



COMMUNITY NOTICE

May 23, 2019

2019 Cape Breton Moose Survey

Together, the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Chiefs, NS Department of Lands and Forestry, and Parks Canada have conducted a moose survey in Cape Breton covering an area from Hunter's Mountain to Meat Cove, with a small sample done around Lake Ainslie.

In the early 2000s, the moose population rose to hyper-abundant levels which led to damaged forest habitat. In 2014, Parks Canada embarked on a five-year project to study the impacts of moose on forest growth. The past winter, the count found around 1300 moose (plus or minus 26%). This number is down from the number found in the 2004 survey. Reports show that hunters are taking mostly young animals, leaving good breeding stock and that calves and high rates of twins are showing healthy habitat. In many ways, the numbers are getting down to where they should be for the habitat.

We now need to keep the population at sustainable levels. We have discussed the following steps with the Province to ensure that happens:

Moose Licenses: The Mi'kmaq harvest is, of course, unchanged. The number of moose licenses issued by the Province for non-Native hunters will remain the same for this season, but if numbers continue to drop, licenses will be cut back. If future license cutbacks are required, the *Sparrow* test will be honoured (licenses to be the first cuts and any Mi'kmaq restrictions on food harvest will be a last resort).

Create Accurate Count of Mi'kmaq Harvest: Since there may be restrictive measures in the future if numbers continue to drop – it is critical we have an accurate count of animals harvested by Mi'kmaq. We know the number taken by licensed hunters, and we know that poaching is an increasing problem. However, without Mi'kmaq numbers, we cannot assess the impact of poaching.

Conservation Check Points at Hunter's Mountain and Wreck Cove: Mi'kmaq harvesters have been requesting checkpoints and Lands & Forestry and Enforcement have agreed to this. While they may have to be voluntary at this point, we encourage all harvesters to stop at them. These checkpoints will help us to identify the types of harvesters and collect data on harvested animals. These checkpoints would be co-managed jointly operated by both the Mi'kmaq and the Province.

Bear Licenses: Lands & Forestry and Enforcement have agreed with Mi'kmaq concerns that the regulations around bear hunting licences in the Highlands are too open and are leading to abuse by unauthorized hunters. We will be working with the Province to put an end to this loophole.

Mi'kmaq to Stop Enabling Non-Native Hunters: If we are going to restrict non-Native use of bear licenses, etc. to get around proper licenses, we must make a firm effort to end Mi'kmaq taking non-Natives out and claiming their moose. This is a growing area of abuse and includes unfortunate stories of Mi'kmaq men and women being used and abused. Regarding non-Native spouses, Mi'kmaq women in some communities have started organizing Women Harvester outings so they can help each other without non-Native support. These are encouraged.

New Count in Winter 2019/2020: Instead of waiting years for a new count, there will be another count this upcoming winter. We are also recommending a habitat analysis for Zone 5 (north of the Park).

The Assembly would like to thank Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources and the Mi'kmaq Conservation Group for assisting with this work on their behalf. We will continue to keep our community members updated and hope that you will help us to ensure that the moose population stays healthy for years to come.

For additional information, please contact:

Crystal Dorey, Communication Officer
Kwilmu'kw Maw-klusuaqn Negotiation Office
crystaldorey@mikmaqrights.com Ph: 902-843-3880

