

A Tool for Raising and Lowering Mist Nets

Ever since I started banding, over 20 years ago, I have been searching for the perfect tool for getting mist nets to the tops of poles and down again without breaking the trammels, wearing out the loops, or feeling as if I am auditioning for *White Men Can't Jump*. I have tried forked sticks, yardsticks with coat hangers taped to them, dowels with nails in them, and other devices too silly and awkward to mention. Last year I finally found a tool I expect to use for the rest of my banding career: a telescoping boat hook (see figure). There are many brands and models out there, but the one I have chosen is the Dock Rite Model #72396 (DTS Manufacturing, Portland, OR 97266). It has two sections that collapse to 30 inches and extend to 53 in. It has a plastic hook end shaped almost as if it were created for this purpose (although of

course it was not). The shiny, aluminum pole makes it hard to lose in vegetation and, since it is designed for use in marine environments, it is rust proof. It is even sturdy enough to double as a light-duty branch-whacker. The plastic handle has grooves to improve grip. It weighs only 11.3 oz. My local vendor sells it for under \$10; many banders probably could afford to have one stationed at every net.

I have found this hook for sale at Western Boat & Tackle, 101 3rd St., San Rafael, CA 94901 (415-454-4177). They told me they can arrange a discounted price for bulk orders. I have no vested interest in the manufacturer or any vendor but felt compelled to share my find with other banders.

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