



# Metis Laws of the Harvest

*Revised 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition*

*Guide to Metis Hunting, Fishing,  
Trapping and Gathering*



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## **NOTICE**

### ***Metis Recognized Harvesting Agreement Area***

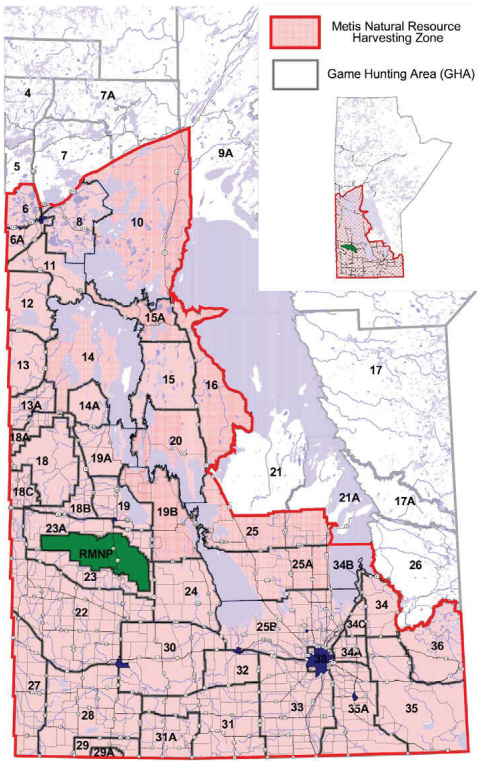
In September 2012, the MMF and the Province of Manitoba entered into an agreement that recognizes Metis rights to harvest for natural resources for food and domestic use in the defined area of Manitoba indicated in the Metis Recognized Harvesting Area Map on the following page.

Metis harvesters may harvest throughout the Metis Recognized Harvesting Area on all unoccupied provincial Crown Lands in Manitoba and occupied provincial Crown lands, including provincial parks, wherever First Nation Members are allowed to harvest; and on any privately owned lands in Manitoba on which that Metis Harvester has been given permission by the owner or occupant, or Indian Reserve lands with permission of Band Council.

Metis harvesters must follow the Metis Laws of the Harvest when harvesting within the Metis Recognized Harvesting Area.

Temporarily, Metis harvesters harvesting outside the Metis Recognized Harvesting Area must purchase appropriate provincial licenses and follow all provincial regulations.

For more information, please contact the MMF Natural Resources Department prior to purchasing a provincial license.



For a more detailed map, please go to [mmf.mb.ca](http://mmf.mb.ca)



**Message from MMF  
President David  
Chartrand, on the  
printing of the  
revised 3<sup>rd</sup>  
Edition.**

Dear Metis Harvesters,

Thank you for picking up this revised version of the Metis Laws of the Harvest, 3rd Edition. Since we first seriously started down this path of fighting for our rights, many things have happened.

We have won in the courts of law and in the courts of public opinion. But none of this would be possible were it not for each and every one of you who have decided that our rights as a people are the most important thing. As we always say, together we are so much stronger than we are separately.

The way we practice our rights has been given to us by our Elders who were taught the ways of our people by their ancestors. These laws are a gift that we must all hold onto and not let individuals or other levels of government tear from our grasp.

Practice common sense, listen to your Elders and keep this guide with you as you share with future generations and keep the Metis spirit alive.

**Believe in yourself, believe in Metis!**

Meeqwetch.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Chartrand". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right from the end of the name.

David Chartrand  
President  
Manitoba Metis Federation



## **Introduction to the Metis Laws of the Harvest, Revised 3rd Edition.**

***By MMF Natural  
Resources Minister  
Alfred Anderson***

Dear Metis Harvester,

I am pleased to greet you as the Manitoba Metis Federation's new Minister of Natural Resources. This is a very exciting time to be leading the Natural Resources portfolio. Together, we have made excellent progress towards the advancement of Metis harvesting rights in the Province of Manitoba, but there's still more work to do. We will continue to work diligently with the Province of Manitoba to champion our Metis rights throughout the province.

In previous editions, it was stated that along with Metis rights comes responsibilities. We would elaborate this statement further to say that we need to identify what our harvester responsibilities are. Our philosophies on hunting are founded on being conservation minded; never shoot out of the season, be mindful of female animals; ensure they are not tending to young, or have young lying down in the grass nearby.

Also, be sure to validate your Metis Harvester Card with a Conservation Trust Fund Sticker and get your new Big-Game Tags every year by April 1st.

