

Artifact of the Month

Tribal Historic Preservation Office

September 2017



September's Artifact of the Month features a case of mistaken identity. Just like "Swimmy" in the entitled children's book by Leo Lionni, this artifact went through its own "identity crisis." While completing research on a project, our collections staff took a closer look at two artifacts from the Brighton Reservation. Originally both labeled as pectoral spines and grouped together, one of the artifacts yielded a surprising discovery. This artifact displays some significant points to disprove its pectoral spine label; and by points we mean actual teeth! By way of a magnifying glass, the collection staff were able to properly see the tiny indentations along the mandible or lower jaw portion of a fish. After extensive team research the dentary has now been officially re-labeled *and* with an even more distinctive name!

The Alligator Gar (*Lepisosteus spatula*) is one of the largest freshwater fish and a great source of food. It groups its young together just like "Swimmy" grouped his friends together and showed us that teamwork is essential in overcoming any danger, or in this case, mistaken identity. As depicted above in the historical photograph (right) gar is still a staple among the Seminole Tribe because of their inherent relationship to water.

