

# A Scientific Look at the Thru-hiker



**Class:** *None whatsoever.*  
**Order:** *Rarely.*  
**Suborder:** *More so.*  
**Family:** *Other thru-hikers and trail angels.*  
**Genus:** *Not to be confused with genius.*  
**Species:** *Wildlife.*



**By Chuckie “Funnybone” Veylupek**

## Geographical Range:

The thru-hiker is primarily an inhabitant of North America, frequently found in summertime climates along the high mountains of the United States’ most renowned ranges: the Sierra Nevada, the Cascades, the Rockies, and the Appalachians.

## Habitat:

Found in a variety of habitats, from treeless tundra to coastal sea banks, rocky cliffs, mountain forests, and desert canyons to open plains and everywhere between.

## Description:

The thru-hiker, upon first sight, is typically darker skinned, excessively hairy, generally thin and most often quiet. The average height is typically five to six feet tall. Shorter ones have been seen, as have much taller creatures. Males are predominant, but females are frequently seen as well, though it is often difficult to decipher between the two. Above and beyond appearance, however, it is the scent of the thru-hiker that is the dead giveaway – some have described this distinct odor as “lethal.” The thru-hiker has a complex thought-processing unit, but demonstrates its use sparingly.

## Vocalization:

Again, the thru-hiker is typically an introspective, quiet breed. It has been known, however, to whoop it up when seen in civilization or atop mountains, particularly while overlooking incredible views.

## Gear:

Thru-hikers’ gear is their lifeline. Thru-hikers carry their houses on their backs, similar to a snail or a turtle: it is worth noting, however, that snails and turtles generally move faster. Gear includes tools to make meals (highly sophisticated), tools to light fires, and a wide array of footwear.



Photo Caption, top of page: Chuckie “Funnybone” V. near Kangaroo Springs, north of Seiad Valley, Calif. This tree, located just a few yards off-trail, is one of Chuckie’s favorite spots along the entire PCT.

Photo Caption, above right: Some members of the “thru-hiker species”, namely (from left) Charlie Woodcock (the author’s wife), Rain-Shirt (aka Inaki Diaz de Etura from Madrid, Spain), and John Henzell (aka Rolling Thunder) from Christchurch, New Zealand. This was taken just a few miles north of Kennedy Meadows Campground.





Above: Brian Johnson from Salisbury, England; better known on the trail as “Ancient Brit” and a perfect example of a thru-hiker!

### Related Species:

The thru-hiker is often confused with its close relative, the homeless, but there are major differences between the two species that are readily apparent when thru-hikers and the homeless are seen together, i.e. Gore-Tex.

### Food:

Thru-hikers are known scavengers who eat primarily from the Snickers food group, as well as grains, dried foods, meat, pizza, ice cream, candy, berries, and beer, and most everything else that involves calories.

### Behavior:

Varied, depending on surroundings. May be seen alone or in social settings. Thru-hikers are strong individuals and, as stated earlier, smell just as strong. This smell can hover for weeks on end and extend significantly beyond the thru-hiker’s ken. Though this doesn’t really have much to do with their behavior it does lead to the next thought.

### Behavior of Those Around Thru-Hikers:

Many cultures have regarded the thru-hiker as an omen of death, pestilence and disease. Of course, they’re generally right, but that’s beside the point.

### Thru-Hiker Vital Statistics:

**Weight:** Invariably less after completing a thru-hike.

**Pulse-rate:** Almost always lower as trip progresses.

**IQ:** Almost always lower as trip progresses.

**Stride length:** From 1 inch to 8 feet, depending on conditions.

**Stride amount:** Depends on trail and stride length. On the PCT, anywhere from 1 to 8,000,000

### Lifespan:

85 years in the wild, give or take.

### Breeding & Nesting:

Not applicable.

### Additional Notes:

The best description for a thru-hiker is up to the individual actually thru-hiking.