



ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY July 14-15-16, 2026, Ottawa, ON

Resolution no. 40/2026

TITLE: Pairing Indigenous Knowledge Systems with Western-based Science to Rebuild Wild Fisheries

SUBJECT: Fisheries Conservation and Protection

MOVED BY: Chief Donald "Duffy" Edgars, Old Massett Village Council, BC

SECONDED BY: Chief Dalton Silver, Sumas First Nation, BC

DECISION Approved by the AFN Executive Committee by consensus.

WHEREAS:

A. *The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN Declaration) states:

- i. Article 13(1): Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places, and persons.
- ii. Article 13(2): States shall take effective measures to ensure that this right is protected and also to ensure that indigenous peoples can understand and be understood in political, legal, and administrative proceedings, where necessary through the provision of interpretation or by other appropriate means.
- iii. Article 25: Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinctive spiritual relationship with their traditionally owned or otherwise occupied and used lands, territories, waters and coastal seas and other resources and to uphold their responsibilities to future generations in this regard.
- iv. Article 31(1): Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, as well as the manifestations of their sciences, technologies and cultures, including human and genetic resources, seeds, medicines, knowledge of the properties of fauna and flora, oral traditions, literatures, designs, sports and traditional games and visual and performing arts. They also have the right to

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maintain, control, protect and develop their intellectual property over such cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions.

- B.** The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act Action Plan (UNDA) states that Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) is tasked with the following Action Plan Measures (APM), among others:
- i.** APM 36: Pursue amendments and reforms to fisheries legislation, regulation, or policies to support self-determination and the meaningful implementation and exercise of Indigenous fishing rights, including Aboriginal and treaty rights.
 - ii.** APM 40: Develop and employ mechanisms that respect and incorporate Indigenous Knowledge as a distinct knowledge system in the management of fisheries, fish habitat, conservation, marine safety and protection of the marine environment.
- C.** Kitasoo Xai'xais Nation, as a member of Coastal First Nations Great Bear Initiative and one of eight First Nations signatories to the Fisheries Resources Reconciliation Agreement, is leading cutting-edge research to advance a Case Study on Pacific herring to demonstrate how pairing of Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) and Western science and practices can improve fisheries conservation and management outcomes and lead to collaborative governance.
- D.** The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) has passed Resolution 61/2018, *Respect, Protection, and Preservation of Indigenous Knowledge Systems*, which directs the AFN to call on all levels of government to respect, honour and prioritize IKS policies and protocols that First Nations have established and to require free, prior and informed consent from First Nations regarding requests for the use of IKS.
- E.** The AFN has passed Resolution 11/2019, *Indigenous Knowledge Systems in Fisheries*, which directs the AFN to continue its advocacy work concerning IKS with DFO to respect First Nations' inherent rights, Treaties, title, and jurisdiction.
- F.** Research published in May 2025 found that out of 78 public documents produced or co-produced by DFO within the past five years, approximately 87% of these documents did not meaningfully include First Nations and/or IKS. Additionally, only 9% included Indigenous Peoples in some aspects of research, but not their IKS'.
- G.** Bill C-68, *an amendment to the Fisheries Act to provide more protection to fish and their habitat*, received Royal Assent on June 21, 2019, and included amendments to the *Fisheries Act*, including provisions outlining the consideration of Indigenous Knowledge in certain aspects of work administered by the Federal Government under the Act.
- H.** The House of Commons Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans (FOPO) is concluding the statutory review of the *Fisheries Act* in the 45th Parliament and is expected to publish its Report in 2026.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the First Nations-in-Assembly:

- 1.** Mandate the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to advocate for increased resources, capacity and funding to support First Nations in the work carried out by the Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) concerning Indigenous Knowledge Systems in the development of regulations, guidelines, policies, and other related

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tasks, that honours the ownership, control, access, possession (OCAP®) principles and maintains the intellectual property rights of First Nations sharing the knowledge.

2. Direct the AFN to call on the Minister of Fisheries, and any other relevant Ministers, to meet directly with representatives of First Nations, to identify a path forward for DFO to fulfill the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act Action Plan Measure 40 as it relates to incorporating Indigenous Knowledge in the management of fisheries, fish habitat, conservation, marine safety, and protection of the marine environment.
3. Direct the AFN to explore policy and legislative changes for the incorporation of Indigenous Knowledge Systems in Canadian fisheries management and present options to the National Fisheries Committee by December 2026 Special Chiefs Assembly.

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