

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Tampering with Fishing Nets on Lake Nipissing

May 25, 2021 – Nipissing First Nation (NFN) and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) remind recreational and commercial fishers of their rights and responsibilities related to the fishery we share.

Last year, we were notified of multiple incidents of tampering with commercial gill nets in Lake Nipissing, which is an offence under the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act. We will investigate and pursue charges for cases of tampering with lawful gillnets to the full extent of the law.

In order for a tampered net case to be successful in court, NFN fishermen must be registered to fish commercially in compliance with NFN's Fisheries Law as stated:

No person designated to fish under permit shall set, have in the water or lift a net from the water, unless:

- A buoy, marker or stake is attached to each end of the net;
- A tag issued by the Nipissing First Nation Natural Resources Department is attached below the buoy, marker or stake. The tag number will be unique to individual fishermen.

We also remind fishermen to set nets at a safe depth to ensure nets don't pose a boating hazard.

Tampering with fishing nets is an offence

It is an offence under the *Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act* to interfere with, or tamper with, gillnets set for commercial or scientific use. If you observe anyone tampering with commercial fishing gear, please report it immediately to one of the following agencies:

- NFN Natural Resources Office: 705-753-2050
- MNRF Tips Line: 1-877-847-7667
- Crime Stoppers: 1-800-222-TIPS (8477) or online at nearthcrimestoppers.com

Enforcement officers respond quickly to reports of nets that have been lost, abandoned or tampered with. Commercial fishers are encouraged to clearly mark their nets in order to minimize tampering and waste.

Tampering with nets is not only an offence, it wastes fish that would otherwise be harvested responsibly. Again, we ask anyone who sees this activity occurring to contact NFN, MNRF or Crime Stoppers to report it.

Commercial fishing is an inherent and treaty-protected right

NFN is committed to principles of sustainability and the protection of resources while maintaining the practice of our rights in a responsible way. We regulate our own fishery through assessments, active monitoring, data exchange and harvest reporting, and we work with the MNRF to enforce our *Fisheries Law*.

NFN members have inherent and treaty-protected rights to commercially fish the waters of Lake Nipissing, as we have done since time immemorial. Ontario recognizes NFN's *Gichi-Naaknigewin* (constitution) and *Fisheries Law*, a first for the province. This recognition supports a new cooperative approach to fisheries management and nation-to-nation relationship building that has shown success over the past five years, largely through the continued signs of improvement in the Lake Nipissing walleye population.

NFN's Chief and Council continue to affirm the inherent and treaty-protected rights of the NFN membership, and are committed to maintaining safe harvest levels within our commercial fishery, consistent with Aboriginal and treaty harvesting rights.

NFN's leadership in the management of the commercial fishery on Lake Nipissing is vital to its long-term health and sustainability. We all need to do our part to ensure that we can continue to enjoy the resources that Lake Nipissing provides for all of us, for generations to come.

More Resources:

[Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act](#)
[Ontario Fishing Regulations Summary](#)

[NFN's Fisheries Law](#)
[Safe Boating Guide](#)

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