BOOK OF EXTINCTION



5E COMPATIBLE

Discover Extinct Animals and Player Options Resurrected in 5th Edition

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BOOK OF EXTINCTION

Extinct Animals Raised to Life
For the 5th Edition of the World's Greatest Roleplaying Game



BOOK OF EXTINCTION



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BETA VERSION

This version of the Book of Extinction was released on 3/16/24.

The book is now edited and content complete!

With the final major pass on the book, we checked the CR of every monster, overhauled monsters that didn't really work, and tweaked mechanics everywhere. We also read and edited every sentence and double-checked some of the claims and statistics that weren't well supported in our research. Finally, we adjusted the layout of several pages to make reading and searching the book dramatically easier.

CONTENT TO COME

The following chunks of content are next on the development queue.

Polish. We'll keep cleaning up small mistakes as we find them and working on presentation details.

This work includes material taken from the System Reference Document 5.1 ("SRD 5.1") by Wizards of the Coast LLC and available at https://dnd.wizards.com/resources/systems-reference-document. The SRD 5.1 is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License available at https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/legalcode.

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Introduction

The *Book of Extinction* is a bestiary of extinct animals, resurrected through roleplaying games. Within its pages, you will find the real-life histories of the world's most famous extinct animals—the dodo, the thylacine, the saber-toothed tiger, and many more—giving you the opportunity to play alongside them in your 5th Edition game. This book also reimagines each extinct animal as a magical creature torn from the pages of a fantasy novel, transforming the docile dodo into an absurd denizen of the Feywild, and the saber-toothed tiger into a bloodthirsty weretiger.

Furthermore, this book provides a bevy of options to players: new endling player races, a complete set of subclasses, new spells, and more!

With the *Book of Extinction* in hand, you have the tools to reinvigorate your storytelling, allowing your 5th Edition game to grapple with ideas like mass extinction and ecological decline, letting players experience the despair of a species forever lost, and helping GMs find a ray of hope in the darkness, that the world can be healed and the crisis can be stopped.

Chapter Overview

This book is written for players and GMs alike, with each chapter principally dedicated to character options for players or monsters and adventures for the GM.

The first chapter, *Dead Races*, considers endlings—creatures which are the last of their species—as player characters. It also introduces six new races, each of which hangs on the precipice of extinction.

In the second chapter, *Subclasses*, players can choose from a dozen brand new subclasses that live in harmony with or draw experience from the natural world.

The *Extinct Bestiary* presents the real-world stories of extinct animals and their statistics as Beasts to be fought or befriended. Following each entry, the chapter reimagines each animal as a magical creature suitable for a fantasy world, drawing inspiration from that animal's legacy. Each of these extinct animals coexisted with humanity, many of them vanishing within recent memory.

By contrast, the Beasts recorded in the *Prehistoric Megafauna* chapter are monsters in their own right. Possessing incredible power and size, the monsters in this chapter originated in an earlier age, one in which humanity didn't exist or didn't yet dominate the globe.

Reduxed Monsters departs from the realm of reality and reimagines classic RPG monsters, such as dragons, gelatinous cubes, and giants, as fresh and unique fantasy creatures.

Applying the principles of conservation and ecology, the *Monster Extinctions* chapter considers what happens when monsters, such as owlbears, go extinct in a fantasy world, examining the risks for such extinctions and their ramifications.

Finally, the *Appendices* contains a great many tables: monsters by challenge rating, adventure hooks to introduce monsters into your campaign, and a timeline of the extinctions detailed in this book. It also contains a list of whimsical collective nouns for monsters, a glossary of the terms used within this book, and a full list of this book's citations to factual and primary sources.

Using this Book

The *Book of Extinction* builds upon the rules of 5th Edition with new options for players and GMs, opening up new ways to play the game and see the world.

A Toolkit of Options

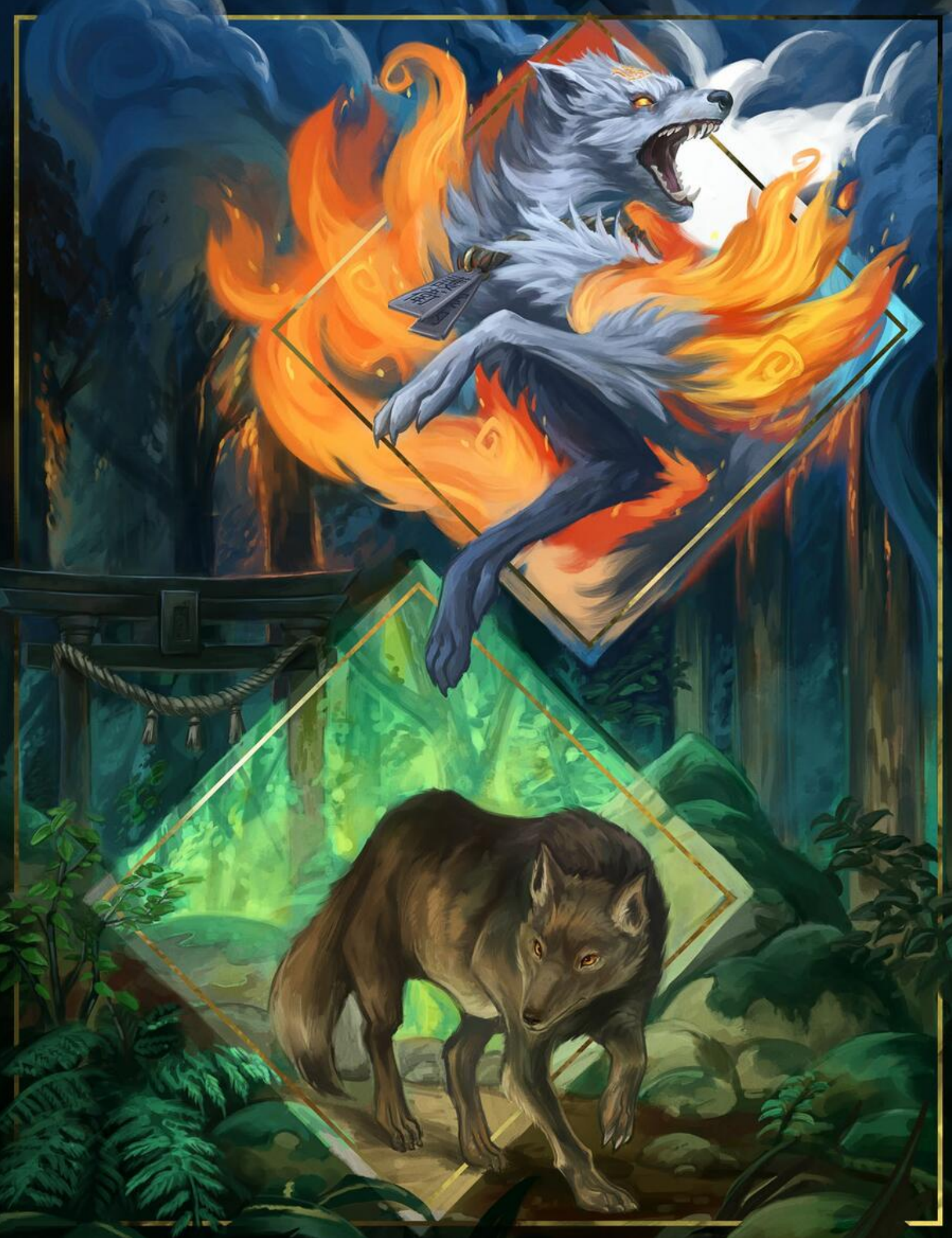
Think about this book as a content expansion for the 5th Edition core rules. Everything within its pages is optional, and you pick and choose which elements are suitable for your game. Because it harmonizes with the game's core design principles, the *Book of Extinction* should be compatible with any setting and supplemental book, and even other roleplaying games that utilize a similar ruleset.

Informative and Engaging

With a captivating blend of science and fantasy, the *Book of Extinction* serves dual purposes as an educational tool for all ages and a thrilling expansion to your favorite roleplaying game. Players can seamlessly encounter the stories of extinct animals as friends, foes, or magical familiars, while GMs can immerse themselves in the over eighty stories of extinction throughout the book. With some luck, this book might spark a student's interest in biology or inspire someone to donate their time or money to conservation.

Transformative Storytelling

Few books—and fewer roleplaying games—confront topics such as scarcity, overhunting, and extinction. These elements are powerful tools for your storytelling, drawn from a crisis unfolding before our very eyes. Though these topics should be treated with care, the *Book of Extinction* makes them immediate and personal through the window of roleplaying, engendering in players a newfound compassion for animals and a deeper understanding of the extinction crisis.



Dead Races

Throughout the multiverse, a myriad of humanoid races create a vibrant tapestry of peoples and cultures. *You are not part of that tapestry.*

In this chapter, you will find imminently dead races which you embody as an endling—the very last of your kind. Your death carries not only the sting of individual oblivion but the death knell of your entire race. The endling races presented in this chapter can be played in any campaign setting, but each is an utterly unique specimen, an exception to the order that governs all other races.

This chapter first explores the idea of playing an existing race in an exceptional setting: one in which mankind teeters on the edge of total extinction following some catastrophic (or decidedly mundane) event. It then details some rules for making your character and presents seven new dead races that can be included in your game.

Dead Races in Your Campaign

Introducing endlings of any sort into your campaign promises emotional and narrative stakes for the plot and sets the stage for dramatic storytelling opportunities. You can drive any conventional fantasy race to the edge of extinction in your own campaign setting. Perhaps elves haven't been seen for generations or dragonborn are considered entirely mythical.

The singularity of an endling should be immediately apparent to those who encounter them. People often regard endlings as living ghosts or walking relics, or even mistake them for members of a more common race. Adventuring alongside such a creature would be akin to going on a road trip with the Loch Ness monster.

However, the mere existence of an endling in your campaign is a grim portent. The looming extinction of an entire race might allude to an existential threat in your campaign world, for if it can happen to that race, surely it could affect others. Perhaps this threat is a singular plot device, such as a dangerous magical artifact or a voracious species of creatures. An endling could also signify a precipitous global order—unwary civilizations on the brink of collapse, dwindling natural resources, or spiraling ecological systems that could spell disaster within years. Whatever force drove the endling's race to the brink of extinction should be a threat to be overcome or a terrible reality to be faced.

Choosing an Endling Race

Placing an imminent extinction scenario in your fantasy world will shape it into something utterly unique—and it needn't restrict the players' choices.

If a player decides to play an endling, such as those presented later in this chapter or an existing race that you have decided will be nearly extinct, make it clear that resurrection magic will be restricted for them. You can even allow multiple players or the entire party to play endling characters, as long as no NPCs of that type exist elsewhere in the world.

The player's choice of race paints a backstory with all the hallmarks of a ceaseless tragedy, leaving them without family, clan, or anyone of their kind. Furthermore, it places clear stakes on their adventuring career: death for them carries a terrible finality for an entire race, but perhaps a successful quest could yield some sort of catharsis for the fate of their race, or hope for a brighter future.



Case Study: The Last Human

You don't need extravagant rules to explore an endling's story: you can start with basic human stats and play a fighter—the very last human fighter. This section discusses how to roleplay the human endling in a campaign setting that has seen humankind driven to the brink of extinction.

The Road to Extinction

Doubtless, the most appealing story is that of a cataclysmic event: a targeted plague constructed by a mad lich, an alien threat from beyond the colors of time, or a magical superweapon evoking the Manhattan Project and its scientific masterminds. Perhaps this sets the stage for a post-apocalyptic campaign setting in which the characters struggle against a hostile environment and mutated wildlife. Or perhaps the world is mostly unchanged, aside from the ruins of humanity littering the landscape.

Perhaps the cataclysm was so sudden that there is faint hope for other survivors. Or perhaps you know for sure that you are the last human in the world.

