



FIGURE 2. The most useful mirror bracket before (left) and after (right) modification. See text for manufacturer.

Financial support of research for which this apparatus was helpful was provided by the Chapman Fund of the American Museum of Natural History, the Kansas Academy of Science, and the Watkins Fund of the Museum of Natural History, the University of Kansas.—James W. Parker, Museum of Natural History, University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas 66044. Received 11 January 1972, accepted 9 May 1972.

An inexpensive cylindrical blind for observing and photographing birds.—For several years I have been using a cylindrical blind to observe and photograph birds. This design has several advantages over the commonly used square blinds supported at the corners by poles sunk into the ground (see Pettingill, *Ornithology in Laboratory and Field*, Minneapolis, Minn., Burgess Publ. Co., 1970), including total cost.

The frame consists of one 15-foot long piece of 5-foot high welded wire fencing. This fencing has a mesh of 2 x 4 inches, costs about \$.35 per foot, and can be obtained at many retail lumber companies or hardware stores. In setting up the frame, I overlap the ends about two feet and wire them together. For future reference, I mark the amount of overlap desired by wrapping several pieces of the colored wire, used to seal plastic garbage bags, onto the frame. The blind will resist wind best if two or three mist net poles are forced into the ground and wired to the inside of the frame. Wires should not protrude, thus possibly catching on the blind cover as it is pulled down over the frame. Observation ports of any size can be cut at convenient places around the blind with a wire-cutting pliers. An entryway at the back measures 28 x 14 inches. After filing smooth the severed wire stubs, entry and emergence are not difficult. The entrance hole begins 16 inches from the top and bottom of the fencing. The smaller the opening, the stronger the frame.

The cover can be made of any convenient material, although a waterproof material may be desirable. One of the least expensive blind covers can be made by sewing two wool sacks together. Wool sacks are rectangular and measure 7 x 3 feet. These sacks are designed to be opened along either side. Hence, one can open one side of each wool sack and sew them together to make a final blind cover measuring 7 feet tall by 6 feet wide. The frame described above is designed to accommodate a blind cover with these dimensions. Wool sacks are made of material similar to burlap sacks but are denser in their construction. Each sack costs about \$1.50 and can be obtained through companies that process or market wool. One such company is Midwest Wool Marketing Cooperative, 405 E. 14th Avenue in North Kansas City, Missouri. Being rectangular, the blind cover will fold flat for storage. However, when it is placed over the blind two puckers will be produced on opposite sides. This excess material can be either tied down by sewing a strap onto each pucker and on the sides of the blind cover, or the puckers can be held down with large safety pins fastened onto the frame. Straps used to tie the sides of the entryway together should be placed on the inside and recessed several inches to permit overlapping the sides upon closure.

The inside is roomy enough for two people (diameter = 4 feet; surface area = 13.5 square feet) and readily lends itself to modification for particular needs. The frame can easily be formed into an oblong shape if needed. The frame can also serve as a place for hanging supplies, or one can suspend shelves from the frame. The structure is not heavy and can be easily moved while remaining inside. The wind tends to flow smoothly around the round blind without forming a pocket to catch the wind (a common annoyance with square blinds) and create a continual flapping that might affect the behavior of nearby birds. Because the blind is round, one can pull the sides of the entrance snug against the frame and tie the sides together tightly enough so that no part of the blind will flap even in high winds. Winds of 35 mph have not penetrated blinds made of wool sacks, and this material will hold three inches of melted snow on top without leaking. I do not use a roof support other than the fencing, but additional support may be needed when rain is expected. I have used my blinds mainly in the winter with a heater. The use of this frame permitted me to place the heater adjacent to the blind cover without fear of a fire.

The major disadvantage of this blind is in transportation of the fencing which is rather bulky, even when rolled as tightly as possible. However, the advantages, including cost (less than \$10.00), make use of this blind a joy compared to others I have tried.—Jerome D. Robins, Museum of Natural History, The University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas 66044. Received 26 April 1972, accepted 18 June 1972.

An adult Mockingbird with a pale white iris.—On 12 October 1969 at my station in Pennington, N. J. I banded (702-89327) a Mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*) that had a pale iris and processed it as: HY-U, fat class 0 (0-3, scale) 52.1g. When recaptured on 16 April 1972, this Mockingbird's iris was a pale, muddy white with no indication of the bright yellow color which is characteristic of an adult Mockingbird.

Charles H. Blake (*EBBA News*, 25: 171, 1962) describes the sequence of Mockingbird eye color change: "after independence: gray, brown, dull yellow. The last color is achieved about the time post-juvenile molt begins and some individuals retain it for at least a year. Some adults of unknown age have the iris more orange." Merrill Wood (*A Bird-Banders Guide to Determination of Age and Sex of Selected Species*, Univ. Park, Pa., 1969, 75) suggests that one should age Mockingbirds by skulling in the summer and into September, and gives a key to aging based on eye color as: "Iris gray: from hatching—Dec. HY, Jan-Apr. SY; Iris yellow (occasionally orange): Jan-Sept. AHY, Oct-Dec. age U." Robert H. Horwich (*Bird-Banding*, 37:263, 1966) describes the sequence of eye color change in young Mockingbirds of known age as: "After about five months of age the eyes change from a dark gray to a light grayish-green. At about ten months of age there is a gradual color change to pale yellow. By 16 months it appears light orange or dull yellow. By 18 months it still had not reached the bright yellow-orange or yellow . . . which I have seen in adults."