



GIRL SCOUT MARINERS

Twenty-First Century Guidelines



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“Lakes, pools, river, bays, oceans—wherever there is water there is the lure to be in it, on it, or be a part of it in one way or another.”

— SENIOR GIRL SCOUT HANDBOOK, 1963

Preface

How to Use This Toolkit

The audience for these guidelines is councils and their volunteers. The introduction provides an overview and direction to council staff for assessing, planning, and activating troops. Subsequent sections speak to council staff and volunteers as they compose their troops and work with them to define the Mariner experience.

A Note to the Reader

Across our Movement, Girl Scout Mariners persist in a variety of compositions and presentations. Some councils have Mariner troops closely aligned to what is described in these guidelines. Others have special interest groups that take part in Mariner-themed events hosted by community partners or in Mariner-focused activities at summer camp or service units. All of these activities introduce girls to what it means to be a Mariner and add to their experience in Girl Scouts. These guidelines do not seek to limit these activities; they serve to provide direction for those councils interested in developing Mariner troops.

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Introduction

Why Girl Scout Mariners, Why Now?

Girl Scouts provides a wide array of opportunities for older girls to engage in high adventure throughout our Movement. And what could be more adventurous than catching the wind, riding the waves, or cruising with the current? Girl Scout Mariners is a special interest troop that offers adventure on, in, and near the water. Water unites us all—whether we are in it, on it, or near it. Our connection to water is more important now than ever! Revitalizing and expanding these troops is a national priority and, as such, GSUSA is releasing this set of updated twenty-first century guidelines.

With the release of these guidelines, GSUSA seeks to support councils with the revitalization, initiation, and/or expansion of Girl Scout Mariners nationally. Included within this comprehensive document is direction on troop composition and water-focused activities; safety considerations; direction on certifications, ratings, and badges; staffing requirements; opportunities for girls to lead; and insight into the product program and merchandise as they apply to Mariners.

It is important to note that this document serves as a guiding tool, not a rigid set of rules. GSUSA understands that just as our Movement is diverse, so will be the composition and focus of our Mariner troops. Mariner troops should be inclusive of all girls—we recognize that their ability, experience, watercraft choice, and participation in troops will vary by region and council. The primary goal is for older girls to have the opportunity to pursue high adventure on or near water as Mariners.

What Is the Girl Scout Mariner Program?

Girl Scout Mariners has been a part of Girl Scouts' bold history since 1934. Initially one of several patrols that included Trailblazers (hiking and camping), Mounted (equestrian), Panorama (general), and Wing (air and flight), Mariners enjoyed water hikes, shakedown cruises, and GAMS (Gathering of All Mariners) while learning critical skills on the water.

Today, Girl Scout Mariners provides teen Girl Scouts, grades 8 to 12, an opportunity to engage deeply in water-focused activities. As Mariners, girls develop skills in swimming, safety, and rescue; canoeing, kayaking, sailing, paddle boarding, or boating; and weather and navigation. Girls also take action on oceans, lakes, and rivers; explore careers related to water and the environment surrounding water; and participate in associated local, regional, national, and international travel opportunities.

Girl Scout Mariners engage in these activities on almost every waterway that can support small crafts, including pools! With year-round programming in a variety of environments and climates, they are also quite active on land.



Who Can Become a Mariner?

All girls and adults participating in a Mariner troop are required to be current Girl Scout members. These are recommendations for Mariner troop composition:

- **Experience level:** There are no prerequisites for joining a Mariner troop other than an interest and willingness to complete the requirements of the Mariner pin within the first year of being a Mariner.
- **Ability level:** Girls of all ability levels can participate in a Mariner troop with the appropriate accommodations.
- **Age:** It is recommended that Mariner troops be comprised of girls in grades 8 through 12. Girls younger than eighth grade level may find some of the physical activities too challenging depending on their strength, size, and ability. Girls older than eighth grade level sometimes find it difficult to commit to regular troop meetings because of the heavy pressures and responsibilities of high school. Eighth grade is the optimal time to retain or reengage girls as they consider how they'd like to pursue new, adventurous opportunities through Girl Scouts.
- **Geography:** Councils that have access to bodies of water that can support water sports—such as canoeing, kayaking, sailing, paddle boarding, or even swimming activities like SCUBA—should consider sponsoring Mariner troops.
- **Troop versus group:** GSUSA recommends that councils offer Mariner troops versus groups when possible. Based on our understanding of the benefits of the troop model, girls will reap a greater benefit from a Mariner troop. Troops provide two dedicated adults and offer a regular meeting schedule; they participate in the product program and practice traditions and ceremonies. While groups serve a valuable purpose in introducing girls to water-based activities, troops provide the structure that supports retention.

