





### **Makau (fishhook)**

Hawai'i, mid 19th century

Approx. 4 x 1.5 inches

American Antiquarian Society, 1895. PM 95-20-70/48442.1

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Fishermen in Hawai'i, called po'e lawai'a, are respected specialists whose fishhooks, called makau, are considered prized possessions. Makau took on many different shapes, each one specialized to catch different types of fish with a variety of fishing techniques. This one is a composite hook, made from two pieces of carved bone lashed together with fibrous twine, a form unique to Hawai'i that was used to catch larger reef fish and deep-water species. These specialized hooks were made in two pieces, because stress during fishing would cause one-piece hooks to break at their bottom curve or bend. The Hawaiians' solution was to separate the sides of the hook and tie them together at this bend, creating greater flexibility and strength.

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