



Fish Lure (Pa)

Date

19th Century

Primary Maker

Tongan

Medium

Sperm whale tooth, marine turtle, bivalve mollusk shell, sennit cordage

Description

This is a 19th Century Tongan Bonito fishing lure or pa.

Though a similarly designed lure was used to catch bonito fish in the waters surrounding the Tongan Islands, both the length and the presence of a barb on this lure’s hook indicate that it was used to catch tuna or kingfish. The size of these larger fish required that lures be reinforced with whale bone or teeth. When paired with a reflective mother-of-pearl plate, the combination was highly effective at attracting Tongan fishermen’s desired catches.

Dimensions

With Sennit Extended: 8 1/4 × 3 1/4 × 2 3/8 in. (21 × 8.3 × 6 cm)