Meet Our Mariners!

Girl Scout Mariners and alum range in age from early teens to nearly 100 years old and live all around the world. There is a wide variety in how Mariners engage in their nautical pursuits. Check them out:

- [**Girl Scouts Mariners of Northern California**](#)
- [**Girl Scouts Mariners of San Jacinto**](#)
- [**Girl Scouts of Central Texas—SCUBA Troop**](#)

Former Girl Scout Mariners have gone on to lead adventurous lives!

One of them is Nancy Richardson, who has sailed for more than 60 years on 101 ships across the seven seas. A Girl Scout Brownie in 1949, Nancy was inspired by reading about a Mariner troop in her local New Jersey council. Seven years later, she became a Mariner. Nancy has spent her life sailing and advocating for ocean conservancy; she continues to work to advance Mariner troops in Girl Scouts.



Are You Ready for a Mariner Program at Your Council?

If you're ready to launch a Mariner program at your council, here are some steps to guide your council self-assessment.

1. Survey current older girl membership to determine what, if any, Mariner-type groups are currently operating. If so, what has been working? What further assistance do they need?
2. Identify your primary goal(s) in building your Mariner troop(s).
 - a. Are you looking to expand your programmatic offerings for older girls?
 - b. Is your council considering this work an opportunity to support retention or increase recruitment?
 - c. Does this troop strengthen your marketplace position?
 - d. How will Mariners enhance your council's outdoor focus?
3. Develop an overall timeline and system that will work for your council.
 - a. Think of year-round programming for troops.
 - b. How can multiple council teams engage to support the success of these troops?
4. Engage all council departments.
 - a. Program, outdoor, and camp teams are well-suited to take the lead.
 - How can they facilitate programming, manage equipment, and support staffing throughout the year?
 - How will the equipment be inventoried, maintained, and assessed annually?
 - b. Membership and volunteer services will provide needed support.
 - Advise your volunteer systems team to prepare in Salesforce. Mariners is now listed as a participation type. Create volunteer project and job campaigns for each Mariner troop.
 - Determine a council naming convention for Mariner troops, including volunteer jobs and troops.
 - Indicate all troops participating in the program as "Mariners" to support council and national reporting.
 - For each volunteer job specific to the Mariner troop, determine screening requirements and renewal eligibility and display these in the council's catalog guidelines.
 - Volunteer and recruitment management teams can provide critical recruitment insights and training solutions to attract qualified Mariner leaders and volunteers.
 - c. Consider the role other teams can play in supporting the Mariner program.
 - Marketing and communications
 - Finance and operations
 - Fund development
 - Mission delivery office



5. Try these tips and tricks for initiating a Mariner troop.
 - a. What type of community assistance does your council need to support the start-up or expansion of Mariners? Examples may include:
 - Finding the right equipment for the local water type
 - Utilizing personal experience
 - Accessing waterways via docks, slips, and entry points
 - b. When you know your needs, contact local water-focused groups, stores, and organizations to request support. For instance, local retailers may be willing to donate equipment or rent it at a reduced rate. Local sailing clubs may have skippers or enthusiasts who support or could even lead activities for the troop. Contact:
 - Sailing or yacht clubs
 - Gear shops and outfitters
 - Training establishments and instructors
 - Swimming programs
 - Organizations that promote inclusivity in the outdoors such as Outdoor Afro and Latino Outdoors. Seek out local organizations that provide accessibility options for people with differing abilities.
 - c. Consider faith partners as well. Since its inception, Girl Scouts has partnered with a wide range of faith traditions to serve girls. Faith partners look to partner with Girl Scouts to help equip girls for their future, provide avenues for engagement and action, and connect girls' leadership development with the values of their tradition. The values of environmental stewardship and service to community are held in common by all faith traditions. As such, the Mariner program may be of interest to faith partners who are seeking new ways to be relevant to girls in their community and provide learning and service opportunities.
6. Establish a systematic evaluation process.
 - a. How and with what frequency will you assess the program's performance?
 - b. What is your contingency plan if the program or a troop does not persist after the first year?



