

# The Marai

Native To Mariah VI, the Marai are an humanoid amphibious species who populate the sixth planet of their solar system. Once technologically advanced, the Marai were reduced to a near-Stone Age existence following a massive planetary crustal collapse.

## Personality

The Marai possess a vibrant *joie de vivre*, and seem determined to savor (if not necessarily enjoy) every moment that life brings them. Haggling (particularly over trade goods) is a cultural past-time and planetary art form- let the buyer beware. Even if the price does not change a single farthing, neither side is truly happy unless the “proper forms and motions” have been gone through. It is important to note that while the Marai are (generally) honest (and that few go out of their way to actually *cheat* a customer), hucksterism seems bred in their bones.

Public debate and philosophical arguments (on every imaginable subject) occupy public squares, city streets, and information nets- with shockingly little rancor. Federation observers have noted that it is almost impossible to offend a Marai- they regard rhetorical personal attacks as a sign of weakness and simply refuse to take offense.

## Culture

The Marai are a boisterous, brash, lively people- gregarious, out-spoken, and blustery without being confrontational. Their artwork is vivid and their music is vibrant- and often *loud*. They trend toward the more plastic arts rather than the abstract, though the formidable (and formulaic) Pre-Collapse architecture has been replaced with more organic and contemporary design.

Given the scarcity of unblighted and/or arable land, the Marai are very careful in husbanding their resources. Most power is generated from hydro-thermal vents in the sea floor, and sea-farming is the primary vocation of the Marai. As a people, the Marai are reluctant to throw away anything that might be useful, and recycling and re-use programs are ubiquitous. Some of these items are (illicitly) repurposed into Pre-Collapse “artifacts” and it is not unheard of for machinery in operation today to have been built (or repaired) using genuine Pre-Collapse parts.

Most permanent cities are built on platforms anchored to the sea bed while others are free-floating, drawn by the seasonal currents.

Despite the (heretofore) uncatalogued and abundant mineral and material wealth, these resources will need to be developed before they can be of profit. The largest net export of the Marai consists of “authentic Marai Imperial artifacts”- a variety of small trade goods comprised alternately of scavenged (ruined) tech, folk crafts, and other items of dubious provenance. The Marai claim to have founded an interplanetary empire prior to the crustal collapse, but actual evidence for this claim is lacking.

## Physiology

The tallest Marai stand just a little over 1.5m (a little under five feet) in height and they average around 68 kilograms (150 lbs) in mass. The Marai morphology can be (charitably) described as “pear-shaped” with large heads, narrow shoulders swelling to out-sized hips and skinny legs. Marai limbs (arms and legs) and digits (fingers) are longer than those of humans and their eyes and mouths are significantly larger. Marai vision and olfactory senses are very-slightly poorer than human norms but their auditory ranges are nearly identical. The Marai have both lungs and a semi-permeable, frog-like skin which allows them to spend significant amounts of time underwater. They must also take care to remain properly hydrated while on land- and, as a result, prefer environments which humans would consider oppressively humid. Interestingly, the Marai never learned to communicate underwater except in the simplest of terms or with technological assistance.



# The Marai

## Government

The Marai people are governed by the Council of Matriarchs, a semi-representative oligarchy comprised of nine elected representatives and the nine hereditary matriarchs of the most powerful historical clans.

Marai laws are very similar to those of the Federation- common sense prohibitions against theft or injury to persons or property and careful respect for inalienable natural rights.

## Homeworld

Marai VI is a damp, swampy Class M world with broad shallow seas. Roughly a thousand years ago, Marai VI suffered a catastrophic crustal collapse in which the planet lost ten percent of its planetary diameter and the topography was radically altered- broad plains and high mountains become low-lying salt marshes and islands.

The societal collapse which followed led to widespread warfare among the desperate survivors. Chemical and radiological warfare (and some accidental releases) among the survivors further poisoned the landscape and nearly reduced the population below viable minimums. Since that time, the Marai have a cultural aversion to advanced weaponry and heavily-armed warships in their system- meaning that all interplanetary travel is performed by shuttlecraft or merchant vessel.

Almost a thousand years later, the planet has healed- but the scars still remain. Roughly 94% of the planet is covered (to varying degrees) by water and roughly three-quarters of the remaining arable land is contaminated with radioactive or toxic chemical residue.

## Technology

Having clawed back from near-extinction, the Marai are on a rough technological par with Earth of the late-Twentieth to Mid-Twenty-First Centuries. They possess an advanced communication and transport infrastructure, and scientific and medical advancements are on-par with expectations for their culture's level of development.

## Interstellar Relations

Despite considerable public debate/dissent, the Council of Matriarchs has petitioned for Federation membership, but- for the time being- the Marai remain independent (if allied) with the Federation. Initial trade relations have been formed and teams from the Federation Science Council have arrived to provide technical support and materiel aid in reclaiming blighted lands. A small number of Marai serve as exchange officers aboard Federation starships.

A handful of foreign traders and merchants have visited the Marai, but little has (yet) come of this contact, though that may change in the future.

## Species Adjustment

+1 Daring, Fitness, Presence.

**Trait:** Marai. Squat, toad-ish amphibians, Marai are determined to experience life to its fullest. They are equally at home in water or on land, but are somewhat vulnerable to high salinity levels.

## Species Talents

### Talents:

Amphibian Agility: Marai are excellent swimmers and their cartilaginous skeletal structure grants them an advantage in confined spaces. When you attempt a **Fitness** test to maneuver through water or within a tight space, gain one additional d20 in your dice pool.

### Notes:

The Marai first appeared in the Star Trek Adventures mission "Puddlejumpers" by Roger Taylor.