Canada)

Anne Nuorgam, Sámi Parliament of Finland (Finland)

George Russell Jr, NunatuKavut Community Council (Canada)

**Doug Bliss:** so Melissa, if you don't mind, we'll start with you and the first question, and then we'll go to each panellist. And the first question is, what does NASCO mean to Indigenous peoples? And what can Indigenous peoples provide in support of NASCO's objectives? Thank you.

**Melissa Nevin:** I'll keep this short because I know my colleague, Carl, has a lot to say in this perspective. But NASCO, to Indigenous people that know of NASCO, I think see this as very much as an opportunity to contribute to the discussion around salmon. And as the discussions have happened over the presentations earlier today, Indigenous people have a lot to offer to NASCO around conservation, around protection. So, I see this very much as an opportunity.

**Doug Bliss:** thank you very much. Carl, would you mind going next?

**Carl McLean:** yes. Thank you, Doug. I just want to recognise that we are on the unceded territories of First Nations people of the Moncton area. We want to thank them for inviting us here. And greetings to everybody and the speakers this morning, who were great. Thanks very much. So, what does NASCO mean to Indigenous people? And what can Indigenous people provide in support of NASCO's objectives?

NASCO's objective, and I'll quote, to conserve, restore, enhance and rationally manage Atlantic salmon through international co-operation, taking account the best available scientific information. So there are several points I'd like to make, I think, here. Indigenous people, as we heard this morning, have traditionally been, have historically been, excluded from many important discussions that impact their livelihood, land and rights. So Indigenous involvement that is sustainable, institutionalised and ongoing is actually reconciliation in action.

Indigenous rights to be involved in these conversations are clear. Salmon rivers in Canada and other nations run through the traditional territories of many Indigenous populations, and the salmon have been harvested by Indigenous people for sustenance from time immemorial. We heard that this morning.

Food security is always a concern for Labrador Inuit, and the Nunatsiavut food fishery, as we heard from Todd, is very important for this food security aspect. It also aligns with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP), as we heard from Shelley. So most NASCO states have adopted this declaration at the UN, and it's now enshrined in Canadian law.

So I won't quote, but Article IV and Article V, I think, are both relevant to this discussion. I do have them written here. But anecdotally, when I started with NASCO 11 years ago, the Labrador food fishery was misunderstood, and many parties around the table had a lot of misconceptions on how this fishery was managed. Knowledge sharing has been beneficial and pivotal in progress both at this table at NASCO and beyond. As NASCO attendees go back to their own regions, jobs, expand the knowledge and perspectives continue to benefit.

So the connections that I have made at NASCO, what I've learnt has added value to my work at the Nunatsiavut Government, and even since in my later years. Further, the Nunatsiavut Government is the first and only Inuit self-government in Canada. Where did that go? It's a consensus-based style of government, and that forces difficult conversations, as we know at NASCO, but ensures comfort with solutions reached, and lends itself to more successful implementation because it is consensus based.

So everyone believes in what we've agreed to. So, hopefully, it's feasible to do that. And also traditional knowledge, as we heard, western science and data cannot be the only science considered by NASCO in their decision making. Traditional knowledge is also science and would improve decisions around Atlantic salmon. So I feel there is value for NASCO to ensure traditional knowledge is considered in all, if not most, of the decisions that NASCO makes.

Science based can mean relying on traditional knowledge because that is science, too. I know they're often used as separate, but I don't think that's really the case. Indigenous people are traditionally seen as guardians of the land, and NASCO's focus on conservation fits well with many Indigenous priorities.

This is my longest answer, by the way. The next question is going to be shorter. Nunatsiavut, through their land claim agreement, have developed co-management boards for land and water. When you think of that, it's not unlike how NASCO operates. International co-operation across Indigenous nations, governments, and organizations is well practiced and done frequently, and has been since time immemorial.

Borders are a colonial construct. Transnational co-operation comes naturally. We see this in things like the Inuit Circumpolar Conference and Indigenous lobbying at the UN. Governance challenges faced at NASCO can learn from

this co-operation. The Steering Committee noted that Indigenous knowledge systems capture generational data that can include detailed observations about changes in environmental conditions, species abundance and species behaviour.