Girl Scout Mariner Program

The Foundational Girl Scout Experience, Mariner Style

Through the Mariner troop experience, girls can explore all the opportunities provided through Girl Scouts while pursuing their love of being on, in, or near water. As with all troops, Girl Scouts will provide an all-girl environment, an emotionally and physically safe space, a consistent, supportive adult, and active family engagement throughout the troop year. Troops will meet regularly—at least monthly—throughout the year. Mariner troops may not be able to be on/near the water through some months of the year. This is a great time to head to a local pool to practice skills or plan events, fundraise, and engage with the local community to increase awareness of the troop. Girls will:

- Earn badges in STEM, Outdoor, Life Skills, and Entrepreneurship through the lens of a Mariner. For example, the Senior Paddling badge is an easy fit, but so are Ambassador First Aid or Public Policy as they relate to supporting the marine environment. Badge work may be adapted to activities around the water.
OR
- Take part in a National Leadership Journey. All Journeys are eligible. Consider the Justice Journey for Ambassadors. In this Journey, for example, a girl could look at the big picture of environmental justice issues related to our waterways and environmental issues.
OR
- Earn a highest award. The Girl Scout Silver and Gold Awards are a fundamental part of the Girl Scout experience. Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors grow through a progressive leadership experience where they partner with their communities to create sustainable solutions that address society's biggest challenges. Empower girls to take action on environmental conservation or another Mariner-related issue and support their growth into courageous leaders, community organizers, and change makers.

- 1. The Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE):** This experience is what Mariner troops activate through the challenges girls face on the water. They learn about themselves and their values and they stretch to seek and meet challenges beyond what they might in other settings. Mariners work together with their shipmates, build positive relationships, and band together on critical issues facing our waterways. While on the water, Mariners gain a unique perspective that encourages them to think critically about the world around them and consider how they can best address significant problems they are passionate about solving. Ultimately, Mariners will be taking the helm and sailing full speed ahead into actualizing their potential as leaders.



2. The Three Girl Scout Processes: These ensure the promotion of the fun and friendship that have always been integral to Girl Scouting.

- **Girl-led** means that girls take an active and grade-appropriate role in figuring out the what, where, when, why, and how of what they do.
- **Learning by doing** is hands-on learning that engages girls in an ongoing cycle of action and reflection. When girls participate actively in meaningful activities on the water and later reflect on them, they gain a deeper understanding of concepts and mastery of nautical skills.
- **Cooperative learning** is designed to promote sharing of knowledge, skills, and learning in an atmosphere of respect and cooperation as girls work together on goals that can only be accomplished with the help of others.

3. Take Action: Take Action and service projects can focus on a wide variety of marine and service-related activities.

- Service projects can include introducing water skills and water-related issues to troops of younger Girl Scouts, whether in the community or at camp. Examples may include:
 - Sponsor events that bring awareness to the benefits of and threats to a local waterway. Activities could include a water show that displays the girls' skills and techniques on the water.
 - Modify or design a boating or swimming area to be as barrier-free as possible for people with differing abilities and needs.
- Environmental stewardship and action related to the water projects can include activities such as reducing water use and recycling water, preventing litter or pollution from degrading waterways, groundwater, and the marine environment, and participating in marine-related advocacy or service projects.

4. Awards: For Girl Scouts interested in pursuing honors that develop their leadership skills, awards are an excellent option. Below are some considerations:

- Cadettes can go for the Silver after completing one Cadette Leadership Journey.
- Seniors/Ambassadors must complete the Silver and one Senior/Ambassador Leadership Journey or, in lieu of the Silver Award, two Senior/Ambassador Leadership Journeys before going Gold.
- Girls may set their sights on earning the Cadette, Senior, or Ambassador Leadership Torch, Service to Girl Scouting Bar, or Community Service Bar for their service and leadership efforts within their Mariner troop or wider community. These awards recognize girls who go above and beyond in service to their troop or school as they identify issues to tackle in their highest award.



- Girls eager to mentor younger Girl Scouts and build their group leadership skills (and the pipeline for future Mariners!), may consider earning these:
 - Leader in Action (LiA) and Program Aide (PA) pins for Cadettes
 - Volunteer in Training (VIT) and Counselor in Training (CIT) pins for Seniors and Ambassadors
 - Service to Girl Scouting Bars for Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors
 - Silver Award for Cadettes
 - Gold Award for Seniors and Ambassadors

