

Treasure Diving

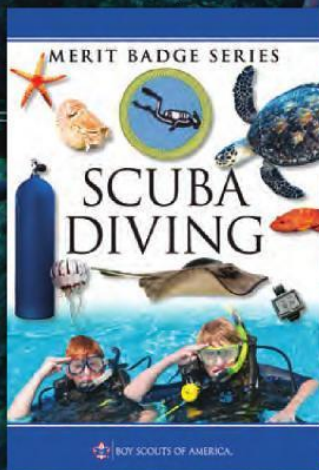
There are estimated to be more than 200,000 treasure-laden shipwrecks around the world. Get your Scuba Diving merit badge, then check out these amazing places in the United States.

- More than 95 percent of the sunken ships holding treasure in the United States are off the Florida coasts, says world-renown archaeologist and treasure hunter Robert Marx. The hot spots: the Florida Keys and east coast of Florida between Palm Beach and Cape Canaveral. Many ships that sank in these areas were carrying silver and gold from the New World to Spain.
- The San Francisco Bay area from Monterey to Oregon's border is a great place to find hundreds of Spanish ships like the *San Agustin* that sank in 1595.
- Ships leaving Mexico would follow the Texas coastline, making it another place to go, especially off Padre Island.
- With more than 8,000 shipwrecks, the Great Lakes offer a great glimpse into the past, says Steve Libert, who discovered what is believed to be French explorer LaSalle's *Griffin* 330 years after it sank in Lake Michigan. Why? The icy cold water preserves everything, unlike warm salt water.

Interested in going on your own treasure hunt?

You can find all kinds of interesting buried items in 10 feet of water. Stuart Cove, an expert diver in the Bahamas, recommends getting an underwater metal detector to find modern-day treasure like coins and jewelry that can be buried under sand.

Or ask a local fisherman if he knows of any unusual items like sunken cannons and anchors. Usually there's a shipwreck not too far behind. —Dawn Reiss



Get Your Scuba Diving Merit Badge!

Boy Scouts and Venturers may now be able to earn a **Scuba Diving merit badge**. You'll have to earn your Swimming badge first. Then, you'll need help from an outside organization to get certified for an open-water dive.

One source is the Professional Association of Diving Instructors. Visit its Web site to learn what it takes to get an open-water certificate: www.boyslife.org/links/padi

Also new this year: the **Scouting Heritage merit badge**. Earn a merit badge by learning all about the 100-year history of the Boy Scouts of America. —Aaron Derr

Scouting News

Anthony Thomas, from Troop 3471 in Minnesota, has become the 2 millionth Scout to earn the rank of Eagle Scout. It was 96 years ago that New York's Arthur Eldred became the first Eagle Scout. In 2008, 52,025 young men earned Eagle rank. ... The Cub Scouts of Pack 717 in Orange County, Calif., raised \$14,000 and had 28 members volunteer to shave their heads to raise funds to find a cure for cancer. Their motivation? Their leader told them that anyone who raised more than \$100 would get to throw a pie in his face. Sounds like a lot of pies. Learn how you can help find a cure at www.boyslife.org/links/stbaldricks. ... Troop 485, Bellevue, Neb., was on a hike last year when they came across a calf stuck at the bottom of a hole. The boys dug a ramp so the tired and hungry animal could walk out. The thankful rancher who owns the calf estimated it had been stuck for three days.