

SEA SCOUT SHIP 9 SUMMER CRUISE 2026

ALAMEDA, MONTEREY, SAN FRANCISCO, SACRAMENTO, ALAMEDA

Happy people, a crew working together, operating a boat, docking and casting off, navigating, steering, cooking and washing dishes together, and bursting into song like in an old-fashioned Broadway musical. I was part of that joy as a guest for five of the 14 days of the annual Summer Cruise aboard the Sea Scout boat Seafox.

Sea Scouts is part of Scouting America (formerly Boy Scouts of America) for all genders, ages 14 through 20. The scouts planned the cruise and sailed the 67-foot power boat under the watchful eyes of US Coast Guard Licensed Skipper Ken Shupe, who started in scouting as a young boy and has been Skipper since 2014, growing the program from a few active scouts to more than two dozen. Skipper Shupe said that they average almost 90 days of water activities per year, from an inflatable zodiac to rowing and sailing dinghies, 26-foot rowing whaleboats, skiboat, a 41-foot sailboat, and a 67-foot powerboat. He said, "We are here to give scouts confidence to be leaders to their peers, communities, and future careers..." He emphasized that the scouts have "Fun and learn something along the way."

Sea Scout Ship 9 Committee Chair Will Pallas emphasized Sea Scouts' coed youth leadership and maritime and life skills. Scouts learn about themselves and working with others to get things done, and environmental stewardship. Elliot Tenorio, a rising tenth grader, said, "For me, this summer cruise was finding out who I am, and for that I am ever grateful for this opportunity. Sea Scouts for me has helped me in many ways ... and [I] will continue to participate for the years to come."

Beginning at the home dock at Ballena Bay, Alameda, the scouts cruised south in the ocean to Santa Cruz and Monterey. Then back under the Golden Gate Bridge to dock at Pier 39 in San Francisco. Junior Officer Sadie Cosby, a rising sophomore at Oregon State University, majoring in Environmental Science, said, "We've sighted over a dozen humpback whales, several pods of Pacific white-sided dolphins, and large flocks of migrating sooty shearwaters... We were treated to a blue whale sighting, and a pod of Risso's dolphins." In the spirit of environmentalism, the boat slowed, and scouts picked up floating trash, mylar party balloons which had been released on land. According to the US Fish and Wildlife Service, mylar is not biodegradable and should be disposed of in the trash. Fish, whales, dolphins, and other marine animals get tangled in the long string and eat the sparkly mylar because it looks like food, but it causes death.

The boat cruised back under the Golden Gate Bridge. After San Francisco, the scouts anchored off Angel Island and spent a day hiking and exploring before heading up the Delta to Sacramento with stops at Benicia, Pittsburg, and Walnut Grove. Then, homeward bound, stopping to provision, scouts practiced boating skills, swam, went tubing, and learned to water ski.

Bosun Finn Zijlstra, a rising high school senior, summed up his experience saying, "Twenty-four teenagers running a former workboat down the coast of California for two weeks sounds like an interesting way to spend your summer, but there really is no better experience. From learning how to operate small boats in the Monterey Bay to swimming in the California Delta, our summer cruise lets us spend time together in and on the water and build our boating skills. We run a unique program, and over the course of my time in scouts, I have seen the ways we are able to serve our community. I

have no more important memories than my time on the Seafox. Being part of our community and leading my crew through our adventures has built me into the person I am today.”

Scouts and adult leaders may register and participate in Sea Scouts and other Scouting America units such as troops, Girl Scouts, and Explorers at the same time. The scouting units may be in different scouting councils. One registration fee covers registrations in multiple Scouting America units and councils. If you are interested in information about Sea Scouts or joining Sea Scouts, please visit www.seafox9.org or Beascout.org.



Sea Scout boat at the dock in West Sacramento.