- 5. Trips and travel:** Mariners have the unique opportunity to travel by water! Troops will start with local canoe or kayak overnight trips and, ultimately, work up to bigger adventures like paddling the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness to Canada or planning a multiday sailing experience. Older Girl Scout Mariners will have the opportunity to travel independently on a Girl Scout Destination. Destinations in 2020 range from a Lake Erie island exploration to catching waves in Costa Rica. There are water-based experiences every year, such as kayaking the Greek islands, scuba diving with sea turtles, and learning to sail a historic tall ship.
- 6. Product program:** Mariners participate in product program just as other troops do. This is a great way for Mariners to purchase and maintain their equipment and participate in events. If a girl has a home troop and also participates in a Mariner troop, the girl, troops (home and Mariner), and council product program staff need to have a discussion as to how to distribute the product program earnings. For example, the girl may apply all door-to-door sales under one troop and all booth sales under the other troop. The income from product program does not become the property of individual girl members. Girls, however, may be eligible for rewards and credits that they put toward council-sponsored camps, programs, and programmatic materials—see page 61 of the 2019 *Safety Activity Checkpoints* (SAC). Note that if girls are participating in multiple troops, for instance, a home troop and a Mariner troop, there may be community and geographical issues to consider.
- 7. Girl Scout traditions:** These include but are not limited to saying the Girl Scout Promise and Law, singing Girl Scout songs, taking part in ceremonies, and wearing a Girl Scout uniform.
- 8. Mariner uniform:** At this time Girl Scout Mariners wear the same Girl Scout age-level uniform as that for other troops. However, Mariners can identify themselves by wearing their Mariner pin on their sashes where membership pins are located.
- 9. Mariner ratings:** Girl Scout Mariners may wish to advance through earned ratings (see page 18 for more on ratings) or participate in the troop without earning ratings. They may become a Mariner to learn more and teach younger Girl Scouts while working toward their Leader in Action (LiA) or Cadette Program Aide (CPA) award, and they can join just for the pure sport and thrill of the water. Plan to give girls a choice in their intended paths.



Volunteers

Girl Scouts is not only committed to providing amazing experiences to girls, but to ensuring that our volunteers feel engaged and empowered with the knowledge and skills to be a part of that mission. All Girl Scout Mariner volunteers are expected to be registered, screened, and prepared members of Girl Scouts. Volunteers should stay current with all council-level required trainings for their roles.

Due to the specialized nature of this troop leader role, councils may want to implement a process to gather more information about the prospective volunteer and add an interview to ensure the best fit. Refer to the latest revision of *Managing Girl Scout Volunteers*, which can be found on gsConnect, for specific guidance on information gathering and interviewing.

Councils should customize the troop leader position description to reflect the additional preparation and expertise needed for this role. Including specific details will also help recruiters find qualified adults! For example, the leader should have experience on the water in the craft that is employed by their troop and be certified in water safety as directed by the council.

Please refer to *Safety Activity Checkpoints* for guidance on basic requirements and consider how staff members with the required certification and/or training can provide initial support to the troop until the volunteer is fully able to lead. Also, consider camp water safety staff as future Mariner leaders. How can water-focused staff be engaged in the conversation about the council's Mariner troop?

As stated above, Mariner troops participate in activities just like any other Girl Scout troop. As such, Mariner troop leaders are expected to abide by all the requirements and procedures outlined in the position description.

Basic Equipment

Basic requirements for a successful Mariner program include access to:

- Small craft
- Docks and trailers
- Swimming pools

Community resources, including subject matter experts, local maritime museums, local commercial and community organizations with a focus on water, and potential sponsors can help locate basic equipment as well as provide expertise.



Mariner Events

GAM is short for a Gathering of All Mariners. Originally referring to a “herd” of whales, the term “gam” was later adopted by whalers to define a meeting of two or more whaling crews at sea or on land. A Mariner GAM is a meeting of two or more Mariner troops, either on sea or on land. GAMs are a great way for Mariners to socialize, exchange stories, gather activity ideas, and engage in friendly boating competitions to improve their nautical skills. GAMs are encouraged as a council activity and could be offered as a Destination or possibly included in a troop trek.

An example of a weekend GAM may include land skills, boating and swimming, and singing events. Some activities could require the participation of the entire troop, while others can be designed for individuals or small groups. One day’s activities could focus on boating and land skills, the next on swimming events. Some GAMs include multiple-choice tests as part of a team competition to test the girls’ nautical knowledge. The local community should be invited to observe girls at their best to cheer them on. Troops may compete against each other, and smaller troops or individual girls can work together as one troop. Additional options may include:

- Competitive water-based activities
- Ceremonies, such as an investiture or a bridging from one level to the next, with a nautical theme
- A nautically-informed Take Action project designed and carried out on land that might include adopting storm drains or conducting a beach cleanup

Regattas and related events sponsored by local marinas and yacht or sailing clubs can serve as opportunities for the girls to display their nautical skills.

Trips that last a day, overnight, or longer are a great option. Visit a naval base, coast guard station, or maritime academy.

Host events for Girl Scout Juniors, Brownies, and Daisies as a way to introduce them to Mariner activities, including knot tying, properly putting on a life vest, and safely boarding a boat dockside.

