
A device for capturing tree cavity roosting birds

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In order to capture woodpeckers roosting in tree cavities, I devised a net (Fig. 1) which (1) can be raised to the cavity on a pole and (2) is spring-loaded so that when placed over a cavity it "hugs" the tree and does not need to be held in place. This net is of particular value when trying to capture birds in trees which are not safe to climb. Materials needed to construct the net include:

- 2 pieces of aluminum tubing, 1 cm outside diameter by 1.8 m long;
- 1 spring from a large rat trap (or a spring of similar strength);
- 1 ten cm length of aluminum tubing having an inside diameter of 2 cm;
- a short piece of wire;
- a mist net;
- string and/or masking tape;
- 1 or more sections of TV antenna pole.

To construct the net:

- (1) Bend each of the long aluminum tubes into a large questionmark.
- (2) The top end of each questionmark should then be flattened as shown in Figure 1,C and a hole punched through with a hammer and nail or a drill. The top ends of the questionmarks are then overlapped and joined together with a piece of wire passed through the holes. The wire should be fastened loosely enough to allow free movement of the tubing; this hinge is important to the proper functioning of the net.
- (3) Slip the 2 cm diameter tubing over the bottom end of the questionmark and up to the bend in the tubing. This sleeve functions as the lower hinge on the net.
- (4) Drill a small hole through each tube (Fig. 1, A) just below the sleeve formed by the 2 cm tubing such that the ends of the spring can be inserted and will be at maximum tension when the large curves of the questionmark (Fig. 1, D) are pulled apart. The spring may have to be secured to the tubing with wire wound around it. When properly fastened, the spring functions like the spring of a screen door.

(5) Bend each questionmark around a tree so that the resulting frame will hug the tree trunk on the sides but is very slightly out from the trunk directly in front of the cavity entrance.

(6) Fasten a large section of mist net material to the frame with string or masking tape. The net should fit loosely, forming pockets into which a bird leaving the roost can be caught.

(7) Bend one arm of the stem of the frame outward so that when the frame is on the tree the arm is not against the trunk.

To operate the net, prop the frame open with a 1 cm diameter (70 cm long) dowel at points D. The stick is held in place only by the tension of the spring. Insert one arm of the frame (Fig. 1, B) into the end of a section of the TV antenna pole. Raise the net on the pole to the level of the cavity and "slap" it against the tree at the cavity. The dowel falls free and the frame hugs the tree around the cavity. If the bird does not leave the cavity when the frame is slapped in place, the antenna pole can be pulled free to use in putting up other nets at nearby cavities. When the net is to be taken down, slip the end of the antenna pole over the arm of the net that is bent out away from the trunk and simply pull the frame away from the cavity. Reluctant birds can sometimes be hurried from a cavity by pounding on the base of the tree. The bird usually becomes entangled in the net and there is little danger of it escaping while the net is being lowered. The same care must be taken in removing a bird from this net as would be taken in removing a bird from any mist nets.

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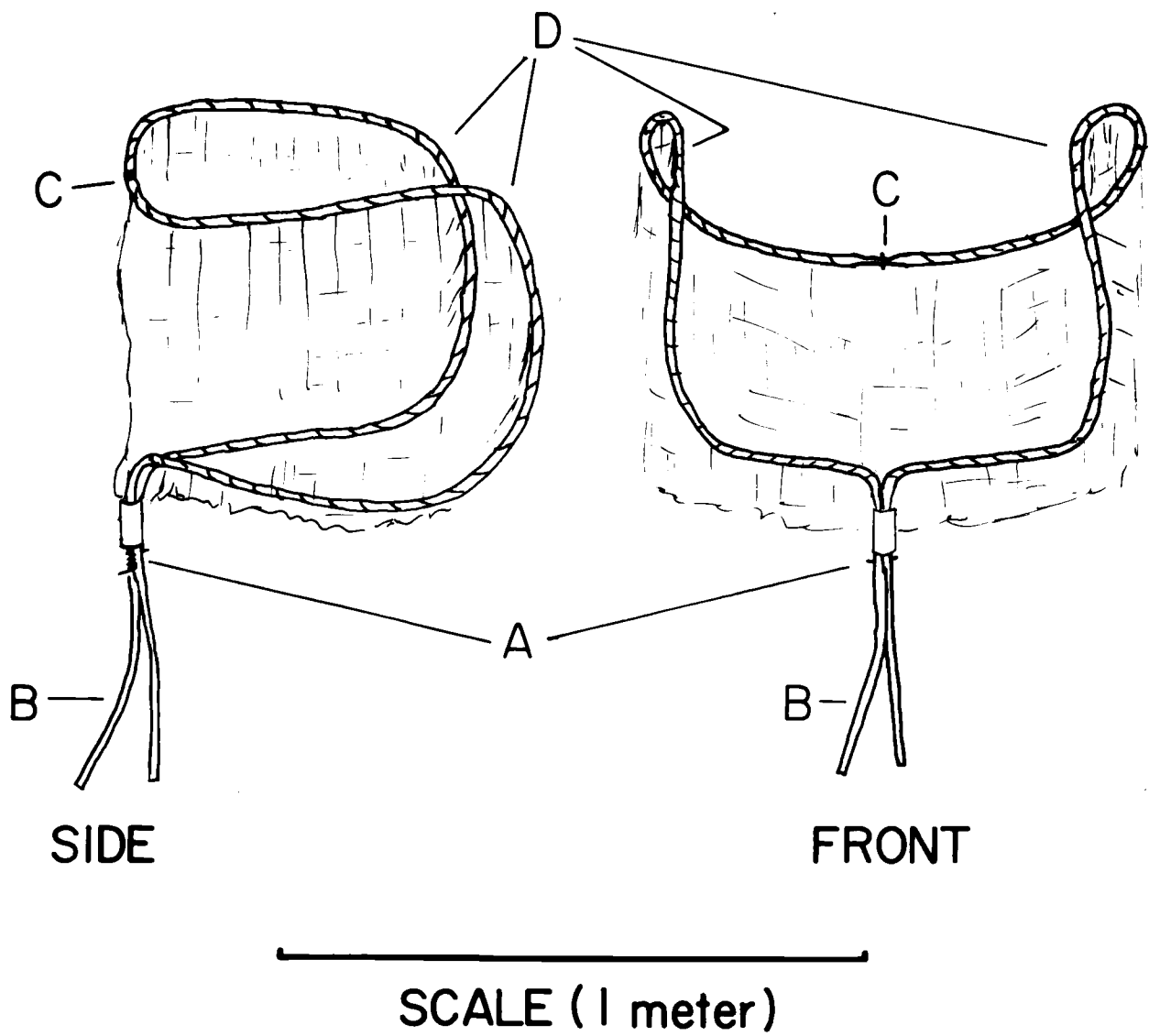


Figure 1. Net for capturing cavity roosting birds.