L-R back: Officer Josh Estrada, Jim Mehlinger, Will Pallas, Brody Esquer, Yeoman Zara Hinson, Ken Shupe, Junior Officer Roman Rishin, Executive Officer Tory Troisi, Natalie, Gavin McCoy, Skipper Emerita Krisie Babcock

L-R front: Galley Chief Sebastian Sanchez, Charlotte Hurowitz, Finn Zijlstra, Cameron Gambino, Bosun's Mate Johnny Oey, Junior Officer Tatiana Orellena, Elliot Tenorio, Brandon Taylor, Officer Aaron Christman

Not pictured but present on parts of the cruise: Sadie Cosby, Tiernan McClure, David Karp, Elizabeth Carhart, Mason Estrada, Officer Bee Christman, Executive Officer Alec Dru

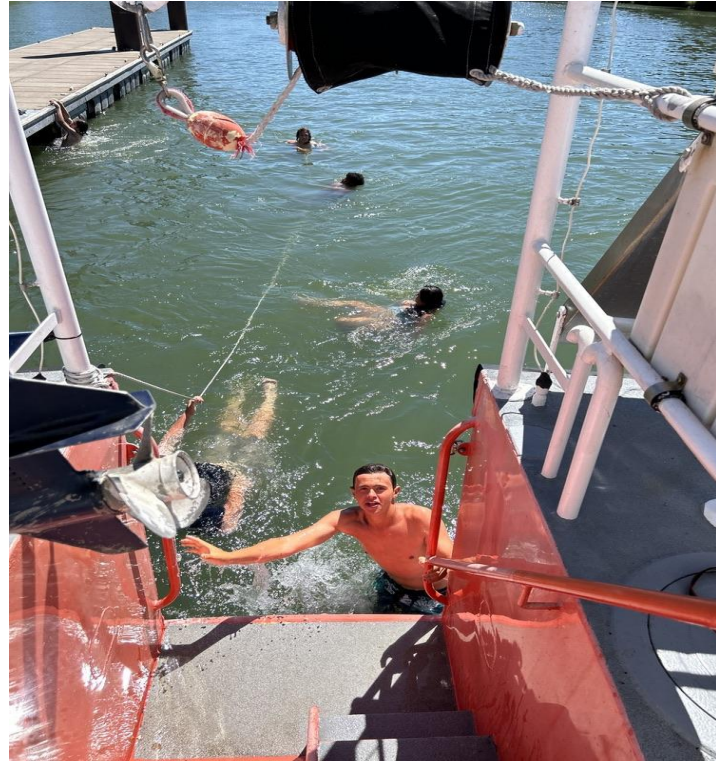
Scouts operated the boat under the watchful eyes of Skipper Ken Shupe, Committee Chair Will Pallas, Executive Officer Tory Troisi, Executive Officer Alec Dru, and Skipper Emerita Krisie Babcock.



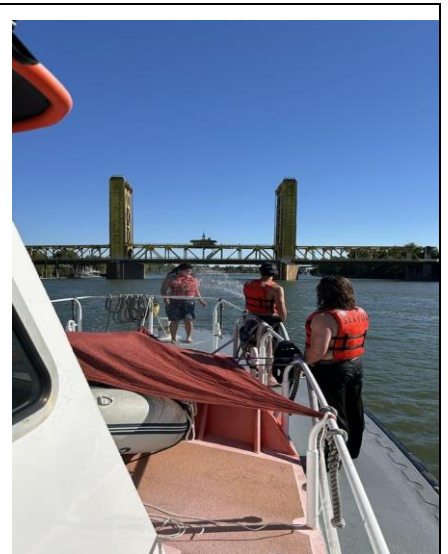
Left: Sadie Cosby steers under the Golden Gate Bridge; Brandon Taylor and Mason Estrata stand watch as lookouts. Right: Docking at the Sacramento Yacht Club on the Sacramento River.



Left: Zara Hinson, Jonny Oey, and Roman Rishin monitor the engines. Right: Zara Hinson calls on the hand-held radio to raise the Helen Madere Memorial Bridge across the Sacramento River at Rio Vista