However, the more ironic end would be the most predictable—that mankind meets its end due to the same reasons that nearly every other species does. The causes of most extinctions are the following:

1. ***Climate Change.*** When fertile soil becomes a dustbowl or entire coastlines are consumed by the sea, extinction looms on the horizon. Human-caused climate change is a disaster playing out in real-time around us, so it shouldn't strain the imagination to dream up a parallel version in your own campaign setting.
2. ***Habitat Loss.*** Humankind relies on a delicate web of constructed habitats and infrastructure, consuming natural resources to function properly. When farmers can't produce food or when clean water universally available, the very framework of cities and towns breaks down.
3. ***Invasive Species.*** The introduction of invasive species could spell disaster for humanity in two ways: if an invader eats our food, or if they simply eat us. The varieties of invasive species abound, so we leave the specifics as an exercise for the reader.
4. ***Pollution.*** Pollutants like industrial waste, non-recyclable materials, and nuclear fallout can decimate an ecosystem. Magical equivalents, like persistent spell effects and cursed magic items might create reciprocal effects in your campaign setting.
5. ***Population Growth.*** Land developed for human use like housing, agriculture, or recreation is land that other species can't use as a habitat unless it is deliberately designed for coexistence. Imagine which creatures in your fantasy world might have the power and population to displace humans in the same way.
6. ***Overutilization.*** Usually, mankind is the sole cause for overhunting or overfishing a species to extinction. The case could still be true in our own extinction. A global war or a particularly gruesome massacre could trigger the start of population collapse.

In whatever way your campaign world arrived at the moment of extinction, set it in stone: you are the last ever human. You are The Endling. There are no lost human settlements, and magic can't return your people to life. Even if it could, the same forces that drove your people extinct in the first place would do so again. You can hope for survival, but not recovery.

Furthermore, when you die, the souls of your race will be cut off from the rest of the mortal realm. Spells like *resurrection* and *clone* become impossible with the finality of your death.

An entire world of elves, dwarves, halflings, and orcs live on, but humanity will soon be a memory.

A Lonely World

Humanity might be all but extinct, but the world still turns. Various humanoid races like dwarves and elves continue their kingdoms almost unchanged. You might live a rich life among these humanoids, and you might even find an adopted family among them, but you can never replace what was lost.

Humans were a vibrant and optimistic people. Flawed, yes, but hopeful that they could overcome any problem with enough ingenuity and dedication. That spirit lives on in you, a flickering light in the gloaming dark. Explore as many avenues as you might, meddle with forbidden magic, and search the ends of the earth, and you will only confirm what you knew to be true: when you die, humanity dies with you.

You carry a heavy burden, but you get to choose how you carry it. Do you seek to leave behind a momentous legacy, for yourself and all of mankind? Do you prefer to live out your days in quiet contemplation, and embrace oblivion as a familiar friend? Or perhaps you choose to pursue an adventurous life, so that the last human will be remembered as an archetype of the people's ambition and heroism?

CAN'T WE FIX IT WITH MAGIC?

Spells that raise the long dead, such as *true resurrection*, seem like a ready-made solution for an extinction crisis. However, extinction has a kind of magnetism that is impossible to avoid. Even if one were to resurrect a few members of an extinct species, the same forces that drove them extinct would do so again. We call such members a "dead clade walking." They might survive for a while, but they can never recover to their previous numbers and avoid the pull of extinction. In the real world, for example, the passenger pigeon relied on huge chestnut and oak forests; without those forests, resurrected passenger pigeons are still doomed to extinction.

It's hard to convey the magnitude of these extinction forces, so fantasy settings need an additional wrinkle in order to parallel the real world: when a species or race goes extinct, the souls of the dead are forever cut off from the mortal plane. Extinct creatures can't be resurrected, consulted, or even magically cloned. Extinction sends reverberations through magic itself, enraging the gods and diminishing the world by degrees. With each extinction, the colors grow a little dimmer.

Because there is no magic that can remedy exploitation and overkill, this small change to the nature of resurrection allows a fantasy world to mimic the perils and consequences of extinction in the real world. Slowing the extinction crisis is a challenge that demands compassion, advocacy, education, and hard work. It should be no different in your campaign.

Half-Humans

Some fantasy settings present a safeguard against total extinction: perhaps you could raise children with an elf or dwarf? Are half-elves possible in this campaign setting, and if so, are they still "human?" Philosophical considerations aside, even your children will be indistinguishable from elves or dwarves after a few generations, with perhaps only a spark of human ambition or a pair of rounded ears to distinguish them from their peers.

Dead Races

The following races—the archon, kore, lob, paleosapien, primordial elf, and underfolk—are Dead Races, or more accurately soon-to-be-dead races. Extinction events of the past have left too few members of these races to recover, and they now inevitably slide toward nonexistence. You can assume the role of one of these endlings in your own campaign, but beware: your death means extinction for an entire race.

Creating your Character

When you choose a race other than human, follow the additional rules below to create your character:

Ability Score Increases. Once you have determined your character's ability scores, choose which of your character's ability scores are further increased due to their natural talents. Increase one score of your choice by 2 and increase a different score by 1, or increase three different scores by 1.

These ability score increases are included in the racial traits in this chapter, along with recommendations that fit each race's unique talents. Apply this rule regardless of the method you used to determine their ability scores.

Languages. Your character can speak, read, and write Common and one other language that you and your GM agree is appropriate. Most races have a language of their own—dwarves speak Dwarvish and elves speak Elvish, for example—but your character might speak a different language depending on their upbringing.

Appearance. No matter what the official descriptions say, there's no one canonical way an elf, dwarf, gnome, or tiefling should look. Your character can be of any height and weight that falls within its size category, and they can have any skin color, nose, eyes, hair, and build you want.



Archon

The hound-headed archons are an early creation of the gods, crafted as foot soldiers and worshippers in an era before mortal humanoids roamed the Material Plane. However, these immortal divine beings were never granted the ability to reproduce, and their numbers have dwindled since the dawn of time, down to a few dozen today.

Flawed Faith

Legions of archons once marched on the gates of the underworld, vanquishing demons and devils alike with their bites. Very few returned to the celestial planes, however, and the few that did were relegated to worshiping the divine host. Unfortunately, their clockwork certainty rendered them incapable of experiencing sincere faith. In this respect, they might be considered prototypes for mortalkind that would follow.



After countless centuries battling the legions of hell and serving minor divine causes, only a few archons remain, bearing grayed fur in their venerable age. Though they age extraordinarily slowly, archons never succumb to the passing of time.

Archon Traits

As an archon, you have the following traits:

Ability Score Increase. Increase one ability score of your choice by 2 and increase a different ability score by 1, or increase three different scores by 1.

Typical: Strength +2, Charisma +1

Creature Type. You are a Humanoid. However, spells and effects that specifically affect Celestials affect you as well.

Immortal Nature. Due to your celestial origins, you don't need to eat, drink, or breathe, and you are immune to disease. You can't die of old age.

Celestial Resistance. You have resistance to necrotic and radiant damage.

Divine Scrutiny. Your ears easily pick up the tonality of deceptions. You gain advantage on Wisdom (Insight) checks you make to determine if a creature is telling a deliberate lie. A creature can offer evasive answers, lies of omission, and accidental falsehoods without deliberating lying.

Vanquishing Bite. When you take the Attack action on your turn, you can replace one of your attacks with a bite infused with divine wrath. Your bite is an unarmed strike that deals radiant damage equal to 1d10 + your Strength modifier on a hit. If the target is an undead or a fiend, the damage increases by 1d10.

This damage increases by 1d10 when you reach 5th level (2d10), 11th level (3d10), and 17th level (4d10).

You can use your Vanquishing Bite a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus, and you regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest.

Kore



Kin to the monstrous gargoyles, korai are people with faultless skin of marble, or rarely of bronze, alabaster, or terracotta. They can live for up to a thousand years and spend their days hiding in plain sight: among the sculpture and monuments of other humanoids.

Korai trace their ancestors back to the Elemental Plane of Earth, where their forebears crafted elaborate subterranean cities that surpassed even dwarven architecture and masonry. Following a disastrous war against a kingdom of earth elementals, however, the kore emigrated to the Material Plane and took up residence among the statues of classical civilizations.

Endlessly patient, a kore can impersonate a statue for decades without moving an inch. Very few people notice when a kore is perched mere feet away, and most believe the entire race to be a myth.

Erosion of Years

The korai have been in decline for as long as human kingdoms have existed on the Material Plane. With the march of centuries, humanoid cities have built fewer statues, leaving korai fewer places to hide. Gargoyles take many of the remaining perches and ruthlessly hunt korai whenever they so much as move an inch. Moreover, each kore can only bear a child every two hundred years, so the population has never been able to grow as fast as it shrinks. Today, as few as three korai remain—all female.

Kore Traits

As a kore, you have the following traits:

Ability Score Increase. Increase one ability score of your choice by 2 and increase a different ability score by 1, or increase three different scores by 1.

Typical: Constitution +2, Wisdom +1

Creature Type. You are a Humanoid.

Size. You are Medium.

Speed. Your walking speed is 30 feet.

False Appearance. While you are motionless, you are indistinguishable from a statue. A creature that hasn't seen you move or act can discern your true nature with an Intelligence (Investigation) check. The DC for this check equals 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Dexterity modifier.

Natural Armor. Your marble skin provides you a base AC of 17 (your Dexterity modifier doesn't affect this number). You can use your natural armor to determine your AC if the armor you wear would leave you with a lower AC. A shield's benefits apply as normal while you use your natural armor.

Statuesque Nature. You don't need to eat, drink, or breathe. Additionally, you can hold perfectly still indefinitely and can remain perfectly still while taking a long rest.

Stone Shaper. You can cast the spell *stone shape* with this trait. When you cast it with this trait, you can only target a stone object of Small size or smaller or a section of stone no more than 1 foot in any dimension. You can only form the stone into weapons with which you have proficiency, suits of armor with which you have proficiency, and objects of Small size or smaller. Only you can wield these weapons or wear this armor proficiently.

Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma is your spellcasting ability for this spell when you cast it with this trait (choose when you select this race). You can also cast this spell with any spell slots you have of the appropriate level.

Lob

The Feywild abounds with magically-imbued creatures of all shapes and sizes, from diminutive fairies to ancient, sylvan giants. But not all of its fey diversity has survived the millennia. Evolution takes on a heightened pace in the faerie realm, where magic and trickery place an outsized role in daily survival, and those who fall behind simply vanish into the misty twilight.

One such forgotten fey race is the lob, close relative of the hob, or hobgoblin. A lumbering and kindly fey creature, lobs were driven from the faerie realm by the fey courts, irate with a pact gone sour. On the Material Plane, lobs fared poorly against violent and superstitious humanoids, and swiftly declined in population. A few remained as house servants, but they too have become a rarity.

Leisurely Giants

Tall, shaggy, and heavyset, lobs look akin to walking bison with reptile tails but are among the most peaceable and docile of fey creatures. Whenever possible, lobs seek to help others with small tasks, like housekeeping or fieldwork, in exchange for a saucer of milk or a loaf of bread. This congeniality has endeared some humanoids to lobs, but most others assume that the furry fey are demons, werecreatures, or man-eating monstrosities. As such, lobs have been hunted wherever they dwell on the Material Plane.

When at last there was a single lob remaining in the multiverse, the fey courts renounced their exile of the lobs. Too little, too late; perhaps a final taunt from the fey lords.



Lob Traits

As a lob, you have the following traits:

Ability Score Increase. Increase one ability score of your choice by 2 and increase a different ability score by 1, or increase three different scores by 1.

Typical: Charisma +2, Strength +1

Creature Type. You are a Fey.

Size. You are Medium.

Speed. Your walking speed is 30 feet.

Amicable. Attacks on the first round of combat against you have disadvantage. If you attack, cast a spell that affects an enemy creature, or deal damage to another creature, this effect ends early. You can't use this trait when you are surprised.

Favor Trade. You can take the Help action as a bonus action. Additionally, once within the next minute, the creature that you helped can also take the Help action as a bonus action to help you in return. Once you use this trait, you can't use it again until the creature helps you in return, or until 1 minute has passed.

You can use this trait a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus, and you regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest.

Powerful Build. You count as one size larger when determining your carrying capacity and the weight you can push, drag, or lift.

Tuck Away. When you take the Hide action, you can squeeze into a space large enough for a Small-sized creature without penalty.

Mandrake



The inscrutable mandrakes were a hybrid of plant and animal constructed by Mother Nature to act as delegates of her will. The tree-people of the old forests bled a ruby ichor and could subsist on sunlight and soil alone.

