



**LETS LEARN ABOUT...**

# **SPEAR FISHING**

In the early spring, spear fishing begins. In places such as Tyendinaga (also known as the Bay of Quinte), Indigenous people come from all around to spear pike and pickerel.

Pike is the first to be speared as they spawn first. The word for Pike in Mohawk is tsikónhses which translates to "it has a long face." Both pike and pickerel are found in rivers and bays. Once pike are finished spawning, pickerel then come in to spawn. The Mohawk word for pickerel is skarkahráksen which translates to "one bad eye."

Waterproof hip or chest waders are worn to prevent the fisherman or fisherwoman from getting wet while in the water. They walk along the shores on foot at night with a flashlight that they use to spot fish in the water, as well as a spear to stab the fish and a stringer (rope) which they use to put the fish on once caught.

Indigenous people believe in giving thanks, therefore medicine (usually tobacco) is laid down and words are spoken to give thanks to the fish for giving their lives for us to eat. It is also important to "milk" the fish before removing them from the water. Milking is done by squeezing the bellies of Sows (females) and Jacks (males) so that their eggs and milt are released to ensure more fish will hatch. Milking is essential to ensure the continuity of fishing for years to come.



**We should never take from Creation without giving back.**