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All about ivory



Tips from the Posse

By Mark Rackay

Growing up, the outdoors has often saved me from a loathsome childhood affliction: school. Getting out to hunt, fish, hike and camp were all I ever wanted to do, and as I look back over half a century, not much has changed.

There are people who made the outdoors their life mission, never letting life get in the way with such adult afflictions as work. One of those people was a long-time family friend by the name of Jerry Tricomi.

Jerry spent his entire life enjoying the outdoors. Besides opening a fishing camp in Northwest Ontario in 1955, he also had a fish camp for tarpon in Parímina, Costa Rica. He was one of the members of the once famous Safari Outfitters, based out of Chicago. When Jerry was not a one of his camps, he was fishing or hunting somewhere in the world.

As a young lad, I once visited his home. He took me to his den and at the



Most people associate ivory with the tusks of an elephant but many other animals have ivory in their jaws. (Charles J. Sharp/Wikimediacommons)

entrance were two elephant tusks around the door. These two tusks were probably six feet tall, and they weighed 94 and 91 pounds respectively. That is very impressive ivory and unheard of today because of the poachers.

Ivory has no intrinsic value, but its cultural uses make ivory highly prized. In Africa, it has been a status symbol for millennia because it comes from the highly respected elephant. Today, poachers kill elephants for their valuable tusks, with a single pound of ivory on the black market bringing as much as \$1,500 per pound.

The United States, and some other countries have banned ivory importation

into the country in an attempt to curb the poaching, but it probably is not enough. Many countries, like China, do not support the ban and buy the illegal tusks. As long as there is a market, there will be poachers.

Ivory is the hard, whitish material from tusks and teeth of elephants, hippos, walruses, warthogs, sperm whales, narwhals, elk and red stag. There are others, many of them are now extinct. The word ivory is used to identify any mammalian tooth or tusk that is of commercial interest.

Ivory is mostly made up of dentin, a hard, dense, and boney tissue. The entire tusk is wrapped in enamel,

the hardest animal tissue and the part of the tusk that manages the wear and tear.

The visible, ivory part of the tusk is made up of extremely dense dentin, and dentin is also found in human teeth. It is probably a good thing that our dentin does not get as dense as ivories or poachers would probably be hunting us.

In North America, only elk and walrus have ivory teeth. Elk have two canine teeth that are called their ivories. Elk ivories are made of the same dentin material and have the same chemical composition as the elephant tusks.

These ivories are found in bulls and cows, hidden in their upper jaw. Just like oth-

er elk teeth, they get slowly worn down and stained over time as the elk grows older.

Elk ivories are sometimes called buglers or whistlers. This is probably because of the unique bugle sound made by a bull elk. The bugle is the defining characteristic of the bull elk. It starts as a low-pitched growl that rises to a high-pitched scream. The bugle has nothing really to do with the teeth, but more from the windpipe and throat.

Native American legends associate the elk with many noble things, such as love in some tribes, protectors of women in others. In several of the Pacific Northwest tribes, elk lead women who had been captured by enemy warriors back to their homes.

In the Plains Indian tribes, elk were associated with masculinity, endurance and bravery. The elk's ivories were highly prized as objects of adornment and as a symbol of a man's hunting prowess. In some Plains tribes, men saved the elk ivories from their first elk kill to make engagement jewelry for their future brides, while in other tribes, women sewed the ivories on their dresses to show off their wealth. The elk ivory symbolized everlasting devotion and permanence, as elk ivory does not decay or deteriorate with time.

Today, not much has changed with elk ivory and its uses. Most ivories are

made into jewelry, such as rings, pendants and earrings. They still symbolize hunting success and honor the great animal.

A matched pair of cow ivories typically cost between \$30.00 and \$40.00, depending on the size, wear and coloring. Bull ivories can run \$40.00 to \$60 for a pair as they are usually somewhat larger and colored more. A very large set of ivories, with unique coloring, could reach as high as \$200. Fortunately, elk ivory is small, and elk can be very difficult and expensive to hunt, so poachers rarely kill them for ivory.

Jerry Tricomi spent his life in the outdoors, and he did it well. Jerry crossed the last horizon when he boarded the last train west in 2008. I have always admired a person who spends their life like he did and wish I could have done the same, but life got in the way. Maybe in the next life.

Mark Rackay is a columnist for the Montrose Daily Press, Delta County Independent, and several other newspapers, as well as a feature writer for several saltwater fishing magazines. He is an avid hunter and world class saltwater angler, who travels around the world in search of adventure and serves as a director and public information officer for the Montrose County Sheriff's Posse. For information about the posse, call 970-252-4033 (leave a message) or email info@mcspi.org.

Seek the outside!

By VALERIA HERRERA FOYAN

In today's fast-paced, technology-driven world, children are often immersed in screens and disconnected from the natural world.

However, the allure of outdoor games remains as strong as ever! Suggesting a simple game of tag or hide and seek with your child is sure to pump up their excitement and get them off the couch.

Outdoor play contributes a wealth of benefits to your child's holistic development including physical health, social skills, and various cognitive skills like reasoning, remembering, imagining, and using language. The power of outdoor games cannot be overstated. Let's explore how outdoor games benefit our children.

