Notes

A Field-Tested Design for Camera Lens Cases

The problem of adequately protecting optical lenses is one that plagues all field enthusiasts. Optical lenses are inherently fragile; they are sensitive to knocks and vibrations, and are easily damaged by water, humidity, sand and dust. There are many designs of lens cases on the market, and many profess to be field resistant. However, they are usually expensive and the degree of protection is often less than acceptable. The advantages of the design described here are its low cost, easy availability of materials, ease of construction, and the fact that the resultant case is completely water and weather-proof and almost indestructible.

The example described and illustrated (Fig. 1) was made for a 100 mm focal length camera lens. The materials comprising the outside shell were purchased from retail dealers of plumbing supplies. These consisted of a short length of ABS plastic water pipe with a 7.6 cm (3″) outside diameter, a plastic end cap of matching diameter, a plastic threaded collar with a screw-on cap, and a small quantity of ABS plastic cement. The end cap and threaded collar were cemented on to the section of pipe, and the end cap and cover were padded with styrofoam or high-density plastic foam. A thin foam sheet can be used to line the sides. These packing materials are usually available at inexpensive prices. A small packet of silica gel was placed in the bottom of the case to keep the air inside the container dry.

The 7.6 cm diameter pipe is adequate for any lens with an outside diameter of up to 65 mm. For wider-diameter lenses or for spotting scopes, a plastic pipe with an outside diameter of 10 cm (4″) can be used, along with ends and caps of corresponding diameter. In the example only a short length of pipe was used, enough to join the collar and end cap. For longer

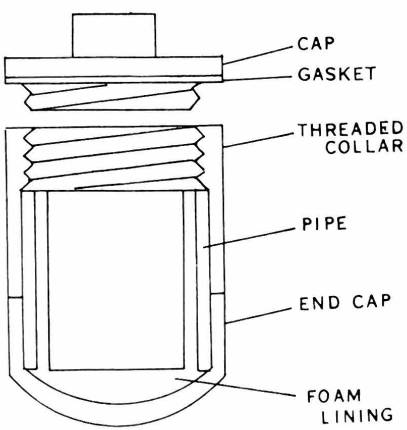

Figure 1: Components of the lens case.

telephoto or zoom lenses, a longer section of pipe is necessary. This type of plastic pipe is easily cut with an ordinary hand saw. This design has been extensively field tested by the author under a wide range of climatic conditions including tropical rain forests and arid deserts, as well as temperate climates. Under tropical conditions no fungal growth was observed, as the seals were adequate against water and high humidity, and dry conditions were effectively maintained inside the cases. The same seal against water is also effective against sand and dust. The hard exterior with a foam lining provides a good protection against shocks, so the cases can be carried in any bag or pack.

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Man-Made Materials in Nests of Gray Catbird

Breeding densities of 46/km² have been reported for the Gray Catbird (*Dumetella carolinensis*) from urban settings in southern Ontario (Dance 1982). In these locations birds often have access to a variety of man-made materials for use in nest construction.

In his brief account of this species, Harrison (1975) found it worth noting the variety of man-made materials which he observed in one Pennsylvania catbird nest. Bancroft (1981) describes the occurrence of plastic, Kleenex and paper in catbird nests found in Manitoba. In this note I report the presence of plastic, cellophane, tin foil and tissue paper in catbird nests found in urban park settings in southern Ontario (Table 1).

Seven Gray Catbird nests containing man-made materials were examined. Nests were constructed during the 1982 or 1983 breeding seasons. Four nests were from Lakeside Park, Kitchener, Waterloo R.M., two were from the Mabel Davis Conservation Area, Newmarket, York R.M. and one was collected at the King Campus of Seneca College, northeast of King City, York R.M. Descriptions of habitat and bird populations at the first two locations are contained in Dance (1982) and Dance (1984), respectively.

All nests were lined with rootlets, a characteristic which separates catbird nests from those of the Northern Cardinal (*Cardinalis cardinalis*), with which they can be confused (Harrison 1975). The number of pieces of man-made materials in the six nests which were dissected ranged from three to 12. Man-

made materials were concentrated in the bases of four of the nests. Four nests contained no leaves, while two had leaves as a minor component. According to Harrison (1975), leaves are an important part of the Gray Catbird nest. It may be that plastic and other man-made materials replace leaves in the nests described here.

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Literature Cited

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Dance, K.W. 1982. Urban park with pond. Amer.Birds 36:77.

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Harrison, H.H. 1975. A Field Guide to Birds' Nests in the United States East of the Mississippi River. Houghton Mifflin, Boston.

Table 1: Nest Materials in Six Gray Catbird Nests

Nest No.	Natural Materials	Man-Made Materials (number of pieces in brackets)	Location Collected
1	twigs, bark, a few leaves, rootlets	cellophane (4), unidentified plasticized paper (1)	Seneca College, King Campus
2	twigs, grapevine bark, rootlets	thin plastic and cellophane (9)	Lakeside Park, Kitchener
3	grass, grapevine bark, rootlets.	thin plastic and cellophane (3)	Lakeside Park, Kitchener
4	grass, twigs, rootlets	plastic and cellophane (4)	Lakeside Park, Kitchener
5	leaves, grass, rootlets	cellophane, plastic, tissue paper (7)	Mabel Davis Conservation Area, Newmarket
6	twigs, grapevine bark, rootlets	plastic (1), tinfoil (1)	Mabel Davis Conservation Area, Newmarket

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