



SELKIES

DEMEANOR: Selkies are a gentle folk who appear to be Grey Seals but have the ability to take human form by casting off their seal skins. They are also known as Silkies, Selchies, or Roanes.

Selkies prefer cold open waters for feeding, generally traveling alone or in small groups when looking for food. Their diet consists of fish, squid, octopus, and small crustaceans. They occasionally eat seabirds as well. In human form, they will eat most things that humans eat, but retain their preference for seafood and meat. Selkies will often gather in larger groups on isolated shores to dance in the moonlight, or on sunny days may be found basking in the sun on outlying rocks, either in seal form or often in human form. If disturbed while in human form, they will quickly grab their seal skins and rush back to the safety of the sea.

Young Selkies, especially the males, often develop wanderlust, travelling great distances, exploring both the waters and nearby lands along the shores of the lands.

During this time of wandering, male Selkies are very amorous and often make expeditions ashore to court human women, particularly those unsatisfied with their current relationships. Selkie males will seldom stay with these women, preferring to return to the sea and their travels fairly quickly.

It is said that should a woman wish to have an encounter with a Selkie, she should make her way to a suitable rock along the shore, then at high tide, shed seven tears into the sea. A young Selkie male will come ashore shortly, removing his seal skin and approach the woman as a handsome young man.

Usually after three to five years of wandering, Selkies will settle down, often, but not always, returning to the waters where they were born.

Selkie women do not normally seek human lovers, but occasionally a human male will obtain the seal skin of a careless Selkie. The beautiful maiden is then trapped in human form and is forced to marry her captor and bear him children. Often the Selkie or her children will eventually find the hidden seal skin and she will return to the sea.

While Selkies may have an adventurous youth, they normally eventually settle down into a monogamous relationship with another Selkie. Young are usually conceived in a four to six week period in the spring when Selkies gather in larger groups ranging from a dozen to close to two hundred on isolated beaches and shores on clear spring nights, courting each other and celebrating reunions with friends. This leads up to the Midsummer's

Eve festival when many marriages are formalized and many pups are conceived. Gestation lasts from ten months to a year, with most pups being born in early spring. Females usually give birth to a single pup at a time, but occasionally give birth to twins.

The offspring of Selkie and human unions are normal humans, but often have webbed hands and feet. **APPEARANCE:** In seal form, Selkies resemble Grey Seals. The males are much larger than the females, often weighing up to three times as much.

In seal form, males range from 375 pounds up to 880 pounds. Females range from 220 pounds up to 572 pounds.

Selkies in human form will weigh roughly half of what they weigh in seal form. They usually appear slim and graceful when in human form, although older males will start to appear bulkier with thicker necks and shoulders and larger rounded noses. Selkies that spend a considerable amount of time in human form tend to stay near the lighter end of the scale, the Selkies that spend most of their time in seal form are the ones that reach the larger sizes.

In seal form, males can grow close to ten feet long although slightly over eight feet long is more typical. Females can reach a length of seven feet. Selkies in human form will be slightly more than three quarters as tall as they are long in seal form, averaging 6'0" for males, 5'4" for females

In seal form, selkies vary in appearance from being whitish with black markings to being almost black with white specks and blotches. Generally the males are darker in color than the females. Actual coloration varies considerably, all shades of gray, brown, black and silver may be found.

Pups are born white with a yellowish tint. The eyes are usually large and dark in color and are the one feature that changes very little between seal form and human form.

In human form, young Selkies usually have very white unblemished skin, as they get older the skin color darkens, again, the females are generally lighter and the males darker. The skin usually remains unblemished although there may be some light freckling that is reminiscent of the speckles and blotches on the seal skin. Hair is usually dark in color.

In human form, selkies will adopt the clothing and styles of the population they are mingling with, although they tend to avoid wearing fur or skins, preferring to wear cloth garments.

In seal form Selkies do not wear clothing and seldom wear any sort of decoration. On rare occasions they will wear a favourite necklace.



LIFESPAN: Selkies have an average lifespan of 80 years although a few exceptional individuals have lived as long as 100 years.

CULTURE: Selkies normally have Aquatic Culture as their default culture, but if a selkie was captured in it's youth, or for some other reason spends most of it's life on land in human form, they could belong to any of the cultures available to humans..

SPECIAL ABILITIES:

Shapechanger - Selkies appear to be Gray Seals in most respects, but have the ability to cast off their seal skins and assume human form. Selkies require the seal skin to return to their seal shape, and if this is stolen or lost they become trapped in human form.

Intense Eyes - Selkies in human form appear very beautiful and almost irresistible to normal humans. They have the Intense Eyes talent, which gives them a +10 to all skills in which they interact with other people (Duping, Bribery, Interrogation, Diplomacy, Seduction, etc). Their eyes must be visible to whomever they are talking to for them to gain this bonus.