Encourage girls to serve as Program Aides at a day or resident camp to bring nautical programming to a new audience.



Her Mariner Experience

Girl Scout Mariner Pin

To become a Girl Scout Mariner, girls will complete the requirements for the Mariner pin:

- Know and recite the Girl Scout Promise;
- Know and recite the Girl Scout Law; and
- Complete option A or B described below. Although most girls will pursue option A, option B exists for girls who want to become Mariners but are unable to access the traditional Mariner experience. Girls who choose Option B should work with their troop leader to determine which of the skills described below will best support her safe Mariner experience. Girls who chose Option A should start by earning the pin, then complete water safety, and finally choose path one or path two to continue her mariner experience.

A) Mariners ON or IN water

1. Acquire basic swimming skills.
 - Swim 50 yards using any stroke.
 - Tread water fully clothed for three minutes.
2. Select a watercraft or water sport.

B) Mariners NEAR water

1. Learn basic skills to prevent drowning.
2. Select a focus area, such as marine or aquatic ecology.
3. Study and learn the safety protocol required for the focus area.

Learning by Doing: Water Safety Skill Development

All Girl Scout Mariners will begin with a focus on water safety skills. Safety is first and foremost for Girl Scout Mariners around the water. As such, some basic skills and knowledge are required before girls consider use of a watercraft.

■ First aid

- Girl Scout First Aid badge (Cadette, Senior, Ambassador)
- American Red Cross certification

■ Swimming

- Before girls learn about watercraft, they should demonstrate knowledge in each of the following strokes:
 - Crawl
 - Backstroke
 - Sidestroke
 - Breaststroke



■ Skills, in addition to basic strokes, required before using any watercraft

- Dive, jump, or fall into deep water and return to the surface, calmly and in full control of faculties, while clothed in a shirt and shorts or jeans over a bathing suit and with socks and sneakers on.
- Swim a recognized stroke, fully clothed and relaxed, in a floating position.
- Tread water with hands held wrist-high above the surface.

■ Lifesaving in the water

- Tread water.
- Know how to size, test, and use a personal flotation device (PFD).

■ Underwater

If girls or troops choose to focus on underwater activities, they should first demonstrate proficiency in basic swimming skills and take instruction from certified dive instructors for snorkeling and scuba diving.

■ Hazards

Girls should also develop an understanding of hazards related to:

- Tides and currents
 - Send and respond to international distress signals.
 - Handle a capsized craft.
 - Rescue a tired swimmer by boat.
- Exposure to the elements
 - Know how to prevent and treat hypothermia, heatstroke, and dehydration, and other issues related to exposure to the elements.



Learning by Doing: Two Paths to Advanced Mariner Skill Development

After receiving their Girl Scout Mariner pin and learning water safety and skills, girls can decide how they want to build skills as a Mariner, choosing one of two paths. They may choose to earn badges and work on skill proficiency (detailed below) or advance through a series of Mariner ratings as they develop their proficiency (detailed further below). As girls grow their skills as Mariners, they may decide to move between both options.

Mariner troops will most likely be mixed level (Cadette, Senior, or Ambassador). This provides an excellent way for more experienced girls to take the lead and teach others the exciting progression in the Mariner program.

Path One: Mariner Skill Development

This details the alternative to the Mariner ratings approach. The skills girls develop through their participation in the Mariner program may be water-based as well as land-based with a water focus. For example, while most maritime careers have a heavy focus on water-based knowledge, not every maritime career is on the water. A shipwright, or ship builder, has a deep understanding of marine sciences and STEM topics—but her career may not require her to be on water.

If girls do not choose to work toward Girl Scout Mariner proficiency ratings, they should set goals and select activities within each of the following concentration areas: nautical skills, badges/Journeys, Take Action projects, career exploration, product program, and Girl Scout traditions. Expectations for each concentration are outlined in the following sections.

Nautical Skills: These include—

- **Safety:** Safety always comes first. As such, basic skills and knowledge are required before girls approach the water. Girls will:
 - Know how to size, test, and use a personal flotation device (PFD).
 - Know the hazards of tides and currents.
 - Know and be able to use U.S. Coast Guard distress signals.
 - Master basic knot tying. Some knots are watercraft specific and others aren't. Girls should demonstrate proficiency in the following basic/practical knots. For a tutorial on knot tying, visit [Girl Scouts' YouTube page](#).
 - Square
 - Bowline
 - Clove hitch
 - Figure eight



