



ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY
July 9, 10, 11, 2024, Montreal, QC

Resolution no. 23/2024

TITLE: First Nations Wild Atlantic Salmon Conservation Approaches

SUBJECT: Fisheries, Economic Development

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

SECONDED BY: Tyler Sack, Proxy, Annapolis Valley First Nation, NS

DECISION Carried by consensus.

WHEREAS:

- A.** The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN Declaration) states:
- i. Article 29(1): Indigenous peoples have the right to the conservation and protection of the environment and the productive capacity of their lands or territories and resources. States shall establish and implement assistance programmes for Indigenous peoples for such conservation and protection, without discrimination.
 - ii. Article 37(1): Indigenous peoples have the right to the recognition, observance, and enforcement of Treaties, agreements, and other constructive arrangements concluded with States or their successors and to have States honour and respect such Treaties, agreements, and other constructive arrangements.
- B.** First Nations in the Atlantic and Quebec regions have specialized knowledge on the depletion and conservation of wild salmon in these regions. Wild Atlantic salmon is and has been one of the most important food staples for First Nations in Atlantic Canada. Since time immemorial, First Nations across Canada have had their own ways of knowing and care taking as stewards to preserve the earth's resources for the generations to come.
- C.** In 2021, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) was mandated by the Prime Minister to "work in close collaboration with provincial and territorial authorities, Indigenous partners, fishing and stewardship organizations and implicated communities to make new investments and develop a conservation strategy to restore and rebuild wild Atlantic salmon populations and their habitats."

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Cindy Woodhouse

CINDY WOODHOUSE NEPINAK, NATIONAL CHIEF

23 – 2024

Page 1 of 3

- D. The Atlantic Policy Congress (APC) passed resolution 01-2024, Atlantic First Nations Chiefs Support for Wild Atlantic Salmon Conservation and the Wild Atlantic Salmon Conservation Strategy. The resolution directed that the APC member Chiefs compel the Minister of DFO to implement the Wild Atlantic Salmon Conservation Strategy and fund \$40 million for Indigenous-led engagement of the strategy for wild Atlantic Salmon.
- E. The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) was mandated by Resolution 21/2017, *Respecting Inherent Rights-Based Fisheries in Parallel with the Review of Canada's Fisheries Act*:
- i. To call on the federal government to recognize and respect First Nations jurisdiction over fisheries, and the positions and perspectives of First Nations in the ongoing review process and ensure these have been considered and will be integrated into proposed legislative, policy and program reforms in relation to the Fisheries Act.
 - ii. To pursue legislative drafting and/or a parallel legislative reform process specifically for First Nations that will address issues specific to First Nations fisheries and will integrate respect for the Inherent right of First Nations to govern fisheries into the *Fisheries Act*.
 - iii. To call on Prime Minister Trudeau and the Government of Canada to work jointly with First Nations in a full review of the legislation unilaterally imposed on Indigenous peoples where there are contradictions, as well as to call on the Prime Minister to ensure that the required mechanisms and processes are in place to ensure legislation is not unilaterally imposed on Indigenous peoples.
- F. Ten of sixteen wild Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*) populations are listed as at risk or under consideration for addition to Schedule 1 under the *Species at Risk Act* and the Lake Ontario population was designated as extinct in 2010.
- G. The "Principles respecting the Government of Canada's relationship with Indigenous peoples" was published on September 1, 2021, and commits the Government of Canada to achieve reconciliation with Indigenous peoples through a renewed, nation-to-nation, government-to-government relationship based on recognition of rights, respect, co-operation, and partnership.
- H. DFO has not been transparent with its engagement process regarding the implementation of the Wild Atlantic Salmon Conservation Policy in the Quebec region; rather, DFO has excluded the Abenaki, Algonquin, Attikamekw, Cree, Huron-Wendat, Mohawk, Malecites, Innus, Mi'qmaq and Naskapi in its implementation and engagement processes to implement wild Atlantic Salmon conservation strategies.

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

1. Direct the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to advocate for the Government of Canada to provide adequate funding and resources to First Nations in the Atlantic and Quebec regions to fully engage with DFO to implement First Nations conservation strategies, engage in the Atlantic Salmon Conservation Policy and Strategy, and ensure respect of First Nations' Inherent and Treaty rights.
2. Call on the AFN to advocate that Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) ensure that the Atlantic Salmon Conservation Policy (WASCP) and Strategy (WASCS) are consistent with and support the objectives of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, and that engagement meets

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consultation and collaboration requirements in the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*.

3. Direct the AFN to work with DFO to ensure that findings from the WASCP/WASCS engagement processes are shared with First Nations.
4. Direct the AFN to advocate for necessary changes to the *Fisheries Act* to ensure respect for First Nation approaches to fisheries stewardship and wild Atlantic salmon conservation.

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23 – 2024
Page 3 of 3