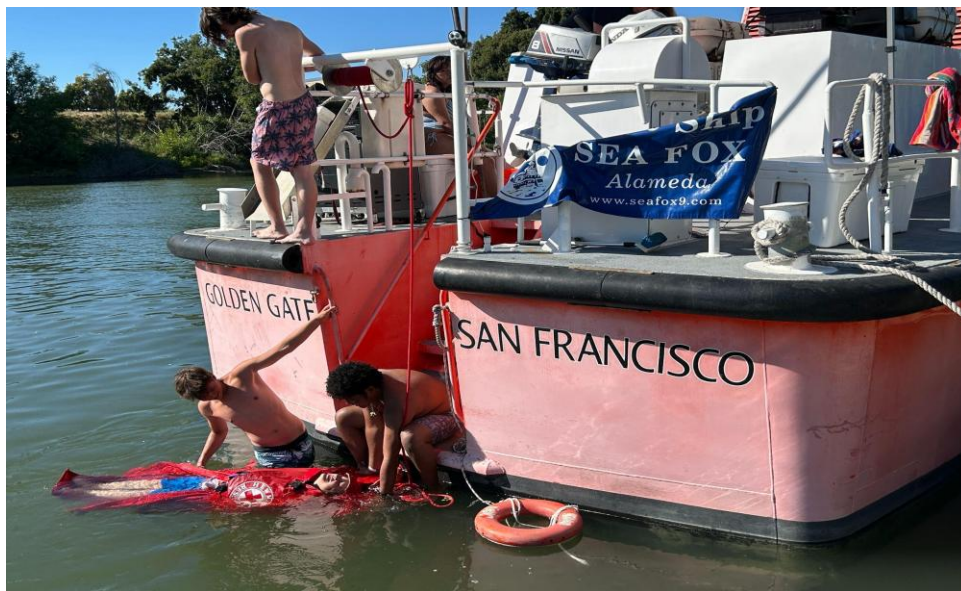
The mast was a popular hangout spot amid radar, electronics, and other navigational equipment used by scouts to safely pilot the boat, and there was lots of swimming off the back of the boat.



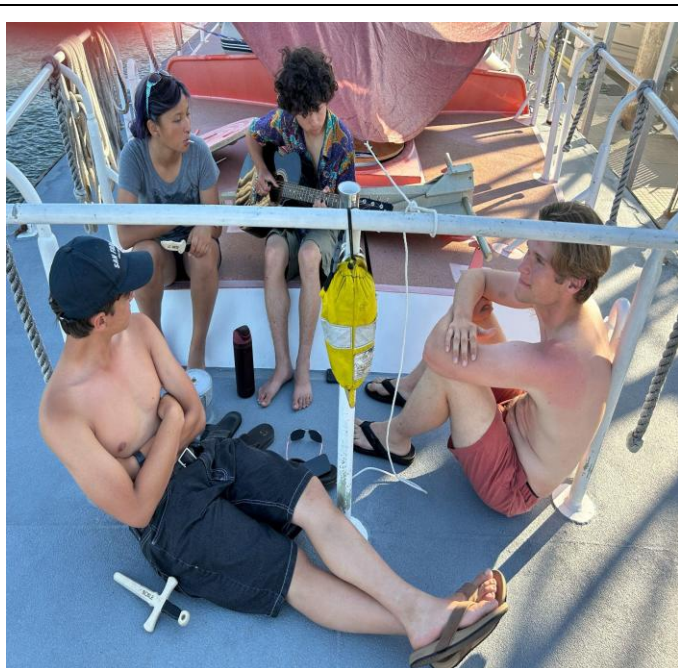
The boat is heated and air-conditioned inside, but outside was sometimes over 90 degrees. L-R: Roman Rishin, Brody Esquer, and Tatiana Orellena cool down in the spray from the fire hose on the Sacramento River (old paddle wheeler Delta King and iconic Tower Bridge, Sacramento in background).



L-R: Elliot Tenorio, Aaron Christman, Brandon Taylor. Elliot and Brandon got up on their first try water skiing.



Practicing water rescue. Brandon Taylor (victim), Roman Rishin, Josh Estrada, and Cameron Gambino (standing).



There was lots of music, singing, and fun. Aloha Night in Monterey Harbor toward the beginning of the cruise. Roman Rishin, Zara Hinson, and Finn Zijlstra listen to Johnny Oey toward the end.

Contributors:

Michael James Mehlinger, Finn Zijlstra, Zara Hinson, Josh Estrada, and Theodore Mehlinger Eisemon

Photo credits

Michael James Mehlinger, Ken Shupe, William Pallas, and Joshua Estrada

#####