

Homemade bird spikes

By John Everson

I tried a few different things last year to keep the cormorants off my boat, but they all eventually failed. I looked at a few boats in the harbor that had bird nails or bird spikes and they were the only things that seemed to work. So this year I decided that I would make a set for myself using 2 inch stainless siding nails.

****DISCLAIMER**** This is not a how to guide. This is how I made some bird spikes. I can't be held responsible if you get hurt, you ruin your boat, your wife laughs at you, etc.

The process is pretty straight forward. I took a piece of ½ inch half round molding I had laying around and cut it into two 31 inch sections and sanded them smooth.



Next, I laid out marks every inch along, and marked the center line along each piece. I then drilled holes at each mark alternating between vertical and about 40 degrees from vertical. I think a drill press would come in real handy here, but I don't own one so I used a protractor and drilled by hand.



After completing the drilling, I turned each piece over and counter sunk each hole on the back. The next step is to carefully tap the nails through the holes all the way until the heads are countersunk. Apply ½ inch double sided foam tape to the back of each thus insulating the nail heads from the spreader.



I also applied a few coats of varnish to help protect against the weather. At this point the project is basically done. The last step is to pull the tape, and apply to the top of the spreaders with the angled nails facing astern. I used a few zip ties as well. The nails were angled to the stern for two reasons; 1) Birds usually land flying into the breeze, therefore they come in from the stern. My boat is on a mooring so it points whatever direction the winds is from. 2) An old timer told me that setting every other nail at an angle will help prevent the wind from whistling.



With the mast up, they shouldn't be too noticeable and the thin profile will keep the sails from catching on them. I made a small piece for the masthead while I was at it. The cost of making these was about six bucks for the nails and I had everything else on hand. The total time to build them was one hour, not including letting the varnish dry.

I'll let you know how well they work out over the next few months.