



NDP Responds

Note: We have yet to release our full platform but here are the answers to date outlining our commitments.

New Brunswick Salmon Council

1. Ministerial Advisory Committee Report on Wild Atlantic Salmon –

In response to the low returns of wild Atlantic salmon in 2012 through 2014, and from a call to action from conservation groups, the Government of Canada established a ministerial advisory committee. The committee consulted with stakeholder groups throughout the Atlantic provinces and Quebec and put forward 61 recommendations to Minister Gail Shea (Department of Fisheries and Oceans). Many of our survey questions relate to the recommendations from the committee report.

a. Are you familiar with the report?

NDP Response: The NDP is very aware of the Advisory Committee's Report. We were watching the process with great interest. The viability of all fisheries resources is a priority for the NDP.

2. Recreational Fisheries Liaison Committee –

If your party forms the government, will you:

a. Support and commit to defining and establishing a province-wide Recreational Fisheries Liaison Committee that will be comprised of government and non-government participants with a mandate to collectively and openly discuss fisheries issues, management options and strategies to ensure sustainable populations of our inland fisheries resources and the recreational fisheries which they support?

b. If not, why not?

NDP Response: We will consider supporting recreational liaison committees in provinces, as we believe everyone has a role to play in conservation.

c. Support the Committee in developing and distributing educational materials designed to improve the techniques for hook and release angling?

NDP Response: Public education is a valuable mechanism for ensuring long-term sustainability of our environment, and an NDP would be an active proponent.

3. Enforcement and Protection –

Does your party believe that the present status of inland fisheries protection and enforcement within NB is sufficient to protect the resources and the associated recreational and economic benefits?

a. If yes, please provide rationale.

b. If not, why not?

NDP Response: No. The changes to the Fisheries Act that the Conservative government made in an omnibus budget bill have gutted habitat protection, weakened rules around the deposition of deleterious substances, and made it easier to build in and around water, destroying breeding zones and important ecosystems.

c. Does your party recognize that the presence of partners such as Aboriginal/First Nations, anglers and river groups can be a deterrent to poachers on rivers and in estuaries?

NDP Response: Yes, responsible users of our lakes and rivers contribute greatly to stewardship efforts.

d. Will your party, develop networks with these groups, and establish collaborative means to detect and report poachers so that enforcement action can take place in a timely manner?

NDP Response: Enforcement of fish and wildlife violations is provincial jurisdiction, but any assistance that promotes stewardship would be a good effort.

e. Will your party increase the funding levels and capacity for wild Atlantic salmon enforcement?

NDP Response: Enforcement is key to ensuring that the rules are followed, and that populations are restored and maintained. With no capacity to monitor stocks or enforce regulations, it is impossible to make informed management decisions or to predict long-term sustainability. An NDP government would commit to ensuring capacity is restored.

4. *Finfish aquaculture – Peer reviewed science clearly demonstrates a negative impact of net-pen reared Atlantic salmon on wild salmon populations.*

What is your party's position on:

a. Moving the net-pen finfish aquaculture industry out of the marine environment and into sustainable land-based closed containment systems?

b. Establishing incentives intended to encourage industry to move their operations into land-based closed containment systems?

c. Collaborating with provincial partners and the aquaculture industry to do genetics work in river systems adjacent to aquaculture farms to determine the presence and impacts of escaped fish on local wild stocks?

d. Requiring that all aquaculture fish be marked so that escapes may be identifiable?

NDP Response: It is important to acknowledge the provincial jurisdiction in this regard. However, provinces must take steps towards achieving a balanced approach to a sustainable industry in our rural and coastal communities. It is very important to commit to protecting the environment and traditional fisheries as they further develop the aquaculture industry. It is essential to strengthen the monitoring and enforcement mechanisms of the industry. The feasibility studies of closed containment projects are encouraging.

Fisheries are the lifeblood of the East Coast and we must always be looking forward to new technologies that can protect our environment while at the same time contributing to our local economies. Close containment systems need to be evaluated carefully. Canadians expect and deserve strong regulations and effective monitoring of every project, whether in the ocean or on land. The government must work with local communities and groups to ensure that their concerns are heard and addressed and that the balance they are seeking is managed.

5. *Hydroelectric facilities – i.e. Mactaquac Dam –*

NBPower is assessing its options in removing or rebuilding the Mactaquac Hydroelectric Facility. Will your party, through DFO and Environment Canada work.

a. With hydro operators, Aboriginal groups and concerned NGOs to identify the water needs and water risks for salmon (flow rates, timing, temperatures, etc) so that whenever possible, hydro operators can factor these concepts into their water management plans?

NDP Response: Both Environment Canada and DFO have clear roles to play in proper environmental assessments of projects. The NDP is committed to strengthening and reinstating both the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act and the Fisheries Act, and will be engaged and active partners as government.

b. And does your party (Yes or No) support the removal of the Mactaquac Dam and the restoration of a free-flowing, ecologically-restored St. John River, the second largest river in eastern North America and at one time home to arguably the largest fully public recreational fishery for Atlantic salmon in North America?