This Revised 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition of the Metis Laws of the Harvest reflects feedback our Natural Resources team has heard from local harvesters and Regional staff. As with earlier editions, these guidelines are subject to refinement following further consultations with the Manitoba Metis Community, at Local and Regional workshops and Annual General Assemblies, using the information gathered from future Harvester Surveys. We want to thank everyone who has participated in developing this Revised 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition of the Metis Laws of the Harvest. We also want to encourage Metis harvesters to continue to respect the cultural traditions and conservation responsibilities of our ancestors.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Anderson', with a stylized, flowing script.

Alfred Anderson  
Natural Resources Minister  
Manitoba Metis Federation



## **What's New in the Revised 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition**

Since the publication of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, the MMF continues to hear comments from harvesters on the Metis Laws of the Harvest. Based on this dialogue and discussions within the MMF's Natural Resources team, it was recognized that, for further clarity, amendments were necessary. The end result is this Revised 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition of the Laws of the Harvest.

For this Revised 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, guidelines to harvesting were further clarified and outdated content was removed and replaced with current information. A change of date to the Metis Harvester Identification Card annual renewal (page 11), the addition of bear hunting guidelines (page 12), information for harvesters with a permanent disability (page 16), expanding Firewood to include timber for domestic, personal, and harvesting-related uses (page 23), and other minor editorial changes.

The initial publication of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition used information collected from past Harvester Return Surveys, workshops, reports and Harvesting Needs Surveys to create the table of "Guidelines to Metis Harvesting" (pages 17-20).

As with earlier editions, these guidelines are subject to change as we continue to consult with the Manitoba Metis Community. They are simply a summary of what Metis Harvesters have told us they need for their families, as well as what they have actually taken during

previous harvesting seasons. The Big-Game table (page 18) now lists bear limits per harvester.

## ***Principles***

1. Metis harvesting and Metis harvest, for the purpose of the Laws of the Harvest, means hunting, trapping, fishing and gathering for food and domestic use, including sharing, social and ceremonial purposes, of fish, big-game, small-game, furbearers, game-bird (upland and migratory), berries, mushrooms, medicinal and other plants including wild rice, and firewood or timber.
2. Metis harvesting is a Metis right. This right is not subject to a provincial government draw system.
3. Along with our Metis rights comes a responsibility to our community, and to our environment. Conservation has top priority.
4. Metis have harvesting access to resources equal to that of other Aboriginal Peoples. The Metis right to harvest has priority over non-Aboriginal recreational and commercial harvesters.
5. Sharing the Metis harvest, through those ways traditionally used by the Metis Community, is a Metis right. This includes using designated community hunters to harvest for the disabled, elderly, and those unable to hunt.

6. To protect our rights, and to meet our responsibilities and obligations, the Metis people have identified four principle objectives to guide the implementation of our rights. These are implemented in the MMF Metis Harvesting Initiative and include:
  - a. **Metis Harvester Identification Cards.** The cards identify Metis harvesters and prevent the fraudulent abuse of our Metis harvesting rights by non-Metis.
  - b. **Metis Conservation Trust Fund.** A trust fund was created to raise and distribute funds for local and regional Metis-directed conservation initiatives and to support and safeguard our section 35 rights.
  - c. **Metis Management System.** The Metis Management System is Metis-developed and recognizes Metis rights and Metis jurisdiction. Management includes a yearly harvest survey and report.
  - d. **Metis Laws of the Harvest.** Our Ancestors had our own unwritten and written rules such as the “Laws of the Buffalo Hunt”. The Metis people want Metis-made, common-sense rules to protect our rights and resources such as bag limits, restrictions during calving and spawning periods, and MMF-issued hunting area closures where big-game populations are in decline.

## **Laws**

1. **Harvesting Right for Food:** Exercising the Metis Right to harvest for food means Metis cannot sell their harvest. All commercial use, either selling or buying, must be with a commercial permit or licensing agreement.
2. **Harvester Identification Card:** Subject to the requirements and exceptions in the attached Harvesting Quick Reference Guide, all Metis harvesters must possess a validated Metis Harvester Identification Card obtained through the Metis Harvester Identification Card Application Process. This Card must be validated annually for the period from April 1st through to March 31st of the following year. To be validated, the Card must have a Metis Conservation Trust Fund Sticker for the applicable period.
3. **Big-Game Tags:** In addition to the MMF Metis Harvester Identification Card and Metis Conservation Trust Fund Sticker, hunting of big-game requires the appropriate management tags for reporting and conservation purposes.
4. **Harvester Safety:** Metis Harvesters must meet all health and safety regulations, including possessing all applicable federal and provincial firearms, vehicular, and boating safety and operating certificates and licenses.

