

Interview Schedule

Local Ecological Knowledge Study

Mi'kmaq and Kat, Phase II

Paq'tnkek Fish and Wildlife Society

In collaboration with

**Social Research for Sustainable Fisheries
St. Francis Xavier University**

July 2003

Introduction – Instructions for Interviewers

1. It is essential for interviewers to introduce themselves, their affiliations and the research topic/purpose as thoroughly as possible right from the outset of contact with the person who we are requesting to participate in this work.
2. After introducing themselves, interviewers will need to read or state an outline of the research such as:

We would like to thank you and the community for your past cooperation in our quest for information regarding the relationship of our community with *Kat* (American Eel). In Phase I of our study there was much information gathered through a community survey regarding the fishing, preparing and cooking of eel. During this process, we asked the question: “who would you say knows a lot about fishing eels among the Mi’kmaq?” As a result, we have received many recommendations of various individuals identified as knowing a lot about fishing eels. We ranked ordered these recommendations according to the number of times the individuals received the most first mentions followed by the individuals who received the most second mentions. In addition, other people we know to have many experiences with and knowledge about eel, such as several elders, have been added to our list. We feel these individuals hold important cultural knowledge and memories of our relationship to *Kat*. They also know of many of the experiences and memories of those who have passed on before us. Therefore, we feel any knowledge they wish to pass on to us regarding our study would help us to develop our understanding of our community’s relationship with *Kat*.

This aspect of our research will enable all of us to contribute in preserving our cultural connection and our involvement in the future management of *Kat*. We are here today because our community has acknowledged you as knowing a lot about fishing *Kat*. Therefore, we would like to ask you if you would participate in a detailed interview designed to document your family history, movements, stories and any experiences you or your present and past family or friends may have encountered while fishing eels. This detailed interview may require a number of visits to fully document whatever information you may wish to share with us.

Please let me remind you that the information you provide will be used in a manner that will preserve knowledge and help us and our children to understand our traditional ways. We would also like to mention the stories we collect from you may be used for future educational purposes as a means to promote and preserve our culture. In order to assist us in documenting and recording your stories and information we will require the use of an audio tape recorder. Therefore, we would like to request your permission to record our conversations on tape. This would enable us to document your information in an accurate manner. We would also like to remind you that at anytime during these sessions if you wish not to have certain information recorded, we will stop recording at your request. Also during this time, one of us will be taking notes for reference to the audio recordings. We would also like to inform that you may request to stop the interview at any time. Once our interview is completed, the audio tape will be transcribed into a written document. You will be provided with a copy of the transcription for your review. If you wish to have a copy of the audio recording just inform us and we will make it available to you. During the interview, we will also be using various maps as a means to record areas where you have fished eel or know of someone who has fished eel in a certain area before. These maps are to be used as a means of recording and documenting the local area as used by you and/or our ancestors.

Our aim through this whole process is to be able through your permission to preserve on audio and maps your oral testimony of our past relationships to *Kat* and the environment. These may also be used in to help educate our children and our children's children about their cultural background. Our objective through this whole process is to play an active role in preserving our culture.

Would you like to take part in our study by participating in a detailed interview? (If No, ask why not).

If they indicate that they are willing to continue, note that they will be asked to sign a **Consent Form**. Explain that the **Consent Form** specifies the terms and conditions agreed to respecting this research and interview, and that it is intended to provide participant's with written assurances of all agreements. It is also intended to assure that those agreeing to participate do so through providing their informed consent.

After the research has been explained and understood, including participation in multiple interviews, pass a copy of the **Consent Form** to the person and ask that they read this form with you (one of the interviewers). If still agreeing to participate after having reviewed the form, ask them to sign and date two copies of the form. Immediately thereafter and in the presence of the participant, the interviewer must also sign and date the two copies of the form. At this point, give one of the signed and dated copies of the **Consent Form** to the person for their records.

If yes, start the tape recorder now.

Part 1 – Family and Community History

This opening phase of the interview must be introduced as follows:

“In the first part of this interview we think it very important to understand and to document key details of your family’s involvement with fishing eel. We think that this is important for our understanding of the background to your knowledge about fishing eel as well as to your involvement in fishing eel. To do this accurately I will be asking you to describe features through your immediate family history or background.”

