

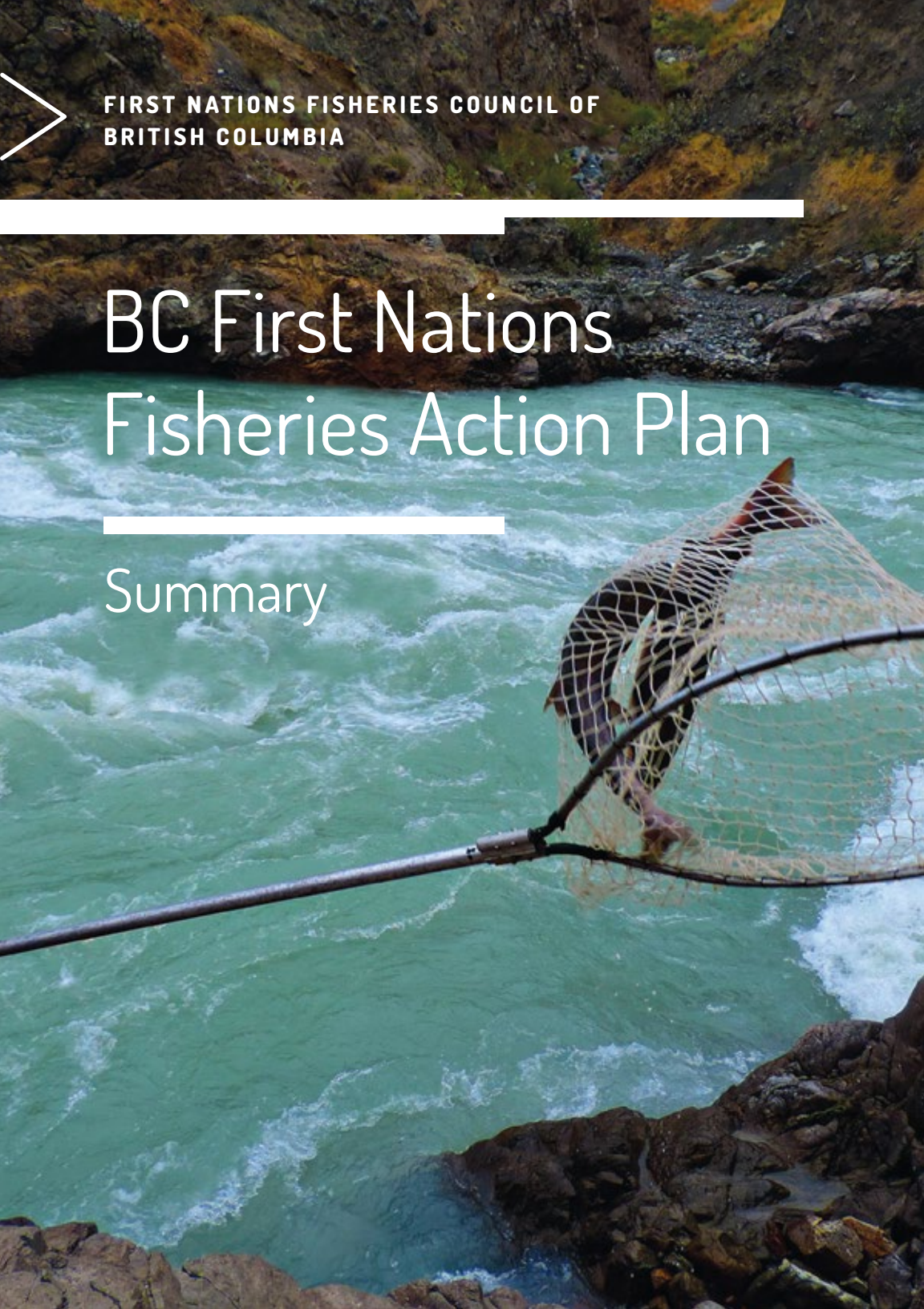


FIRST NATIONS FISHERIES COUNCIL OF  
BRITISH COLUMBIA

# BC First Nations Fisheries Action Plan

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## Summary





## ABOUT THE

# BC First Nations Fisheries Action Plan

In 2006, First Nations in BC gathered to build on work done two years earlier by the First Nations Panel on Fisheries, which delivered the report *Our Place at the Table — First Nations in the BC Fishery*.

