

News Release

For Immediate Release

Release of Plamu Back Into Their Native River

Fundy Salmon Recovery collaborators release endangered salmon back to the Petitcodiac River Watershed

October 13, 2023

Elgin, New Brunswick

Fort Folly First Nation

Fort Folly First Nation is in the spotlight as experts in Indigenous-led conservation. Fort Folly released over 800 endangered inner Bay of Fundy Atlantic salmon into the blessed waters of the Petitcodiac River watershed today as part of the Petitcodiac restoration branch of the Fundy Salmon Recovery program.

The Fundy Salmon Recovery program is known for the development of a wild salmon recovery model which was first in the world. This program involves capturing young Atlantic salmon from the wild, rearing them on a dedicated marine farm site until maturity, and then releasing them back to native rivers to spawn naturally. Fundy Salmon Recovery continues to advance wild salmon conservation rearing. Over the last five years, this collaboration has been dedicating efforts to innovate and advance marine rearing techniques, develop cutting-edge research, foster and share ways of knowing and increase jobs in conservation.

“Plamu”, meaning salmon, is a very important species to the Mi’gmaq and to Fort Folly First Nation. In the heart of their traditional territory, the Petitcodiac River was once home to about 20% of the total inner Bay of Fundy population. In 2003, this population was listed under the Species at Risk Act after witnessing major declines in numbers of returning adults - from 40,000 to the current estimate of 200. The construction of the Petitcodiac River causeway in 1968, among the many other ecological shifts of the time, jeopardized this vital species and the traditions that it held. When the causeway gates opened in 2010, Fort Folly was confident in taking a leading role in salmon recovery efforts. Now, after years of dedication to species and habitat recovery, as well as building technical capacity and strong partnerships, Fort Folly’s role in Fundy Salmon Recovery has become a cornerstone in the work towards ecosystem restoration within the Petitcodiac River watershed. Fort Folly First Nation has solidified its position as a global conservation leader, recently earning the honour of being featured at the meeting of the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO), the leading international policy group for Atlantic salmon.

Fundy Salmon Recovery includes Fort Folly First Nation, Parks Canada, Cooke Aquaculture, Atlantic Canada Fish Farmers Association, the University of New Brunswick and the Province of New Brunswick. Together, we have pioneered the World’s First Wild Salmon Marine Conservation Farm on Grand Manan Island, New Brunswick. This is where wild salmon, collected from inner Bay of Fundy rivers as juveniles, are grown to maturity and then released back into their native rivers. The goal is that these fish will naturally spawn the next generation of wild salmon, providing their offspring with early exposure to the wild and therefore the best chance of survival as adults. The work has led to numbers of naturally returning and spawning atlantic salmon in participating rivers not seen in decades.



Quotes

“There is a critical importance of recovering this population as it’s deeply intertwined in the heritage and culture of the Mi’gmaq people. The recovery of the endangered Atlantic salmon is not only about preserving a species but about reclaiming and sharing our cultural identity, healing historical wounds, and promoting sustainable stewardship of our lands and waters.” **Chief Rebecca Knockwood, Fort Folly First Nation**

“This is a memorable day, seeing first-hand what can be achieved when people work together toward a common goal. Seeing aquaculture knowledge and technology used to help pioneer a revolutionary approach to wild Atlantic Salmon recovery is so rewarding, and we are proud to work alongside our many partners to make real change in our river systems.” **Susan Farquharson, Executive Director of the Atlantic Canada Fish Farmers Association.**

“Marine salmon farming is the most environmentally sustainable animal production on the planet, with the lowest freshwater use and lowest carbon emissions, and ocean aquaculture technology is allowing us to help address the decline of wild salmon stocks in New Brunswick. It makes perfect sense that we continue to apply our decades of science innovations to successfully manage the world’s first wild salmon marine conservation farm in Dark Harbour, Grand Manan Island.” **Joel Richardson, Vice President of Public Relations, Cooke Aquaculture Inc.**

“The Fundy Salmon Recovery model serves as a conservation tool, has changed the face of Atlantic Salmon restoration, and has resulted in increased wild-hatched juvenile salmon production, increased number of adult salmon returning to spawn, and healthier, more productive rivers. For inner Bay of Fundy rivers, and in particular the Petitcodiac River, it is not about conserving what is left, it is all about rebuilding a lost population. I am so proud to share in these achievements and play a part in this impactful work. We have accomplished many things and the results stand on their own.” **Dr Kurt Samways, Parks Canada Research Chair, University of New Brunswick**

“Fundy National Park is very proud to be actively working alongside Fundy Salmon Recovery partners to monitor and restore our aquatic ecosystems, protect endangered Atlantic salmon, and expand our knowledge of biodiversity in and outside the boundaries of Fundy National Park. The cultures and identities of Indigenous peoples are rooted in these lands and waters. Parks Canada recognizes that honouring the connections to this species, as well as, developing conservation actions based in Indigenous knowledge are important elements for outcomes related to reconciliation and conservation.” **Julie M. LeBlanc, Field Unit Superintendent, New Brunswick South Field Unit, Parks Canada**

“I would like to congratulate the Amlamgog First Nation. We are proud to support this important initiative to return native Atlantic salmon to the inner Bay of Fundy. We have worked with many partners to make days like this a reality over the past several years and I look forward to seeing the results of these efforts. Partnerships and creative projects like this are key to the success of the Atlantic salmon.” **Margaret Johnson, Minister, Department of Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries**

“I would like to congratulate Fort Folly First Nation and all its collaborators for this monumental release of Plamu/salmon into the Petitcodiac watershed. The province of New Brunswick is proud to be a collaborator as a continuous funder of this initiative through the New Brunswick Wildlife Trust Fund.” **Mike Holland, Minister, Department of Natural Resources and Energy Development**



Quick Facts

- The inner Bay of Fundy population of Atlantic salmon has been listed as endangered under the *Species at Risk Act* since 2003. In an effort to save this declining population, some of the last remaining wild salmon were collected for “live gene banking”. This has protected the unique genetic lineage of this population which would have otherwise been lost.
- *Fundy Salmon Recovery* is working on two inner Bay of Fundy Rivers - the Petitcodiac River system by Fort Folly Habitat Recovery and the Upper Salmon River in Fundy National Park by Parks Canada.
- Wild endangered Atlantic salmon are grown to maturity on the world’s first Wild Salmon Marine Conservation Farm at Dark Harbour on Grand Manan Island, NB. Cooke Aquaculture operates and maintains the farm, which has been provided by the Village of Grand Manan, with operations support from the Atlantic Canada Fish Farmers Association.
- Salmon are health tested in the rivers and on the conservation farm by the Province of New Brunswick veterinarians with regular monitoring and surveillance by Cooke veterinarians and fish health staff.
- Salmon and salmon habitat research and monitoring projects led by Fundy Salmon Recovery include: Passive Integrated Transponder (PIT) river arrays, radio telemetry, adult snorkel survey monitoring, wild salmon genetic analysis, juvenile salmon monitoring program, aquatic invertebrate and habitat monitoring, marine derived nutrient research, marine smolt survival, feed regimes and citizen science programming.

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