



# Natural Resources Directorate

Listuguj, Gespe'gewa'gi, Fall 2024

## Grand Entry Into The Market Listuguj Sasqale'sq

Listuguj Fisheries employees, lead, David Martin, and 2nd lead Cody Guitard and four other colleagues depart Listuguj every Tuesday at 6 am to perform Aquaculture. The drive to Carleton takes around 40 minutes and another one-hour boat ride to the Listuguj Large Lease Site where our scallop farm is located.

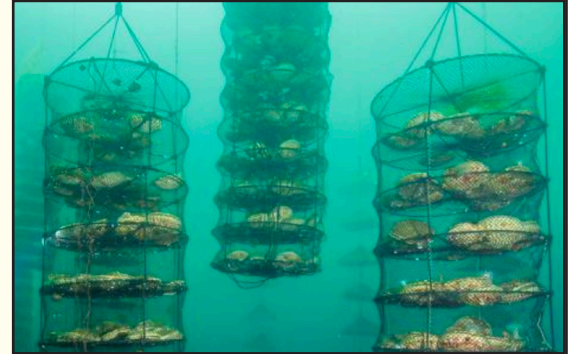
This has been their routine for the past 5 years but today is special. By the end of the day, they will harvest 240 scallops, between the sizes of 11cm to 13cm. The harvested scallops are placed in coolers at 40 to 50 scallops per cooler. The live scallops are then carefully packed in boxes and kept cold at a temperature of 4 °C, moist with soaked paper towels and absorbent pads -they use seawater taken from the farm site- and covered with three ice gel packs. The next morning at 6:00 am, they prepare the scallop order and drive to La Taniere, a distinguished restaurant in Quebec City. François-Emmanuel Nicol, the multi awards winner Chef and co-owner of the restaurant had compliments for the quality of the Listuguj scallops. "Our guests appreciated the scallops, we were able to keep them alive all week, the quality was impeccable, and we told the guest, how special it was for us to have live scallops. We serve them with wild oxalys (wood sorrels) and sea buckthorn (berries) We kept the roe for a sauce for later in the fall."

For Mr. Nicol and his restaurant, it is the first time working directly with a First Nation supplier. 'It has been a pleasure to work with Listuguj. The quality of the products is impeccable and our communication has been great. It is an honor for me to have access to those precious scallops. I hope that this is the beginning of a great relationship. Our goal with La Tanière is to share the culinary culture of Québec with the world. The contribution and knowledge from the Listuguj Mi'gmaq community are important. I feel privileged to have your trust working with your scallops".

The scallops industry in Canada, particularly in the Atlantic provinces, is a critical component of the seafood sector. As of October 2023, scallop aquaculture in Canada, particularly in regions like Prince Edward Island Newfoundland, and Labrador, has been gaining traction due to increasing market demand and sustainability practices. The country's scallop farming primarily focuses on the Atlantic sea scallop and production levels have been gradually rising, with thousands of metric tons harvested annually.

In Listuguj, in April 2019, a business plan was developed for commercial development and although it was met with some setbacks, the Natural Resource Directorate (NRD), and the scallop team have worked for several years to increase its scallop production as it takes 3-4 years to build a commercial inventory. In 2023, a small market test of our scallops was done and received a positive response.

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“This project has been a long time in the making, and through hard work, determination, and team effort of our crew and NRD management we are proud that we were able to turn a research and development project into what we envision for 2024/2025 the beginning of a profitable endeavor for NRD/ LMG,” said Maureen Isaac, Program Manager at the NRD.

This work is labor intensive and requires planning, structuring, tracking, and managing seed and scallop outgrowths. It also requires knowledge of different pieces of equipment.

“There is a lot of work that goes to bringing a product to market. However, with a renewed commitment, 2024 marks our first official scallop sales. By the end of October, we will wrap up our season and take inventory of marketable scallops for 2025. We are optimists because our current calculation is approximately 100,000 scallops”

For Denny Isaac, Associate Director of NRD, this project is promising. “Our directorate is always looking for ways to diversify our fisheries, access to more species, advance our fisheries’ governance and community capacity, by reaffirming our rights to help the community creating new jobs and new expertise”.



A screenshot of the Listuguj Fisheries website. The header includes the text "Listuguj Fisheries" and navigation links for "Home", "About Us", and "Contact". The main content area features a logo for "Listuguj Fisheries" with a fish and a boat, and the text "Welcome to Listuguj Sustainable Scallop Farming". Below this is a large image of scallops with the text "Sasqale'sq - Scallops".

[www.sasqalesq.ca](http://www.sasqalesq.ca)

## From Listuguj to the World

Marketing a new product is always an uncharted adventure with inherent challenges like distance to markets, developing infrastructures, transportation for live products, or establishing our brand name.

Felicia Mitchell was hired by the NRD to bring Listuguj Sasqale'sq to the market, in her first year, the NRD managed to get the interest of a distinguished client.