Forgotten Envoys

Mandrakes once planted and harvested their children in sacred groves, untouched since the dawn of time. With the proliferation of mankind, however, all of their groves have been corrupted or clear-cut to make way for villages and farmland. The remaining mandrakes are unable to plant future generations, growing ever more bitter and gnarled as they age.

Mandrake Traits

Because you are neither beast nor plant, you have the following characteristics:

Ability Score Increase. Increase one ability score of your choice by 2 and increase a different score by 1, or increase three different scores by 1.

Typical: Wisdom +2, Constitution +1

Creature Type. You are a Humanoid. However, spells and effects that specifically affect Plants affect you as well.

Size. You are Medium.

Speed. Your walking speed is 30 feet.

Plant Nature. Even though you are not fully a plant, you still possess many of the same traits as one. As long as you are in direct sunlight for at least 4 hours a day, you don't need to eat. Additionally, you can breathe through your leaves and extremities and you can absorb water and nutrients through your feet.

Emissary of the Trees. You are proficient in the Nature skill. Additionally, you have advantage on Charisma (Persuasion) checks you make to interact with Beasts and Plants.

Root Magic. You know the *shillelagh* cantrip and can target yourself with the spell, treating one of your limbs as a club for the duration of the spell. Starting at 3rd level, you can cast the *goodberry* spell with this trait, without requiring a material component. Starting at 5th level, you can cast the *barkskin* spell with this trait, without requiring a material component. Once you cast *goodberry* or *barkskin* with this trait, you can't cast that spell with it again until you finish a long rest. You can also cast either of those spells using any spell slots you have of the appropriate level. Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma is your spellcasting ability for these spells when you cast them with this trait (choose one when you select this race).

Entangling Vines. You can use your bonus action to cause grasping weeds and vines to sprout up from the ground around a Large or smaller creature you can see within 30 feet. Until the end of the creature's next turn, its speed becomes 0 and can't increase. This effect ends early if the creature takes the Disengage action. You can use this trait a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus and you regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest.

When you reach 3rd level, your Entangling Vines gain an additional effect based on the season in which you were harvested (choose when you select this race):

Spring. Your Entangling Vines can target an airborne creature within 30 feet of the ground, which is pulled safely to the ground when you use this trait.

Summer. Your Entangling Vines can move the target up to 10 feet to an unoccupied space on the ground or on a floor.

Autumn. Your Entangling Vines can affect a second creature within 5 feet of the first target.

Winter. The target takes cold damage equal to your proficiency bonus.

Paleosapien



Dinosaurs once roamed great portions of the Material Plane, dominating its jungles and fields through sheer size and ferocity. However, as the gods introduced more humanoids and monsters to the Material Plane and its habitats shifted away from sprawling jungles, dinosaurs were pushed to the margins of the world, relegated to undiscovered tropical islands, deep fens, and inaccessible plateaus.

Contrary to common belief, however, dinosaurs were not merely dull beasts. They possessed complex hunting and pack behaviors, most of which are now lost to time. The most intelligent of them—paleosapiens—were akin to modern humanoids, with their own cultures, languages, and gods.

Prehistoric Peoples

Paleosapiens resemble raptors with resplendent feathers that have borrowed humanoid posture and clothing. Though they once dominated the Material Plane alongside the dinosaurs, many of which they domesticated, they have been supplanted by humans, elves, dwarves, and so on. Only a few small enclaves of paleosapiens survived to modern centuries, and with adventurers reaching and plundering these isolated groups, only one paleosapien remains.

Paleosapien Traits

As a paleosapien, you have the following traits:

Ability Score Increase. Increase one ability score of your choice by 2 and increase a different ability score by 1, or increase three different scores by 1.

Typical: Dexterity +2, Intelligence +1

Creature Type. You are a Humanoid.

Size. You are Medium.

Speed. Your walking speed is 35 feet.

Bounding Escape. You can take the Disengage action as a bonus action on each of your turns. When you take the Disengage action, you can move through the space of any hostile creature as if it were difficult terrain.

Jurassic Instincts. Survival among colossal dinosaurs has granted your people an innate sense for survival. You have proficiency in one of the following skills of your choice: Nature, Perception, Stealth, or Survival.

Talons. You have talons on your feet that you can use to make unarmed strikes. When you hit with them, the strike deals 1d6 + your Strength modifier slashing damage, instead of the bludgeoning damage normal for an unarmed strike.

Raptoran Strike. As a bonus action, you can make one melee attack with your Talons. You can use this trait a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus, and you regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest.

Primordial Elf



The divinely created elves were ageless, perfect beings at harmony with nature. They walked the planes with ease and could change their forms at will to mingle with all living things. But due to the treachery of the drow spider goddess, the primordial elves were cast out of their god's domain, rendered mortal, and ultimately divided into dozens of peoples. A few of these primordial elves, imbued with their god's favor, persisted on the Material Plane, even while their kin were transformed by centuries in the Feywild. They wandered this plane for eons, watching civilizations rise and fall, and watching their own kin multiply.

Immortal Yet Lost

Primordial elves, also called the illumiar, don't age or grow infirmed. Of course, they were never truly born, either; each was created fully grown by the elven god, possessing the wisdom and experience of adults. Immortality doesn't provide a perfect safeguard from extinction, however. Throughout the eons, their numbers have been winnowed by the fangs of monsters, the spears of humanoids, and an encroaching madness that afflicts immortal beings. Now, there is only one: the last primordial elf.

Primordial Elf Traits

As a primordial elf, you have the following traits:

Ability Score Increase. Increase one ability score of your choice by 2 and increase a different ability score by 1, or increase three different scores by 1.

Typical: Dexterity +2, Wisdom +1

Creature Type. You are a Humanoid. You are also considered an elf for any prerequisite or effect that requires you to be an elf.

Size. You are Medium.

Speed. Your walking speed is 30 feet.

Ageless. You don't age, can't be aged magically, and suffer none of the frailty of old age. You can't die of old age.

Darkvision. You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it was bright light, and darkness as if it was dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

Keen Senses. You have proficiency in the Perception skill.

Trance. You don't need to sleep, and magic can't put you to sleep. You can finish a long rest in 4 hours if you spend those hours in a trancelike meditation, during which you retain consciousness.

Whenever you finish this trance, you gain a foretelling roll. Roll a d20 and record the number rolled. You can replace any attack roll, saving throw, or ability check made by you or a creature that you can see with the foretelling roll. You must choose to do so before making the roll. You lose this foretelling roll when you use it or when you finish a long rest.

Primordial Magic. You know the *thaumaturgy* cantrip.

Starting at 3rd level, you can cast the *guiding bolt* spell with this trait. Starting at 5th level, you can also cast the *alter self* spell with this trait. Once you cast *guiding bolt* or *alter self* with this trait, you can't cast that spell with it again until you finish a long rest. You can also cast either of those spells using any spell slots you have of the appropriate level.

Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma is your spellcasting ability for these spells when you cast them with this trait (choose when you select this race).

Underfolk

The language of Undercommon takes its name from its forebears, a nearly-forgotten race of mole people known as the underfolk. The once-profilific race of mole-like humanoids spanned entire continents with their causeway-tunnels and labyrinthine hideaways. However, as their society expanded, they eventually came into contact with the drow.

Peaceable Burrowers

As the drow expanded their merciless subterranean empire, their influence poisoned the ecosystem and stamped out competitors. Dwarven clans were forced up to mountain fortifications while grimlocks were driven even deeper into the bowels of the earth. When the drow encountered the underfolk, they mounted an assault down the very same causeway-tunnels that connected the far reaches of underfolk society. Though the drow remember it as a triumphant conquest, the reality was a massacre.

The remaining underfolk fled to the surface and established molehills near the surface, but without the sure protection of stone tunnels, the pacifistic underfolk soon dwindled in number. Rival tunnelers, like kobolds and goblins, invaded their hills and raided their stocks. Today, the great molehills stand abandoned and only a few underfolk remain—desperately out of place in the surface world.



Underfolk Traits

As an underfolk, you have the following traits:

Ability Score Increase. Increase one ability score of your choice by 2 and increase a different ability score by 1, or increase three different scores by 1.

Typical: Strength +1, Dexterity +1, Constitution +1

Creature Type. You are a Humanoid.

Size. You are Small.

Speed. Your walking speed is 30 feet, and you have a burrow speed equal to half your walking speed. You can dig through sand, earth, mud, or ice, but you can't burrow through solid rock.

Darkvision. You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were in dim light. You discern colors in that darkness only as shades of gray.

Claws. You can use your claws to make unarmed strikes. When you hit with them, the strike deals 1d6 + your Strength modifier slashing damage, instead of the bludgeoning damage normal for an unarmed strike.

Craven. When a creature you can see misses you with a melee attack, you can use your reaction to move 5 feet without provoking opportunity attacks.

Tremorsense. You can use a bonus action to focus on the vibrations of the earth. Until the end of your next turn, you can detect and pinpoint the origin of vibrations within 60 feet of you, provided that you and the source of the vibrations are in contact with the same ground or substance. This sense can't be used to detect flying or incorporeal creatures.

You can use this trait a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus, and you regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest.

Subclasses

By third level, each class offers a character-defining choice called a subclass that shapes their playstyle and introduces a novel theme for storytelling. These subclasses represent experience accrued through meticulous exploration, canny interaction, and deadly combat. In this chapter, you can find twelve new subclass options inspired by the natural world, one for each of the game's core classes.

While druids and rangers draw their magical power directly from nature, any class can represent a character that lives in harmony with the natural world, thrives in the wilderness, or finds inspiration from plants and animals.

Subclass	Level	Class	Description
Path of the Swamp	3rd	Barbarian	Calls earth, tree, and vine to war with their rage
College of Birdsong	3rd	Bard	Sings the power of flight into fellow adventurers
Evolution Domain	1st	Cleric	Evolves their allies and themselves to adapt and thrive
Primal Circle	2nd	Druid	Manifests beast companions of ancient, titanic species
Bestiarius	3rd	Fighter	Gladiator skilled in the tactics of bestial combatants
Way of the Dodo	3rd	Monk	Master of a psychedelic combat style, inflicting delirium and trances
Oath of Preservation	3rd	Paladin	Sworn protector of the natural world that halts death and commands the arena like a lair
Spiritbound	3rd	Ranger	Warden enhanced by a host of intangible nature spirits
Chameleon	3rd	Rogue	Skilled assassin hiding in the underbush
Mutagenic Bloodline	1st	Sorcerer	Becomes a fearsome physical combatant through chimeric mutations
The Swarm	1st	Warlock	Servant of a plane-hopping, psionic hive mind
School of Protomancy	2nd	Wizard	Studies the first spells ever cast with unparalleled magical flexibility





Path of the Swamp
Barbarian Subclass

There's a cold, dark world where the river meets the land. Every step forward could put you on solid turf or plunge you into black water. In this world, alligators and the Venus flytraps lie in wait to swallow the unwary once the knee-deep water and labyrinth of trees has eroded their will to continue.

However, the most fearsome denizen of the swamp isn't a giant alligator, black dragon, or a gnarled treant, but a barbarian, a fearsome warrior imbued with all of the land's malice. When the swamp is threatened by an external force, long-forgotten magic seizes a host, transforming them into a thing of crushing roots and choking vines, an avatar of the swamp's vengeance.

Thing of the Swamp
Starting when you choose this path at 3rd level, you are magically engulfed by vines and roots when you rage. These vines and roots extend out from you in a 10-foot radius and follow you as you move.

This area is difficult terrain for creatures you choose.

When you take the Attack action on your turn while raging, you can forgo one of your attacks to call vines from the ground to entangle a creature you can see within the area of difficult terrain. The target must succeed on a Strength saving throw (DC equals 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Strength modifier) or be restrained for the duration of your rage. You can only restrain one creature at a time using this ability. A restrained creature can use its action to repeat its saving throw against this effect, freeing itself on a success. If a creature succeeds its saving throw or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to this ability for the next 24 hours.

Bogborne
Also at 3rd level, you gain a swimming speed equal to your walking speed, and you can breathe underwater. Additionally, nonmagical difficult terrain costs you no extra movement.

