



MAMKA QUARTERLY

Message from the Co-Chairs

It is with great pleasure, that MAMKA issues this edition of the MAMKA Quarterly for 2008. The fall season is upon us and as we enjoy the vast colors of the changing season we reflect on MAMKA's accomplishments this year.

In this edition you will see that MAMKA has been busy with a number of initiatives. Through its activities and communications such as this news letter, as well through collaborative efforts with a number of stakeholders. MAMKA has become a well known body representing MFN and FNI in oceans and aquatic matters.

In that April 2009 is the last year of funding for MAMKA under our current AAROM agreement. MAMKA Board of Directors and staff will be engaging in internal discussions and discussions with our principle funding partner, DFO, to obtain a second mandate and funding arrangement that will hopefully see MAMKA continue its important work and activities in the years ahead. MAMKA through MAMKA Quarterly will keep you updated on the renewal process as it unfolds.

Brendan Sheppard
Misel Joe
MAMKA Co-Chairs

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MAMKA will be changing the MAMKA Quarterly Mailing procedures for the 2008-2009 year. MAMKA will now only mail two newsletters per year and distribute two newsletters online. The purpose of this is to reduce resource consumption.

Youth Attend Oceans Conference

On October 17, 2008 10 youth from Miawpukek First Nation attended Ocean Net's annual "Youth and the Oceans Conference" held at the Marine Institute in St. John's. Ocean Net's Annual Youth and the Oceans Conferences brings together youth to engage in discussions and activity centered on the ocean and its importance to the world and specifically to Newfoundland and Labrador. This year's theme was "Our Oceans, Our Future, its all about you". The Miawpukek youth that attended the conference were the St. Anne's performance choir and they performed the opening ceremony for the conference.



Overview of MAMKA 2008-2009 Projects

The MAMKA office and staff at Miawpukek First Nation (MFN) have been busy this past summer and fall with several MAMKA projects. These projects include the Little River eelgrass survey, American eel study, beach cleanup project, river habitat surveys, and the Gander River redd survey project. MAMKA-MFN staffmembers Dean McDonald, Stewart Etheridge, and Levi Burke carried out the projects from July to October 2008. The Beach clean up activity is ongoing year after year and contributes greatly to ensuring the beaches at Miawpukek and surrounding area are free of debris and garbage.

The MAMKA office for the Federation of Newfoundland Indians (FNI) has been active with the continuation of several past projects. MAMKA-FNI is continuing the documentation of Banded Killifish in Newfoundland and has found several undocumented populations (see page 3). The 2007-2008 American eel project was expanded this year to include samples from across the island (St. George's Bay, River of Ponds, Gander Bay, the Avalon Peninsula, and Bay D'Espoir). The results from the American eel project will be made available early/mid 2009. MAMKA-FNI also continued researching the American Lobster on the west coast of the island. This year the lobster project focused on documenting the distribution, abundance, and reproductive potential of lobster over the legal size. MAMKA-FNI believe that large lobster are responsible for maintaining the reproductive potential of local stocks. MAMKA-FNI has also been documenting and removing debris from riversides and shorelines.

© 2003 Canadian Shark Research Lab



<http://www.marinebiodiversity.ca/shark>

MAMKA-FNI has initiated several new projects this year. MAMKA-FNI is documenting the presence of various shark species within the Bay of Islands, Port au Port Bay, and St. George's Bay. It is believed that sharks have a greater presence in NL than originally documented. MAMKA-FNI is also conducting research on the Wolffish in western NL. The purpose of the project is to document the type of species found in the study area, their abundance, and distribution. This year MAMKA will also be conducting several redd surveys and documenting obstructions in various aquatic habitats.

MFN Small Craft Harbour Opens

The residents and Marine user groups, including MAMKA, are delighted that a new Small Craft Harbour is now open at the Miawpukek Reserve. The Small Craft Harbour, which was funded by DFO's Small Craft Harbour Division, includes a newly constructed wharf which represents much needed infrastructure at Miawpukek given the commercial fishing, aquaculture, and recreational boating activity at Miawpukek. As well, the site is the departure area for MAMKA's MFN field technicians as they carry out MAMKA activities in the area such as the eel survey, beach cleanup, and Little River eelgrass survey. Construction on the site was completed in June 2008 and the Miawpukek First Nation has added a floating dock system and boat launch pad to further add to the usability of the area.