**NRD** - What were the challenges for branding our scallops?

**Felicia Mitchell** - I started in this new role as the Business Development Advisor in mid-May and, part of my duties are to champion the Listuguj Scallop aquaculture sales, which is a brand-new learning experience for me. It required a lot of cold calling local restaurants and fish markets with either no responses, some said they were only interested in scallop meat, or they already had inventory. Our product is whole live scallops still in the shell and beautiful roe.

**NRD** - Once you found a buyer, what was the challenge of delivering the scallops?

**Felicia Mitchell** - We had the incredible honour of making our first transaction with a high-end restaurant in downtown old Quebec. The major issue was securing a reputable transportation service to deliver our time-sensitive live scallops. So, to establish a good relationship with the restaurant, we decided to deliver in-house with our harvesting team to ensure the freshest product from sea to table.

**NRD** - How was the feedback from the buyer about the quality of our scallops?

**Felicia Mitchell** - The co-owner/chef has had very positive remarks, saying they were in perfect condition, loved working with them, and would like to continue as a client!



## How we started

Listuguj Scallops is a community-owned scallop farm dedicated to sustainable scallop farming. Our team is committed to providing high-quality scallops while preserving the environment. We take pride in being an Indigenous product and strive to uphold the traditions of our community.

It started with a study from a biological perspective; a 4-year pilot-scale growth study that began in 2014. This study demonstrated that the lease site off Carleton-sur-Mer is highly suitable to support the commercial development of cultured sea scallops. The operations were temporarily impacted by the pandemic and resumed in 2019.



## HOW OUR SCALLOPS AQUACULTURE WORKS

Scallop production begins by collecting larvae from adult scallops when they spawn. As the larvae grow to become baby scallops, they are transferred to large nets or cages and suspended in the deep ocean water, where they remain for three to five years. The job of Dave Martin and his colleagues is to raise and lower the cages so that the scallops remain at a constant 4-degree temperature, to monitor water quality and repair broken structures. The scallops do the rest. Most of the Canadian production of farmed scallops occurs in British Columbia, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Quebec.

Our team has had training on the theory of scallops and at-sea training. The process begins by collecting seed with seed collectors deployed at our leased sites (Listuguj has three leased scallop sites). Each year these collectors are emptied and transferred to cages. In year two, they are transferred from cages to 12mm mesh lantern nets, and in year three they are moved to 21mm mesh lantern nets where they remain until

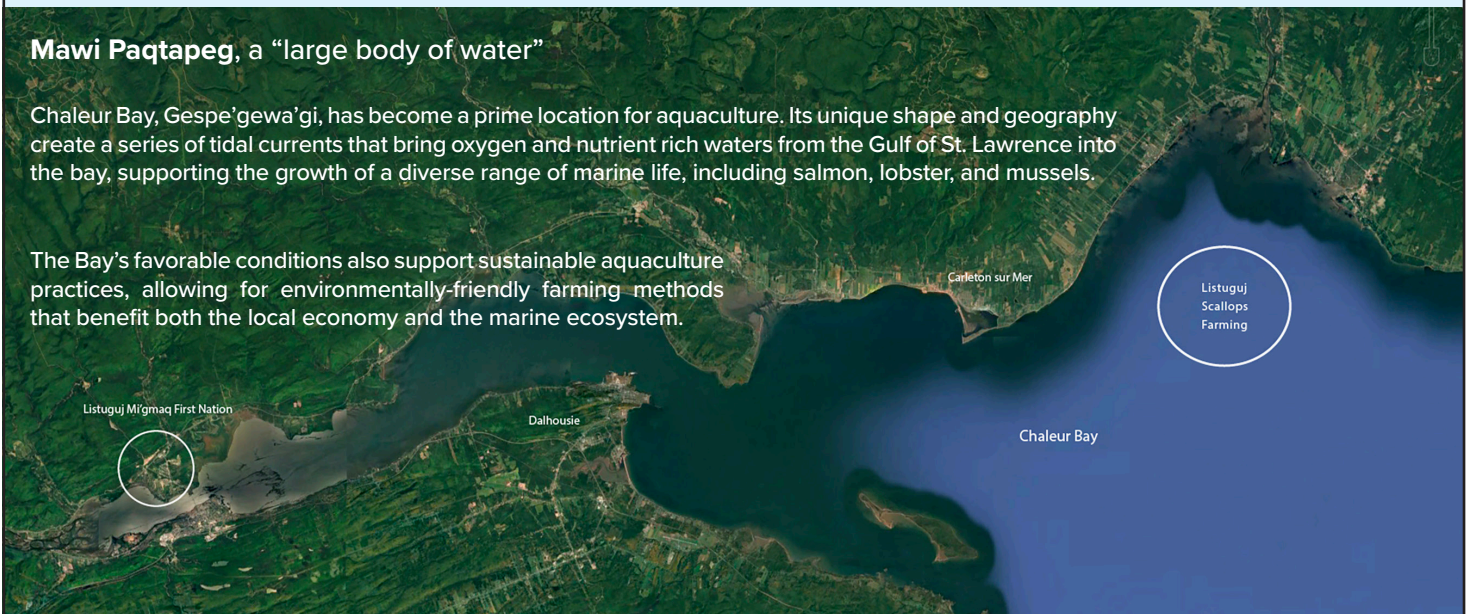
they are harvested for sale. Typically they can be harvested for market in year 4, when their size reaches around 7-8 cm. If the market wants larger scallops we would need to allow another year or two before harvesting but the longer we leave them in the water, they become more of a mortality risk due to the elements.