Vine Snare
By 6th level, your roots and vines writhe with a life of their own. You can use your bonus action while raging to pull a Large or smaller creature you can see within 15 feet of you to an unoccupied space within 5 feet of you.

Lay Down Roots
Beginning at 10th level, you can magically extend roots from your body to draw restorative nutrients from the earth over the course of 1 minute. When you do so, you can spend one Hit Die to regain hit points as if you finished a short rest and you can cast the spell *speak with plants* to communicate with nearby flora.

Once you cast *speak with plants* with this feature, you can't cast that spell with it again until you finish a long rest.

Inescapable Mire
By 14th level, you can sense whenever a creature attempts to escape your roots. Your melee weapon attacks gain the Reach property if they didn't already have it. Additionally, when a creature within your area of difficult terrain moves, you can use your reaction to make a melee weapon attack against it.

College of Birdsong
Bard Subclass

As the legend goes, the first bards learned to sing from a nightingale, or perhaps a thrush. Each morning, the bird sang a splendid song that beckoned the sun to rise and flowers to bloom, and in turn every other bird joined the chorus. Bards which continue this tradition join the College of Birdsong and learn to sing as the nightingale once did.

Whistle in the Wind
Starting when you choose this college at 3rd level, you gain the ability to magically communicate through music with any Beast or Monstrosity that has a flying speed. The knowledge and awareness of such creatures is limited by their intelligence, but at minimum, they can give you information about nearby locations and monsters, including whatever they can perceive or have perceived within the past day. Furthermore, you have advantage on all Charisma checks you make to influence Beasts and Monstrosities that have a flying speed.

Birdsong
By 3rd level, you can bestow flight with your singing. When you give a creature a Bardic Inspiration die as a bonus action, you and that creature each gain a flying speed equal to your respective walking speeds. This effect lasts until the end of your next turn. When the effect ends, a flying target floats gently to the ground if it is still aloft.

Feather Charms
Beginning at 6th level, you can use your action to conjure a number of magical feathers equal to your Charisma modifier. When you conjure them, you can choose to bestow each feather to a willing creature within 60 feet of you. A bestowed feather floats around its willing creature; the rest float around you. A feather grants the following benefits:

- The creature gains a +2 bonus to its Armor Class and Dexterity saving throws.
- The creature's walking or flying speed increases by 10 feet.
- Opportunity attacks against the creature have disadvantage.

As a part of the action used to conjure the feathers or as an action on a later turn, you can expend a feather orbiting you and launch it at a target within 120 feet. Make a ranged spell attack. On a hit, the target takes 1d8 force damage for each point of your proficiency bonus + your Charisma modifier.

Unexpended feathers vanish after 1 minute. Once you use this feature to conjure feathers, you can't do so again until you finish a long rest. Starting at 10th level, you can use this ability twice, and regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest.

Chorus of the Sky
At 14th level, the flying speed granted by your Birdsong feature lasts for 1 minute. If a creature expends its Bardic Inspiration die, this effect ends at the end of its turn.

Additionally, a creature that has a Bardic Inspiration die from you can expend that die as a bonus action to take the Attack (one weapon attack only), Dash, Disengage, Dodge, or Hide action.

Evolution Domain
Cleric Subclass

There are few gods of the Evolution Domain; indeed, many gods oppose it outright. But the march of nature and the pressure of survival never ebbs, and so evolution continues with or without the gods' blessing.

Whether or not the first beasts were divinely constructed, those that live in the world today adapt to their environment over generations; those that fail to do so go extinct. In this way, evolution is an arbiter of living things, and an unspoken ethic of the multiverse: adapt or die. Clerics that understand the profundity of this system revere the Evolution Domain and carry its teachings far and wide.

Evolution Domain Spells

Cleric Level	Spells
1st	*jump, longstrider*
3rd	*darkvision, enlarge/reduce*
5th	*conjure animals, plant growth*
7th	*giant insect, polymorph*
9th	*contagion, legend lore*

Bonus Proficiencies
At 1st level, you gain proficiency in your choice of two of the following skills: Arcana, History, Nature, or Survival.

Evolutionary

Starting at 1st level, you have a pool of Evolution Dice, which are d4s, equal to your proficiency bonus that you can use to raise yourself and your allies to greater power. As a bonus action, you can choose a willing creature you can see within 60 feet, choose an ability score, and expend and roll 1 Evolution Die. The creature's chosen ability score increases by the number rolled, as does its maximum for that score, up to a maximum of 24. This increase lasts for 1 minute. A creature can have only one ability score increased by this feature at a time.

If a creature gains a bonus to its Constitution score using this feature, it gains temporary hit points instead of increasing its hit point maximum or current hit points. For +1 increase to the creature's Constitution modifier, it gains temporary hit points equal to its level. For a +2 increase, it gains temporary hit points equal to twice its level. These temporary hit points last for the duration of the ability score increase.

You regain all expended Evolution Dice when you finish a long rest.

Channel Divinity: Adaptation

Starting at 2nd level, you can use your Channel Divinity as a bonus action to grant a willing creature within 60 feet of you a transformative natural adaptation. The target chooses one of the following adaptations, which lasts for 1 hour:

Aquatic Adaptation. The target sprouts gills and grows webbing between its fingers. It can breathe underwater and gains a swimming speed equal to its walking speed.

Arboreal Adaptation. The target gains a climbing speed equal to its walking speed and grows a prehensile tail. You can hold and manipulate objects and weapons with your hands, feet, and tail, but you can't make attack rolls with weapons held by your tail, wield a shield with it, or lift more than 10 pounds with it.

Elemental Resistance. The target gains resistance to one of the following damage types of its choice: acid, cold, fire, lightning, poison, or thunder damage.

Natural Armor. The target develops tough, scaly skin. When the target isn't wearing armor, its base AC is 14 + Dexterity modifier. The target can use its natural armor to determine its AC if the armor it wears would leave it with a lower AC. A shield's benefits apply as normal while it uses its natural armor.

Natural Weapon. The target grows prominent horns, teeth, or claws (target's choice), which it can use to make unarmed strikes. When the target hits with them, the strike deals 1d8 + its Strength modifier, instead of the bludgeoning damage normal for an unarmed strike. The attack deals bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage, as appropriate for the natural weapon chosen.

Transient Awakening

Beginning at 6th level, you can use your action to touch a Beast or Plant and bestow sentience upon it for a short time. The creature must have either no Intelligence score or an Intelligence of 3 or less. The creature gains an Intelligence of 10 and the ability to speak one language you know. If the target is a plant, it gains the ability to move its limbs, roots, vines, creepers, and so forth, and it gains senses similar to a human's. Your GM chooses statistics appropriate for the awakened plant, such as the statistics for the awakened shrub or the awakened tree.

The awakened creature chooses whether to be friendly to you, based on how you treated it and creatures like it before it was granted sentience.

After 1 hour, the creature reverts to its normal intelligence and loses its ability to speak, as well as any other special movement or statistics granted to it by this feature. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

Potent Spellcasting

Starting at 8th level, you add your Wisdom modifier to the damage you deal with any cleric cantrip.

High Evolutionary

By 17th level, you have reached the pinnacle of your form. Each of your ability scores increases by 2, as does the maximum for each of those scores.

Additionally, your Evolution Dice become d6s. You can increase an ability score maximum up to 26 using Evolution Dice.

Primal Circle
Druid Subclass

The Primal Circle was the foremost druidic circle, dedicated to the caste of titanic creatures that once dominated the Material Plane. As their bestial companions were driven to the fringes of the map, the Primal Circle persisted, channeling the spirits of long-forgotten beasts, such as tyrannosaurs and saber-toothed tigers. These primal spirits begin as youths and grow into their colossal adulthood as the druid grows in power, culminating in a behemoth from prehistory, a beast unparalleled in size and ferocity.

Titan Empathy
Beginning when you choose this circle at 2nd level, you gain proficiency in the Animal Handling skill. If you already have proficiency in this skill, you can add twice your proficiency bonus to checks you make using it. Additionally, you have advantage on Charisma checks you make against creatures that are Large or larger.

Primal Companion
At 2nd level, you have forged a bond with the spirit of a forgotten, primal creature that towers over humanoids and heeds your commands. You can summon this spirit from eons past as a primal companion.

Choose whether your primal companion is a mammoth, a saber-tooth, or a tyrannosaurus. This choice determines certain traits in the Primal Companion stat block. When you gain a level in this class, you can change your selection. Your companion begins as a youth, and grows with you as you advance in level.

Summoning Your Companion. As an action, you can expend one use of your Wild Shape feature to summon your primal companion, rather than assuming a beast form. Your companion uses the Primal Companion stat block and appears in an unoccupied space within 30 feet of you. Your companion is friendly to you and your companions, and it obeys your commands.

Your companion disappears after 1 hour, when it is reduced to 0 hit points, when you use this feature to summon your companion again, or when you die.

Commanding Your Companion. Your companion takes its turn immediately before or after your turn each round (your choice). It can move and take one of the following actions: Dash, Disengage, Dodge, Help, or Hide. If your companion didn't take an action on its most recent turn, you can use a bonus action to command it to make an attack using its reaction.

Primal Companion
Medium Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 14 + your Wisdom modifier (natural armor)
Hit Points 5 + 5 × your druid level (the companion has a number of Hit Dice [d10s] equal to your druid level)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	3 (−4)	14 (+2)	8 (−1)

Skills Perception +4
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages understands the languages you speak, but can't speak
Challenge —

Actions

Maul (Saber-Tooth Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* your spell attack bonus to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage. If the saber-tooth scores a critical hit, it rolls damage dice three times, instead of twice.

Bite (Tyrannosaurus Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* your spell attack bonus to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

Stomp (Mammoth Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* your spell attack bonus to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage. If the target is Medium or smaller, it must succeed a Strength saving throw against your spell save DC or be knocked prone.

Hit Points. Your companion's hit point maximum equals 5 + five times your druid level. It has a number of Hit Dice (d10s) equal to your druid level, which it can expend to regain hit points over a short rest as normal.

Attacks. Your companion uses your spell attack modifier for its attack rolls.

Save DCs. Your companion uses your druid spell save DC for its save DCs.

Proficiencies. Your companion uses your proficiency bonus rather than its own. Because the Primal Companion stat block already includes a +2 proficiency bonus, you need only adjust the attack bonus and skill proficiencies starting at 5th level.

Colossal Claws
By 6th level, your companion has grown with you into a formidable ally, gaining the following benefits:

Size. Your companion grows to Large size. Additionally, its Strength score increases by 2 to 18 and its bonus to damage rolls increases accordingly.



Magic Fang. Your companion's attacks count as magical for the purpose of overcoming resistance and immunity to nonmagical attacks and damage.

Keen Strike (Saber-Tooth Only). The saber-tooth's Maul attack scores a critical hit on a roll of 19 or 20.

Massive Bite (Tyrannosaurus Only). The damage die of the tyrannosaurus's Bite attack increases to 1d10.

Trample (Mammoth Only). When the mammoth knocks a creature prone, the target takes 1d6 bludgeoning damage.

Neolithic Bond

Beginning at 10th level, the connection between you and your companion deepens until you fight in perfect synchronicity. Your primal companion gains the following benefits:

Multiattack. When you use your bonus action to command your companion to attack, it makes two attacks instead of one.

Shared Spell. While you are within 60 feet of your primal companion, you can make any spell you cast that targets only you also target your companion.

Apex Predator

At 14th level, your companion reaches adulthood, as signified by its earth-shattering footfalls and fearsome silhouette. Your primal companion gains the following benefits:

Size. If your companion is a Mammoth or Tyrannosaurus, it grows to Huge size. Your companion's Strength score increases by 2 to 20 and its bonus to damage rolls increases accordingly.

Primal Roar. When you command your companion to attack, you can choose for it to bellow a roar before attacking. Until the end of its turn, the companion has advantage on attacks it makes against hostile creatures within 10 feet of it, and creatures within 10 feet of your companion have disadvantage on attacks against it.

Your companion can roar twice and regains all expended uses when it is summoned again.

Rampage. When the companion reduces a creature to 0 hit points with a melee attack, it can move up to half its speed and make an attack.

Bestiarius
Fighter Subclass

Bestiarii are gladiators that specialize in fighting the fiercest beasts the arena has to offer. With a flair for the dramatic and instincts honed against apex predators, Bestiarii ensure not only a victorious fight, but an entertaining one. A Bestiarius might fight for glory, honor, or even the freedom of the very beasts they once opposed.

