

# MERIT BADGE SERIES



# OCEANOGRAPHY



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# OCEANOGRAPHY



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# Requirements

1. Name four branches of oceanography. Describe at least five reasons why it is important for people to learn about the oceans.
2. Define salinity, temperature, and density, and describe how these important properties of seawater are measured by the physical oceanographer. Discuss the circulation and currents of the ocean. Describe the effects of the oceans on weather and climate.
3. Describe the characteristics of ocean waves. Point out the differences among the storm surge, tsunami, tidal wave, and tidal bore. Explain the difference between sea, swell, and surf. Explain how breakers are formed.
4. Draw a cross-section of underwater topography. Show what is meant by:
  - a. Continental shelf
  - b. Continental slope
  - c. Abyssal plain

Name and put on your drawing the following: seamount, guyot, rift valley, canyon, trench, and oceanic ridge. Compare the depths in the oceans with the heights of mountains on land.

5. List the main salts, gases, and nutrients in seawater. Describe some important properties of water. Tell how the animals and plants of the ocean affect the chemical composition of seawater. Explain how differences in evaporation and precipitation affect the salt content of the oceans.

6. Describe some of the biologically important properties of seawater. Define benthos, nekton, and plankton. Name some of the plants and animals that make up each of these groups. Describe the place and importance of phytoplankton in the oceanic food chain.
7. Do ONE of the following:
- Make a plankton net. Tow the net by a dock, wade with it, hold it in a current, or tow it from a rowboat.\* Do this for about 20 minutes. Save the sample. Examine it under a microscope or high-power glass. Identify the three most common types of plankton in the sample.
  - Make a series of models (clay or plaster and wood) of a volcanic island. Show the growth of an atoll from a fringing reef through a barrier reef. Describe the Darwinian theory of coral reef formation.
  - Measure the water temperature at the surface, midwater, and bottom of a body of water four times daily for five consecutive days.\* You may measure depth with a rock tied to a line. Make a Secchi disk to measure turbidity (how much suspended sedimentation is in the water). Measure the air temperature. Note the cloud cover and roughness of the water. Show your findings (air and water temperature, turbidity) on a graph. Tell how the water temperature changes with air temperature.
  - Make a model showing the inshore sediment movement by littoral currents, tidal movement, and wave action. Include such formations as high and low waterlines, low-tide terrace, berm, and coastal cliffs. Show how offshore bars are built up and torn down.
  - Make a wave generator. Show reflection and refraction of waves. Show how groins, jetties, and breakwaters affect these patterns.
  - Track and monitor satellite images available on the Internet for a specific location for three weeks. Describe what you have learned to your counselor.

\*May be done in lakes or streams.

8. Do ONE of the following:
- a. Write a 500-word report on a book about oceanography approved by your counselor.
  - b. Visit one of the following:
    - (1) Oceanographic research ship
    - (2) Oceanographic institute, marine laboratory, or marine aquariumWrite a 500-word report about your visit.
  - c. Explain to your troop in a five-minute prepared speech “Why Oceanography Is Important” or describe “Career Opportunities in Oceanography.” (Before making your speech, show your speech outline to your counselor for approval.)
9. Describe four methods that marine scientists use to investigate the ocean, underlying geology, and organisms living in the water.



# Oceanography Resources

## Scouting Resources

*Bird Study, Energy, Environmental Science, Fish and Wildlife Management, Fishing, Fly-Fishing, Geology, Mammal Study, Nature, Plant Science, Reptile and Amphibian Study, Soil and Water Conservation, Sustainability, and Weather* merit badge pamphlets

Visit the Boy Scouts of America's official retail website at <http://www.scoutstuff.org> for a complete listing of all merit badge pamphlets and other helpful Scouting materials and supplies.

## Books

- Ballard, Robert D. *Exploring the Titanic*. Econo-Clad Books, 1990.
- Broad, William J. *The Universe Below: Discovering the Secrets of the Deep Sea*. Simon and Schuster, 1997.
- Carson, Rachel L. *The Sea Around Us*. Oxford University Press, 1991.
- Carson, Rachel L., and Sue Hubbell. *The Edge of the Sea*. Houghton Mifflin, 1998.
- Center for Marine Conservation Staff. *The Ocean Book: Aquarium and Seaside Activities and Ideas for All Ages*. John Wiley & Sons Inc., 1989.
- Coulombe, Deborah. *The Seaside Naturalist: A Guide to Study at the Seashore*. Simon and Schuster, 1992.
- Denny, Mark. *How the Ocean Works: An Introduction to Oceanography*. Princeton University Press, 2008.
- Earle, Sylvia, and Linda K. Glover. *Ocean: An Illustrated Atlas*. National Geographic, 2008.
- Earle, Sylvia A., and Wolcott Henry. *Wild Ocean: America's Parks Under the Sea*. National Geographic Society, 1999.
- Ellis, Richard. *Encyclopedia of the Sea*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2000.
- Foreman, W. *History of American Deep Submersible Operations*. Best Publishing Co., 1999.
- Miller, James W., and Ian G. Koblick. *Living and Working in the Sea*. Best Publishing Co., 1995.
- Strang, Craig, Catharine Halversen, and Kimi Hosoume. *On Sandy Shores*. GEMS: Great Explorations in Math and Science, 1996.

## Organizations and Websites

### American Meteorological Society

Telephone: 617-227-2425

Website: <http://www.ametsoc.org>

### Careers in Oceanography, Ocean Engineering, and Marine Biology

Website: <http://www.marinecareers.net>

### The Discovery Channel Blue Planet

Website: <http://dsc.discovery.com>

[/convergence/blueplanet/blueplanet.html](http://convergence/blueplanet/blueplanet.html)

### The JASON Project

Telephone: 703-726-4232

Website: <http://www.jason.org>

### National Climatic Data Center

Telephone: 828-271-4800

Website: <http://lwf.ncdc.noaa.gov/oa/ncdc.html>

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Telephone: 202-482-6090

Website: <http://www.noaa.gov>

### The Ocean Alliance

Toll-free telephone: 800-969-4253

Website: <http://www.oceanalliance.org>

### The Savage Seas, Public Broadcasting Service

Website: <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/savageseas>

### Scripps Institute of Oceanography

Telephone: 858-534-3624

Website: <https://scripps.ucsd.edu>

### PBS Secrets of the Ocean Realm

Website: <http://www.pbs.org/oceanrealm>

## Acknowledgments

The Boy Scouts of America thanks Thomas Potts, associate director at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Undersea Research Center, University of North Carolina Wilmington for his extensive assistance with this revision of the *Oceanography* merit badge pamphlet. The BSA is also grateful to Eagle Scout Lawrence Cahoon, professor, Department of Biology and Marine Biology at the University of North Carolina Wilmington, for his assistance.

The Boy Scouts of America is grateful to the men and women serving on the Merit Badge Maintenance Task Force for the improvements made in updating this pamphlet.

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