

*Jason Bisonette:* We like to arrive at the landing before the sun sets to ensure that we have a permit. But we really can't start fishing until it's dark enough to be able to use the headlamps.

If the fishing is good, we'll be on the water until we have all the fish that our permits allow us to take. I give tobacco for those water spirits, and I ask for safety. I love having Samuel and Benesi in the boat. I love seeing young Ojibwe men becoming providers for their family.

It's like the opportunities I was given by my older brothers. I started in the late '80s fishing with my brothers. There were certain lakes that they wouldn't take me on, lakes that they knew that there was going to be trouble. They didn't necessarily want me to witness the racial slurs and stuff getting thrown at us and things like that.

Go home back to the reservation where you belong!

Now that I have my own boys fishing with us, I understand why they did that. The spearing controversy for some people will probably always be there. They just don't understand why we do this.

*[crowd chanting, "U. S. A. !"]*

Spearing happens in very shallow water. The fish always determine when we're allowed to spear. When the lake reaches a certain temperature, that triggers the spawn, and the fish will come in. Basically, what we're looking for is a reflection of a walleye's eye.

It'll illuminate a little bit. That way you can pick it out.

*Samuel:* This is the hot spot here!

*Jason Bisonette:* For us, anytime we fish or hunt, maybe there's a little bit of sport in it. But the actual taking something, whether it's wild rice, or syrup, or a fish, or a deer, being able to go out and harvest fish means that I can be a contributing member of the community. We've fished for elders, we've fished for single mothers. We always try to give as much as we can away. There's a lot of honor in that. When I drive the boat, I always worry about a lot of different things. You know, obstacles in the water. I worry about trees hanging over.

I worry about docks and private property. We've had people standing on docks, saying things. We've had people shine lights at us, throw rocks at us. It's always in the back of your head. But in the same respect you know, we've had a lot of people that are just curious and seem very supportive and very interested in what we do.

Even though our techniques have maybe changed a little bit, knowing that that fish coming off a long winter is something that all the Ojibwe people that came before us since the creation of the world tasted the exact same fish that we taste now. We live in an Americanized society, and the federal government has wanted us to assimilate. And for a large part we are, you know? But then there's also the other side. The Ojibwe education is something we have to have to survive as Ojibwe. Tasting that fish is part of that, having that living history.

I spearfish because I'm Ojibwe. That's who we are, that's what we do.