

ALGONQUIANS AND RESPECT FOR ANIMALS

The Algonquians see hunting as a relationship between human and animal: the animal agrees to give itself to the hunters if they treat it with respect. This respect is shown in several ways:

Spiritual gestures

Before the hunt, the hunter asks the animal's spirit to give itself to him because he needs it to live. The hunter often makes an offering during this prayer.

When the animal is dead, the hunter **thanks the animal's spirit** for giving itself to him and promises to use it well and share it with those who need it.

Efficient use

The hunter and his family use as many parts of the animal as possible, so it will not have died for nothing. Then, in addition to eating the meat and some other pieces (snout, heart), the skin and fur will be used to make moccasins, snowshoes and clothing, the bone and teeth to make tools (scrapers, arrowheads), the feathers to decorate headdresses, etc. The unused parts, such as the bowels, will be buried to return them to the earth and resume the cycle of life.

Managing the resource

Aboriginal hunters only go hunting and fishing when they need to. If they already have a catch, they do not kill another on their way back if they don't really need it. They don't accumulate unnecessarily.

Also, those who can hunt and fish share with those who cannot, such as the elders or the sick.

These actions reflect the fact that the First Nations believe that humans are simply part of the universe, that they are no more important than other living beings, and that they must act accordingly.