NDP Response: The NDP would have to base its decision on a science-based assessment of the impacts and alternatives available. It would be premature to take a position without due diligence.

6. Fish Habitat Management and Protection –

If your party forms the government, will you:

a. Partner with relevant provincial resource departments, industrial resource users and developers to ensure that appropriate legislation and best land use practices are in place to protect fish habitat during industrial development including forestry, aquaculture and agricultural activities?

b. Ensure the habitat protection legislation is enforced?

NDP Response: As stated above, we will reinstate the habitat protection and other provisions of the fisheries act to ensure that fish habitat is protected, and we will ensure that DFO enforces it.

7. Predators

If your party forms the next federal government, will you

a. Partner with First Nations groups to conduct a grey seal hunt in the Gulf of St. Lawrence and a striped bass fishery in the Miramichi estuary?

b. Immediately cease the unproductive efforts to mechanically remove smallmouth bass from Miramichi Lake and move to chemical eradication?

NDP Response: A New Democrat government would conduct a robust assessment of the options for dealing with grey seals, striped bass, and smallmouth bass, and make an informed decision based on the best scientific advice.

8. Research and Management including Mortality at Sea –

If your party forms the next federal government, will you

a. Work with national and international partners to research the larger ecosystem changes that are occurring in the Northwest Atlantic, including the Gulf of Saint Lawrence?

NDP Response: Yes, we are committed to restoring scientific capacity that has been gutted by the Conservatives, and we will rely on science to make our decisions.

b. Update the overdue review of the Wild Atlantic Salmon Conservation Policy using, as a point of departure, the 61 recommendations from the 2015 Ministerial Advisory Committee Report on Atlantic Salmon?

NDP Response: Yes. We believe that salmon is more than a resource, it is part of our culture. Changes to the viability of stocks are more than simply a conservation or restoration issue - wild salmon populations are essential to the economy and the ecology of the Atlantic shore, and to the many fisheries and other activities on rivers that support Atlantic salmon.

c. Identify the financial level of priority you place on increasing investment in Atlantic salmon restoration including the development of a Wild Atlantic Salmon Research and Innovation Fund?

NDP Response: The Conservative government gutted the habitat protection provisions of the Fisheries Act in an omnibus budget bill, which makes one of the most essential elements of species protection extremely difficult.

Furthermore, changes to regulations around the deposit of deleterious substances, protection of navigable waters, rules around environmental assessments, devastating budget cuts to Environment Canada and Fisheries and Oceans, and the firing and muzzling of federal scientists have all but destroyed our capacity to monitor and protect Canada's fisheries and environment. This must be reversed.

Furthermore, wild salmon don't respect national borders or territorial waters – they are a species that travels great distances, and one that is considered a resource by other nations. If Canada can't manage to keep salmon healthy and thriving in our own waters, and is not seen to be doing so by our partners in the salmon fishery, we will have little credibility in negotiating international agreements to sustain the species and the economies that rely on it. We must be a responsible steward, and a credible partner.

d. Increase stock assessments as well as reviewing the options for efficiently counting juvenile and adult Atlantic salmon numbers?

NDP Response: As stated above, we must rely on science for decision making. We must be able to assess stocks if we are to efficiently and effectively manage them.

e. Network with First Nations and Aboriginal groups as well as recreational angling interests to set appropriate daily and seasonal bag limits in accordance with the principles of the precautionary approach and status of the stocks?

NDP Response: Public participation in decision making is essential to democracy. Consultation with affected stakeholders is a key principle for effective governance.

9. Reduce net fishing mortality – Non- Aboriginal and First Nations/Aboriginal:

There are a number of non-aboriginal net fisheries conducted throughout Atlantic Canada and Quebec that catch salmon, either incidentally or through a regulated by-catch fishery. The NBSC fully respects the First Nations/Aboriginal rights to fish for food, social and ceremonial purposes (FSC), as well as the duty of DFO to consult with First Nations/Aboriginal partners to develop fishing plans and allocations. If your party forms the next federal government, will you:

a. Review gill net fisheries to determine if they are still required by local commercial fisheries and if these net fisheries are to continue, include licence conditions related to location, timing, orientation, depth, mesh size and other factors that will minimize impacts on salmon runs?

b. Do you support the exclusive use of trap nets and the immediate release of all captured multi sea winter salmon (MSW), which are primarily the large female spawners?

c. Explore options to take grilse only in the FSC fisheries?

d. Explore options to replace salmon with other FSC species (e.g., striped bass in the Miramichi River)?

NDP Response: An NDP government would review gill net fisheries, the use of trap nets, and FSC fisheries and salmon replacement as part of the renewal of the Fisheries Act.

e. On the international scale, will you work aggressively with NASCO, Greenland, Denmark and other partners to reduce the harvest and effectively manage the salmon fishery located off western Greenland?

NDP Response: An NDP government would be an active and committed partner in negotiations and stewardship decisions around the Atlantic Salmon Treaty. As mentioned above, we must be good stewards of the resource domestically in order to be a credible participant in the international management of salmon.