

AOKFN Fishing and Harvesting Practices

Purpose

This bi-law affirms the Anishinaabe of the Kitchi Zibi First Nation's (AOKFN) commitment to sustainable, respectful, and intergenerational stewardship of all aquatic and terrestrial life within our ancestral territory.

Guiding Principle

"We do not inherit the lands from our ancestors — we pass them onto our descendants."

This principle anchors all harvesting and fishing practices in long-term responsibility, cultural continuity, and ecological balance.

Scope

This bi-law applies to all AOKFN members and guests engaging in fishing, hunting, trapping, or gathering within AOKFN-recognized lands and waters.

1. Seasonal and Species Respect

- Harvesting shall follow natural cycles and avoid breeding, spawning, or nesting seasons.
- Endangered or at-risk species shall not be harvested.
- Traditional knowledge and seasonal indicators shall guide timing and location.

2. Sustainable Methods

- Use of nets, traps, and tools must minimize harm and avoid overharvesting.
- No wasteful practices: all parts of the animal or fish must be used or returned to the land respectfully.
- Motorized harvesting methods must be limited to reduce ecological disruption.

3. Community Sharing and Limits

- Harvesting is for family, ceremonial, and community use — not for commercial sale unless authorized by Council.
- Daily and seasonal limits may be set by Council based on population health and community needs.

4. Youth and Elder Involvement

- Youth shall be taught respectful harvesting through mentorship.
- Elders shall guide practices and resolve disputes.

5. Protection Zones

- Certain lakes, rivers, and forest areas may be designated as protection zones.
- No harvesting shall occur in these zones unless for ceremonial or emergency purposes.

6. Enforcement and Accountability

- Violations may result in suspension of harvesting privileges, community service, or restorative justice processes.
- Council may appoint Guardians to monitor and educate.

7. Ceremonial and Cultural Protocols

- All harvesting shall begin with a prayer or offering.
- Animals and fish shall be thanked and honored.
- Harvesting stories and teachings shall be recorded and shared.

Affirmation

This bi-law is a living document, rooted in ancestral law and evolving with the needs of our descendants. It shall be reviewed annually by Council and community members.

Ratified by the Council of the Anishinaabe of the Kitchi Zibi First Nation (AOKFN)