

Finch & C^o



NEW ZEALAND MAORI COMPOSITE SPINNING LURE FISH HOOK 'MATAU'

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WOOD, HALIOTIS SHELL, HUMAN BONE AND FLAX FIBRE

EARLY TO MID 19TH CENTURY

SIZE: 8.5CM LONG – 3¼ INS LONG

LITERATURE

AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR LIVE BAIT THESE HOOKS WERE VERY SUCCESSFUL, ONCE IN THE WATER BEHIND A FAST DRIVEN CANOE THE HOOK LEAPS AND SPINS THROUGH THE WAVES COPYING THE ACTIONS OF SMALL FRY. THE BARB IN ALL THE OLD SPECIMENS OF THESE HOOKS IS MADE OF HUMAN BONE WITH THE LASHINGS MADE OF THE TWISTED FLAX FIBRES OF PHORINIUM TENAX. THEY ARE USED BY THE MAORI OF THE NORTH ISLAND TO CATCH 'KAHAWAI' WHICH IS A FISH THAT OCCURS IN VAST NUMBERS AT THE MOUTHS OF RIVERS AT CERTAIN TIMES OF THE YEAR. IT IS THOUGHT THAT THE MAORI USED SPECIAL HOOKS BEARING CERTAIN KINDS OF HALIOTIS SHELL AT VARIOUS TIMES OF THE DAY TO MAXIMISE THEIR CATCH IN MUCH THE SAME WAY AS A FISHERMAN USES DIFFERENT FLIES TO CATCH TROUT TODAY.