The Importance of Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge (ATK)

In considering the importance of ATK, it is beneficial to first address the question of what is ATK? One definition is as follows:

“A cumulative body of knowledge, practice and belief, evolving by adaptive processes and handed down through generations by cultural transmission, about the relationship of living beings with one another and with their environment.” (Berkes, 1999)

Although this definition presents a good indication of what ATK is about, most people, including elders would not know what one is referring to when “ATK” is mentioned.

This is because ATK is an academic or government constructed term. For aboriginal peoples and aboriginal communities ATK can be best defined as “knowledge of the land”. Land representing the whole ecosystem including water, animals, plants, air, etc. (Duckworth 2007).

Currently, ATK is a popular buzz word and an initiative across a number of forums including a wide variety of federal government departments. In meeting its duty to consult with Aboriginal communities, federal departments and agencies are considering ATK in its decision making. As well, the *Species at Risk Act* (SARA) and the resulting listing species as threatened or endangered brings into play the importance of ATK and applying it to SARA.

MAMKA, has been utilizing ATK since its beginning a few years ago. Examples include the eelgrass survey at Little River. MAMKA technicians began looking for eelgrass early in the summer before eelgrass actually sprouted, elder knowledge helped in determining the time of the year in which eelgrass actually grows and at what places it grows. Capturing ATK also helps preserve the practices, traditions, and history of a community. MAMKA is gathering ATK on American eel, Wolffish, and Shark Species to preserve the traditional knowledge and gain a better understanding of the interrelationships of resources. The FNI has concluded an ATK workshop where 8 ATK-Technicians were trained to collect ATK. The workshop collected information related to species at risk in Newfoundland.

Banded Killifish Project Update—Fall 2008

This field season MAMKA has been active in the documentation of Banded Killifish on the island portion of NL. The Banded Killifish is listed under the *Species at Risk Act* as a species of Special Concern. The main reason for this designation is that the Banded Killifish is sparsely distributed and could face habitat degradation from timber harvest and/or residential development. This season, MAMKA has documented additional Banded Killifish populations in the Bay of Islands and the Port au Port Bay areas. MAMKA believes that the species is more widely distributed than previously thought. It is expected that the information collected through this project will aid in the conservation of the Banded.



Trappers from Miawpukek, Gerald Penny Circa, 1981



Photo by Nicole Lucas



Photo by Nicole Lucas

Mi'kmaq Alsumk Mowimsikik Koqoey Association is the Mi'kmaq translation to the Aboriginal Aquatic Resource & Oceans Management. Here is a tip on how to pronounce our organization's name.

Mi'kmaq (Mig/maw)
Alsumk (All/sum/k)
Mowimsikik (Moo/wem/see/gek)
Koqoey (Ka/oak/gue/wey)
Association

Please contact Roger Gallant (FNI) or Gary Hoskins (MFN) for more information on the articles within this issue of the MAMKA Quarterly.

Mi'kmaq Alsumk Mowimsikik Koqoey Association (MAMKA)



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Mi'kmaq Words

Turtle - migjigj - pronounced (mik/chikch)
Sailor - matlot - pronounced (ma/dê/lot)
Fish Hook - mgign - pronounced (êm/ki/gên)

Did You Know?



Did you know that the leatherback turtle is the world's largest reptile? The carapace (upper shell) can grow to more than 2m in length!



Did you know that leatherbacks have been sighted off the coasts of Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island?



Did you know that leatherbacks do not have the ability to swim backwards, which causes them to get easily entangled in fishing nets, lines, and ocean debris?

Information taken from:
http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/species-especes/species/species_leatherbackTurtle_e.asp



Dr. Scott A. Eckert, Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network (WIDECAST)

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