Given limits to government resources, these additional knowledge systems make significant contributions to salmon restoration, conservation and management. We've already heard that in NASCO in previous years.

Labrador Inuit rely on the land and water to sustain their livelihood, maintain their culture and way of life. As I mentioned earlier, Labrador Inuit are the eyes and ears on the land and water. And as Todd said, there is very little federal enforcement or provincial enforcement. So that's important, we can be the eyes and ears and see what's going on.

So, the way this question is framed is interesting. Why is it up to Indigenous people to justify or reason why they should be included in NASCO and outline what they bring to the table? I think that's crazy, actually. Indigenous perspectives in these spaces are critical. They allow each country to make better informed conservation efforts in their borders for marginalised populations, who are significantly affected by salmon migration and fishing patterns.

In no context should the First Peoples of the land really have to justify why they should have a seat at tables like this. It should be obvious. Even if they've been historically excluded from Western style government systems, it should now be clear why Indigenous people need to be involved. If you want help in understanding why, I suggest you read the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action report that is publicly available. I think I'll end it there.

**Doug Bliss:** thank you very much, Carl. George, can we turn to you next, please?

**George Russell Jr:** thank you. And I just wanted to thank our Elder for the very wise and topical words and to get us going this morning. I didn't really write anything down to say because I find sometimes when you do that, some people will say what you're going to say, and all of the sudden you're just repeating other people's words. I think I'll just speak from the point of view of our communities, the communities of NunatuKavut.

And when it comes to NASCO, what do we think of NASCO? What do we know about NASCO? That sort of thing. It was a conception in our communities for many years that NASCO wants to shut down your food fishery and the mixed stock net fishery in Labrador. And whether that was right or wrong, I don't really know. But I know there was pressure from outside forces on our fishery for many years, and we felt that in our communities.

I think our leadership, and also having Carl on the committee for some years, too, we've helped to bridge some of those gaps with our people. There's still apprehension, I think, about NASCO in many coastal communities of Labrador,

and there's still, I think, work to do to bring people fully on board with the NASCO objectives and the greater understanding of NASCO. When we come to these meetings, we always try to come back and share perspectives and understandings that we gather here, when we meet with people from other countries in Canada.

So having greater representation at the NASCO tables will also go a long way in helping our people reconcile our thoughts around NASCO. And when it comes to the second part of the question, I can't remember the exact words, but what can Indigenous people do to help the objectives and the overall ideals of NASCO?

In Labrador, we have running through our communities and throughout our territory, we have some very healthy populations of salmon and healthy rivers, and our people have a very deep understanding of how these work. How the wind works with the salmon. The ice. The tides. The bait fish. We know all these things. We live with them, and everything is connected. Like the Chief said earlier, it's like your body. When some things change, it affects other areas.

We know our rivers. We know the salmon, how the salmon relate to the capelin, or what the tides do, what the winds do, and we're ready to share that knowledge with others and help incorporate that into the broader process. I'll end it there. Thank you.

**Doug Bliss:** thank you very much, George. Anne, if we could turn to you for the first question, please.

**Anne Nuorgam:** thank you. Much has been said. But what does NASCO mean to Indigenous peoples? In this case, for the salmon. And as I told you in my earlier statement, that the principles of NASCO have to be used to change the Salmon Agreement. And only the conservation principles have been used for the benefit of the governments.

So there hasn't been anything for us Sámi Indigenous peoples. So, I'd like to look at the objective of NASCO. As was mentioned earlier, it's to conserve, restore, enhance and rationally manage Atlantic salmon through international co-operation, taking account of best available scientific information.

And may I add an addition to this objective? After the available scientific information, you add words and Indigenous knowledge, because as was mentioned earlier, not in all these member states of the NASCO that scientific information is not seen to include Indigenous knowledge.

So, this is my proposal. When you look at our case, Indigenous knowledge is not taken into account in the management of the salmon. And we have heard, and I'm going to say this very... To simplify it, that the Indigenous knowledge is passed through our generations to generation. And in our case, the knowledge is not static. It changes, because it changes according to the nature. And for passing the knowledge to the next generation, practicing salmon fishing is needed.