Battle Tactics
When you choose this archetype at 3rd level, you learn maneuvers that are fueled by special dice called battle dice.

Battle Dice. You have two battle dice, which are d8s. A battle die is expended when you use it.

You regain all of your expended battle dice when you finish a short or long rest, or when you roll initiative. Your battle die changes and more battle dice become available when you reach certain levels in this class, as shown on the table below.

Fighter Level	Battle Dice
3rd	2d8
7th	3d8
13th	3d10
19th	4d10

Using Battle Dice. Once per turn, you can expend a battle die to perform a maneuver of your choice. Your maneuver options are detailed at the end of the subclass description.

Saving Throws. Some of your maneuvers require your target to make a saving throw to resist the maneuver's effects. The saving throw DC is calculated as follows:

> **Maneuver save DC** = *8 + your proficiency bonus + your Strength or Dexterity modifier (your choice)*

Gladiatorial Flair
Also at 3rd level, you gain proficiency in the Performance skill.

Additionally, if you use your Second Wind feature to regain hit points, you also gain an equal number of temporary hit points. You must have a non-combative audience watching you fight to gain this benefit.

Escape Master
Beginning at 7th level, you can break loose of certain conditions, such as a giant constrictor snake's Constrict attack or the *entangle* spell. When you are subjected to an effect that grapples or restrains you and allows you to use an action to attempt to escape, you can instead attempt to escape as a bonus action. You also have advantage on ability checks and saving throws you make to escape.

Battle Surge
Starting at 10th level, you regain one expended battle die when you use your Action Surge.

Predatory Edge
By 15th level, your combatants stir an animalistic instinct within you. Whenever you expend a battle die on your turn, record the number rolled. The next time you hit a creature with a weapon attack on the same turn, you can add the number rolled to the damage roll.

Bloody Renown
At 18th level, whenever you reduce a creature to 0 hit points, you can regain an expended use of your Second Wind, Action Surge, and Indomitable features. The creature must have a challenge rating of half your fighter level or higher.

Once you use this ability, you can't use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

Maneuvers
The maneuvers are presented in alphabetical order.

Bear Hug. Immediately after you hit a creature with a melee attack on your turn, you can expend one battle die as a bonus action to attempt to grapple the target. Add the battle die to the Strength (Athletics) check. If you successfully grapple the target, it takes bludgeoning damage equal to the battle die's roll + your Strength modifier.

Bull Rush. When you move at least 10 feet in a straight line and immediately make a melee weapon attack against a creature, you can use a bonus action and expend one battle die to shove the target after the attack. Add the battle die to the Strength (Athletics) check you make to shove the target. On a success, you can choose to either knock the target prone or push it up to 10 feet away from you.

Eagle Shot. When you make a ranged weapon attack roll against a creature, you can use your bonus action and expend one battle die to add it to the roll. You can use this ability before or after making the attack roll, but before the GM says whether the attack hits or misses.



Lightning Reflexes. After you regain battle dice when rolling initiative, you can immediately expend one battle die and add it to your initiative roll.

Lion's Challenge. When you hit a creature with a weapon attack on your turn, you can expend one battle die as a bonus action to challenge the target to a duel. Until the end of your next turn, that target has disadvantage on any attack roll that isn't against you.

Viper Strike. When you make a weapon attack on your turn, you can expend one battle die as a bonus action to extend the strike's distance. If it is a melee attack, increase your reach by 5 feet for that attack. If it is a ranged attack, increase the attack's range by 30 feet for that attack.

Additionally, if the attack hits, the target can't take reactions until the start of its next turn.

Way of the Dodo

Monk Subclass

The very last dodo absconded into the Feywild and thrived in the nonsense land beyond. Before long, it learned to speak and manipulate the magic of the twilight realm just as well as fey. Visitors came to see the magical endling and an order of monks rose to learn its teachings and defend it from harm.

Those who follow the Way of the Dodo focus their ki by expanding their consciousnesses and engaging in psychedelic trances. With a touch, they can send others into technicolor hallucinations borrowed from their erstwhile master's Feywild magic.

Eccentric Insight

Starting when you choose this tradition at 3rd level, whenever you make an ability check that doesn't include your proficiency bonus, your unique insight allows you to make connections that may or may not exist. If the d20 roll for the ability check is even, you add your proficiency bonus to the check.

Psychedelic Strike

Also at 3rd level, when you hit a creature with one of the attacks granted by your Flurry of Blows, you can force the creature to make a Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, a creature is plagued by wild hallucinations until the end of its next turn and must roll on the following table:

d20	Effect
1	The creature can't move or take actions this turn.
2–5	The creature uses all its movement to move in a random direction. To determine the direction, roll a d8 and assign a direction to each die face.
6–9	The creature loses the ability to distinguish between friend and foe, regarding all creatures it can see as enemies. The creature chooses the targets for its attacks, spells, and abilities randomly from among the creatures it can see within range, and it must make an opportunity attack if any creature provokes one.
10–19	The creature has disadvantage on the first attack roll it makes on its turn.
20	The creature can act and move normally.

Trance

Starting at 6th level, once per day when you finish a short or long rest you can enter a mind-expanding trance for 10 minutes. During this trance, you visit a surreal landscape and choose one of the following paths to wander for the duration of the trance:

Path of Realities. Your trance grants you a glimpse of a higher reality. You can ask the GM a single question concerning a specific goal, event, or activity to occur within 7 days. The GM answers this query truthfully in the form of a metaphorical vision, an omen, or an overpowering emotional state.

Path of Serenity. Your trance places your mind in a placid sea. Until you take a short or long rest, your ki point maximum and current ki points increase by 2.

Path of Turmoil. Your trance evolves into a chaotic, agitated vision, bolstering your mental defenses. Choose Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma. Until you finish a short or long rest, you have advantage on saving throws you make with the chosen ability.

Chaotic Delirium

At 11th level, when you force a creature to make a saving throw against your Psychedelic Strike, you can spend 1 ki point to deal extra psychic damage equal to one roll of your Martial Arts die + your Wisdom modifier to the target. You can use this feature only once per turn.

Third Eye Opening

Beginning at 17th level, you can spend 4 ki points as a bonus action to open your third eye, gaining the following benefits for 10 minutes:

- You have truesight out to a range of 120 feet.
- You can't be surprised.
- You gain a +2 bonus to your Armor Class and Dexterity saving throws.
- Once on each of your turns when you make an unarmed strike and miss, you can cause that attack to hit instead.

Oath of Preservation

Paladin Subclass

Paladins have always sworn allegiance to the forces of nature, but unprecedented threats have sparked the formation of even fiercer orders of paladins, dedicated to securing a better tomorrow. The Oath of Preservation binds its knights to defend the natural world—beasts, plants, and monsters alike—for the sake of future generations. Confronted with an ever-shrinking world, ravaged by new magic and technologies, these paladins work to safeguard vulnerable species and habitats, piece by piece.

Tenets of Preservation

Paladins who swear the Oath of Preservation follow four brutally optimistic tenets.

Audacious Hope. You bear witness to tragedy and extinction, and yet choose hope. Hope is your greatest tool against the tidal wave of foes that threatens the natural world.

Future Selves. You don't inherit the world from your ancestors; you borrow it from your children. You shall secure the greatest good for the highest number over the longest run.

Interconnected World. No creature exists without its habitat, and no habitat without its creatures. You should protect one as fiercely as the other.

Strength in Diversity. A lost species robs the world of music, color, and life. Every member of a species is as valuable as the whole. Do not allow the world to be silenced by a thousand whispers or killed by a thousand cuts.

Oath Spells

You gain oath spells at the paladin levels listed.

Oath of Preservation Spells

Paladin Level	Spells
3rd	*entangle, sanctuary*
5th	*animal messenger, pass without trace*
9th	*plant growth, protection from energy*
13th	*polymorph, stoneskin*
17th	*awaken, tree stride*

Channel Divinity

When you take this oath at 3rd level, you gain the following two Channel Divinity options.

Rebuke the Despoilers. You can use your Channel Divinity to rebuke those that recklessly destroy the environment. Immediately after a creature within 30 feet of you deals damage with a spell or effect that affects an area, you can use your reaction to force the creature to make a Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the creature takes radiant damage equal to the damage it just dealt, or the highest single instance of damage, if it dealt damage to more than one target. On a successful save, it takes half as much damage.

Ward the Vulnerable. You can use your Channel Divinity as a bonus action to place a protective ward for 1 minute on a number of creatures up to your Charisma modifier that you can see within 60 feet of you. The first time a creature under your ward would drop to 0 hit points as a result of taking damage, it instead drops to 1 hit point, and the ward ends for it.

Aura of Exploration

Beginning at 7th level, you emanate an aura that grants your allies fleet feet on any terrain.

You have a climbing and swimming speed equal to your walking speed, and difficult terrain costs you no extra movement. Any ally that starts its turn within 10 feet of you also gains these benefits.

When you reach 18th level in this class, the range of this aura increases to 30 feet.

Touch of Preservation

At 15th level, you can grant boons of protection to any in need. Whenever you use your Lay on Hands feature, you can grant the target temporary hit points up to your paladin level instead of restoring hit points to it.

Primeval Warden

By 20th level, your presence revitalizes habitats and empowers them to fight back. As an action, you gain the ability to use lair actions for 1 minute. If another creature has lair actions, you and that creature alternate; you take the next lair action, the other creature takes one on the following round, and so on.

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), you can take a lair action to cause one of the following effects. You can't use the same effect two rounds in a row:

» Spectral vines emerge from the ground in an 30-foot radius centered on a point you can see within 120 feet of you. Each creature you choose within the area must succeed on a Strength saving throw against your spell save DC or be restrained. A restrained creature can repeat this saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

» A flash of sunlight fills a 30-foot-radius sphere centered on a point you can see within 120 feet. Each creature you choose within that area regains 4d8 hit points, and every other creature within the area must succeed on a Constitution saving throw against your spell save DC or take 4d8 radiant damage.

» A stampede of spectral Beasts emerges from you and charges in a 10-foot-wide, 120 foot-long line. Each creature in the line must make a Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 8d6 force damage and is knocked prone. On a success, it takes half as much damage and isn't knocked prone.

Spiritbound

Ranger Subclass

Spiritbound rangers forge a pact with the invisible nature spirits of the mountains, rivers, and forests. Often, these spirits claw at the material world and seek vengeance upon those that despoil their domains. Spiritbound rangers are the implement of their fury.

Rangers of this archetype strive to achieve balance with the natural world and preserve its majesty. Doing so is a constant struggle in which the spiritbound can find wisdom and companionship within their spirit ally.

Spiritbound Magic

Starting when you choose this archetype at 3rd level, you learn an additional spell when you reach certain levels in this class, as shown in the Spiritbound Spells table. The spell counts as a ranger spell for you but doesn't count against the number of ranger spells you know.

Spiritbound Spells

Ranger Level	Spells
3rd	*animal friendship*
5th	*enhance ability*
9th	*phantom steed*
13th	*dominate beast*
17th	*tree stride*

Nature Spirit

Also at 3rd level, you are bonded to a nature spirit, a manifestation of nature's wrath. In its natural state, the spirit is a Tiny wisp that hovers around you. However, you can cause the spirit to take on an animal form by attuning to an icon when you finish a long rest. You can also change its form as an action by expending a spell slot of 1st level or higher. No matter what form the spirit takes, it is intangible and invulnerable.

Your icons can be animal parts, such as bones, fur, and feathers, a set of elaborate masks, or simple wooden carvings of animals. The spirit grants the following benefits based on its form:

Bear. You have advantage on Strength (Athletics) checks you make to grapple another creature or escape grapple.

Bull. You can take the Dash action as a bonus action. Until the end of your turn, you can only move in one direction in a straight line.

Cat. When you fall and aren't incapacitated, you can subtract up to 60 feet from the distance when calculating falling damage.

Eagle. As an action, you can command the spirit to fly up to 60 feet. Until the start of your next turn, you can see through its eyes, while you are blind with regard to your own senses. At the end of your next turn, your spirit returns to your side unless you take this action again. Your spirit also returns to your side if it is ever more than 120 feet away from you.