- **Rope and splicing:** In addition to knots, girls should be able to care for and repair rope—including the creation of splices to join two ropes. Mariners should explore and develop skills in:
 - Needle whipping
 - Short splice
 - Round splice
- **Proficiency in a marine craft:** Girls or troops will demonstrate increasing skill in a marine craft. Specific skills related to the craft below are listed in Appendix A.
 - Rowboats, sculls, racing shells
 - Canoes
 - Kayaks
 - Sailboats
 - Powered boats (*Safety Activity Checkpoints* does not permit a girl to drive powered boats.)
 - Stand-up paddle boards
 - Other crafts and modes of exploration, including scuba, are all permissible.
- **Weather and its effects on water activities:** Mariners should be able to describe these and know the effects and warnings. Girl should learn about clouds, including cumulus, cirrus, stratocumulus, stratus, and cirrocumulus.
- **Small craft warnings:**
 - Flags
 - Pennants
 - Lights
 - Barometer readings for weather predictions
- **Navigation:**
 - Know starboard and port sides of your craft.
 - Know marine navigation rules for all crafts.
 - Know how to use a compass and a map.
 - Know how to locate her position using compass and map and GPS.
 - Know how to create a route with bearings, using compass and map.
 - Know how to determine a reciprocal course.
 - Know how to plot her position using “dead reckoning.”
- **Communication: Demonstrate ship-to-shore communications:**
 - Flag signaling
 - Flashing lights
 - By sound
 - Using semaphore
 - Without signaling equipment
 - Using the International Code of Signals



■ **Advanced knots:**

- Round turn and two half-hitches
- Rolling hitch
- Cleat hitch
- Fisherman's bend

Badges: Badges appropriate and relevant to the Girl Scout Mariner program will depend on the girls' level and the focus of the troop's programs and activities. The following badges are suggested starting points, always using a marine focus:

- **Girl Scout Way** (Cadette, Senior, Ambassador). At each level, troops are encouraged to consider the Girl Scout Way badge to maintain a focus on the basic tenets of Girl Scouting.
- **First Aid** (Cadette, Senior, Ambassador)
- **Paddling** (Senior)
- **Sky** (Senior)
- **Eco Advocate** (Ambassador)
- **P&L** (Ambassador)
- **Public Policy** (Ambassador)
- **Ultimate Recreation Challenge** (Ambassador)
- **Water** (Ambassador)

Journeys: These may be customized to have a marine focus. Examples include:

- **Outdoor** (Cadette, Senior, Ambassador)
- **Your Voice, Your World** (Ambassador)

Highest awards: Working with younger Girl Scouts will help Cadettes to earn their LiA and PA, Seniors and Ambassadors to earn their CIT and VIT, Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors to earn their Service to Girl Scouting Bar. Girl Scout Silver and Gold Awards are the highest awards for a Girl Scout Cadette, Senior, or Ambassador. GSUSA provides explicit direction on how girls pursue highest awards.

Take Action. Environmental Stewardship and Take Action projects related to water can be selected. Take Action projects can range from sustainable projects that focus on water conservation, reuse, and reduction and recycling of water to projects that prevent litter or pollution from degrading waterways, groundwater, and the marine environment.

Career exploration: Girl Scout Mariners are exposed to a breadth of career opportunities related to the water. Troops can visit marine-related facilities and hear from women who are professionals in a wide variety of water-related careers, such as marine biologists, marine researchers, shipyard operators, shipwrights, and shipbuilders, Coast Guard members, and water-related public policy advocates. See Appendix B for more resources.



Product program. Mariners participate in product program just as other troops do. See the product program bullet point in “The Foundational Girl Scout Experience, Mariner Style” section on page 8.

Girl Scout traditions. Girl Scout traditions include, but are not limited to, wearing a Girl Scout uniform and saying the Promise and Law. Traditions also include singing Girl Scout songs and taking part in ceremonies, such as an investiture, a bridging, a rededication, and so forth.

Path Two: Mariner Proficiency Ratings

Girl Scout Mariners chart their own path. Some girls may choose to develop their skills by advancing through the ratings described below. Upon fulfillment of each, an appropriate recognition will be awarded. These ratings are earned in succession starting with:

■ Midshipmite

- Safety
 - Know how to size, test, and use a personal floatation device (PFD).
 - Know the hazards of tides and currents.
 - Know and be able to use U.S. Coast Guard distress signals
- Basic swimming and personal water safety
 - Dive, jump, or fall into deep water and return to the surface, calmly and in full control of faculties, while clothed in a shirt and shorts or jeans over a bathing suit and with socks and sneakers on.
 - Swim a recognized stroke, fully clothed, and relax in a floating position.
 - Tread water with hands held wrist-high above the surface.
- Nautical knots
 - Tie knots appropriate to the watercraft selected.
- Basic watercraft (one of choice)
 - Identify the parts of the watercraft.
 - Be able to board and launch/cast off watercraft.
 - Be able to land and/or dock watercraft.
- Navigation
 - Know the shipboard directions: starboard and port.
 - Understand basic marine navigation rules.
- First Aid badges
 - Cadette or Senior Girl Scout Way
 - Cadette or Senior First Aid
- Take Action project relates to water/marine issues.
- Explore career options related to nautical pursuits or marine or aquatic systems.



