



By Loren Woerpel, Noc Bay Trading Company

TURTLE RATTLE

There are many ways people have made turtle shell rattles, but the suggestions here work very well with the materials and tools readily available today. The shell we use is the common Red Ear turtle shell averaging 5" to 6" long. In addition to the following list of materials, you will need an electric drill, a 3/32" and a 1/4" drill bit and a scissors that cuts leather.

Materials: Turtle shell, Hardwood dowel 3/4" diameter and 11" long for the handle, 3 yards of fine simulated sinew, one #3 gloves needle, a scrap piece of buckskin or swede leather cut in an oval 10" long x 9" wide, 20 glass crow beads, and a tube of Grabbers glue or equivalent used for leather and plastics.

Prepare the leather by cutting a 1/2" wide strip from around the outside of the scrap leather piece as illustrated in Figure 2. Cut out the following strips; 2 pieces 10" long, 1 piece 32" long.

Prepare the shell by drilling with the 3/32" drill bit around the perimeter of the shell about 1/4" from the edge spaced about 3/16" apart. The best way to do this is to have someone hold the drill solidly on a bench rest or in a vice while you push the shell into the bit slowly. A drill press also will work well using the same technique of pressing the shell into the drill.

Carve a beveled end on the handle and insert it into the neck end of the shell pushing tightly to the rear end. Mark the handle at the edge of the shell and estimate the space around the handle between handle and shell. Use an end of the 32" strip of leather to form a gasket around the handle to hold it firmly in the shell. Do this by glueing and wrapping the 1/2" leather at the mark made on the handle until it is thick enough to make a tight fit between handle and shell. Let dry. Then put glue on the rear end and on the leather gasket and force into the shell. Let dry.

Place a bead of glue around the parameter of the shell under the rim. Figure 3 shows a top view of the shell laid on the remaining scrap leather piece. Pull the leather up, stretching it into place around the edge. Before finishing at the neck insert the glass beads into the shell and let dry. Cut and form a tight fit around the handle. Trim off the excess leather.

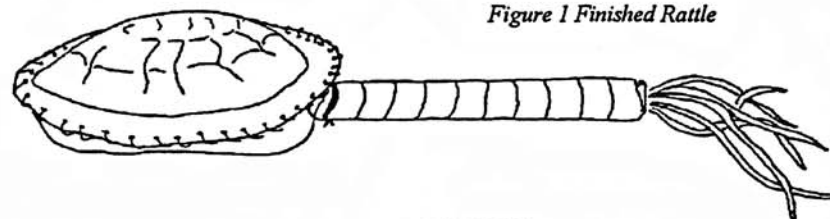


Figure 1 Finished Rattle

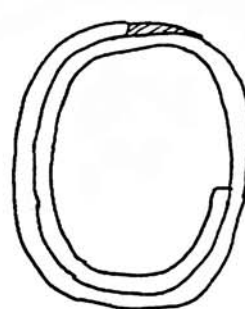


Figure 2
Leather Pattern

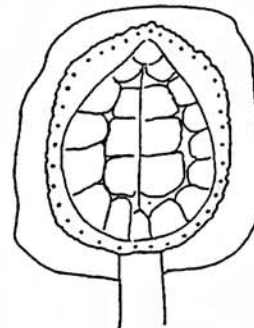


Figure 3
Top view



Figure 4



Figure 5 Handle wrapping

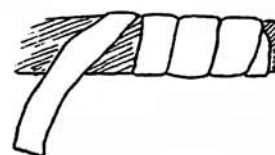


Figure 6

Thread the gloves needle with the simulated sinew. Start by sewing through the hole at the center top of the rattle (turtle's rear), and pull through up to half of the thread. Continue the stitching around the left side of the shell as in Figure down to the handle. Remove the needle and thread onto the other end of the thread and sew up the other side. Use the remaining thread to wrap up the opening around the handle and tie a solid knot.

Using the remaining part of the 32" strip of leather, lay on a newspaper and lightly spread glue on one side of the strip. Beginning at shell side of the handle, wrap it as in Figure 5 with the glue side to the wood. Tuck in the ends or wrap the ends with sinew and tie a good knot.

Drill a 1/4" hole in the end of the handle. Cut the two pieces of 10" strips of leather into fringe leaving them attached at one end as in Figure 6. Glue and wrap the uncut ends together and force in the handle hole. Let dry. Adding any other decorations to make it personal and your rattle is ready to use.

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