

ELK IVORY REMOVAL MADE SIMPLE

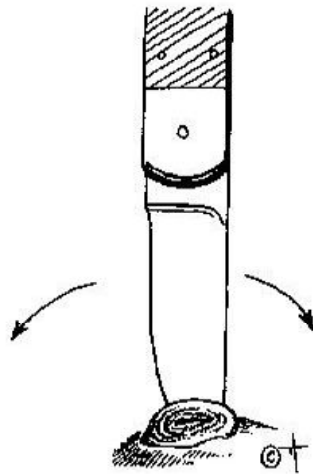
by Tom and Mary High

YOUR CLIENT HAD A SUCCESSFUL hunt and now his trophy is in your hands to preserve for him and all to see with pride. You also have the important duty to skillfully extract your client's elk ivories without damage. Many taxidermists find the hunter has already removed the ivories, but if not, do you find it a problem to re-

move them without chipping and breaking the roots? In the past thirty years of crafting elk ivory jewelry we have found that many people, including taxidermists, have this problem.

In the case of elk ivories, we do not recommend pliers. One simple way we have found to remove the teeth without damage is with a sharp, thin-blad-

REFLECTIONS, REVUES & Revelations



ed knife. Turn the head upside down so the teeth are upright and easily accessible. Insert your knife blade along the side of the widest part of the tooth and rock the blade back and forth. Repeat the process on all four sides of the tooth, gradually loosening it. Do not force the tooth. Continue to rock the blade from side to side until the ivory can be pulled out easily with your fingers.

After removal, air dry the ivories. *NEVER SOAK THEM IN BLEACH!* To clean them, gently boil them in a small pan of water with some Sal-Soda. After fifteen minutes you should be able to use a knife and scrape off all tissue. Brush them gently with an old toothbrush, towel dry and lay them out to thoroughly air dry. Never put them in plastic bags while still wet and do not freeze them, as it may cause cracking. Younger bulls (spikes) have hollow, brittle teeth and extra care must be used in extracting them as they can be easily crushed.

Centuries ago the American Indians treasured

jewelry. Rocky Mountain Scrimshaw provide an important service for you and your clients. We handcraft .999 fine silver and 14K gold to each ivory to produce beautiful scrimshaw jewelry. As a scrimshaw artist, I hand engrave, cut and hone into the ivory wildlife and flora, producing wearable works of art.

We hope when next elk season comes around you will find my tips on elk ivory removal made simple to be of benefit.

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ELK TOOTH SCRIMSHAW

With YOUR Elk Teeth
In Gold & Sterling Silver

BEAR CLAW CAPPING