■ Jack Tar

- Survival strokes
 - Demonstrate mastery of the crawl, sidestroke, breaststroke, and back stroke.
 - Swim ten minutes.
 - Tread water with hands above water for five minutes.
- Watercraft
 - Demonstrate basic skill completion of selected watercraft.
 - Demonstrate knowledge of basic maintenance of the watercraft.
 - Participate as crew if a larger vessel.
 - Demonstrate survival ability if vessel capsizes.
- Rope and splicing

In addition to knots, girls should be able to care for and repair rope including creation of splices to join two ropes.

 - Needle whipping
 - Short splice
 - Round splice
 - Eye splice
 - Coiling and uncoiling
- Navigation
 - Know how to use a map and compass.
- Badges

Start with Senior First Aid and then choose two of following Senior badges, using a marine focus.

 - Adventurer
 - Eco Explorer
 - Paddling
 - Truth Seeker
- Take Action project relates to water/marine issues.
- Explore career options related to nautical pursuits or marine or aquatic systems. Invite a subject matter expert to speak to the troop.



■ Seawoman

- Swimming
 - Swim 20 minutes.
- Watercraft
 - Lead use of selected watercraft.
 - Perform basic maintenance.
- Learn about navigational aids.
 - Buoys and beacons
 - Lights on vessels
 - Lighthouses
- Know about basic cloud formations.
 - Cumulus
 - Cirrus
 - Stratocumulus
 - Stratus
 - Cirrocumulus
- Demonstrate ship-to-shore communication.
 - Flag signaling
 - Flashing lights
 - Sound
 - Semaphore
 - Without signaling equipment
 - International Code of Signals
- Badges
 - Senior First Aid
 - Senior Girl Scout Way
- Take Action project relates to water/marine issues.
- Explore career options related to nautical pursuits or marine or aquatic systems. Explore opportunities to meet with professionals whose careers are on or in the water. Arrange a visit to their worksites.

**■ Old Salt**

- Swimming
 - Complete requirements for the American Red Cross Lifeguard Certificate.
- Watercraft
 - Repair watercraft as appropriate, e.g., strip and repaint, repair sails, or patch fiberglass.
- Navigation
 - Know how to create a route with bearings.
 - Know how to determine a reciprocal course
- Weather

Know small craft warnings by:

 - Signal flags
 - Pennants
 - Lights at night
 - Official weather map
 - Barometer
- Communication

Demonstrate ship-to-shore communication.

 - Flag signaling
 - Flashing lights
 - Sound
 - Semaphore
 - Without signaling equipment
 - International Code of Signals
- Required badges
 - Ambassador First Aid
 - Water
- Elective badges—choose one of these Ambassador badges:
 - Ambassador Girl Scout Way
 - Eco Advocate
 - P&L
 - Ultimate Recreation Challenge
- Take Action project relates to water/marine issues.
- Explore career options related to nautical pursuits or marine or aquatic systems. Explore opportunities to meet with professionals whose careers are on or in the water. Request a day to shadow them at work.



■ Helmswoman

- Swimming
 - Complete American Red Cross Water Safety Instructor course.
- Watercraft
 - Teach basics of selected watercraft.
- Two badges OR one Journey
 - Journey
 - Your Voice, Your World with a marine focus
 - Ambassador badges
 - Required badge: Public Policy
 - Elective badges: any not chosen for Old Salt
- Take Action project relates to water/marine issues.
- Explore career options related to nautical pursuits or marine or aquatic systems. Explore opportunities to meet with professionals; consider asking them to mentor those girls interested in a career on/in/near the water.