And in other words, if there's no Indigenous knowledge, then we are not able to fish salmon in our rivers. And if we cannot practice salmon fishing, it means that the Indigenous knowledge disappears gradually, because it's kept alive through the exercise of fishing.

This is a basic issue, but it's really hard to get across when you speak with decision makers. And therefore, my proposal is to include also the Indigenous knowledge to the objective, so that the member state differences do not hinder the using of the Indigenous knowledge in the conservation and management of Atlantic salmon. Thank you.

**Doug Bliss:** thank you so much, Anne. We'll go to the second question, which I think, from a NASCO perspective, is very important for us to hear your view. And it is, how could Indigenous people's participation be enhanced within NASCO? What are your suggestions for what we could do to help that? Thank you. Do you mind? I'll start with you again, Melissa, if that's okay.

**Melisa Nevin:** yes, that's fine. I have a little bit more to say in this section. I think it's important that we're here today, important we're having this discussion. I didn't get to thank everyone earlier for their presentations, speaking earlier today. It was very powerful. But how could Indigenous peoples' participation be enhanced within NASCO? I think there are opportunities.

The Council could decide to invite Indigenous folks as observers in the meetings and establish terms and conditions for that participation. And Indigenous observers can be made up of Indigenous peoples' organizations, Indigenous governments who attend NASCO and Indigenous representation as attending as a state delegation.

The role of Indigenous attendees would be to discuss items of concern and interest, including outcomes of scientific assessments, local knowledge, values, perspectives, implications of conservation measures, and discuss conservation measures that may potentially differ from those discussed during NASCO and offer perspectives, offer different perspectives.

Like the structure of the NGOs, a chair or designated representative can be selected from the Indigenous organizations. I think this is an extremely exciting opportunity. The International Atlantic Salmon Research Board and Scientific Advisory Group meetings all receive correspondence from those. Unlike NGOs, Indigenous attendants would be a part of the International Atlantic Salmon Research Board and those types of opportunities.

So there's that, as well as including Indigenous representation in the Heads of Delegation and Commission meetings. I see this very much as an opportunity. While Canada seeks an independent non-DFO member as second part of their representation, an Indigenous perspective, an Indigenous role is extremely important.

The role of salmon to Indigenous people's identity, culture, traditions and spirituality is critical to sustain Indigenous ways of knowing and cultural

practices. Therefore conservation and protection of Atlantic salmon is of the utmost importance to Indigenous people. As salmon is critical to Indigenous people, we can enhance the NASCO process and provide an alternative perspective to the conservation and preservation of Atlantic salmon in a meaningful and conducive manner.

For Indigenous people, the priority of Atlantic salmon recovery strategies will be placed based on identified culture, social and economic priorities. Thus, the inclusion of Indigenous participation and knowledge may offer more options for alternative measures based on the context of Indigenous fishing and governance.

This is for Canada. Canada has a legal obligation to support considerations of Indigenous knowledge and decision making, and we would love that support and any opportunity to enhance, because I think all of us here today really want to see Atlantic salmon prosper. Thank you.

**Doug Bliss:** thank you very much, Melissa. Over to you, Carl.

**Carl McLean:** thank you, Doug. So how could Indigenous people's participation be enhanced within NASCO? So I think the sustainability and permanence of Indigenous voices at the NASCO table is necessary, and I think it can only strengthen the Organization.

Within Eastern Canada, where the North Atlantic salmon are on, the usage patterns, traditions of how Indigenous groups interact with salmon differs by nation group region but is also similar, and these perspectives all need to be incorporated and considered in NASCO. I suspect in other countries, it's much the same, at least in similar countries.

And I think panels like this help to share Indigenous perspectives. However, it is not always very productive for Indigenous stuff to be lumped into one symposium meeting or agenda item, which can sometimes be treated like a checkbox or a token exercise.

I think Indigenous values and perspectives should be woven throughout all NASCO discussions and activities in a way that is organic, effective, and, most importantly, not just a token and applied accordingly in a way that supports all NASCO objectives. So in my opinion, NASCO can substantially enhance Indigenous participation now. I don't think there's any convention change or anything like that needed. I think this needs to be a key point in the strategic planning exercise that we are undertaking. Thank you.

