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A Case for Storage and Transportation of Mist Net Poles

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Large numbers of mist net poles can be difficult to carry and store, especially in a vehicle and during long walks in the field. The case described below reduces these difficulties. It is inexpensive, easily constructed from commercially available materials and can be modified easily to suit one's individual needs.

The main item needed is a section of PVC (plastic) non-perforated sewer pipe. It is 4 inches in diameter and sold in 10' or 12' lengths for about $5.00 in most retail hardware stores. It can be cut easily, to any desired length, with a saw. Caps for each end of the pipe section are made from the bottoms of 2-liter plastic bottles in which soft drinks are sold. The bases fit tightly over the ends of the sewer pipe (Fig. 1).

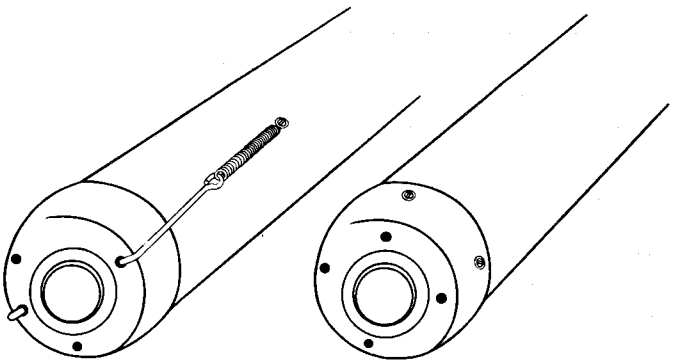

Figure 1. The two ends of the case with removeable caps (left) and non-removable caps (right).

One base should be permanently attached to one end of the pipe. This can be done with 1 or 2 long bolts inserted through holes drilled in opposite sides of the pipe and base and secured by nuts and lock washers. The second base acts as a removable cap at the other end. However, it must be held securely enough that it cannot be knocked off by the net poles sliding inside the pipe. This is done with 2 metal coil springs with U-shaped ends. These are available in several sizes in most hardware stores. One end of each spring is attached to a short bolt secured through the wall of the pipe. The free ends of both springs can then be hooked into small holes in the rim of the base. The bolts holding the springs should be placed far enough from the end of the pipe that the stretched springs hold the base with considerable pressure, but not so tight to cause cracking of the base. Loss of the base when it is off the pipe is prevented by a short piece of cord. This is knotted at one end, and the other end is passed through one of the small holes in the edge of the base and tied to one of the springs.

The case will hold about 20 sections of ½" diameter net poles or a slightly smaller number of poles of larger diameter. Additionally, the pipe can be cut long enough to hold one or more mist nets inserted after the poles. The nets cushion and damp the motion of the poles, and I suggest stuffing a rag or piece of rubber into the end with the permanently-attached base to do the same. The case should not be so long that one cannot reach the end of the net poles when they are fully inserted.

The case can be carried as is, or one or more handles can be attached along its length with large hose clamps, or in any other convenient manner which takes into account the weight of the poles and the limited strength of the plastic pipe. Fully loaded, the case weighs about 40 pounds, and care should be taken not to allow it to bend to the point where the plastic creases. The case can easily be attached to automobile luggage racks, and in this situation could be modified to accommodate longer sections of pole, including one used with a mirror to inspect the contents of nests (Parker, *Bird-Banding* 43:216-218, 1972.

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