



## Waaswaaganing (Fishing by Torchlight)

Fishing by torchlight is a long practice of Ojibwe fishermen. This type of fishing happens in shallow water where ogaa (walleye) come to spawn when the water reaches the right temperature. A birch torch attached to the front of the canoe shines light into the water to mesmerize the fish and reflect off their eyes. A sheet of white bark behind the torch shields the people in the canoe from the light, keeping them in darkness so their prey would not detect them. The shield also protects the spearer's eyes to stay adjusted to the darkness.

Light shining can also be used for hunting. Deer and other game, tormented by mosquitoes, come to the water's edge to drink and avoid the worst of these pests. A canoe with a flamelight can paddle along the shore, freezing the animals long enough to obtain them.

- Waaswaaganing is also the name of the Lac du Flambeau (Lake of Flames) tribal lands in Northern Wisconsin. It comes from a style of spearfishing after dark using a birch torch attached to the front of a canoe.
- Wauswaugoning Bay in Grand Portage refers to the excellent fishing traditionally practiced here.
- Waawaashkeshi (deer) comes from the same root word and refers to their flashing white tail.
- Waawaatesi (firefly)