This gathering produced the *BC First Nations Fisheries Action Plan (2007)* with a solid foundation for First Nations to seek increasing shares in the BC fishery and greater involvement in management and decision-making.

The *Fisheries Action Plan* is a strong, collective vision and strategy to achieve progress on First Nations goals for transformative changes in the BC fishery.



### **The *Fisheries Action Plan* identifies issues and action items for six key themes:**

- 1.** Relationships and Reconciliation
- 2.** Aquatic Resource Sharing (Allocation)
- 3.** Safeguarding Habitat and Responding to Threats
- 4.** Aquatic Resource Management
- 5.** Building Solid Economic Opportunities
- 6.** Negotiations and Litigation

The First Nations Fisheries Council (FNFC) was formed to deliver the actions identified in these six themes and to help BC First Nations address issues in the BC fishery. This report provides the FNFC's interpretation of the broad elements detailed in the full *Fisheries Action Plan* document, which was published in 2007 and is available on the FNFC website [www.fnfisheriescouncil.ca](http://www.fnfisheriescouncil.ca)



## The FNFC

Established in 2008, the First Nations Fisheries Council (FNFC) has the mandate of implementing the 2007 *Fisheries Action Plan*. From modest beginnings, the FNFC has grown and established itself as a recognized and reputable organization with infrastructure and a process framework to adequately respond to the need for transformative change in the BC fishery.

## Vision

We are responsible, as our ancestors were before us, for protecting our land, waters and resources and passing on our traditional values and practices to future generations.

First Nations in BC will work together with respect for each other and the natural world to address issues in the fishery for our common good and for the wellbeing of our communities.

We will strive to maintain, and restore where necessary, healthy aquatic ecosystems and species.

We will work as partners and share management responsibility based on our ownership of our territories and our right to manage the fishery.

We will work with other governments and third parties to ensure recognition and respect of Aboriginal Title and Rights and Treaty Rights and to ensure conservation and appropriate management of the resource.







# Goals for the Pacific Fishery

- 1** Healthy ecosystems that are resilient to change.
- 2** The ability for First Nations to use species and habitats to nourish their people for food, social, spiritual, educational and ceremonial purposes.
- 3** The ability for First Nations to generate enough economic wealth from a diversity of resources and uses so that families and communities are healthy.
- 4** The ability for First Nations to share their resources and wealth with respectful neighbours and guests, and have this sharing reciprocated.
- 5** Joint management by First Nations, federal and provincial governments of aquatic species and ecosystems.
- 6** Accountability for the users and managers of aquatic species and ecosystems.
- 7** A high degree of certainty that we can continue to achieve these goals over time.

## Principles to Guide Actions for the Pacific Fishery

1. **MANAGE SPECIES AND HABITATS THROUGH AN ECOSYSTEM APPROACH** that looks at the role of a species, habitat type or activity in relation to other species, habitats or activities and to the broader ecosystem. Consider cumulative effects of activities and broader processes that drive change at small scales.
2. **CONSERVE AQUATIC RESOURCES BY PROTECTING, MAINTAINING AND REHABILITATING SPECIES AND ECOSYSTEMS**, including protecting their diversity and resilience to impacts and changes. In making decisions, err on the side of caution to implement cost-effective measures that address threats of serious or irreversible damage, even when lacking full scientific certainty.
3. **APPLY SUSTAINABLE METHODS TO ANY USE OF AQUATIC RESOURCES.** In assessing an activity, ask whether it will produce similar benefits for future generations. Make decisions using full-cost accounting that integrates social, ecological and economic benefits and costs.
4. **SHARE RESPONSIBILITY FOR MANAGING AQUATIC SPECIES AND HABITATS.** First Nations must play a central role in management, based on Aboriginal Title and Rights and Treaty Rights. First Nations, federal and provincial governments should share primary responsibility for management, while local governments, fishers, communities and the public should have opportunities to contribute meaningfully.
5. **EMPHASIZE ACCOUNTABILITY BY AQUATIC RESOURCE MANAGERS AND USERS** for the results of their decisions and actions. Establish desired outcomes and rules of conduct in achieving these outcomes, monitor the rules, evaluate whether outcomes are achieved and implement meaningful corrective action when needed.