(The non-question asking interviewer must focus on taking notes as well as setting up and monitoring the tape recorder. *Note:* it is critical to make sure each tape is correctly labeled with the name of the interviewee and the date of the interview. Also make sure that the tapes are numbered sequentially as they are completed. The non-question asking interviewer must also note in their interview books the tape counter readings when significant changes in topics and parts of the interview occur. Additionally, the tape counter readings should also be noted when an especially important, insightful, or fascinating piece of information has been provided. These must be noted in the interview books as – Tape Number, followed by Tape Counter Reading, with a brief descriptive note about what the information concerns.)

Kinship Abbreviations for assistance when recording this information:

Fa	=	Father
Mo	=	Mother
S	=	Son
Z	=	Sister
Br	=	Brother
Da	=	Daughter
BrS	=	Brother's Son
BrDa	=	Brother's Daughter
ZS	=	Sister's Son
ZDa	=	Sister's Daughter
FaBr	=	Father's Brother
FaZ	=	Father's Sister
FaBrS	=	Father's Brother's Son
FaBrDa	=	Father's Brother's Daughter
FaZS	=	Father's Sister's Son
FaZDa	=	Father's Sister's Daughter
MoBr	=	Mother's Brother
MoZ	=	Mother's Sister
MoBrS	=	Mother's Brother's Son
MoBrDa	=	Mother's Brother's Daughter
MoZS	=	Mother's Sister's Son
MoZDa	=	Mother's Sister's Daughter
FaFa	=	Father's Father
FaMo	=	Father's Mother
MoFa	=	Mother's Father
MoMo	=	Mother's Mother

and so on.....

Note: Wives are designated by the letter **W**, as in BrW = Brother's Wife, MoBrW = Mother's Brother's Wife...and so on.

Note: Abbreviations must conform to the above list in order to avoid confusion and mis-reporting. If in doubt, write out the kinship relation term in full.

Note: the interviewer asking questions will also have to record family information so as to recall person's names and birth orders)

Phase I interview questioning should open as follows:

We would like begin this interview by asking you about your family's history with eels. I would like to begin by asking you to tell me the names of your Father and of your Mother.....(Note: record these names in your notebooks)

1. Was your father from here? If no, Where was(is) he from?
2. Did he fish for eels?
3. Was your mother from here? If no, where was she from
4. Did your mother fish for eels?

Now would you tell me the names of your brothers and sisters, naming them from the oldest (eldest) to the youngest or starting with the 1st born (oldest/eldest) and including yourself. (Note: The notetaker needs to make a list for the interviewer to refer to the names of the brothers and sisters and ask these questions for everyone on the list.)

Starting with the eldest, is _____ from here? If no, where is he/she from?

1. Where is this brother/sister living?
2. Do they fish for eel now?
3. Have they ever fished for eel?
4. Does this brother/sister have any children who fish eel?
5. If yes, what is/are their name(s)?

6. Does this child's other parent fish for eels? If yes, where did/do they fish for eels?
7. Where is this child's other parent from or living? (Where is their family resident? Where were they raised?)
8. Do the other parents family members of this child fish for eel?

Now, thinking about the 2nd oldest brother/sister, is _____ from here? If no, where is he/she from?

1. Where is this brother/sister living?
2. Do they fish for eel now?
3. Have they ever fished for eel?
4. Does this brother/sister have any children who fish eel?
5. If yes, what is/are their name(s)?
6. Does this child's other parent fish for eels? If yes, where did/do they fish for eels?
7. Where is this child's other parent from or living? (Where is their family resident? Where were they raised?)
8. Do the other parents family members of this child fish for eel?

(Repeat all of the above questions for all of the siblings specified. If a story is mentioned, the notetaker should make note of the counter number on the tape.)

Now thinking about yourself for a moment and your family, (if partnered/married)...

1. What is the name of your partner/wife (prompt for maiden/family name)?
2. Where is your partner/wife from? (Was your partner/wife raised here?....)

(repeat above questions for partner's/wife's family etc.)

Would you tell me the names of your children , from oldest to youngest or starting with the 1st born?

Starting with your eldest child...

