



MATAWA FIRST NATIONS

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

July 16, 2008

Dear Editor,

In response to your article “Sturgeon studies continued” - Thursday July 10 2008; Matawa First Nation Chiefs can't help but take into consideration the harsh comments that were made by John Kapalanis. We feel that his remarks are an attack on the inherent rights of our treaty.

While it is certainly good that the Ministry of Natural Resources is seeking further studies in the health of sturgeon fisheries; we believe those studies should be done in consultation with First Nations and Aboriginal people. Our relationship and knowledge of the species dates back hundreds of years and in that time we have successfully managed the sustainability of our natural resources for future generations.

Habitat loss, silt increase, pollution and fluctuating water levels from dams have had much more impact on this species than those caught for sustenance and ceremonial usage by Aboriginal people. Moreover, First Nation communities face a disproportionate impact of these industrial actions as we too are affected by the declining fish population.





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It is our recommendation that the studies focus on the health of the species not limiting Aboriginal and Treaty Rights.

Mr. Kaplanis needs to recognize that there is a range of when a species is classified as “at risk”; and without specific clarification of what level that risk represents, Aboriginal and Treaty rights should not be challenged.

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