6. **RESPECT THE CULTURAL DIVERSITY AMONG BC FIRST NATIONS AND SUPPORT EACH OTHER'S TRADITIONAL PRACTICES.** Within a common framework, nurture different approaches from communities throughout BC.
7. **RESPECT THE RIGHTS OF ALL BC FIRST NATIONS AND SUPPORT EACH OTHER IN ADVANCING THOSE RIGHTS.** Aboriginal Title and Rights and Treaty Rights arise from prior use and occupation of the land and ocean spaces, and include rights to use and manage aquatic resources.
8. **BE RESPONSIBLE STEWARDS FOR AQUATIC SPECIES AND HABITATS** to ensure that future generations have unimpaired use and enjoyment of them.



# theme

# 1

## Relationships and Reconciliation

*Okanagan / n̓xaʕlkʷ (clear water)*

*Tsimshian / hoon (fish)*

*Lil'wat / t̓swan (dried fish)*

*Tseshah̓t / muukʷaawis (smokehouse)*

*Hul'qumi'num / tsāso̓ (sea shore)*

*Nlaka'pamux / qʷúʔeʔ (sturgeon)*

## THEME 1 /

## Relationships and Reconciliation

**STATEMENT OF UNITY:** With respect, recognition, accommodation and reconciliation of Aboriginal Title and Rights and Treaty Rights, First Nations in BC will advance common positions on fisheries matters through a united front and a united voice to build effective working relationships with governments and third parties.

**ISSUE:** Strained relationships hinder meaningful progress on both political and technical levels in the Pacific fishery.

### BROAD ACTIONS:

- > Develop principles to guide collaborative government-to-government relationships.
- > Resolve internal differences and determine areas of agreement among First Nations in BC.
- > Determine how and on which issues to engage with the commercial and recreational fishing sectors.



# theme

# 2

## Aquatic Resource Sharing (Allocation)

*Tlingit / aashát (steelhead)*

*Ehattesaht / čiičmaŋuk (expert troller)*

*Nuxalk / t'li (dog salmon)*

*Kwakwaka / t'lina (grease)*

*Nlaka'pamux / héní? (humpback salmon/pink)*

*Nuu-chah-nulth / ʔuusmit (herring)*

## THEME 2 /

## Aquatic Resource Sharing (Allocation)

**STATEMENT OF UNITY:** With respect for Aboriginal Title and Rights and Treaty Rights arising from First Nations ownership of their territories and resources therein, First Nations in BC will have a majority share of all aquatic resources. First Nations will conserve shared and migratory stocks and work together to resolve intertribal resource sharing concerns.

**ISSUE:** The current system for sharing migratory fish among First Nations results in contentious allocations and fails to promote unity.

### BROAD ACTIONS:

- > Improve communications among First Nations about resource sharing.
- > Lead a First Nations approach to establishing systems for allocation and sharing.
- > Develop strategies to address resource sharing, achieve First Nations majority share of all fisheries resources, and share aquatic resources with third parties.
- > Promote resource-sharing discussions that foster and maintain unity among First Nations.





# theme

## Safeguarding Habitat and Responding to Threats

*Cowichan / q'e'wutsun (dorsal fin)*

*Halq'emeylem / q'eyq'emo:s (dip netting)*

*Squamish / ts'ixwts'ixw (fishhawk)*

*Hul'q'umi'num / sqi'mukw (giant octopus)*

*Secwepemc / cts'ixwelcten (spawning grounds)*

### THEME 3 /

## Safeguarding Habitat and Responding to Threats

**STATEMENT OF UNITY:** First Nations in BC have a common interest in long-term protection and revitalization of aquatic resources and habitats. First Nations will work together to assess and respond to threats and to maintain and advance comprehensive habitat protection programs in freshwater and marine environments essential for the survival and productivity of all species and populations.

