

THE PRESERVATION OF FISHING NETS

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The Preservation of Fishing Nets by J. T. Cunningham

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J. T. CUNNINGHAM

**THE PRESERVATION
OF FISHING NETS**



MANGROVES.

THE PRESERVATION
OF
FISHING NETS

BY

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THE PRESERVATION OF FISHING NETS: ITS SCIENCE AND PRACTICE

CHAPTER I

TANNING MATERIALS AND THE METHODS OF TESTING THEM

THE cotton and hemp of which nets, lines, and ropes are made consist of vegetable fibres, which, however strong they may be when new, become weakened by use and by exposure to air and water. They may lose their original strength in two ways—mechanically by wear and tear, chemically by rotting or decomposition, and unless means are taken to prevent it, the conditions to which the materials are exposed in fishing operations will cause them to become rotten long before they would be worn out mechanically.

The rotting or decomposing processes which take place in the materials of fishing gear, as in other vegetable and animal substances, are produced by the action of minute living particles of the nature of moulds, yeasts, or bacteria. Air and moisture are usually necessary to the life and development of these

agents, and, therefore, gear that is stored in a dry condition will suffer little or no harm even in its natural state. When in actual use, however, it is constantly exposed to air and water, and, therefore, preservative treatment is necessary to increase the durability of the materials by preventing the life and growth of putrefying organisms in them. At the same time, the treatment employed may serve to protect the materials from mechanical wear and tear.

Methods of preservation or 'curing' are most important in relation to the nets used in drift-fishing, both on account of the enormous scale on which such nets are used, and of the fact that they are generally made of cotton, a material which, in its natural condition, has but little durability under the conditions of drift-net fishing. Of the various substances used for impregnating cotton nets, the first class to be considered are tanning materials, which have been employed for the preservation of nets, fishing lines, and sails in all parts of the world from the earliest times down to the present day.

Tanning materials consist of the bark or other parts of various trees which produce a reddish or brown solution when steeped in cold water or boiled in water, and there is scarcely any tree or shrub which does not contain, in some part, either the bark, wood, fruit, galls, or roots, soluble substances having the properties we are about to consider.

To preserve nets or cordage

they are dipped in a hot solution of the tanning substance. In former times, and in some countries still, raw materials, such as oak bark, or the bark of other