5. **Harvesting Season:** Metis Harvesters may harvest year-round subject to Metis Regional decision- making, planning, and management consideration as enacted from time to time.

**Exceptions to the harvesting season include:**

- a. No big-game hunting (caribou, moose, elk, deer) from January 15th to July 15th. Black bear hunting, however, is year-round (or spring to fall season). Barren-land caribou can be harvested in the far north in spring or when they are migrating through. During the rest of the year, no hunting of female big-game if the animal is accompanied by offspring under one-year old.
  - b. No big-game hunting for a specific species in an area when a conservation closure has been issued by MMF to recover a declining population.
  - c. No fishing by net during species-specific fish spawning seasons. Spawning season occurs every spring from approximately early April to late May.
  - d. No game-bird hunting during nesting. Spring game-bird hunting may take place during migration if before nesting.
6. **Harvesting Area:** Metis harvesters may harvest throughout the Manitoba Metis Community's province-wide traditional harvesting territory on all unoccupied provincial Crown Lands

in Manitoba and occupied provincial Crown lands, including provincial parks, wherever First Nation Members are allowed to harvest; and on any privately owned lands in Manitoba on which that Metis Harvester has been given permission by the owner or occupant, or Indian Reserve lands with permission of Band Council.

7. **Fishing/Hunting Limits:** A harvester can only have 50 pounds of fillets per household in possession (including fish in freezer) at any one time. Fish harvesting is year round. The individual fish caught can be any size or species.
8. For game limits on harvesting, use common sense, the guidelines provided in this booklet, our unwritten Metis traditional rules, or existing provincial bag limits.
9. **Harvesting for Sustenance:** Don't waste. Eat what you kill and if there are other uses for the animal, try to do that.

## **MMF Home and Regional Offices**

The Metis Harvester Identification Card, Big-Game Tags, and the annual Conservation Trust Fund sticker can be obtained from your local MMF Regional or Satellite Office.

Big-Game Tags and the annual Conservation Trust Fund sticker can also be obtained from the **MMF Head Office** at: 300-150 Henry Avenue, Winnipeg Manitoba, R3B 0J7  
Phone: 204-586-8474 | Fax: 204-947-1816

**Thompson Regional Office**

171 Cree Road  
Thompson, MB R8N 0C2  
Phone: 204-677-1430  
Fax: 204-677-2240

**Southeast Regional Metis Corporation**

P.O. Box 13  
Grand Marais, MB ROE 0T0  
Phone: 204-754-2721  
Fax: 204-754-2687

**Northwest Metis Council Inc.**

40-1st Avenue NW  
Dauphin, MB R7N 1G7  
Phone: 204-638-9485  
Fax: 204-638-3878

**Winnipeg Metis Association Inc.**

10-150 Henry Avenue  
Winnipeg, MB R3B 0J7  
Phone: 204-589-4327  
Fax: 204-582-2711

**Manitoba Metis Federation Southwest Region Inc.**

656-6th Street  
Brandon, MB R7A 3P1  
Phone: 204-725-7520  
Fax: 204-728-9085

**Interlake Metis Association Inc.**

P.O. Box 390  
St. Laurent, MB R0C 2S0  
Phone: 204-646-2706  
Fax: 204-646-4171

**The Pas Region Inc.**

P.O. Box 2467  
The Pas, MB R9A 1M2  
Phone: 204-623-5701  
Fax: 204-623-2825

**Selkirk Local Metis Office (Interlake Satellite)**

218B Manitoba Avenue  
Selkirk, MB R1A 0Y5  
Phone: 204-785-9619  
Fax: 204-785-8900

**Manitoba Metis Federation Southwest Region Satellite Office**

107 Saskatchewan Avenue East  
Portage La Prairie, MB R1N 0L7  
Phone: 204-857-7039  
Fax: 204-857-8042

## **Harvesters with a Permanent Disability**

The MMF recognizes that a portion of our Metis Community members have a permanent disability that may impact their right to harvest. If applicable, please contact the MMF Natural Resources Staff at 204-586-8474, and we will assist you in exercising your right to harvest.

## **Guidelines to Metis Harvesting**

During workshops and meetings, the Metis people consistently said that when we are harvesting, we must not waste food and we should only harvest what we need. Following this direction, these Guidelines are intended to share information about the average amounts needed and harvested by the Metis.

