
**Aboriginal exploitation of tidal ponds:
an example from southwestern New Brunswick**

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Tidal (tide) ponds are formed at the mouth of estuaries and coastal embayments when water is trapped behind an obstruction during ebb tide. This phenomenon is common to many coasts and in particular to the intertidal zone along the Bay of Fundy where tidal range can exceed 16 metres at some locations.

Geoarchaeological studies in southwestern New Brunswick suggest that tidal ponds may have represented an important food source for aboriginal people in coastal areas where fish become trapped in brackish tidal ponds. Here we discuss findings from a shell midden and hearth from Sam Orr's Pond 10 km north of St. Andrews, southwestern New Brunswick. Remains indicate that food, including mammals, birds, clams and small fish, was processed at this site.

Sam Orr's Pond is the uppermost of three main tidewater ponds that occur at the mouth of Taggarts Brook, during an ebb tide into Passamaquoddy Bay that lowers sea level by 9 m at that location. Schools of small fish are sometimes trapped in the ponds during low tide. Local oral history records that these tidal ponds were exploited in the recent past. A collection of boulders forming the shape of an 8 metre wide ring is located at the mouth of Sam Orr's Pond that may represent anthropogenic modification (a stone weir) used to trap fish.

Research is continuing to determine the extent of anthropogenic modification, the date of the earliest possible use of the site and the location of similar tidal pond catchments along the Fundy coast. These results could indicate that weir-technology was used by people along the coast prior to European colonization.