Strong Lungs - This talent allows Selkies to hold their breath for 10 seconds plus 1 minute per Constitution bonus, minimum 10 seconds in human form, minimum of 10 minutes in seal form. In seal form Selkies can also dive up to 475 feet deep.

Base Height & Weight			
Race	Base Height	Base Weight	Weight Modifier
Selkie, Male	6'0"	250	6
Selkie, Female	5'4"	150	5

Starting Ages			
Race	Adulthood	Lifespan	Increment
Selkie	17	80	2

Racial Characteristics													
Race	Racial Stat Modifiers								Endurance	Power Points	Resistance Bonuses		
	St	Co	Ag	Qu	SD	Re	In	Pr			Stamina	Will	Magic
Selkie	0	+3	+2	+2	0	0	0	+4	+30	+30	+15	+5	+10



AQUATIC

There are many races that live below the surface of the water. Some races, such as Merman spend most of their lives below the surface, others such as Selkies, venture onto land, but are most comfortable in the water. These races live in small communities and in great cities, close to shore and at the bottom of the ocean.

In some ways, life is not so different for these submarine races as it is for folk who live on dry land. Aquatic societies must harvest and gather food, breed and raise families to perpetuate themselves. In the cities folk gather to scheme over power, wealth and knowledge. Nations form and sometimes dissolve. Civilizations go to war with other over territory, wealth and, sometimes, nothing more than pure hatred.

But on the other hand, it simply will not do to just transplant land-based culture templates and impose them on Aquatic societies. Aquatic races are different from land-based races in terms of their physiology, which in turn affects the skills that they practice during adolescence. It affects the races with which they frequently come in contact and the neighbours with whom they must learn to get along (and therefore the languages that they know as a matter of course). And the fact that they live immersed in water affects the clothing that they wear, the gear that they carry and the weapons that they use.

PREFERRED LOCATIONS:

Aquatic cultures are found in the oceans and large lakes, wherever underwater races can find enough room to spread out. Most Aquatic communities take hold on the continental shelf, relatively close to a major land mass. But some civilizations live on the seabed in the deep ocean.

DEMEANOR:

Aquatic cultures mirror their land-based counterparts in some of the ways in which they view their place in the world. Some Aquatic folk are content to live small settlements, harvesting

underwater plants, hunting fish and gathering shellfish to feed themselves. Others build great

cities and nations and fancy themselves conquerors as mighty as any land-based realm.

Aquatic folk are, as a general rule, suspicious of all land-based creatures and races. They feel more comfortable around other water-based races, and they feel this elemental bond even with their underwater enemies. This doesn't mean that Aquatic races never associate with or



accept help from land-based beings, but it does reflect the fact that almost all Aquatic races have great difficulty functioning in land-based environments.

For most Aquatic beings—even many of those that are truly amphibious— spending too much time out of the water is unnerving, if not fatal. As sailors fear death by drowning, Aquatic folk fear death on land.

CLOTHING & DECORATION:

Aquatic folk scarcely bother with clothes, as landbased beings know them. Most plant fibers, as well as all wool, furs and animal hides simply degrade too easily when constantly soaked in water (especially seawater). And besides, those garments become dead weight when saturated. Many Aquatic folk don't bother with clothes at all. When they do, they dress in simple garments woven from seaweed fibers. Sometimes they are nothing more than loincloths worn out of modesty.

The wealthier Aquatic civilizations have just as much jeweled finery as their land-based counterparts, however, and do not hesitate to wear it as a demonstration of wealth and social status.



STARTING LANGUAGES: Racial Language (S 6/ W 5)
Common (S 4/W 3)

Adolescent Skill Ranks	
Cultural Skills	Aquatic
Ambush	0
Animal Handling	0
Appraisal	0
Armor	0
Attunement	0
Climbing	0
Crafts *	1
Endurance	2
Healing	1
Herbcraft	1
Jumping	0
Locks & Traps	0
Lore (Local Region)	2
Navigation	2
Perception	2
Riding	0
Runes	0
Stalking & Hiding	2
Swimming	3
Tracking	0
Weapon Skills**	2
Weapon Skills ***	2

*Select one craft skill
**Select one melee weapon group
***Select one missile weapon group

REFERENCES

Additional information on Gray Seals can be found on these websites:

- <http://www.bergen.org/Smithsonian/GreySeal/index.HTM>
- <http://nationalzoo.si.edu/Animals/OceanLiving/Facts/graysealfacts.cfm>
- <http://www.press.jhu.edu/books/walker/pinnipedia.phocidae.halichoerus.html>

Additional information and stories about Selkies can be found on these websites:

- <http://www.orkneyjar.com/folklore/selkiefolk/index.html>
- <http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Forum/4611/fairyS.html#Selkies>
- <http://www.wku.edu/~rob.harbison/kim/selkies.html>
- <http://echoes.devin.com/selkie/selkie.html>