The following charts give the average amount of wild foods that Metis said they would use from a recent Harvesting Needs Survey. This is a base guideline for reference.

The column heading: “MMF Harvesting Needs Survey per Harvester”, is the average amount of Big-Game, Migratory and Upland Game Birds that each hunter/fisher would harvest to meet the needs of their family household.



## **Big-Game:**

Species	MMF Harvesting Needs Survey Per Harvester
Caribou	1
Black Bear	1
Moose	1
Elk	1
Deer	2

\*Big-game harvesters can obtain tags for any of the species listed in the table above. Each harvester can take 6 tags (1 caribou, 1 elk, 1 moose, 1 bear, 2 deer), BUT may only possess 4 animals in their household or freezer at any one time. For instance, if there are 4 harvesters in one household and each has 6 tags, the household can only tag 4 animals at any one time, in any combination of choice. Once they have used up one of the animals, any one of the four harvesters can use one of their remaining tags. This can continue until the big-game season is over. Harvesters must fill out the survey, return any unused tags, and acquire their new tags in the new harvesting season. The Management tags and surveys will be the source of statistical data required by the MMF to assist in developing strong Conservation strategies.



## ***Migratory and Upland Game Birds:***

Species	MMF Harvesting Needs Survey Per Harvester
<b>Migratory Game Birds</b>	
Dark Geese/ Canada Geese	5
White Geese/ Snow Geese	6
Ducks	8
Coots	*
Snipe	
Sandhill Crane	
<b>Upland Game Birds</b>	
Ruffed Grouse	8
Spruce Grouse	
Sharp-tailed Grouse	
Gray Partridge	*
Ptarmigan/Rock Willow	
Wild Turkey	
Birds Total	*

\*The total number was not determined in the Harvesting Needs Survey.



## Harvesting Quick Reference Guide

The reference guide tables on the following pages are intended to help the Metis Harvester identify what requirements must be met if he or she intends to harvest various resources on the land. This guide may change.

Identify the resource you want to harvest on the left hand column. You will notice there are separate lines for harvesters who are 18 years of age or older, 16 to 17 years, and 12 to 15 years. Please choose the applicable line and move to the boxes to the right to determine the requirements needed to harvest.

For example, if you are over 18 and want to harvest deer, you would look under big-game and follow the “18 or older” row and would determine that you require an MMF Metis Harvester Identification Card, a Metis Conservation Trust Sticker, and Management Tags.



IF I HARVEST...	DO I NEED?...			
	MMF Metis Harvester Identification Card <sup>11</sup>	Metis Conservation Trust Fund Sticker <sup>12</sup>	Management Tags <sup>10</sup>	Adult Accompaniment <sup>1</sup>
<b>BIG-GAME<sup>2</sup></b>				
18 years old or older	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
16 to 17 years old	Yes	No	Yes	No
12 to 15 years old	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
<b>SMALL-GAME<sup>3</sup></b>				
18 years old or older	Yes	Yes	No	No
16 to 17 years old	Yes	No	No	No
12 to 15 years old	Yes	No	No	Yes
<b>UPLAND<sup>4</sup> AND MIGRATORY<sup>5</sup> GAME-BIRDS</b>				
18 years old or older	Yes	Yes	No	No
16 to 17 years old	Yes	No	No	No
12 to 15 years old	Yes	No	No	Yes
<b>FISH<sup>6</sup></b>				
18 years old or older	Yes	Yes	No	No
16 to 17 years old	Yes	No	No	No
12 to 15 years old	Yes	No	No	Yes
<b>SMALL-GAME FURBEARERS<sup>7</sup></b>				
18 years old or older	Yes	Yes	No	No
16 to 17 years old	Yes	No	No	No
12 to 15 years old	Yes	No	No	Yes
<b>BERRIES, MUSHROOMS, MEDICINES, WILD RICE AND OTHER PLANTS<sup>8</sup></b>				
18 years old or older	No	No	No	No
16 to 17 years old	No	No	No	No
12 to 15 years old	No	No	No	Yes
<b>FIREWOOD &amp; TIMBER<sup>9</sup></b>				
18 years old or older	Yes	Yes	No	No
16 to 17 years old	Yes	No	No	No
12 to 15 years old	Yes	No	No	Yes

