



Vol. 3, No. 3

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## Earn the BSA National Outdoor Awards

From short day hikes to challenging wilderness expeditions, Scouting opportunities for adventure are almost without limit. Master the skills of the outdoors, add plenty of time along trails, on open water, and in camp, and you've got the perfect recipe for becoming a seasoned backcountry traveler.



The National Outdoor Awards recognize Scouts who have demonstrated extensive knowledge and experience in camping, hiking, aquatics, riding, and adventure. Requirements for each badge are full of exciting possibilities. For example:

- The *camping badge* asks for a minimum of 25 nights under the stars.
- The *hiking badge* requires at least 100 miles on the trail.
- The swimming and lifesaving merit badges and Mile Swim, BSA are the gateway to the *aquatics badge*.
- Hundreds of miles on a horse or bicycle carry you toward the *riding badge*.
- The *adventure badge* combines backpacking with rock climbing and your choice of canoeing, rowing, or sailing.



Complete these and the rest of the requirements for each badge, then add the embroidered bar to the main patch. Silver and gold devices attached to the bars indicate even more time in the field.

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## National Medal for Outdoor Achievement

Ready for even more? Then set your sights on the National Medal for Outdoor Achievement, the highest recognition a Boy Scout or Varsity Scout can earn for exemplary achievement, experience, and skill in multiple areas of outdoor endeavor.

Begin by completing the National Outdoor Awards camping badge with a silver device, and two more National Outdoor Awards badges, each with a gold device. Other requirements include:

- Earn merit badges for Backpacking, Emergency Preparedness, Nature, and Wilderness Survival.



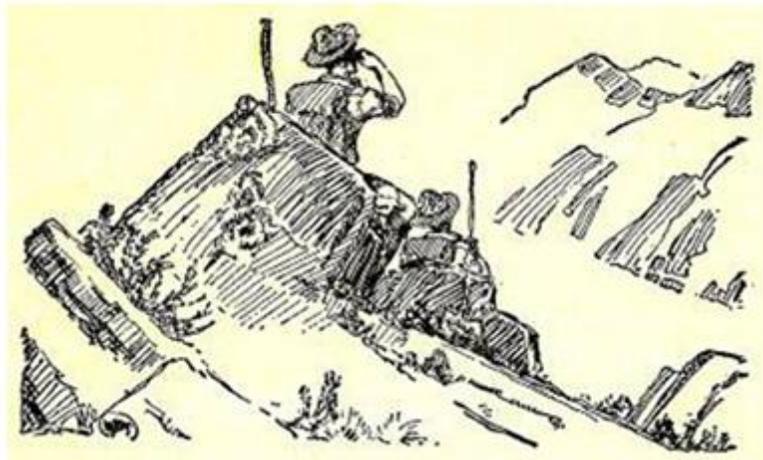
- Complete approved training in Wilderness First Aid (16-hour course).
- Become a certified Leave No Trace trainer (16-hour course).



- Plan and lead qualified adventures for Scout units.
- Complete at least one of the following: - Plan and lead, with the approval of your unit leader, an adventure activity identified in the National Outdoor Awards badge for adventure for your troop, team, patrol, or squad. - Successfully complete a season on a council summer camp staff in an outdoor area, such as aquatics, Scoutcraft, nature/environment, climbing, or COPE.



Do all of that and more, and you'll be closing in on the National Medal for Outdoor Achievement, sure to become one of Scouting's most respected awards. For full requirements, check with your local council or search [www.scouting.org](http://www.scouting.org).



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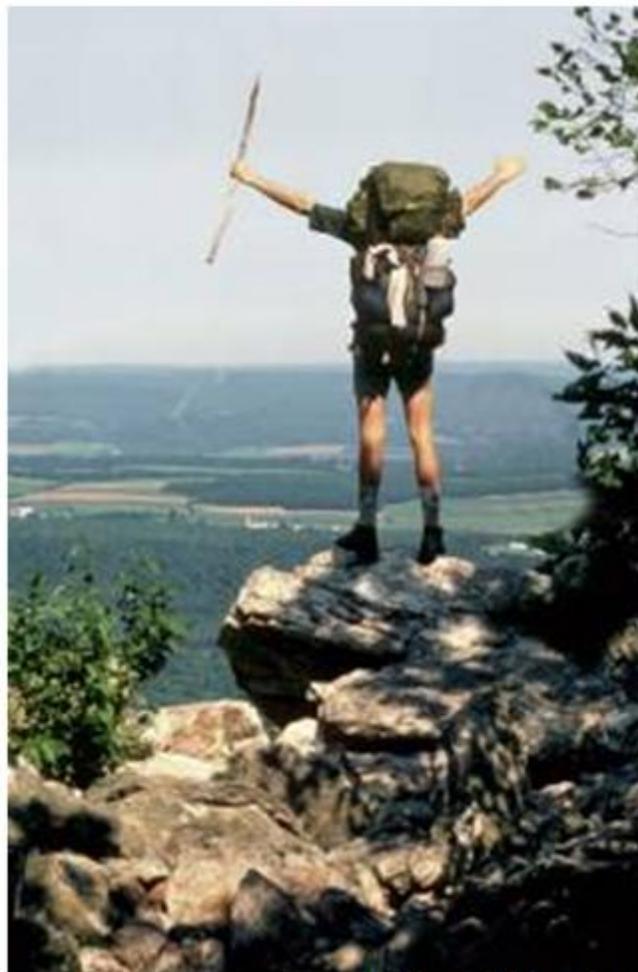
## ULTRA-LIGHT BACKPACKING