Our team has worked hard to maintain our site. This includes not only transferring scallops but also cleaning the collectors and lantern nets. Currently, we have team leader Dave Martin his first mate Cody Guitard, and 2 contracted laborers, Tammy Duguay and Nathan Duguay. We will require additional laborers at the end of the season for seed sorting work. Our team has learned that this work is very labor intensive and requires dedication and commitment to Listuguj becoming a successful contender in the aquaculture market and getting our name “Listuguj Saqale’sg” to become a well-known brand in scallop markets.

### Mawi Paqtapeg, a “large body of water”

Chaleur Bay, Gespe’gewa’gi, has become a prime location for aquaculture. Its unique shape and geography create a series of tidal currents that bring oxygen and nutrient rich waters from the Gulf of St. Lawrence into the bay, supporting the growth of a diverse range of marine life, including salmon, lobster, and mussels.

The Bay’s favorable conditions also support sustainable aquaculture practices, allowing for environmentally-friendly farming methods that benefit both the local economy and the marine ecosystem.





# 25th Anniversary of the Marshall Decision

On September 17th, 1999, the Supreme Court of Canada issued a historical decision that affirmed the right of Mi'gmaq people to fish, hunt, and gather as promised to Indigenous peoples in the Peace and Friendship Treaties of 1760 and 1761. 25 years later, the St. Francis Xavier University in Antigonish commemorated by holding the event "The Marshall Decision @ 25: Honouring the Future of Peace and Friendship Treaties", where academics, Chiefs, fishers, historian, Donald Marshall's lawyer as well as students gathered to reflect on the landmark decision.

There were Learning Lodges about the reflections and recollections from the case, including remarks from members of the legal team and expert witnesses as well as presentations from different representatives to talk about honouring the future of the Peace and Friendship Treaties.

Here is an interview conducted with Mr. Ken Paul, a lead Fisheries Negotiator and Research Coordinator, from Wolastoqey Neqotkuk First Nation (Tobique)

**NRD-** What is the impact of The Marshall Decision on economic and cultural, as well as in terms of pride in your community?

**Ken Paul-** Overall, I would say that because of the economic benefits, it's allowed for more education programs and a diversification of our business structures within the communities. It has certainly benefited our community. However, I feel that the communal commercial licenses are still interim, they're not a part of the fulfillment of our rights as ordered by the Supreme Court of Canada and as promised by our treaties. But in the interim, yeah, it's great to have that ability to make revenue 50 years ahead.

**NRD-** How do you see Marshall and the affirmation that comes with it?

**Ken Paul-** Our nations are going to be governing the ocean. That's what's going to happen. A big part of that is going to be leading on the science, monitoring, and leading on the guardian programs. And

it's not just going to be about the fish, it's going to be about the entire ecosystem. Because we don't just think about a fish. Fish can't exist by itself; it has to live somewhere. So, we also must be caretakers of the waters. Because if we're not taking care of the water why would the fish return?

So that's what's going to happen as we keep moving forward. We must use Canada's courts to get Canada to abide by its obligations, which is ironic, right? Because they never came to our natural law, they never listened to our laws, not yet anyway. But this is what we're building towards, to our self-determination where we're governing nations, again.

**NRD-** How do you see the responsibility that comes with that right?

**Ken Paul-** The ancestors did all of this work. They thrived here. They had food, shelter, and clothing, and built canoes, toboggans, and other things. Our responsibility is to ensure that our descendants have those same advantages. This is why we're working hard to get our knowledge systems embedded into the overall science so that we have a long-term viability and that the fisheries are not all about maximizing profit. It should



be about building abundance and building it towards the future because if we build abundance, we will have enough for ourselves. But if we only build towards maximizing profits that means that we're probably taking what we shouldn't be taking and we will harm the ecosystem if we don't use our knowledge. For the future I want our descendants to remember us as the ancestors that did what we could.

## Listuguj Fisheries Advisory Committee Created



After a long process of recruiting and meeting volunteers, the NRD finally got The Fisheries Advisory Committee and on September 24th it had its first meeting.

The Committee represents a multifaceted membership, from different walks of life

and they will be gathering throughout each year to jointly advise on fishery objectives, community research engagement, sustainable management, and governance development. This is a significant initiative involving community members to be included in Listuguj fishery governance.