1. Does he/she fish eel?

2. If yes, where do they fish eel?
3. Is (he/she) partnered/married? (Name of partner/spouse)
4. Where was this person raised?
5. Does or do any of this person's family members fish for eel?
6. Does your eldest and their family live here in this community?
7. Does your eldest have children who fish eel (If so, document...name, place of residence, fishing areas etc.)

Now, thinking of your next child, is _____partnered/married?

1. Does he/she fish eel?
2. If yes, where do they fish eel?
3. Is (he/she) partnered/married? (Name of partner/spouse)
4. Where was this person raised?
5. Does or do any of this person's family members fish for eel?
6. Does he/she and their family live here in this community?
7. Does he/she have children who fish eel (If so, document...name, place of residence, fishing areas etc.)

(repeat above for each child)

Now, we'll return to your father and mother.

1. Would you please tell me your father's father's name?
2. Did he fish for eels?
3. Where did he fish for eels?
4. What was your father's mother's name? (prompt...family name)
5. Did she fish for eels?
6. Where did she fish for eels?
7. Mother's Father's name?

8. Did he fish for eels?
9. Where did he fish for eels?
10. Mother's Mother's name (prompt....family name)

11. Did she fish for eels?
12. Where did she fish for eels?

(Repeat these questions about livelihood, residence, place raised, and women's families' involvement in fishing as specified above.)

1. Does he/she fish eel?
2. If yes, where do they fish eel?
3. Is (he/she) partnered/married? (Name of partner/spouse)
4. Where was this person raised?
5. Does or do any of this person's family members fish for eel?
6. Does he/she and their family live here in this community?
7. Does he/she have children who fish eel (If so, document...name, place of residence, fishing areas, etc.

Now, what were the names of your Father's Brothers and Sisters?

Again, would you please tell me these names starting with the oldest or 1st born, and including your Father.....

Now, starting with your father's eldest brother/sister...

1. Where is this brother/sister of your father living?
2. Do they fish for eel now?
3. Have they ever fished for eel?
4. Does or did this brother/sister of your father have any children who fish eel?
5. If yes, what is/are their name(s)?
6. Does or did this father's brother/sister's child's other parent fish for eels? If yes, where did/do they fish for eels?
7. Where is this child's other parent (*specified in question 6*) from or living? (Where is their family resident? Where were they raised?)
8. Do the other parents family members of this child fish for eel?

Thinking of your father's second oldest brother/sister and their family members...

1. Where is this brother/sister of your father living?
2. Do they fish for eel now?
3. Have they ever fished for eel?
4. Does or did this brother/sister of your father have any children who fish eel?
5. If yes, what is/are their name(s)?
6. Does or did this father's brother/sister's child's other parent fish for eels? If yes, where did/do they fish for eels?
7. Where is this child's other parent (*specified in question 6*) from or living? (Where is their family resident? Where were they raised?)
8. Do the other parents family members of this child fish for eel?

(Repeat the by now standard group of questions outlined above for each of the father's brothers/sisters and their families, as well as for their children and their children's children.)

Now, turning to your Mother's Brother's and Sister's, would you please tell me their names starting with the oldest or 1st born, and including your Mother.....

Now, starting with your mother's eldest brother/sister...

1. Where is this brother/sister of your mother living?
2. Do they fish for eel now?
3. Have they ever fished for eel?
4. Does or did this brother/sister of your mother have any children who fish eel?
5. If yes, what is/are their name(s)?
6. Does or did this mother's brother/sister's child's other parent fish for eels? If yes, where did/do they fish for eels?
7. Where is this child's other parent (*specified in question 6*) from or living? (Where is their family resident? Where were they raised?)

8. Do the other parents family members of this child fish for eel?

Thinking of your mother's second oldest brother/sister and their family members...

1. Where is this brother/sister of your mother living?
2. Do they fish for eel now?
3. Have they ever fished for eel?
4. Does or did this brother/sister of your mother have any children who fish eel?
5. If yes, what is/are their name(s)?
6. Does or did this mother's brother/sister's child's other parent fish for eels? If yes, where did/do they fish for eels?
7. Where is this child's other parent (*specified in question 6*) from or living? (Where is their family resident? Where were they raised?)
8. Do the other parents family members of this child fish for eel?

