



Tracking - Historic Merit Badge

First offered in 1911—discontinued in 1952

A hundred years ago, being able to track animals was very important in order to put food on the table.

How many animals will you be able to follow?

Think of how many animals you will see.

These are the original requirements as written in 1911. Think about how times have changed as you complete the requirements a Scout your age would have done a hundred years ago.

In 1910 many boys probably had farm animals or lived close to farm animals so they frequently saw tracks. Also, many people hunted for food and trapped for extra income. Can you imagine running a trap-line before going to school?

NOTE:

This merit badge was originally entitled Stalking. Because of what the term stalking means in today's language, the original name has been changed to Tracking.

However, the ability to find a person is a very important skill still used by Search and Rescue teams all over the United States.

At the start of Scouting, Baden Powell wrote about the importance of the skill of tracking. He invented many games to help boys learn this skill. In general, these games consisted of a Scout leaving tracks, signs, and other objects that other boys would try to follow. Sometimes the person setting the trail went to such detail as to create shoes that make animal tracks. What kind of games can you invent to help others in your patrol learn the skill of tracking?

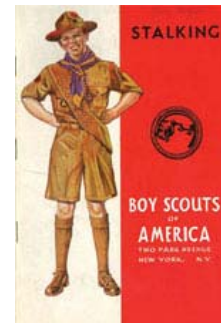
For this requirement it is really good to have an expert as a counselor. There is nothing better than having someone who knows how to identify tracks teach you how to do this.

You can find some great resources on the internet. Just Google: Animal Tracks

Requirements

To obtain a Merit Badge for [Tracking], a Scout must:

1. Demonstrate by means of a [tracking] game or otherwise, ability to [track] skillfully in shelter and wind, etc., showing how to proceed noiselessly and "freeze" when occasion demands.
2. Know and recognize the tracks of ten different kinds of animals or birds in his vicinity, three of which may be domestic.
3. Submit satisfactory evidence that he has trailed two different kinds of wild animals or birds on ordinary ground far enough to determine the direction in which they were going, and their gait or speed. Give the names of animals or birds trailed, their direction of travel, and describe gait and speed; or submit satisfactory evidence that he has trailed six different kinds of wild animal or birds in snow, sand, dust, or mud, far enough to determine the direction they were going and their gait or speed. Give names of animals or birds, their direction of travel, and describe gait and speed.
4. Submit satisfactory evidence that he has tracked a human being and deduced from the trail whether it was man or woman, young or old, the gait or speed, and also give any other information deduced.
5. Submit evidence that he has scored at least 30 points from the following groups:
Group (f) and 4 of the 5 groups (a), (b), (c), (d), (e) must be represented in the score of 30 and at least 7 points must be scored from (a), (b), or (c). Make clear recognizable photographs of
 - a. Live bird away from nest - 4 points each
 - b. Live woodchuck or smaller wild animal - 3 points each
 - c. Live wild animal larger than woodchuck - 4 points each
 - d. Live bird on nest - 3 points each
 - e. Tracks of live wild animal or bird - 2 points eachAND
 - f. Make satisfactory plaster cast of wild animal or bird tracks with identification imprint on back of cast - 2 points each



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