**ISSUE:** Human activities on land and in marine areas threaten aquatic resources and habitats.

### BROAD ACTIONS:

- > Engage about existing and potential threats to aquatic resources at various levels, including assessment, planning, policy and decision-making.
- > Consider whether changes to current policy and legislation will improve or weaken habitat protection, and develop a collective response.
- > Improve information sharing among First Nations and develop standards for incorporating traditional knowledge into plans and practices.



# theme

# 4

## Aquatic Resource Management

*Kwakwaka / dza'xwen (oolichan)*

*Halq'emeylem / q'eyq'emo:s (dip netting)*

*Lil'wat / nt'akmenkalha (our way)*

*Secwepemc / c.wectén (habitat)*

*Tsimshian / txadzemsk (fish stew)*

*Tseshat / miᑕaat (river sockeye salmon)*

## THEME 4 /

## Aquatic Resource Management

**STATEMENT OF UNITY:** First Nations in BC will together plan and manage sustainable fisheries in order to conserve fisheries resources for future generations and to position First Nations as active managers and decision-makers at regional and provincial levels.

**ISSUE:** Fisheries management systems are rapidly changing to reflect realities such as threats to fish populations and decreased public resources.

### BROAD ACTIONS:

- > Determine how First Nations should engage in aquatic resource management and decision-making.
- > Articulate First Nations' vision of co-management, which is a key element in fisheries management reform.
- > Address management concerns such as dispute resolution, resource privatization, species recovery planning, data collection and sharing, adequate funding, and training of First Nations managers and biologists.
- > Ensure food, social and ceremonial needs are met.

# theme

# 5

## Building Solid Economic Opportunities

*Tlingit / l'ook (coho)*

*Nuxalk / k'lat (steelhead)*

*Hul'qumi'num / xi:xwe (sea urchin)*

*Nlaka'pamux / láxix (migrate up river)*

*Okanagan / xʷəxʷmínaʔ (rainbow trout)*

*Ehattesaht / ʕapɫaskwii (dried fish, jerky style)*

## THEME 5 /

## Building Solid Economic Opportunities

**STATEMENT OF UNITY:** First Nations in BC recognize the importance of aquatic resources to all First Nations and will work together to develop fisheries management systems that enable sustainable economic opportunities with long-term benefits to First Nations communities and fishers.

**ISSUE:** Existing and potential economic opportunities must be pursued wisely to benefit First Nations communities.

### BROAD ACTIONS:

- > Identify and create long-term, sustainable opportunities that support economic independence for First Nations communities.
- > Consider tools and practices to promote economic efficiency while avoiding overcapacity (broadly defined as fishing vessels becoming too efficient at catching fish, or too many boats, or too much gear for the quantity of fish available to harvest).
- > Develop a strategy to build First Nations capacity in economic development and business skills.





