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APPENDIX 1: POLE-TROLLING IN THE PACIFIC TRADITION

Pole-trolling (also called pole-and-line fishing and pearl-lure fishing) is a fishing method which evolved in the islands and atolls of Oceania and which dates back thousands of years. Originally practised from traditional paddling or sailing canoes (and still done this way in a few places), the technique has been modified in other locations to take advantage of modern fishing gear and motorised vessels. Nonetheless the essential skills involved remain largely the same.

Fishing gear

The gear for this type of fishing consists of a long pole, about 7m (20 feet) in length, to the tip of which a line about the same length as the pole is attached. A lure is tied to the other end of the line.

Traditionally poles were made of bamboo or strong, light wood. For the most part, fishermen relied on finding these materials drifting at sea, since they do not use ally grow on small islands and atolls. In more modern times, bamboo is easier to obtain. In more urbanised areas, fibre glass poles are sometimes used.

The lines were originally hand-made from braided hibicus or sennit fibres, but have now been largely replaced by modern synthetic fishing lines, which are stronger and may be easier to obtain.

One traditional element which still remains, however, is a universal preference among fishermen for lures made from the shells of mother-of-pearl oysters. Similar lures made of iridescent plastic are commercially available, but although these are cheaper and do not require hours of patient construction and polishing, they have rarely succeeded in overcoming the preference for the traditional version. Modern lures are much the same as those of many generations ago, except that metal is now usually used for the hook section, rather than the more traditional materials of turtle shell, bone or coconut shell.

The lures themselves consist of a curved strip cut from a mother-of-pearl shell, fitted with a barbless hook and a tassel of feathers or fibres. Very subtle variations in the colour, shape and size of a lure are considered of vital importance to fishing success, and this is one of the reasons why natural materials are still preferred to synthetic ones. A fisherman may have several poles, each with several lures attached but tied back, plus a large collection of spare ones ready to hand. Only one lure is in use at anyone time, the fisherman switching among lures of varying appearance until he selects one which produces the desired results.
Fishing techniques

The technique is to locate schools of actively feeding tuna, and to slowly troll the lure among them. The lure is extended out behind the boat using the combined length of the pole and the line to distance it as far as possible. When a fish strikes, the pole is used to heave it into the boat, where it usually hits the lap of the fisherman and falls to the bilge or deck. A lot of skill is required in ensuring that constant tension is kept on the line, so that the fish does not come off the barbless hook before being boated, and in manipulating the fish into precisely the right spot in the boat. A skilful fisherman can have his lure back in the water almost before the fish he has just caught hits the deck.

Traditionally, this type of fishing was — and in some places still is — carried out according to very rigid social or cultural rules. Working in the confines of a narrow canoe, each member of the fishing team had a precise job to do, whether this be paddling, steering or killing the fish just boated. Only one man was allowed to carry out the actual fishing, and years of experience in all manner of seagoing and resource-harvesting skills were required to qualify him for the job. He was the vessel's skipper, and used his experience and skill to direct the other members of the crew, control the fishing operation and, ultimately, maximise the catch.

TRADITIONAL STYLE

Master fisherman (skipper)  Steersman  Paddlers

MODERN STYLE

More modern versions of the technique use motorised vessels, and usually involve two or more fishermen poling simultaneously. Although the rich cultural background to the technique may be diminishing in its importance, the skills of locating the fish, and selecting precisely the right lure to obtain a maximum biting response from them remain as crucial as ever.
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APPENDIX 2: FURTHER READING

The following books all contain useful information and ideas for people interested in knowing more about some of the subjects covered in this book.

**FISHING HAWAII STYLE (Volume 1)** by Jim Risutto.
*Published 1983 by Hawaii Fishing News Ltd., Honolulu, Hawaii, U.S.A. 146 pages.*
Contains many useful trolling tips, especially about big game fishing, from Hawaii's sport fishermen. Very well illustrated.

**MODERN HAWAIIAN GAME FISHING** by Jim Risutto.
Even more detailed information on sport and big game trolling, based on discussions with Hawaii's most successful sport fishermen and charter boat skippers.

**THE CRUISING SAILORS MEDICAL GUIDE** by Nicholas C. Leone, M.D., and Elisabeth C. Phillips, R.N.
As easy-to-follow guide showing first-aid treatment for almost all the minor illnesses and accidents imaginable on board a small boat.

**THE ASHLEY BOOK OF KNOTS** by Clifford W. Ashley
Possibly the most comprehensive knot book available. 7000 drawings illustrate nearly 4000 knots, splices, and related pieces of ropework and seamanship.

**FAO SPECIES CATALOGUE, VOLUME 2: SCOMBRIDS OF THE WORLD**
by Bruce B. Collette and Cornelia E. Nauen.
*Published 1983 by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, Rome, Italy. ISBN 92-5-101381-0. 157 pages.*
Provides wide-ranging information on the habitat, biology and fisheries of the 49 known species of tunas, mackerels and bonitos.
BIG FISH AND BLUE WATER by Peter Goadby.
Another book mainly for game fisherman, but with many tips from areas within the Pacific Islands region, as well as Australia and New Zealand. Illustrated with superb game fishing photographs.

TUNA AND BILLFISH: FISH WITHOUT A COUNTRY by James Joseph, Witold Klawe and Pat Murphy.
Published 1979 by the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission, La Jolla, California, USA. ISBN 0-9605078-0-X. 48 pages.
Describes the life cycles of tunas and billfish in a non-technical style. Nicely illustrated with paintings by artist George Mattson.

HOW TO RIG BAITS FOR TROLLING: PROFESSIONAL GUIDE FOR RIGGING BAITS FOR SALT WATER FISHING.
Although written for game fishermen, this is an excellent guide which shows several bait rigging methods that will be useful to all troll fishermen. Each method is illustrated with photographs, and contains many handy tips.

TRADITIONAL TUNA FISHING IN TOKELAU. SPREP Topic Review No. 27 by Robert Gillett.
Published in 1985 by the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme, South Pacific Commission, Noumea, New Caledonia. 51 pages
Presents a great deal of biological and technical information on the traditional Tokelauan style of pole-and-line fishing for tuna.