(Repeat the by now standard group of questions outlined above for each of the father's brothers/sisters and their families, as well as for their children and their children's children.)

(Note: Ask about FaFaFa, FaFaMo, MoMoMo and MoMoFa. If they can remember, repeat the above questions for these persons.)

Part II - Personal Life History – Eel Fishing

Now I would like to ask your experiences with eels and eel fishing starting from the very first time you fished for eels. We have charts of the local estuaries, specifically Pomquet, Antigonish and Southside Harbor and Tracadie. We would like to try and identify on the charts where you fish now and where you fished in the past. We are also interested in any information on eel population changes and any changes noticed in the fishing areas you fished during your life to present day. (*Note: note taking of the areas and times when fished for future chart work in identifying the areas*)

1st Lifecycle Phase (Notetaker or the chartrecorder must use a red marker to outline these areas on the chart.)

1. Would you tell us about the very first time you went eel fishing?

2. How old were you then?
3. Do you remember who was with you fishing eels at that time, when you first started? (*Note: interviewer should probe for the participant's social relationship with the people he/she is fishing eels with.*)
4. Please, would you try to identify on the chart where you were fishing?

(Introduce the charts, if necessary take time to orientate the interviewee to the charts. Pause tape recorder.)

5. What time of year were you fishing?
6. What method of eel fishing were you using?
7. In your opinion, what do you think made that area a good spot to fish eels?

2nd Life Cycle Phase (Notetaker or the chartrecorder must use a green marker to outline these areas on the chart.)

1. How old were you when you first went fishing eels for your own family (father/sister/brother/sister/etc.)?
2. Where did you go fishing eels at that time?
3. How long did you fish for eels in these places?
4. With whom were you fishing? (*Note: interviewer should probe for the participant's social relationship with the people he/she is fishing eels with.*)
5. Would you please identify on the chart where you were fishing.
6. What time of year were you fishing (for each of the places identified)?
7. What method of eel fishing were you using (in each place and for each time of the year)?
8. In your opinion, what do you think made that area a good spot to fish eels?

3rd Life Cycle Phase (Notetaker or the chartrecorder must use a blue marker to outline these areas on the chart.)

1. How old were you when you first went fishing eels for your own family(father/sister/brother/sister/etc.)?
2. Where did you go fishing eels at that time?
3. How long did you fish for eels in these places?
4. With whom were you fishing? (Note: interviewer should probe for the participant's social relationship with the people he/she is fishing eels with.)
5. Would you please identify on the chart where you were fishing.
6. What time of year were you fishing (for each of the places identified)?
7. What method of eel fishing were you using (in each place and for each time of the year)?
8. In your opinion, what do you think made that area a good spot to fish eels?

4th Life Cycle Phase (Notetaker or the chartrecorder must use a brown marker to outline these areas on the chart.)

1. Would you tell us about the last time that you went eel fishing ?
2. How old were you then?
3. Do you remember who was with you fishing eels at that time, when you last went fishing? (Note: interviewer should probe for the participant's social relationship with the people he/she is fishing eels with.)
4. Please, would you try to identify on the chart where you were fishing?
5. What time of year were you fishing?
6. What method of eel fishing were you using?
7. In your opinion, what do you think made that area a good spot to fish eels?

Note: After completing the personal history section, ask the following questions...

1. Have you fished for eels in areas other than those you already have mentioned? (Ex. Other areas of the province or region.)

2. What made these areas good for eel fishing?
3. Have you noticed any changes in plant life (eel grass), bottom texture, and the abundance of fish and or new fish present?
4. Have you experienced any abundance or any changes in eel catches throughout the years?
5. Could you also try to identify where on the map the different methods of fishing eels are located.
6. Have you experienced any events that would be hard to explain while fishing for eels in these areas?
7. Have you ever been told of any unexplained events or stories that may have occurred by people fishing eels in these areas?

Part III - The past social and communal relations to eels and eel fishing

Now, we would like to ask you several questions that will help us further understand the social and family involvements with eel and eel fishing. We are looking to gather information on family outings and Mi`kmaq fishing for eels in a group settings. Some of the common areas that we know of where families went to fish eels were on the Bayfield beach in the month of June during the spring tides coinciding with the longest days of the year. The tides are extreme then, very high and low, exposing the rocks and benthic sea life where eels are found close to shore. The term used for this type eel behavior was “Na`dagamita`jik” meaning the eels were coming ashore. We would also like to ask for information about family fishing outings during the winter on the ice in Pomquet, Antigonish, and Bayfield estuaries.