Fox. The first 5 feet you move on each of your turns doesn't provoke opportunity attacks.

Owl. You gain darkvision out to a range of 60 feet. If you already have darkvision from another source, its range increases by 30 feet.

Spirit Fang

At 3rd level, as a bonus action, you can command the nature spirit to appear next to a creature within 60 feet of you that you can see and make an attack aagainst it. Make a spell attack roll against the target. On a hit, the target takes 1d8 force damage.

When you reach 11th level, you can add your Wisdom modifier to the damage roll.

Animal Aspect

Starting at 7th level, when your spirit takes on an animal form, you gain a bonus to one of your ability scores. This bonus is +4 if the ability score is 14 or lower, or +2, up to a maximum of 20, otherwise. The ability score that gains a bonus depends upon the spirit's animal form, as shown on the Animal Ability Scores table.

If you gain a bonus to your Constitution score using this feature, you gain temporary hit points instead of increasing your hit point maximum or current hit points. For a +2 bonus, you gain temporary hit points equal to your level. For a +4 bonus, you gain temporary hit points equal to twice your level. These temporary hit points last until you increase a different ability score using this feature.

Animal Ability Scores

Animal Form	Ability Score
Bear	Constitution
Bull	Strength
Cat	Dexterity
Eagle	Charisma
Fox	Intelligence
Owl	Wisdom

Spirit Cyclone

Beginning at 11th level, you can use your action to evoke all of your nature spirit's aspects at once. Your nature spirit manifests at a point you can see within 30 feet of you as a whirlwind of spectral animals occupying a 15-foot-radius, 30-foot high cylinder. As a part of the action used to manifest this whirlwind and as a bonus action on subsequent turns, you can move the whirlwind up to 30 feet to a location you choose. When a creature other than yourself enters the area for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there, it must make a Wisdom saving throw against your spell save DC, taking 6d8 force damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

While your spirit is manifested in this way, you lose the benefit of your Nature Spirit feature and can't use your Spirit Fang feature, though you still retain the ability score bonus of your Animal Aspect.

The whirlwind lasts for 1 minute or until you lose your concentration on it (as if you were concentrating on a spell). Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest, unless you expend a 3rd-level spell slot to use it again.

Ward of the Wilds

Starting at 15th level, when an attacker that you can see hits you with an attack, you can use your reaction to cause the spirit to intercede. Subtract 1d8 + your Wisdom modifier from the damage roll. If this reduction exceeds the damage dealt by the attack, the attacker takes force damage equal to the difference.

Chameleon

Rogue Subclass

Wind through the leaves, a broken twig, and the distant thrum of a bowstring are the only signs that a chameleon has struck. The archetypal chameleon becomes one with nature through druidic rituals or trials in the Feywild. Once the hard lessons of nature are learned, however, they are not easily forgotten.

A chameleon is a ghost of the forest, able to change their skin to match their background. With practice, a chameleon rogue can dash through the treetops, slink through the grass, and strike from the shadows, leaving no trace they were ever there.

Primeval Initiate

Starting when you choose this archetype at 3rd level, you gain proficiency in two of the following skills: Animal Handling, Medicine, Nature, or Survival. Your proficiency bonus is doubled for any ability check you make that uses either of those proficiencies.

Rules for Hiding

Usually, you can't use the Hide action to hide from a creature that can see you. This means you need total cover, invisibility, or to be in an area that is heavily obscured. If you are hidden from a creature, you have advantage on attack rolls against it, and it has disadvantage on attack rolls against you (if it knows your location precisely enough to attack you).

Camouflage

Also at 3rd level, you can change the color and texture of your skin to match your surroundings. Whenever you take the Hide action, you can attempt to hide from a creature even when it could see you, as long as you are at least 15 feet away from the creature or you are lightly obscured by dim light or natural phenomena, such as foliage, heavy rain, falling snow, or mist.

Arboreal Stalker

Starting at 9th level, you have the ability to move up, down, and across vertical surfaces and upside down along ceilings, while leaving your hands free. You also gain a climbing speed equal to your walking speed.

Additionally, nonmagical difficult terrain and moving through the treetops—by leaping between trees, swinging on vines, or vaulting between tree limbs—costs you no extra movement.

One with the Wilds

By 13th level, you strike silently and cause your foes to vanish into the forest. When you are hidden in foliage, missing with a ranged weapon attack doesn't reveal your position.

Additionally, when you kill a creature, the moment of the strike is magically silenced, preventing the creature from making any sounds. If you reduce a creature to 0 hit points with a melee attack, you can hide the body in foliage within 10 feet of the creature as a part of the same action.

Verdant Assassin

Starting at 17th level, once on each of your turns, when you take the Attack action and have advantage on the attack roll, you can forgo advantage for that roll. If that attack hits, it is a critical hit.

Mutagenic Bloodline

Sorcerer Subclass

Your innate magic comes from a blood-born mutagenic curse that has untethered your biology. Much like lycanthropes, your blood transforms you into an amalgamation of beasts—resulting in a fearsome chimera of teeth, pincers, claws, or talons.

Your mutagenic curse might originate from exposure to the Elemental Planes, the bite of a lycanthrope, or the gift of an animal-loving archfey.

As a mutagenic sorcerer, symptoms of your transformative power linger long after you revert to your natural form. You can pick from or roll on the Mutagenic Sorcerer Traits table to create a trait for your sorcerer:



Mutagenic Sorcerer Traits

d6	Trait
1	Your teeth are sharpened to razor points and your voice rumbles to a growl whenever you whisper.
2	Resplendent feathers grow among your hair.
3	Your spine hunches forward, resulting in a posture somewhere between standing upright and running on all fours.
4	You can't control the impulse to bark or snarl at unfamiliar animals.
5	You're always awake when the moon is out. When possible, you're also running barefoot through the woods.
6	Your hair is long, coarse, and warm, bearing distinctive stripes or dots.

Mutagenic Magic

You learn additional spells when you reach certain levels in this class, as shown on the Mutagenic Spells table. Each of these spells counts as a sorcerer spell for you but doesn't count against the number of sorcerer spells you know.

Whenever you gain a sorcerer level, you can replace one spell you gained from this feature with another spell of the same level. The new spell must be an abjuration or a transmutation spell from the sorcerer, warlock, or wizard spell list. New spells are marked with an asterisk.

Mutagenic Spells

Sorcerer Level	Spells
1st	*longstrider, shield*
3rd	*alter self, enlarge/reduce*
5th	*gaseous form, haste*
7th	*death ward, stoneskin*
9th	*antilife shell, passwall*

Mutagenic Form

Starting at 1st level, you can use your bonus action to activate the mutagen in your blood, causing you to transform. Your transformation lasts for one hour or until you end it on your turn as a bonus action.

While transformed, you gain the following benefits:

Natural Armor. Your Armor Class equals 10 + your Dexterity modifier + your Charisma modifier.

Temporary Hit Points. You gain temporary hit points equal to your sorcerer level + your Charisma modifier, which last until your transformation ends.

Natural Weapon. You gain a natural weapon which you can use to make unarmed strikes. You can use your Charisma modifier, instead of Strength, for the attack and damage rolls of your natural weapon. When you hit with it, the weapon deals damage equal to 1d8 + your Charisma modifier, instead of the damage normal for an unarmed strike. The form and damage type of your natural weapon is determined by your mutagen below.

Mutagen. Roll on the Mutagen table to determine the form of your natural weapon and gain an additional benefit.

Once you use this feature to transform, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest. Beginning at 2nd level, you can spend 2 sorcery points to regain a use of this feature.

Mutagen

d6	Mutagen
1	**Aquatic.** Your natural weapon is a muscular tail that deals bludgeoning damage. You also grow gills and are able to breathe air and water.
2	**Caprine.** Your natural weapon is a pair of curved ram's horns that deals bludgeoning damage. Once on each of your turns, when you hit a creature with your horns, you can force the target to make a Strength saving throw against your spell save DC. On a failed save, the creature is pushed 10 feet away from you or knocked prone (your choice).
3	**Carnivorous.** Your natural weapon is a bite with razor-sharp teeth that deals piercing damage. Once on each of your turns, when you hit a creature with your bite, you can regain hit points equal to half of the piercing damage dealt by the bite.
4	**Fossorial.** Your natural weapon is a set of thick, powerful claws that deal slashing damage. You gain a burrow speed equal to your walking speed.
5	**Spiny.** Your natural weapon is a set of spines that deal piercing damage on a hit. You can use your reaction when a creature you can see within 5 feet of you hits you with a melee weapon attack to deal piercing damage equal to 1d4 + your Charisma modifier.
6	**Taloned.** Your natural weapon is a set of hooked talons that deal slashing damage. You gain a climbing speed equal to your walking speed.

Continuous Adaptation

At 6th level, when you use Mutagenic Form, you can spend 1 sorcery point to roll twice on the Mutagen table and use either number. Additionally, your Mutagenic Form improves in the following ways:

Aberrate. While transformed, you are under the effects of the spell *aberrate* (see sidebar).

Extra Attack. While transformed, you can attack twice, instead of once, whenever you take the Attack action on your turn.

Magic Fang. Your unarmed strikes count as magical for the purpose of overcoming resistance and immunity to nonmagical attacks and damage.

Greater Mutation

Starting at 14th level, whenever you use Mutagenic Form, you can also roll on the Greater Mutagen table, gaining the benefit rolled while transformed.

Aberrate

2nd-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Self
Components: V, S
Duration: 1 minute

This spell causes your anatomy to become fluid, constantly refreshing into new and more terrible shapes. For the duration, you do not take extra damage from critical hits.

Additionally, your body adapts to threats as it warps. Immediately after you take damage while this spell is active, you can use your reaction to gain resistance to that damage type until this spell ends or until you use this ability again to gain resistance to a different damage type. This resistance doesn't apply to the triggering damage.

Greater Mutagen

d6	Greater Mutagen
1-2	**Aerial.** You sprout a pair of wings from your back and gain a flying speed equal to your walking speed. You can't manifest your wings while wearing armor unless the armor is made to accommodate them, and clothing not made to accommodate your wings might be destroyed when you manifest them.
3-4	**Arcanoform.** You have advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.
5-6	**Echolocation.** You gain blindsight with a range of 60 feet. Within that range, you can effectively see anything that isn't behind total cover, even if you're blinded or in darkness. Moreover, you can see an invisible creature within that range, unless the creature successfully hides from you. You can't use your blindsight while deafened.

Chimeric Mastery

By 18th level, when you use Mutagenic Form, you can spend 6 sorcery points to transform into an amalgamation of various beasts—a powerful chimera. You gain all the benefits of your Mutagen and Greater Mutagen, and can choose bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage for your natural weapons whenever you deal damage. Additionally, you gain the following benefits while you are transformed:

- Your size increases by one category—from Medium to Large.
- Your natural weapons deal 2d8 damage on a hit.
- You have resistance to nonmagical bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage.

The Swarm
Warlock Subclass

Malevolent beings such as mummies, vampires, and hags can unite the will of individual beasts and turn them to a single dark purpose, creating a swarm. Likewise, some swarms amalgamate naturally, as in the case of a rat king or a plague of locusts.

Regardless of their provenance, all swarms are faint echoes of the first Swarm. This inscrutable hivemind of insect-like creatures has infested the Ethereal Plane since time immemorial and perpetually gnaws at its walls, searching for a way into the Material Plane. No one can fathom the Swarm's age or count its multitudes, but its purpose is clear: to assimilate all life. Warlocks who follow this patron share in its psionic power and can unleash its ethereal drones.

Expanded Spell List
The Swarm lets you choose from an expanded list of spells when you learn a warlock spell. The following spells are added to the warlock spell list for you.

Spell Level	Spells
1st	*jump, speak with animals*
2nd	*see invisibility, web*
3rd	*blink, wind wall*
4th	*giant insect, polymorph*
5th	*contagion, insect plague*

Infest Foe
Beginning when you choose this patron at 1st level, the ethereal, intangible drones of the Swarm heed your command. When you hit a creature with an attack, you can call upon your drones to infest it and claw at its eyes and skin. Whenever the target makes an attack roll, ability check, or saving throw within the next minute, it must roll a d4 and subtract the number rolled from the result. This effect ends early if you die or use this feature to infest a different creature.