### ***Footnotes on table:***

1. All harvesting is subject to, and harvesters must meet the requirements of, all federal and provincial health and safety regulations for harvesting requiring firearms or bows, or for activities involving potentially hazardous conditions or expose the harvester to risk or possible harm; adult accompaniment is recommended. The adult must meet all his or her adult requirements for the resource being harvested.
2. Moose, elk, barren-ground caribou, white-tail deer, black bear and gray wolf.
3. All other animals not listed in footnotes #2 or #7
4. Ruffed grouse, gray partridge, wild turkey, rock ptarmigan, willow ptarmigan, spruce grouse, sharp-tailed grouse and ring-necked pheasant.
5. Ducks, geese, coots and snipe, sandhill cranes.
6. Arctic char, arctic grayling, black crappie, brook trout, channel catfish, goldeye, mooneye, lake trout, muskellunge, northern pike, rock bass, smallmouth bass, largemouth bass, brook trout, brown trout, rainbow trout, walleye, white bass, whitefish, yellow perch, and freshwater mussels, and other species.

7. Beaver, short-tailed weasel, long tailed weasel, coyote, fisher, arctic fox, river otter, badger, bobcat, marten, mink, muskrat, red squirrel, wolverine, raccoon, lynx.
8. Gathering of berries, plants, and wild rice does not require a Metis Harvester Identification Card, stickers or tags. Gathering is intended for own use and not for commercial sale.
9. Metis Harvester Identification Card holders can harvest trees for firewood and timber in lengths as needed for personal, domestic, and harvesting-related uses; firewood or timber cannot be sold for commercial purposes.
10. Tags are required for big-game reporting and conservation management purposes. Other species-specific reporting will also be used.
11. Youth 12 to 17 years require a MMF Harvester Identification Card. Children 11 years or younger may apply for and receive a card, but do not require it. Children must meet all health and safety requirements for the harvesting he or she will be engaged in. Children should be accompanied by an adult at all times.
12. Metis Harvester Identification Card will be considered validated without a sticker for those 12 to 17 years of age or younger.

## **If you are approached by a Conservation Officer:**

If a Manitoba Conservation Officer, or other enforcement authority, approaches you regarding your Metis harvesting or your Metis harvest, please follow these steps:

1. Ensure that you have your validated MMF Metis Harvester Identification Card with an up-to-date Conservation Trust Fund Sticker and the appropriate big-game tags with you at all times while harvesting.
2. Ensure that you are following the Metis Laws of the Harvest Revised 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition
3. Answer his or her questions politely to the best of your knowledge.
4. Identify yourself as a Metis Harvester to the Conservation Officer, and show the Conservation Officer your Metis Harvester Identification Card.
5. Inform the Conservation Officer that you are practicing your Metis right to harvest, and that you are harvesting for food or domestic purposes and not for commercial purposes, trophy, or sport.

6. Inform the Conservation Officer that you are practicing your Metis right to harvest, and that you are harvesting for food or domestic purposes and not for commercial purposes, trophy, or sport.
7. If you have any portion of your harvest seized, or you are given a warning or summons (charged) for practicing your Metis right to harvest, contact the MMF Natural Resources Staff immediately to report the incident at 204-586-8474.
8. Make sure to write down an account of the dialogue with the Conservation Officer on the day the incident occurs.

### ***Remember....***

1. The Metis Harvest is not to be sold.
2. Ensure that you have your validated MMF Metis Harvester Identification Card with an up-to-date Conservation Trust Fund Sticker and the appropriate big-game tags with you at all times while harvesting.

**Remember to renew your Conservation Trust Fund Sticker every year by April 1<sup>st</sup>.**

3. Follow all health and safety regulations or requirements.
4. Metis harvesters may harvest year-round with the exceptions found in the Metis Laws of the Harvest, Revised 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition.



5. Hunt on unoccupied Crown land and occupied Crown land wherever First Nations Members are allowed to harvest.
6. Hunt on Indian Reserve land only with permission from the Band Council.
7. Hunt on privately owned land only if you have permission by owner or occupant. Identify that you have an MMF Harvester Identification Card.
8. When harvesting for fish, use the limits found in the Metis Laws of the Harvest. When harvesting for game, use common sense, the guidelines in this booklet, unwritten Metis traditional rules, or existing provincial limits.







**Published by the Manitoba Metis Federation Inc.**

For more information, please contact the  
**MMF Natural Resources Staff** at

300-150 Henry Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R3B 0J7

Phone: 204-586-8474 | Fax: 204-947-1816

Email: [harvest@mmf.mb.ca](mailto:harvest@mmf.mb.ca) | Web: [mmf.mb.ca](http://mmf.mb.ca)

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