(In this section, the interviewer should be careful not to repeat any questions already asked.)

1. What is your first memory in fishing eels in a family or group setting?
2. Could we find and identify on the chart where this location would be?
3. What do you remember about families who went down to the shore to fish eels?
4. What time of year did families go down to the shore to fish for eels?
5. Why was that a good area and time of year to fish eels?

6. Do you know or are you aware of a Mi'kmaq expression for fishing eels in this manner?
7. Do you remember any stories or events in this area that may have taken place during these fishing trips?
8. Are there any other places that you may remember where people fished in the same manner as you mentioned earlier? (*refer back to question 2.*)
9. Was there a time in your memory when eels were the only food that helped to pull you through hard times?
10. What were the different ways of getting to any of the eel fishing areas in Pomquet, Bayfield or any other areas.
11. Could you tell where these trails are: could you identify on a topographical map where these trails are?
12. Does anybody still use these trails today?

Part IV - Current and recent fishing experiences

In this next set of questions we would like to research information on whether or not there are changes in your eel fishing patterns during your fishing history. We are interested in learning what these changes may have been, and why you think that these changes happened.

(Note: Some of the information sought in this section may already have been gathered. So, pay particular attention to this so that you don't ask the same questions over. Instead, focus on the questions that gather new information)

1. Are you still fishing eels?
2. (If No) Why are you not fishing eels?
3. (If Yes) Where do you fish for eels now?
4. Are these the same areas you always fished eels?
5. (If still fishing) Why do you fish eels in these areas now?
6. Was there a time when you stopped fishing eels?
7. If so, why did you stop fishing eels?

8. Could you identify on the chart the last places you fish/fished eels?
9. What did/do you do with the eels that you get?
10. Where were/are the best place(s) to find and catch eels?
11. How do you find the eels in the winter to fish?
12. When do you know to go fishing eels in the spring?

Part V - Eel fishing technology

Many changes have happened in the eel fishery. We would like to ask you about your experiences with the changing fishing methods and practices. We are also interested in learning your thoughts about these changes.

1. What methods of eel fishing do you like or enjoy the most?
2. What is it that you like about fishing in this (these) method (*Note: ask questions for each method mentioned*)?
3. Have you ever used a generator for fishing at night for eels?
4. Are you still using the gas lantern when fishing eels at night?
5. What type of spear do you use today?
6. Do you use an old wooden spear when fishing at night?
7. If yes, are you still using the older wooden eel spear when fishing eels at night?
8. Do/did you make your own summer spears?
9. Do/did you make your own winter spears? (Negogal)?
10. If no, who made the spears you used (Negogal)?
11. Were the spears made in the local area?
12. Who made the eel spear pole (Sunkuti)?
13. What was the pole made from?
14. Where would you find the poles or the wood to make them?
15. Did you use your own boat to eel when first starting to fish? (and now?)

16. How did you get the boat down to the water?
17. Is there a special name for this type of boat?
18. Did you build your own boat?
19. If yes, what type of boat did you build?
20. If yes, what was the boat made from?
21. If no, did you borrow the boat?
22. If yes, who did you borrow the boat from?
23. Do you cut the holes with an axe or power saw and when and why did you change this practice.
24. How thick do you remember the ice being in the past?
25. How many holes could you cut in the ice with an axe in those days?
26. Did you use an ice chisel (poskikun)?
27. Who made the ice chisel for you?
28. Would be many eels caught in one hole back then?

Part VI - Areas of fishing eels (Estuaries, sea shore, lakes and rivers)

Now, we are going to ask a few additional questions about where you have fished for eel. *(Note: As in the previous sections, some of the information asked about here may have been gathered earlier. Make sure that you don't ask for the same information in exactly the same way. Instead move on to new questions and information).*

1. Did you fish eel in the river?
2. If yes, which river(s) did you fish eel in? *(Note: Have/has these river(s) been identified on the chart already?)*
3. Are you aware of or know of a Mi'kmaq expression used for this method of fishing? If yes, would you mind telling us the expression?
4. Did you eat the eels caught in the river?
5. What method of fishing did/do you use to fish eels in the river?