Early BSA literature did not encourage Scouts to set out on long backpacking trips. One reason was that the canvas tents, iron pans, axes, and other gear of the time were too heavy to pack very far.



1959 Boy Scout Handbook

Today's Scouts know that with modern lightweight equipment they can comfortably carry what they need during an overnight campout or an extended backcountry expedition. For rugged clothing and gear that will help ease your load, check out [www.scoutstuff.org](http://www.scoutstuff.org).



Robert Birkby photo

A key to going light is doing more with less. The *spork* is a great example - a combination fork and spoon that can be your only eating utensil. Add a collapsible bowl and an insulated mug, and everything you'll need at mealtime weighs barely half a pound.



**Spork**  
**1 ounce**



**BSA® Collapsible Silicone  
Bowl**  
**3 ounces**



**Universal Emblem Thermo  
Mug**  
**4 ounces**

Modern materials are another key to ultra-light success. TrekTek™ clothing wicks moisture away from your skin and blocks harmful solar rays. Advanced antimicrobial technology prevents the growth of odor-causing bacteria. Add a fleece pullover as a warmth layer for a clothing system that will help you stay comfortable even if you become wet from perspiration or rain.



**TrekTek™ Tee**  
**3 ounces each**



**BSA® Polarfleece® Pullover**  
**14 ounces or less**

Switchbacks™ Uniform Pants are another great example of cutting weight by using a single item for two or more uses. Rugged nylon fabric protects you when you need long pants. Zip off the legs and you've got great shorts for hot weather or if you need to wade a stream.



**Venturing Switchbacks™ Uniform Pants**  
**16 ounces or less**

When the weather snarls with wind and rain, your outerwear doesn't have to be heavy to be good. Reliable TrekTek™ DriPak™ Soft-Shell Rainwear could be exactly what you need.



**TrekTek™ DriPak™ Soft-Shell Rainwear Jacket**  
**20 ounces**



**TrekTek™ DriPak™ Soft-Shell Rainwear Pant**  
**10 ounces**

*LIGHT!* That's the word for modern headlamps, both in weight and in the strong beams they produce. Batteries last a long time, too, making these lights perfect for long journeys.



**Petzl® Tikkina2 Red Headlamp**  
**3 ounces**

Shed pounds from your pack with careful choices in your gear for camp. Start with a sleeping bag and pad that are light to carry without sacrificing warmth or comfort.



**ProLite™ Plus Self-Inflating Mattress**  
**8 oz.**



**Eureka! Cimarron 15°F Sleeping Bag**  
**3 lbs. 12 oz.**

Advances in burner design and fuel-delivery systems have led to lightweight combinations of stoves and cook kits just right for preparing backpacking meals.



**Jetboil® Flash™ Cooking System**  
**14 ounces**

Round out your ultra-light gear with a good backpack and a sturdy, featherweight tent.

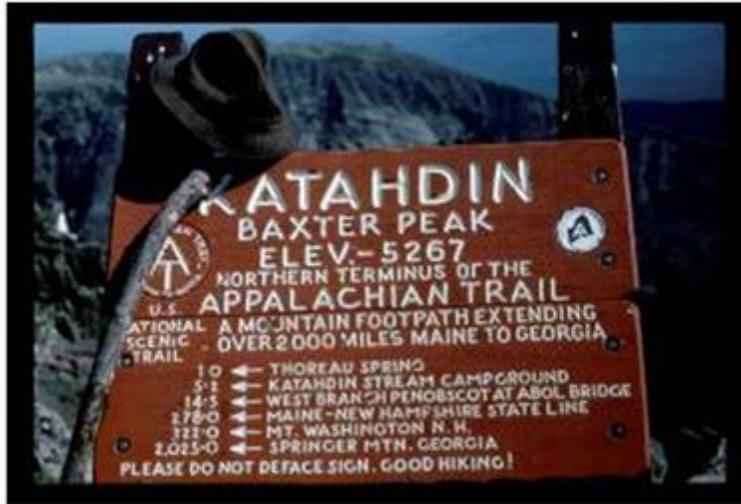


**Technical Backpack 50L**  
**4 pounds 11 ounces**



**Spitfire 2 Tent**  
**4 pounds**

Finally, stay alert for new ways to lighten your load. Have the gear that will keep you safe, but cut out what you never use. Soon you'll know just what to carry for any journey, from a short walk during a Scout camp out to a 2,000-mile hike along one of America's great long-distance trails.