Starting at 10th level, the target subtracts a d6 instead of a d4 from its attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throw.

You can use this feature a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus, and you regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest.

Writhing Escape
Starting at 6th level, when you take damage, you can use your reaction to disincorporate into a swarm of drones. You gain resistance to the damage taken, and can fly up to your speed to an unoccupied space you can see without provoking opportunity attacks. During this movement, you can move through the space of any hostile creature and any space large enough for a Tiny insect, though you can't end your movement in an occoupied space or one that isn't large enough for you. You coalesce back into your original form after moving.

Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

Drone Spy
By 10th level, your connection to the Swarm allows you to manifest individual drones. As an action, you can produce a Tiny ethereal drone, which vanishes after 1 hour, when drops to 0 hit points, when you dismiss it as an action on your turn, or when you use this feature to create a new drone. The drone has AC 10, 1 HP, and immunity to all conditions. It automatically fails all saving throws.

The drone is nearly invisible and requires a successful Intelligence (Investigation) check against your spell save DC to be seen.

You can mentally command the drone to fly up to 30 feet on each of your turns (no action required). The drone can move any distance away from you, but it can't enter another plane of existence.

As an action, you can see through the drone's eyes and hear what it hears until the start of your next turn. The drone has normal vision and darkvision out to 30 feet. During this time, you are blind and deaf with regard to your own senses.

Eldritch Hive
Beginning at 14th level, when a creature infested by your Infest Foe feature dies, you can use your reaction to raise its corpse as an eldritch hive under your control. An eldritch hive is an object with AC 10, 50 HP, and immunity to poison and psychic damage.

As a bonus action on your turn, you can mentally command the hive to move up to the creature's walking speed or 30 feet, whichever is higher, to an unoccupied location you can see.

If a creature you choose begins its turn within 5 feet of the hive, it is temporarily infested with your ethereal drones. Until the start of its next turn, whenever the creature makes an attack roll, ability check, or saving throw, it must roll a d6 and subtract the number rolled from the result.

You can use your action to command the hive to explode in a wave of eldritch energy. It explodes early after 1 minute or when it drops to 0 HP. When it explodes, each creature within 20 feet of the hive must make a Dexterity saving throw against your spell save DC, taking 10d8 force damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

School of Protomancy

Wizard Subclass

Magic predates the written word, the founding of wizard colleges, and even the invention of spells. Long before magic was formalized, mages funneled the bare threads of magic into protospells, fundamental expressions of what would later become the schools of magic. These spells predated the invention of material components and even the spellbook; as such, the first wizards etched protospells into their minds, consuming their memories as an important component of their spells.

The contemporary School of Protomancy seeks to rediscover the art of proto-magic through research and experimentation. Its protomages have no guidance for this forgotten art, but hope to learn from clues left in the structure of schools of magic.

Proto-Magic

Beginning when you choose this school at 2nd level, you learn the primordial ancestor of all magic: protospells. You learn two 1st-level spells with the (protospell) tag, and learn two more spells of any level with the protospell tag at 6th level (4 total), 10th level (6 total), and 14th level (8 total). Whenever you gain a level in this class, you can replace one protospell you learned from this feature with another protospell you could learn.

You always have the protospells you learned from this feature prepared and they don't count against the number of wizard spells you can prepare.

Amnesia Surge

Also at 2nd level, you have mastered the ancient art of burning memories to fuel your spellcasting. When you cast a wizard spell, you can also choose to forget a wizard spell that you have prepared that doesn't have the protospell tag. When you do so, you gain one of the following benefits of your choice:

- You have advantage on spell attack rolls you make as part of the spell.
- One target of the spell has disadvantage on the first saving throw it makes against the spell.
- You have advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects until the start of your next turn.

Upcaster

By 6th level, you have learned to merge your spell slots to suit your needs. You can expend two spell slots of the same level to create a spell slot that is one level higher and immediately use this spell slot to cast a spell that you know or have prepared. Casting a spell in this way uses the spell's normal casting time.

Mnemonic Concentration

Starting at 10th level, you can erase spells you have prepared to sustain your concentration. When you fail a Constitution saving throw to maintain concentration on a spell, you can use your reaction to forget a wizard spell that you have prepared that doesn't have the protospell tag. You succeed on the saving throw instead.

Once you use this feature to maintain concentration on a spell, you can't use it again until your concentration on that spell ends.

Master of Antiquity

Beginning at 14th level, your mastery of proto-magic is second nature. You can cast each protospell you have prepared once at 3rd level without expending a spell slot.

Once you cast a spell using this feature, you can't cast that spell this way again until you finish a long rest.



Protospells

The following new spells are available to wizards who practice the School of Protomancy.

Proto-Abjuration

1st-level abjuration (protospell)

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Touch
Components: V, S
Duration: 1 minute

Weaving raw magic into a bulwark, a creature you touch gains temporary hit points equal to 1d10 + your spellcasting modifier for the duration.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the temporary hit points increase by an additional 1d10 for each slot level above 1st.

If you use a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, you can grant either the Armored Ward or Damage Resistances effect to the target while it has these temporary hit points. If you use a spell slot of 5th level or higher, you can alternatively grant the Arcane Thorns effect to the target while it has these temporary hit points.

Armored Ward. The target has a +2 bonus to its Armor Class and saving throws.

Damage Resistances. The target has resistance to acid, cold, fire, lightning, poison, or thunder.

Arcane Thorns. If a creature hits the target with a melee weapon attack while the target has its temporary hit points, the creature takes force damage equal to the number of temporary hit points lost.



Proto-Conjuration

1st-level conjuration (protospell)

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 60 feet
Components: V, S
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You create an impediment, such as dense undergrowth or craggy rocks, to cover the ground in a 10-foot-radius sphere centered on a point you can see within range. The area becomes difficult terrain and you choose whether it is Hazardous or Obscured.

Hazardous. The area contains a roving mass of thorny brambles, stone spikes, or icicles. When a creature enters the affected area for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there, it must make a Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the creature takes 1d6 piercing damage, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Obscured. The area is heavily obscured by your choice of fog, foliage, or heavy rain.

At Higher Levels. When you cast the spell using a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the damage caused by the Hazardous effect increases by 1d6 for each slot level above 1st.

When you use a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, the spell's area increases to a 15-foot radius sphere. Additionally, you can choose for the area to be Grasping instead of Hazardous or Obscured.

When you use a spell slot of 6th level or higher, the spell's area increases to a 20-foot radius sphere. Additionally, you can choose for the area to be Stunning instead of Hazardous, Obscured, or Grasping.

Grasping. The area contains living vines, tentacles, or webs that seize creatures within it. When a creature enters the affected area for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there, it must succeed on a Strength saving throw or be restrained until the spell ends. A restrained creature can use its action to make a Strength check against your spell save DC, freeing itself on a success.

Stunning. The area contains an insidious gas that shocks the mind and locks muscles in place. When a creature ends its turn in the affected area, it must succeed on a Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the spell ends. A stunned creature can repeat its saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Proto-Divination

2nd-level divination (protospell)

Casting Time: 1 minute
Range: Self
Components: V, S
Duration: Instantaneous

By focusing your mind on a past event, present circumstance, or a planned course of action, you call upon an otherworldly entity for guidance. The GM delivers an omen and secretly chooses for it to be hopeful, baleful, or neutral. A hopeful omen might be the sudden flight of a white bird or the sun appearing from behind the clouds, whereas a baleful omen could be a candle blowing out or a crow shrieking in the distance. Moreover, the GM can provide larger omens for more momentous occasions, such as a meteor shower or a red-colored rain. The GM shouldn't directly reveal whether an omen is hopeful, baleful, or neutral.

The spell doesn't take into account any possible circumstances that might change the outcome of future events, such as the casting of additional spells or the loss or gain of a companion.

If you cast this spell again before finishing a long rest, there is a 50 percent chance that you get a random omen. The GM makes this roll in secret.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, you can receive a Premonition instead of an omen. If you cast the spell using a spell slot of 5th level or higher, you can receive a Prophecy instead of an omen.

Premonition. When you next sleep during a long rest, you have a dream that foretells the future. The GM describes the contents of the dream to create a non-literal or symbolic representation of a possible future. For example, to imply an imminent betrayal, the GM could present a dagger stabbed into the back of a scarecrow or one of your possessions splattered with blood.

Once you use the Premonition effect of this spell, you can't do so again until you receive a dream foretelling the future.

Prophecy. The GM offers you a vision of an event that will occur within the next 24 hours. This vision contains discrete, concrete facts about the future, but offers no context that might clarify them. For example, a vision might entail you battling a close ally, but withhold the knowledge that the ally in question is influenced by a spell or is a foe in disguise.

The vision doesn't take into account any possible circumstances that might affect future events, such as the casting of additional spells or the loss or gain of a companion.

Once you use the Prophecy effect of this spell, you can't do so again for 24 hours.

Proto-Enchantment

1st-level enchantment (protospell)

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 30 feet
Components: V, S
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

Tendrils of mind-altering magic worm their way into the mind of a creature you can see within range. Choose whether you attempt to Charm or Frighten the target, which must make a Wisdom saving throw.

Charm. The target has advantage on its saving throw if you or your companions are fighting it. On a failed save, it is charmed for the duration. The spell ends early if you or any of your companions do anything harmful to the target.

Frighten. On a failed save, the target is frightened of you until the spell ends. The frightened target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns. On a success, the spell ends.

At Higher Levels. If you cast this spell using a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, you can instead attempt to Frenzy the target. If you cast the spell using a spell slot of 9th level or higher, you can instead attempt to Dominate the target.

Frenzy. On a failed save, the target is frenzied for the duration. When a creature is frenzied, it draws a melee weapon, if it has one.

A frenzied creature must use its action at the start of its turn to attack a creature within its reach. It uses a melee weapon, if it has one, or an improvised weapon or unarmed strike if it doesn't. If multiple targets are within the creature's reach, it chooses its target randomly. If there is no target within the creature's reach, it attacks itself, against its own AC, dealing damage as normal on a hit.

The frenzied target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns. On a success, the spell ends.

Dominate. On a failed save, the target is charmed by you for the duration. While the target is charmed in this way, you can use a bonus action to mentally issue a command to the creature. You can specify a simple and general course of action, such as "Attack that creature,"

"Run over there," or "Fetch that object." If the creature completes the order and doesn't receive further direction from you, it defends and preserves itself to the best of its ability.

You can use your action to take total and precise control of the target. Until the end of your next turn, the creature takes only the actions you choose, and doesn't do anything that you don't allow it to do. During this time, you can also cause the creature to use a reaction, but this requires you to use your own reaction as well.

Each time the target takes damage, it makes a new Wisdom saving throw against the spell. If the saving throw succeeds, the spell ends.

Proto-Evocation

1st-level evocation (protospell)

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 60 feet
Components: V, S
Duration: Instantaneous

A blast of pure elemental energy erupts from your hand toward a creature that you can see within range. Choose acid, cold, fire, lightning, poison, or thunder damage. The target must succeed on a Dexterity saving throw, taking 3d8 damage of the type you chose on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful save.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the damage increases by 1d8 for each slot level above 1st.

If you use a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, you can shape the spell into an area effect. Choose a 30-foot cone, a 15-foot-radius sphere, or a line that is 5 feet wide and 60 feet long. Each creature in the chosen area makes a saving throw against the spell.

If you use a spell slot of 6th level or higher, you can shape the spell into an even larger area. Choose a 60-foot cone, a 30-foot-radius sphere, or a line that is 10 feet wide and 120 feet long. Each creature in the chosen area makes a saving throw against the spell.



Proto-Illusion

2nd-level illusion (protospell)

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 60 feet
Components: V, S
Duration: Concentration, up to 10 minutes

You create the image of an object, creature, or some other visible phenomenon that is no larger than a 10-foot cube. The image appears at a spot within range and lasts for the duration. The image is accompanied by a single sound of your choice, which emanates from the image as appropriate. This sound can't harm a creature or impose a condition. For example, you can create the image of a dragon and allow it to roar, but it is otherwise silent and the flames of its breath give off no heat.