**Doug Bliss:** thank you, Carl. George, please.

**George Russell Jr:** I agree with a lot of what Carl and Melissa had to say about the increased presence for Indigenous people at these meetings, and the process and the early engagement and design of NASCO. And incorporating the Indigenous ways of knowing and Indigenous knowledge into the operations is going to be key.

And for people to understand that at NASCO is even more important, because we can throw around those words, and a lot of people will, yes, okay, that's good, but thinking, well, really, what does it mean? What does it mean? I'm just going to tell a little story.

Because I can say what Carl and Melissa just said, but what I'll do is just talk about how some things work in our community. The Inuit communities of southern Labrador, our mothers, our grandmothers, our aunts, they prepare all the salmon for the meals, for the gatherings, for the festivals, and this is old knowledge. Hundreds, thousands of years old, passed down through many, many years of working together and teaching.

And the women in our communities, they know salmon. When they're cleaning, the colour it's supposed to be... The texture of the meat. All this stuff if... We know it to be a certain way. And if there's something wrong fish, salmon, the char, the trout, it's now a different colour, or the meat is a different texture, something is not right. Something is not right in the water. Something is not right in the river. There's something going on.

And as harvesters, the information comes to us. And also, when did we catch them? Where did we catch the salmon? What was different at that time? What was the water doing? What was the wind doing? What was in the water? What was the big fish?

And then we can start working together in our communities and say, okay, there's something happening right there. And if it's a big concern, then we can reach out to science to say, maybe there's some testing that has to happen on it now because some things have changed here in this certain area. So I just wanted to bridge the gap of how...

One example. Just one example. Of how people in the communities, the knowledge is so important and so accurate, but it can also mesh and weave with science to produce better outcomes.

**Doug Bliss:** thank you, George. Anne, over to you for the second question.

**Anne Nuorgam:** thank you. Already 2018, the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues issued a recommendation in its report to the NASCO. The Permanent Forum urges member states to reform the agreements of intergovernmental conservation organizations such as NASCO to comply with the principles of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

And this is very important recommendation to you as a conservation organization because all around the world, there are discussions about how the conservations organizations had been infringing Indigenous rights, especially in Southern America and in Africa. But I have not seen that many cases mentioned in NASCO, in this kind of context.

And I'm really happy that this discussion is going on within NASCO at the moment. And when you look at the United Nations, all the member states, which are also part of the NASCO, have agreed that the status of Indigenous

peoples as non-governmental organizations does not comply with their representative national legislation, and therefore member states have started a process called enhanced participation of Indigenous peoples at the United Nations or at the UN system, enhancing the participation of Indigenous peoples' representative institutions, in meetings of relevant UN bodies on issues affecting them.

As already earlier proposed that this kind of system to take into account. And also, I'd like to propose that the NASCO establishes an ad hoc committee with Indigenous peoples' representatives, representative institutions, such as Sámi Parliament, I don't know how it would work in Canada or US, to design a specific status for the representative institutions of Indigenous peoples to NASCO.

And also, to prepare proposals how the main principles and recommendations of NASCO comply with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This ad hoc body would have a limited time to prepare their proposal together with these Indigenous representative institutions, and not many years, but just a short time.

And as the president of the Sámi Parliament, Silje Karine of Norway or in Norway, Silje Karine Muotka already suggested in 2019 that the model of Arctic Council to be adopted for certain to the NASCO, and Indigenous peoples' representative institutions would have similar status as in the Arctic Council, being around the same table, and as the member states or the members without voting rights as it is the case in the Arctic Council.

But of course, this would bring them the responsibility for the Indigenous representative institutions to include fishing right holders Indigenous peoples within their delegations.

And of course I'm aware that, for example, the European Union is part of NASCO, and Finland and Sweden are through the European Union. Denmark is part of NASCO. But we have to realise that the European Union has adopted in its external policies. They have decided that the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples should be mainstreamed in all external policies. So there is already decision by the UN, EU bodies to do that. It would facilitate the work easier.

Thank you for this opportunity to give you some ideas how to reorganize NASCO, and good luck with your work.