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## BIRDCRAFT

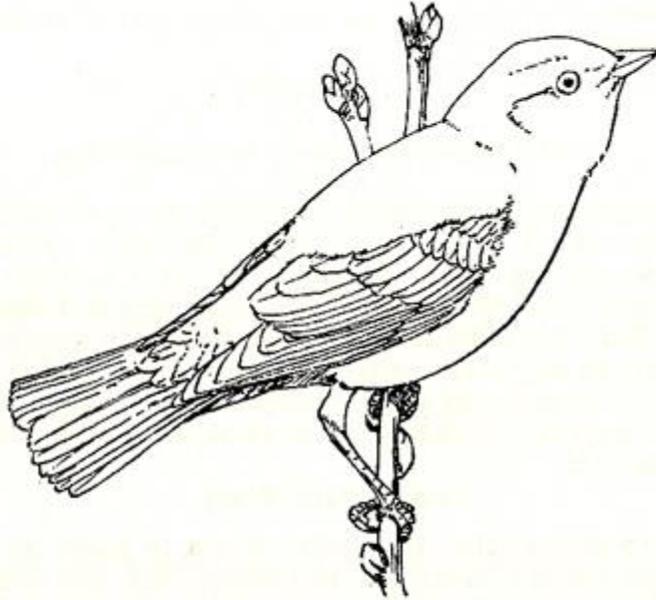
Experts in featherweight travel, birds have fascinated Scouts since the BSA's earliest days. Ten pages of the first edition of the Boy Scout Handbook were devoted to birds in a section titled Birdcraft.

"Any boy who cares enough for the out-doors to be a scout is sure to want a good acquaintance with the birds," the manual explained. Descriptions of ways to tell one bird from another were followed by a bird identification chart:

Location \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Hour \_\_\_\_\_

Weather \_\_\_\_\_ Wind \_\_\_\_\_



**SIZE:**  
Smaller than wren  
Between wren and sparrow

Between sparrow and robin  
Between robin and crow  
Larger than crow

**SEEN**  
Near ground or high up  
In heavy woods

Bushy places  
Orchard  
Garden

Swamp  
Open country  
Near water

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Order \_\_\_\_\_ Family \_\_\_\_\_

Genus \_\_\_\_\_ Species \_\_\_\_\_

Every handbook since has encouraged Scouts to learn about birds. Many of the pages have been as beautiful as the birds themselves.



**Boy Scout Handbook 1979**

Handbooks and merit badge pamphlets have also shown ways to build birdhouses and birdfeeders. It's a skill you can enjoy today, and it can be of tremendous help to birds in your neighborhood.

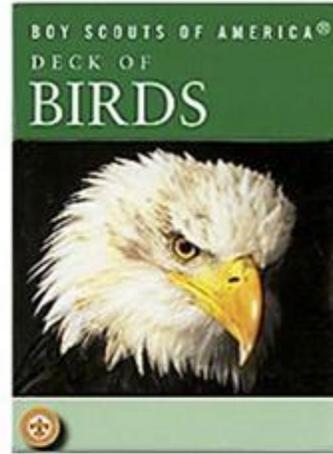
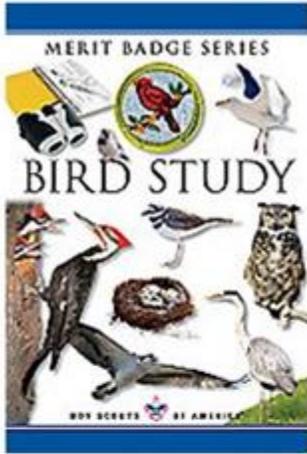


Boy Scout Handbook 1940

Look to [www.scoutstuff.org](http://www.scoutstuff.org) for excellent birdhouse and feeder kits. As projects for Cub Scout dens and Boy Scout patrols, they're hard to beat.



The BSA has plenty of good literature about birds, too. The latest Bird Study merit badge pamphlet is a terrific introduction to the lifelong hobby of Birdcraft, and a guide for earning one of Scouting's most enjoyable merit badges.



Bird Study Merit Badge

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## EAGLE VISION

As the symbol of our nation and emblem of Scouting's highest rank, the American eagle is the bird most closely associated with Scouting. Eagles are known for their keen eyesight. That allows them to see their surroundings with clarity and to act decisively.



The Trail to Eagle offers Scouts a route for achievement, service, leadership, and great adventure. More than two million Scouts have accepted that challenge. Perhaps it is the right path for you, too.



**Two millionth Eagle Scout Anthony Thomas waves during the BSA's Centennial parade through Washington, DC.**

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(This edition of the *Be Prepared Newsletter* was developed and written by Robert Birkby, author of the Centennial edition of the *Boy Scout Handbook*.)