



Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council

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Employees of the NTC's fisheries department, Uu-a-thluk, apply a radio tag on a Chinook salmon as part of a mark-recapture study. Photo: Uu-a-thluk

NUU-CHAH-NULTH TRIBAL COUNCIL CALLS FOR A REVISED SALMON ALLOCATION POLICY THAT UPHOLDS ABORIGINAL RIGHTS, PROTECTS SALMON AND REJECTS RACISM

MEDIA RELEASE: February 3, 2026/Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council/ Hupacasath and Tseshaht Territories, Port Alberni, BC: The Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council (NTC) calls upon Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) to ground their review of the Salmon Allocation Policy (SAP) in respect, legality and the full implementation of constitutionally protected Indigenous fishing rights.

"Our nations have relied on salmon for thousands of years, and our rights and responsibilities to these waters are not up for debate," said Cloy-e-iis, Dr. Judith Sayers, NTC President.

The Tribal Council is also deeply concerned about the rise of racist and inflammatory rhetoric from parts of the recreational fishing sector. This behaviour is unacceptable and puts public safety at risk. Recreational fishing organizations must stop spreading misinformation, recognize the constitutional priority of Indigenous fisheries and ensure their members understand the legal context of the SAP review.

Further, all Canadians have a role to play in rejecting racism in fisheries discussions. We appeal to the public to support approaches that prioritize local harvesters, and stand with First Nations in advocating for fair, lawful, conservation-focused allocation.

The Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council urges Fisheries and Oceans Canada, and Fisheries Minister Joanne Thompson, to take the following actions:

- Revise the Salmon Allocation Policy to reflect the legal priority of First Nations' fisheries and remove policy elements that contradict constitutional rights.
- Publicly condemn racist and inflammatory discourse and reaffirm the Crown's obligations.

The NTC rejects misinformation from certain recreational fishing representatives suggesting First Nations intend to restrict non-Indigenous access. This is false — nobody is being shut out of the water. Nuu-chah-nulth Nations are seeking removal of outdated policy language that treats all user groups as if they hold equal rights, despite constitutional and court-affirmed Indigenous priority.

This federal review of the Salmon Allocation Policy stems from the *Ahousaht et al.* decision, which confirmed priority for rights-based commercial fisheries and highlighted Canada's longstanding failure to update allocation policies accordingly. The SAP, unchanged since 1999, still does not reflect the law.

Allocation decisions must prioritize conservation and uphold the precedence of Food, Social, and Ceremonial (FSC) and rights-based economic fisheries for First Nations. Recreational and commercial users, while valued, do not hold constitutional fishing rights and should not represent themselves as if they do.

"Canada must bring policy in line with the law and protect salmon for all who depend on them," said Sayers.

Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council supports regional management approaches that strengthen stewardship and prioritize community-based harvest opportunities, consistent with recommendations from the First Nations Fisheries Council.

As ocean peoples, Nuu-chah-nulth-aht hold deep responsibilities for salmon, a central food source, economic foundation and cultural identity for thousands of years. Protecting salmon is both our right and our obligation.

"For too long, allocation decisions have ignored the courts and our role as original stewards," added Sayers.

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About Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council

The **Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council (NTC)** provides programs and services to over 10,000 registered members. The role of the NTC is to represent 14 First Nations in three regions stretching 300 kilometers of the Pacific Coast of Vancouver Island from Brooks Peninsula in the North to Point-no-Point in the south. Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council represents Ahousaht, Ditidaht, Ehattesaht/Chinehkint, Hesquiaht, Hupacasath, Huu-ay-aht, Kyuquot/Cheklesah, Mowachaht/Muchalaht, Nuchatlaht, Tla-o-qui-aht, Toquaht, Tseshah, Uchucklesah and Ucluelet First Nations and provides a variety of programs and services to them. For more information, please visit www.nuuchahnulth.org.