Appendix: Marine Craft Skills and Resources

Appendix A: Marine Craft Skills

GENERAL INFO

- Boat types: skiff, sloop, catboat, catamaran, schooner, brigantine (wind jammer), barque/bark (clipper)
- Boat terms: port, starboard, windward, leeward
- Types of sails: mainsail, junk, jib, genoa, gaff
- Types of knots: clove hitch, bowline, figure eight, rolling hitch, monkey fist

ROWBOATS, SCULLS, RACING SHELLS

- Identify:
 - Parts of the boat
 - Parts of the oar
- Be able to:
 - Select oars for correct length and balance
 - Board and cast off
 - Land and debark
 - Dock and moor
- Demonstrate:
 - Sculling
 - Backwater
 - Feathering
 - Hand paddling
 - Paddling with a single oar

CANOES

- Identify the parts of a:
 - Canoe
 - Canoe paddle
- Be able to:
 - Board and launch a canoe
 - Beach or dock a canoe
- Demonstrate:
 - Pushover stroke



- Draw stroke
- Stern pry stroke
- J-stroke
- Sweep stroke
- Bow stroke
- Stern paddling
- Tandem paddling
- Paddling with a passenger
- Solo paddle
- Canoe-over-canoe rescue

SAILBOATS

- Identify:
 - Major parts of a sailboat and function of each
- Be able to:
 - Prepare a boat for sailing
 - Rig a boat
 - Set sail
 - Cast off
 - Dock and moor your craft
 - Leave a boat shipshape
 - Mend a sail
 - Rig a jury mast
- Keep sails trimmed:
 - Close-hauled
 - Reaching (close and broad)
- Demonstrate:
 - Running
 - Coming about (tacking)
 - Jibbing
- Be able to handle the following emergencies:
 - Capsizing
 - Loss of the rudder
 - Sailing only under the mainsail or only the jib
 - Broken shroud or stay



KAYAKS

- Identify:
 - The different types of kayaks
 - Parts of a kayak
 - Parts of the kayak paddle
- Be able to:
 - Board and launch a kayak
 - Beach or dock a kayak
- Demonstrate:
 - Forward stroke
 - Reverse stroke
 - Draw stroke
 - Sweep stroke
 - How to paddle with matched and feathered blades

STAND-UP PADDLE BOARDS

- Identify:
 - Parts of a stand-up paddle board
 - Parts of the stand-up paddle board paddle
- Demonstrate
 - How to size a paddle
 - Forward stroke
 - Reverse stroke
 - Draw stroke
 - Sweep stroke
 - Cross bow stroke

POWERBOATS (Note: *Safety Activity Checkpoints* does not permit girls to drive powered boats.)

- Identify:
 - Four common types of motorboats
 - Major parts of outboard motorboat or small cruiser
 - Engine parts (gasoline and diesel) and function of each
- Check off that you are able to prepare a boat for casting off:
 - Bilge
 - Ignition
 - Fuel
 - Safety equipment
 - Cast off
 - Moor or dock
 - Leave a boat shipshape and safe



Appendix B: Valuable Resources

IMPORTANT DATES

- May 22, National Maritime Day
- June 8, World Ocean Day
- UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021–2030)
- August, National Water Quality month

EDUCATION

- Ocean Literacy Under Sail
- Sea Education Association
- National Marine Educators Association
- The GLOBE Program: Global Learning and Observations to Benefit the Environment
- Organizations and Nautical Museums
- Mystic Seaport Museum
- Los Angeles Maritime Institute
- Sound Experience
- Tall Ships America
- Ocean Conservancy
- The Association of Zoos and Aquariums
- Council of American Maritime Museums

ASSOCIATIONS

- United States Sailing Association
- Women's Aquatic Network
- National Maritime Historical Society
- American Sailing Association
- National Association of State Boating Law Administrators
- National Safe Boating Council (NSBC): provides lists of partners and state boating courses
- North American Marine Environmental Protection Association (NAMEPA)
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)—Marine Protected Areas
- National Boating Federation
- American Canoe Association
- United States Dragon Boat Association
- Student Angler Federation
- World Organization for Model Shipbuilding and Model Shipsport (NAVIGA)
- US Windsurfing
- American Kayaking Association
- Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI)
- National Association of Underwater Instructors (NAUI)



CAREERS

To find maritime-related careers, do a key word search online using words such as marine, maritime, nautical, aquatic ecology, marine animal, and marine biology.

SONGS

- “Barges”
- “Row, Row, Row Your Boat”
- “Home from the Sea”
- “Sailing, Sailing”
- “Baby’s Boat”
- “Sloop John B”
- “Michael Row the Boat Ashore”

COMMUNICATIONS ON THE WATER

Semaphore is system of sending messages by holding the arms or two flags or poles in certain positions according to an alphabetic code. Multiple online tutorials are available, or Mariners can engage local experts for guidance and training.

International Code Flags is a system of internationally recognized alphabetical and numerical flags and pennants that can be used to communicate on the open water. The set is also known as International Code Signal and the nautical flag alphabet. More information is available online or can be obtained from speaking with local experts.