

2010 HISTORICAL MERIT BADGE PROGRAM



Tracking

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?



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.

NOTE:

This merit badge was originally entitled Stalking. It included an additional requirement to follow the trail of a person. Because of what the term stalking means in today’s language, that requirement has been omitted and 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?

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Tracking

Requirements (cont.)

2. Know and recognize the tracks of ten different kinds of animals or birds in his vicinity, three of which may be domestic.

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](#)

Guide To Animal Tracks

TRACKS NOT TO SCALE

Depending on the substrate (snow, mud, dust, sand, etc.) and the speed the animal was moving, tracks may show great variability in their appearance.

F – Front track
H – Hind track
T – Tail marks may be present

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION:
begins with conserving habitat!

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Tracking

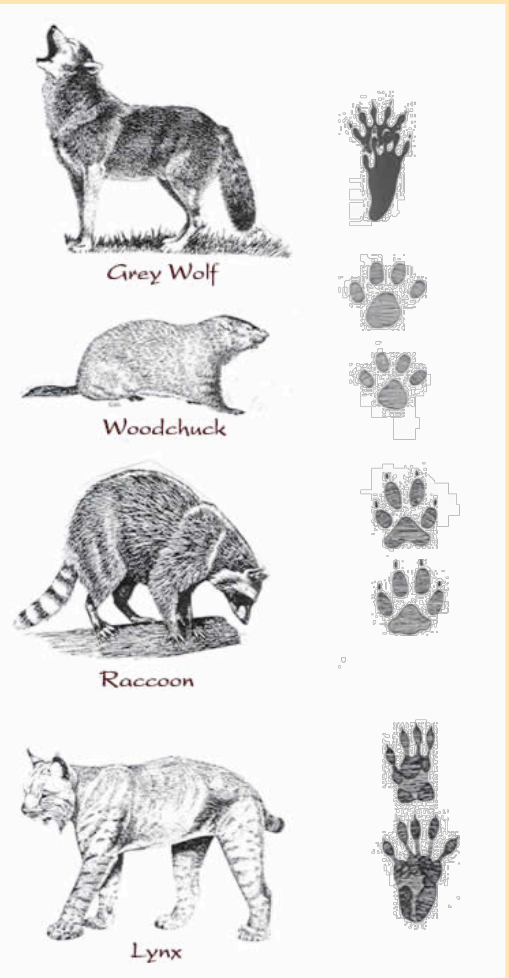
Requirements (cont.)

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.



Pay attention to the easiest places to find tracks. Mud, snow, wet sand, and soil hold prints the easiest and are the most helpful in survival situations. Carry with you a guide that pictures different animal prints until you become familiar enough with them to recognize them. You can find a guide at Beartracker's website.

Keep the animal track between you and the sun. This helps cast a shadow that allows you to see the print better. Check to see how fresh the tracks are. If vegetation that was stepped on is dead in the track, you know the animal didn't come through recently. You'll have better luck tracking an animal that is closer to you.



2010 HISTORICAL MERIT BADGE PROGRAM

Tracking

Requirements (cont.)

4. Submit satisfactory evidence that he has tracked a human being and deducted 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

(d) 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 each

AND

(f) Make satisfactory plaster cast of wild animal or bird tracks with identification imprint on back of cast

2 points each

At first glance, this requirement looks very confusing, but think of it this way: Each photo and cast is worth points. You need to make at least one plaster cast and photos in four out of five of the other categories. Two pictures need to be from the categories live bird away from nest, small wild animal, or large wild animal.

Think about how you would rewrite this requirement to make it easier to understand.

A hundred years ago photography was much different than it is today. Color photography didn't become popular until the 1960's. Instead of the instant digital photography of today, scouts not only needed to use film, they often had to learn how to develop it themselves.

Photos from the 1942 Merit Badge Book



A 1910 Kodak Camera



This remarkable photo of Mountain Caribou was taken at 7,000 feet, in British Columbia. John F. Stanwell-Fletcher writes: "The caribou saw me quite clearly but stopped every time I whistled. I pretended to be a marmot sitting on a rock."

THIS HISTORICAL MERIT BADGE WILL ONLY BE AVAILABLE DURING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR OF SCOUTING. THE TRACKING MERIT BADGE COUNTS TOWARD RANK ADVANCEMENT. REQUIREMENTS MUST BE COMPLETED BY DEC. 31, 2010.