**Doug Bliss:** thank you so much, Anne. We will just have a brief round of applause for our panellists. I recognise we're just past noon, but it is, I think, critically important if... We'll have a very limited time for a question-and-answer period, before we have our closing blessing. So, I'm proposing that we are not going to do this for more than about ten minutes. So, if anyone has a question, now is the time. And we have roaming mics, as you know.

**Stephen Chase (The Foundation for the Conservation of Atlantic Salmon – Canada):** thank you, I'll be brief. I'm Stephen Chase with the Foundation for Conservation of Atlantic Salmon in Canada. This has been an extremely important and interesting discussion this morning. And I think as Carl put it, the Indigenous organizations should not have to justify why they should have a seat at the NASCO table. Rather... And I understand there are complexities.

NASCO is an organization of governments under the NASCO treaty. But likewise, Indigenous organizations are mostly as government entities in their own right. The only point I wanted to make was that I've been associated with NASCO long enough to remember when NGOs were excluded for making presentations to the NASCO table.

And then subsequently, over the years, at a minimum, the NGOs were given an opportunity to present opening statements and to comment on matters. Subsequently, the aquaculture industry was given an opportunity to present. So the minimum question tonight is how we could start this process, how NASCO would start this process of engaging Indigenous people in a meaningful way in the actual decision making of NASCO. That's what I'm looking forward to seeing.

**Doug Bliss:** thank you, Stephen. Any other comments or questions?

**Katrine Kærsgaard (Denmark (in respect of the Faroe Islands and Greenland)):** thank you. Katrine Kærsgaard representing the government of Greenland. I think it cannot come as a surprise to anyone representing an Indigenous government that we fully support more involvement of Indigenous peoples in NASCO and anywhere else where it's relevant.

And I think as mentioned by the speakers, we could look at the Arctic Council, the involvement of Indigenous peoples there. But I think also considering involvement of local knowledge, Indigenous local knowledge is very important. And here, we could also look at the work being done on the central Arctic Ocean, where local knowledge is an extremely important part of the work on scientific knowledge and management of the future time we can fish in the central Arctic Ocean.

So, I think there is already a lot of good work being done, that we could look to. So, we don't need to invent anything that's already there, and I think we should start doing this work right away. Thank you very much.

**Doug Bliss:** First of all, I'd like to thank all our presenters. Anne, sorry that we have only met by video call over the last few months, sorry we haven't had the chance to meet in person but thank you for all your time and effort working on this, we appreciate your thoughtful comments. And that goes for all the presenters that were here. We know how much time and energy that goes into putting something like this together and to speak about a topic that is, amongst other things, very emotional and sometimes hard to do. I do have to thank the people who helped put this together. We couldn't have done it without the very strong and helpful advice from Shelley and from Carl, so thank

you for that. And to recognise the rest of the team, Isabelle and Dan Kircheis and Nadia Hamoui who is not here today but works with us in our Ottawa office. As always, nothing happens in NASCO without the full support and the activity of the Secretariat and the Secretary. So, this would in no way be possible without their assistance.

I hope this session will have increased your understanding of Indigenous peoples' connections to and experience with wild Atlantic salmon. And that perspectives shared today will inform future decisions imminent and future decisions regarding the participation and involvement of Indigenous peoples in NASCO.

I invite Keptin Stephen Augustine to close the Session with a prayer. Thank you.

**Closing prayer by** Keptin Stephen Augustine of the Mi'kmaq Grand Council, Siknikt District, New Brunswick, Canada.

For bibliographic purposes, this publication may be cited as follows:

NASCO. 2023. Indigenous Perspectives and Roles in Atlantic Salmon Conservation. Bliss, D., Denny, S., Hamoui, N., Kircheis, D., McLean, C., Morisset, I. and E.M.C. Hatfield. (Eds.). Report of a Special Session of the Council of NASCO, CNL(23)88. 72 pp.

Design, layout and printing: [shaw-online.com](http://shaw-online.com)

Publisher: North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO),  
11 Rutland Square, Edinburgh EH1 2AS, UK. email: [hq@nasco.int](mailto:hq@nasco.int)

ISBN: 978-1-7398364-1-2

Date of Publication: 15 December 2023

Contact: The Secretary, NASCO, 11 Rutland Square, Edinburgh EH1 2AS, UK

Cover illustration courtesy of Dozay