# theme

# 6

## Negotiations and Litigation

*Secwepemc / cemṭilc (school of fish or flock of birds)*

*Nuu-chah-nulth / čeʔinwa (goose barnacles)*

*Cowichan / stseelhtun (fish)*

*Halq'emeylem / lexeywa (spear fish by torchlight)*

*Squamish / sme7úskw (fish head)*

## THEME 6 /

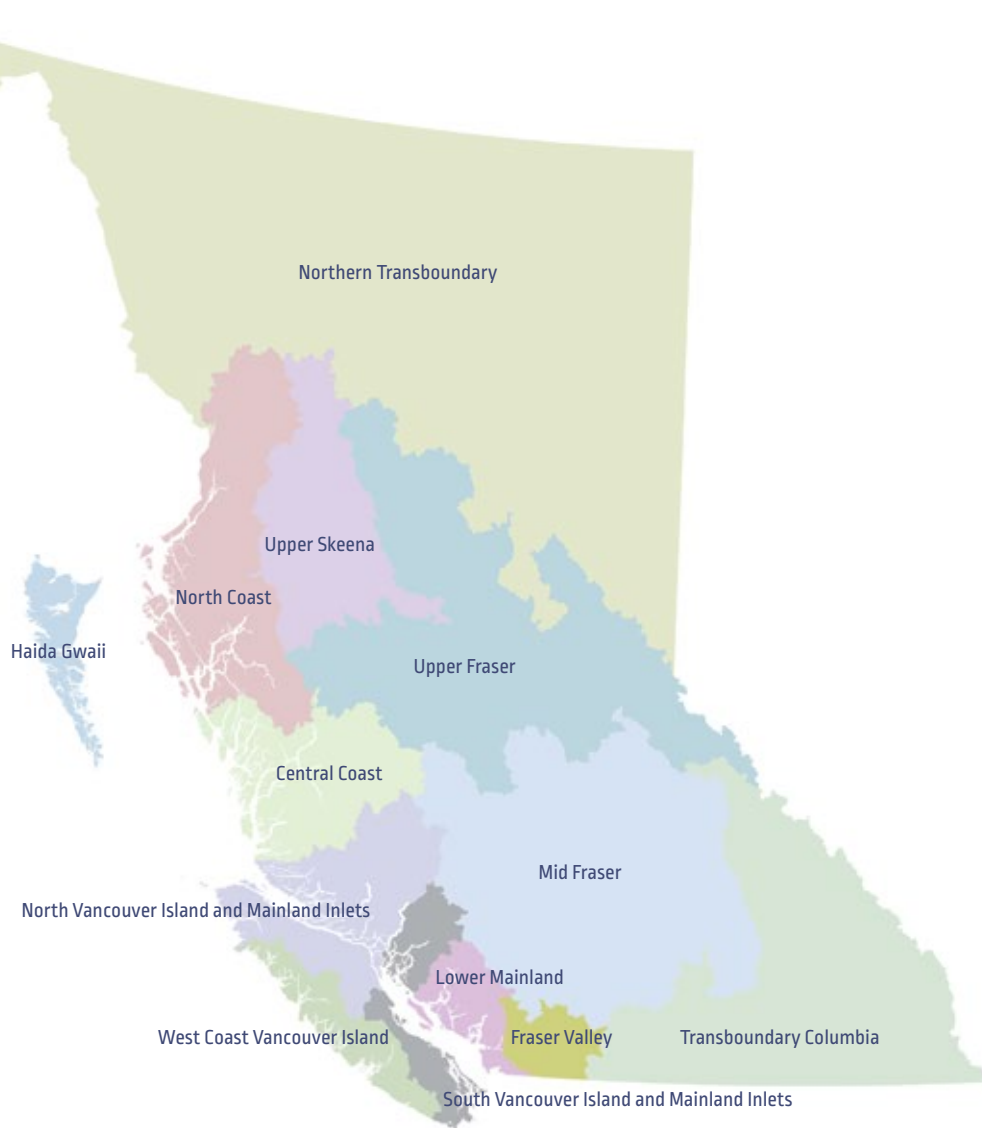
## Negotiations and Litigation

**STATEMENT OF UNITY:** First Nations in the treaty negotiation process will work with each other and with First Nations not currently in the treaty negotiation process to solve issues of common concern and to develop a common mandate for fisheries negotiations where government mandates and negotiating positions are creating impasses.

**ISSUE:** Government mandates are a barrier to the resolution of aquatic resource negotiations, regardless of whether the negotiations occur within or outside the treaty negotiation process. Although litigation has effected some changes in the Pacific fishery, it can be slow and costly, and decisions may have a narrow scope.

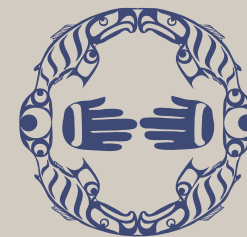
### BROAD ACTIONS:

- > Increase communication among First Nations that are or are not involved in treaty negotiations.
- > Work collectively on province-wide intertribal negotiations for aquatic resources.
- > Avoid the route of litigation wherever possible, but form a First Nations litigation office to monitor cases, intervene if needed and develop a strategy to protect Aboriginal Title and Rights and Treaty Rights.



## Contact Us / Get Involved

For more information, including the full *BC First Nations Fisheries Action Plan* document published in 2007, visit the First Nations Fisheries Council of BC website at [www.fnfisheriescouncil.ca](http://www.fnfisheriescouncil.ca)



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