



## Advancing the National Fish, Wildlife, and Plants Climate Adaptation Strategy into a New Decade

The 2012 National Fish, Wildlife, and Plants Climate Adaptation Strategy was designed to “inspire and enable natural resource managers, legislators, and other decision makers to take effective steps towards climate change adaptation over the next five to ten years.” One major gap identified was that the Strategy did not include discussion of Indigenous Knowledges (IKs) and the importance of incorporating these critical knowledges into planning and implementation. The Report provides an in-depth look at IKs and how natural resource managers can incorporate IKs into their adaptation actions.



### What are Indigenous Knowledges?

Consulting with and contemplating the wisdom of elders and community members, both human and non-human, has long been valued in Indigenous communities. IKs refer to “Indigenous Peoples’ systems of observing, monitoring, researching, recording, communicating, and learning that are required...to support survival and flourishing in an ecosystem and the social and adaptive capacity to adjust or prepare for changes,” (NCA4 2018). Additional definitions emphasize the temporal, relational, and holistic aspects of IKs as an accumulation of knowledge, practice, and belief acquired by Indigenous peoples over hundreds or thousands of years.

### How Indigenous Knowledges inform climate change adaptation planning, research, and implementation

IKs are sometimes used to assist with selecting species, habitats, and ecosystems on which to focus planning efforts within the context that many Tribes view all species as important and value the interconnectedness of all beings. Focal species might include those that are significant spiritually, culturally, medicinally, and/or for food sovereignty, that play keystone roles in ecosystems and/or that are already being impacted by climate change. These may be species not included by Western scientists and managers in their work. The expertise encompassed in IKs can also contribute greatly to our understanding of baseline climate and ecosystem conditions and of resource management approaches that can increase the resiliency of ecosystems and communities to a changing climate.

### Protection of Indigenous Knowledges

Each Indigenous community and knowledge holder will have [unique laws and customs](#) governing IKs custodianship and interactions between Indigenous and non-Indigenous entities. This custodianship is governed collectively by the community’s principles and values. It should not be viewed through the Western lens of property ownership but encompasses rights around the sharing of IKs. Indigenous people, non-Indigenous staff, and those partnering with Indigenous communities all share in the obligation to honor the critical principles of *Cause No Harm and Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC)*.