Engaging in outdoor games means movement and physical activity! Running, jumping, climbing, and throwing are the primary building of children's physical fitness. Outdoor games promote these gross motor skills, along with eye-hand-foot coordination, balance, and strength.

The unpredictability of outdoor play requires quick thinking, concentration and decision-making. Children learn to adapt to changing circumstances, analyze risks, and develop strategies on the fly.

Outdoor games provide a dynamic and stimulating en-

vironment for children. Not only do they receive a good dose of fresh air, and sunlight, opportunities abound for them to exercise their five senses through observing the sounds, smells, textures and colors found in nature.

Outdoor games fuel their curiosities about their surroundings and may encourage them to explore more and foster a love for nature.

One of the greatest benefits of outdoor games lies in their ability to foster social interaction and communication skills. When children play outdoors, they engage with peers, siblings, or neighbors, leading to improved social competence.

Outdoor games encourage teamwork, cooperation, negotiation, and conflict resolution as children work together towards common goals. They learn to share, take turns, and respect each other's boundaries.

These interactions lay the foundation for building positive relationships and developing essential life skills that extend beyond the realm of play.

Outdoor play has a profound impact on children's emotional well-being. Physical activity releases endorphins, the "feel-good" hormones, which reduce stress, anxiety, and depression.

The freedom to run, jump, and explore in the natural environment provides an outlet for pent-up energy and fosters a sense of joy and

happiness.

Outdoor games also encourage children to take calculated risks and face challenges, promoting resilience and building self-confidence. The connection with nature during outdoor play promotes a sense of calmness, mindfulness, and overall emotional balance.

The vast outdoor environment serves as a canvas for children's imagination and creativity to flourish. In this unstructured space, they can transform a simple patch of grass into a magical kingdom or turn fallen leaves into treasure.

Outdoor games encourage imaginative play, storytelling, and the creation of imaginary worlds. Children develop problem-solving skills, critical thinking, and the ability to think outside the box. Unleashing their creativity in outdoor games nurtures their ability to envision, innovate, and appreciate the beauty of the natural world.

Outdoor games are the first step in promoting a lifelong enjoyment of an active lifestyle. In an era dominated by screens and structured activities, recognize the value of free-form outdoor play is essential.

By encouraging children to embrace the joy of outdoor games, we not only support their overall well-being but also cultivate a generation that appreciates nature, values physical activity, and possesses the

necessary skills to thrive in a rapidly changing world.

Some examples of outdoor games that are beneficial to children's health include:

- Tag, the classic outdoor game promotes cardiovascular fitness and agility. Children engage in running, chasing, and evading, which helps improve endurance and motor skills. It also enhances reflexes, coordination, and spatial awareness. Evening flashlight tag is also a fun escape from the heat of the day.
- Hide-and-seek encourages children to be physically active while developing problem-solving skills. Running, hiding, and seeking help children build strength, balance, and coordination. It also enhances cognitive abilities as they strategize and make decisions during the game. Try playing it at night for added excitement.
- Capture the Flag is an exciting team-based game that promotes teamwork, communication, and strategic thinking. Players must work together to capture the opposing team's flag while defending their own. The game involves running, dodging, and coordination, improving cardiovascular fitness and physical agility.
- Red Light, Green Light is a game that helps children develop listening skills, self-control, and physical coordination. Players move forward on the "green light" command but must freeze when the leader says "red

light." This game encourages bursts of physical activity followed by periods of stillness, promoting a balance between energy expenditure and self-regulation.

- Simon Says is a game that combines listening skills, physical activity, and following instructions. The leader gives commands prefaced with "Simon says," and players must follow them. This game enhances children's listening abilities, motor skills, and body awareness.

- Hopscotch is a game that improves balance, coordination, and motor skills. Children jump, hop, and skip through a series of numbered squares, enhancing lower body strength and stability. It also promotes spatial awareness and counting skills.

- Jump rope is a classic outdoor activity that boosts cardiovascular fitness, endurance, and coordination. Children can engage in various jump rope games, such as single jump, double Dutch, or skip counting, which provide an enjoyable way to improve overall physical health.

- Tug of War is a team-based game that develops strength, teamwork, and coordination. Children divide into teams and compete by pulling a rope in opposite directions. This game enhances upper body strength, grip strength, and cooperative skills.

- Soccer or football is a popular team sport that

enhances cardiovascular fitness, coordination, and teamwork. It involves running, kicking, passing, and strategizing.

- Every child loves obstacle courses. Crawling under obstacles, climbing over structures, balancing on beams, and jumping through hoops improves coordination, strength, endurance, and promotes problem-solving skills.

- Several outdoor games help improve eye-hand coordination and can engage many people of all ages at summer family gatherings: ladder ball, cornhole, croquet, bocce ball, badminton, and Frisbee.

Embrace the wonders of outdoor play and unlock the immense potential of unbridled joy, active bodies, imaginative minds, and social skills in your children.

Let them run, laugh, explore, and make lasting memories in the great outdoors with their friends and families and watch your children bloom into confident, well-rounded individuals. They will feel ready to conquer the world!

Friends of Youth and Nature is a nonprofit that promotes opportunities for youth and families to get outside, experience outdoor activities, and explore nature. Follow our outdoor news blog and receive monthly tips on connecting your children to nature. Learn more, visit: www.friendsofyouthandnature.org.