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On the use of electrical conduit for mist net poles

Jerome A. Jackson and Bette J. Schardien

Castrale and Karr (*North Am. Bird Bander* 6:48-49, 1981) described use of electrical conduit, hose clamps, and metal sleeves with screws to erect mist nets. While we concur in their recommendation for using electrical conduit, we have had problems with wind blown nets becoming caught on the clamps and screws, sometimes resulting in a torn net.

Castrale and Karr do suggest that the metal connectors for joining two pieces of conduit can be permanently welded rather than screwed in place, which would eliminate the protruding screw heads. In more than fifteen years of use of electrical conduit as net poles, we have found that crimping the connecting sleeve to the bottom pole is the least expensive, quickest, and least "tangle-prone" method of attachment (Fig. 1a). The top pole just slips into the connector, thus allowing quick disassembly for easy transport. Hardware stores that sell conduit frequently have the necessary crimping tool and a sleeve can be crimped on the end of each

pole at the time of purchase. Alternatively, we have used liquid solder to connect sleeves to the bottom pole. These sleeves occasionally come "unglued" and, thus, we consider this a less acceptable alternative. If the sleeves are glued or welded in place, care should be taken to sand smooth all burs that might snag the net.

Some hardware stores do not carry conduit sleeves that can be crimped in place, but do sell connectors that tighten in place with a wrench (Fig. 1b) — we do not recommend these because they also tend to "catch" the net. Castrale and Karr suggest a need for the hose clamps to hold net loops in place. We have never had a problem with net loops slipping, so long as the loops are "doubled" on the pole (Fig. 1c). In our experience, it is best to keep the net pole as "snag" free as possible.

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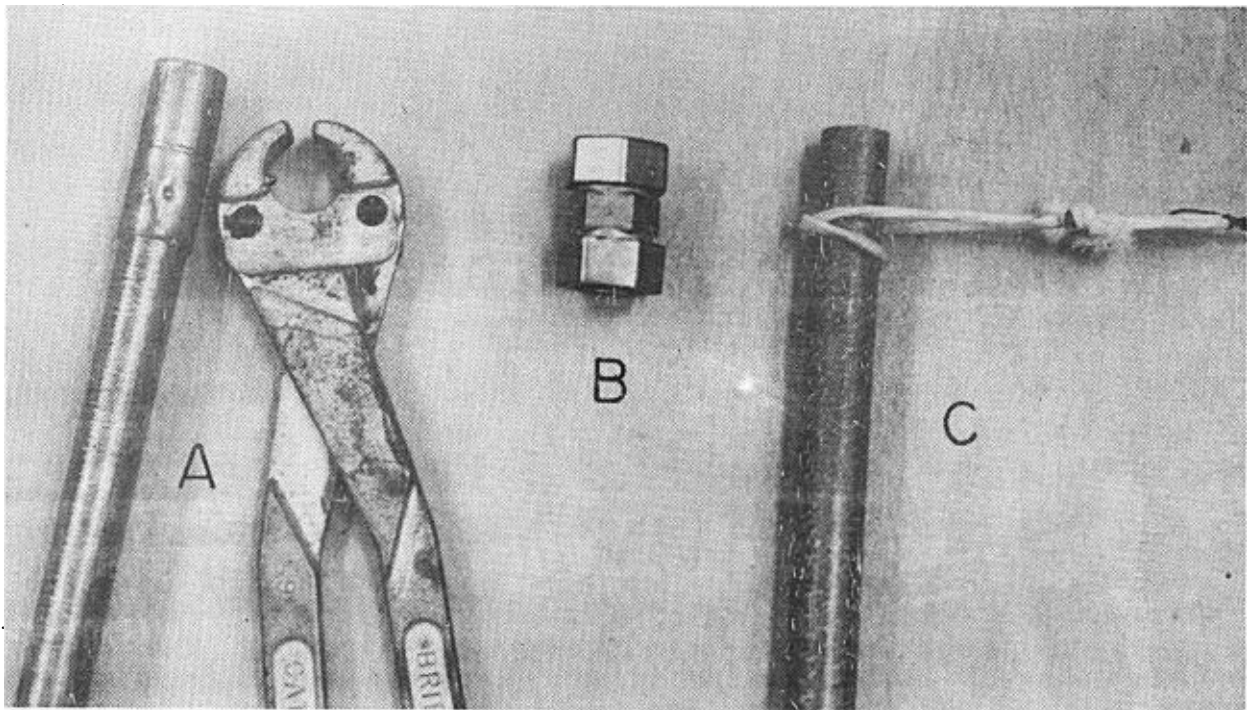


Figure 1. (a) Connecting sleeve crimped onto electrical conduit; crimping tool is to the right. (b) "Bolt" type conduit connector which occasionally "catches" wind-blown mist nets. (c) Doubling the loops of mist nets over the poles eliminates problems of slipping nets.