6. Are you aware of or know of Mi'kmaq expression(s) for these methods of fishing eel? If yes, would you mind telling us the expression(s)?
7. Did your family go down to the sea shore to fish eels and lobster during the spring?
8. Are you aware of or know of a Mi'kmaq expression for this type of fishing? If yes, would you mind telling us the expression?
9. What type of spear did you use in this fishery?
10. Is there a name for this type of spear?
11. What do you remember fishing eels in that setting?

Part VII - Eel Habitat and movements

Now, we would like to ask you a few questions about your experiences in and knowledge about eel habitat. (*Note: Again, make sure that questions asked previously are not simply repeated here. Focus on gathering new information*)

1. Have you ever witnessed eels moving over land to reach another body of water?
2. Are you aware of a Mi'kmaq expression used for this movement?
(Na`dagameta`jik)
3. Where have you witnessed this event?
4. Have you ever witnessed eels gathered in a big ball?
5. Are you aware of a Mi'kmaq expression for this event?
6. Where have you witnessed this event?
7. When do you know the eels are out of the mud?
8. Are you aware of a Mi`kmaq expression for eels out of the mud? If so would you tell us this expression?
9. Are you aware of a Mi`kmaq expression used to describe eels burrowing into the mud? If so would you tell us this expression?

10. How do you determine when the eels have gone into the mud?
11. Why do you think eels are frightened after a thunder and lightning storm?
12. Are you aware of a Mi`kmaq expression for the eels being afraid when hunted by a light?
13. Do you have any special personal memories of eel fishing? Would you like to share these memories with us?
14. Did you teach anyone else how to fish eels?
15. Do you know of anyone who still fishes eels?
16. Do you know of anyone who makes eel spears or other types of tools for eel fishing?
17. When do you know when you have enough eels to eat or to give away?
18. Have you ever gathered eel grass?
19. Did other people in the community gather eel grass?
20. What was the eel grass used for?
21. Is there a Mi`kmaq term used for this practice if so would you know and tell us this term?

Part VIII - Eel Consumption and use

Now, we would like to end this interview by asking you a few questions about your experiences eating and using eel. We are also interested in learning your knowledge about how eel has been and can be used by the Mi`kmaq.

1. How old were you when you were first fed eels?
2. How young are children when first fed eel broth?
3. Where you fed eel broth when you were a child? If yes, why were you first fed eel broth?
4. Is eel broth a child's first real meal after weaning?
5. Have you any thoughts on why many elders ask of eels stew when they do not feel like eating anything else?

6. Are you aware of a Mi`kmaq expression used for this request?
7. Have you any thoughts on what the traditional meal elders would eat during the last days of their lives?
8. What method do you use to cook eels? Why do you prefer this method?
9. Who in the family would usually prepare the eels for cooking?
10. Have you ever witnessed eels cooked in the ground or sand?
11. Are you aware of a Mi`kmaq expression used for this type of cooking?
12. Do you know of anyone who prepares the eels in this manner?
13. Are eels caught in the different seasons the same to eat?
14. If no, what are the differences, and which season's eels do you prefer?
15. In what ways are you aware of eels being used in a ceremonial manner?
16. In what ways are you aware of eels being used as a special food in gatherings?
17. At what other kinds of gatherings do you remember getting fed eels?
18. Do you know of ways in which eels are used for medicinal or health purposes?
19. Can you tell us if you remember any events in your life or in the lives of others when eels were used in a medicinal manner? If yes, would you tell us how eels were being used?
20. Would you tell us any stories when eels were used in a spiritual manner like food offerings and for giving thanks?
21. Would you like to share with us any other eel fishing stories?
22. Have you heard of any legends, traditions, or customs involving the eel?
23. Would you mind telling us who heard this/these story(ies) from?
24. Where does this person live?

We are now finished with our questions. Thank you for your time and patience. Before finishing, are there any other stories or information that

you would like to share with us, and that you think are important to understanding our peoples' relations with *Kat*.