You can use your action to cause the image to move to any spot within range. As the image changes location, you can alter its appearance so that its movements appear natural. For example, if you create an image of a creature and move it, you can alter the image so that it appears to be walking.

Physical interaction with the image reveals it to be an illusion, because things can pass through it. A creature that uses its action to examine the image can determine that it is an illusion with a successful Intelligence (Investigation) check against your spell save DC. If a creature discerns the illusion for what it is, the creature can see through the image.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 4th level or higher, you can infuse the image with motes of shadow material from the Shadowfell to grant it semi-tangibility. Physical interaction no longer reveals the image to be an illusion. A successful Intelligence (Investigation) check against your spell save DC still discerns the image for what it is and allows a creature to see through the image.

The image has AC 10 + your spellcasting modifier. The image vanishes if it takes any damage or is forced to make an ability check or saving throw. You can use your action to cause the image to reappear, but each creature that witnessed the illusion vanish can discern that it is an illusion.

If you cast this spell using a spell slot of 6th level or higher and the image is a creature, when you use your action to cause the image to move, you can also cause it to attack. It makes a melee or ranged spell attack roll, as appropriate to its form, using your spell attack bonus. On a hit, the target takes 8d6 psychic damage. A creature that discerns the image as an illusion is resistant to this damage.

Proto-Necromancy

1st-level necromancy (protospell)

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 60 feet
Components: V, S
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 hour

This spell animates an Undead servant. Choose a pile of bones belonging to a Medium or Small Beast within range. You spell imbues that target with a foul mimicry of life, causing it to become an animal skeleton.

The creature crumples into a heap when it drops to 0 hit points or when the spell ends.

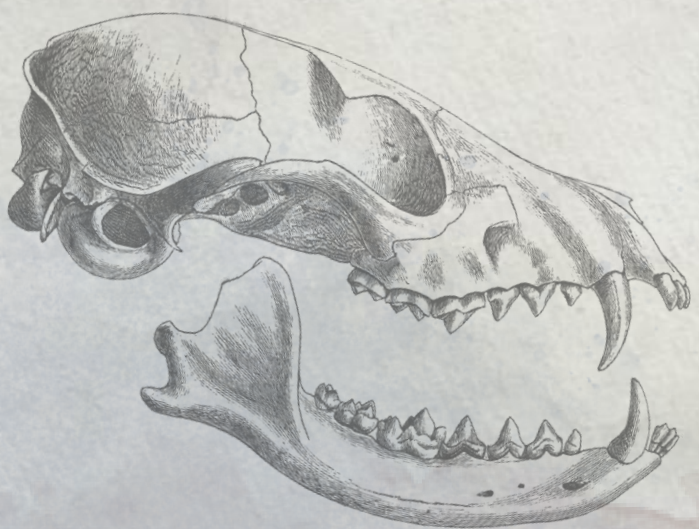
The Undead is an ally to you and your companions. In combat, the Undead shares your initiative count, but it takes its turn immediately after yours. It obeys your verbal commands (no action required by you). If you don't issue any, it takes the Dodge action and uses its movement to avoid danger.

The Undead gains a bonus to its attack and damage rolls equal to your spellcasting ability modifier.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the Undead's current and maximum hit points increase by 5 for each slot level above 1st. The Undead makes a number of attacks equal to half this spell's level (rounded down).

If you use a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, you can target a pile of bones or a corpse of a Medium or Small humanoid within range and animate a skeleton or zombie. Additionally, the Undead also gains the Blood Frenzy trait:

Blood Frenzy. The Undead has advantage on attack rolls against any creature that doesn't have all its hit points.



Animal Skeleton

Small Undead, Typically Lawful Evil

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 9 (2d6 + 2)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (−1)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	2 (−4)	11 (+0)	5 (−3)

Damage Vulnerabilities bludgeoning
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages —
Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Proto-Transmutation

1st-level transmutation (protospell)

Casting Time: 1 minute
Range: Touch
Components: V, S
Duration: Varies

You shift the fundamental elements composing a nonmagical object you touch. You can use this spell to alter liquids or solid objects.

Liquid. You touch a vessel containing 1 gallon of water, trasmuting the contents into 8 ounces of acid, 1/2 ounce of basic poison, 1 pint of honey, 1 quart of oil, 1 quart vinegar, or 1 quart of wine.

Solid. You touch one object that can fit within a 1-foot cube. If that object is composed entirely of wood, stone (but not a gemstone), iron, copper, or silver, you transmute it into a different one of those materials. This transmutation lasts for 24 hours.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, you can transmute up to 10 gallons of water or a solid nonmagical object that can fit within a 5-foot cube.

Additionally, you can change the shape of any object you transmute. You can create nonmagical weapons, armor, and shields, and you can create up to two hinges and a latch, but finer mechanical detail isn't possible.

Extinct Bestiary

Bestiaries like this book and the *Monster Manual* trace their ancestry to medieval illuminated texts. These books were filled with pages of illustrations and descriptions of beasts that their readers would have thought fanciful. Many of them were in fact derived from Greek legend, misremembered voyages to far off continents, or the author's own imagination, but many more were real animals from around the world. Primitive as they were, these repositories of knowledge were the forefathers of modern field guides and zoological textbooks. The division between a bestiary of magical beasts, such as the *Monster Manual*, and a biology textbook is one of fact and detail.

Paradoxically, this book intends to embody both parts of this division. The following chapter of monsters contains both factual histories of extinct animals as well as reimagined versions of these animals as magical creatures. Each pair of entries is presented side-by-side, and their formats are very much the same: each animal and monster contains a written description, a stat block, and an illustration.

Real

The histories you are about to read are real. Each was rigorously researched and carefully fact checked by a science consultant who fell with us down these rabbit holes. We interviewed dozens of academics and experts and recorded an entire companion podcast filled with the dozens of stories that could never fit in this book. Lastly, we cited all of our sources point-by-point at the end of the book, so you can read them for yourself.

To our knowledge, this book is the first of its kind. No roleplaying game book has received this level of dedication to factual history.

This book focuses on Holocene extinctions—that is, extinctions that occurred since the proliferation of mankind. You might have missed many of these animals by a single generation; some were declared extinct in your lifetime. As such, these extinction stories share a single motivating factor: the actions of people and societies, and the waves of repercussions that flow from them.

Revived

Each extinct animal in this book is presented with 5th Edition monster stat blocks, so they can gain a second life through your game. The statistics capture each animal's unique biodiversity, from the agility of the great auk, to the affability of the laughing owl, to the majesty of tens of thousands of passenger pigeons flocking from horizon to horizon. These spectacles feel like they belong in a fantasy novel or an imaginative RPG campaign, but they were commonplace a few hundred years ago. Taken together with the existing Beasts of 5th Edition, you can present a fantasy world in which they never went extinct.

A few of the Beast stat blocks are functionally identical to existing Beasts, but a few represent dazzlingly unique options for a druid's Wild Shape or a wizards pet familiar. Our priority was to faithfully translate each animal using the syntax and constraints of 5th Edition monsters. When the resolution or focus of 5th Edition strains our ability to represent an animal, we address that in a sidebar.

The biggest, most RPG-adventure-appropriate monsters—like the saber-toothed tiger, the megalania, and the elasmotherium—were usually pre-Holocene extinctions. These stat blocks and descriptions are presented in the *Prehistoric Megafauna* chapter as an array of enormous beasts to be defeated by brave adventurers.



Reimagined

This book also reimagines each extinct animal as a magical creature, inspired by the legacy it left behind. The dodo becomes a thing of Lewis Carroll inspired Feywild absurdism. The thylacine "ghost tiger" of Tasmania is reimagined as a literal spectral predator hailing from the Ethereal Plane. The golden toad gains the Midas power of transmuting its victims into solid gold. Each of these fantastical monsters is detailed with an illustration and the lore appropriate for a *Monster Manual*.

These monsters can fill your dungeons, enchanted forests, and remote planes of existence. Though a few might make staunch allies or wise NPCs, the rest are intended to be adversaries suitable for an adventuring party. With regular use, this book contains enough monsters for years of gaming spanning every level of play.

Let these monsters inspire you and revitalize your campaign world, but never forget from whence they came. Each one draws inspiration from an animal in the real world that is forever lost to us. They exist only in our imaginations, just as the monsters in this book do.

Hope and Despair

The stories in this book are sometimes difficult to read. The visceral reaction—a sinking feeling in the stomach, a knot settling in the throat, and an encroaching cloud of dread—never went away for us. It's bitter medicine, but you should take it. Every extinction is a little wound, a light extinguished in the world, which is easier to ignore. We live in a world that has been irreparably harmed, and before we can make strides to stem the bleeding, it's important to know the extent of the injury.

However, this book is also an exercise in hope. The sixth extinction crisis isn't a runaway steam roller, crushing every species unfortunate enough to be in its path. It's something we can overcome together through conservation policy, bio-literacy, and legislation.

On a more granular level, this book attempts to accomplish one singular thing: to change the way you tell stories. When you kill an owlbear in your RPG games, there's always another one. Our fantasy stories exist in a universe of infinite abundance, which influences how we think about the real world. If your stories never grapple with scarcity, pollution, or extinction, how are you meant to engage with these ideas except in a detached, theoretical way?

If this book can change how you tell stories, it will have made a small contribution to the larger cause.

"The climate emergency and crisis of biodiversity loss show that the relationship between humans and the rest of nature is failing…The scale of the inter-related issues of climate change and biodiversity loss and radical changes required for a sustainable future require a new relationship with nature. Bringing about a new relationship with nature needs interventions and approaches that affect large changes at scale across complex systems. The approach to creating a new relationship with nature is based on improving the psychological construct of nature connectedness through a framework called the 'pathways to nature connectedness.' The relatively recent psychological construct… covers how we think about nature, our affective relationship with nature and the extent to which we see ourselves as part of nature. Nature connectedness…is a factor in improved mental wellbeing and increased pro-environmental behaviors.

The pathways to nature connectedness… provide a new methodological approach for improving human–nature relationships through targeting and increasing nature connectedness…These were **contact through the senses**, **emotion**, **beauty**, **meaning**, and **compassion**."

—M. Richardson, et al., 2020[1]

*This bestiary uses all five pathways to reconnect players to nature, and approach a solution to the extinction crisis. Players will encounter these vanished creatures through the embodied experience of roleplaying (**senses**), allow the emotional impact of those encounters to bleed over into their own self-image as they interact with their character (**emotion**), wonder at nature's beauty both real and imagined (**beauty**), find meaning in those encounters through the art of collective narrative storytelling (**meaning**), and experiment with alternative solutions to these extinctions through their character (**compassion**). Players who connect to nature improve their own mental health and become motivated to act on behalf of the natural world of which they are a part.*

Atlas Bear & Atlas Lion

Atlas Bear

Ursus arctos crowtheri
African Bear

Named for the Atlas mountains that stretch from modern-day Morocco to Tunisia, the Atlas bear was the only bear species native to Africa. It is thought to have been an opportunistic omnivore like its taxonomic cousin the brown bear, *Ursus arctos*. Exactly how it came to live in the Atlas mountains is a mystery, although some theories posit that cave bears or brown bears from Pleistocene Europe swam across the strait of Gibraltar to establish this unique population.

The Atlas bear's extinction is directly related to the arrival of the Roman Empire circa 146 BCE. The Romans ruthlessly exploited the bear's habitat for timber, removing the vegetation that protected the sandy soil of North Africa from erosion and thus erasing the ecosystem that supported the bear's omnivorous lifestyle.[2] Even as the bear's habitat was destroyed, the bears themselves were brought to Rome to be slain by *venatores*, gladiators that fought animals for glory and gold. Ancient historians record the bears being imported by the hundreds.[3]

The Atlas bears that persisted into the modern era were lost to overhunting and collectors in the 19th century. By 1830, the bear was already a rarity when the Emperor of Morocco sent a live specimen as a gift to the Marseilles zoological gardens.[4] The last known specimen was killed by hunters in the 1870s in the Tétuan mountains.[5]

"That which was the utmost glory of thy renown, Meleager, a boar put to flight, what is it? a mere portion of that of Carpophorus. He, in addition, planted his hunting-spear in a fierce rushing bear, the monarch in the realm of the northern pole; he also laid low a lion remarkable for its unheard-of size,—a lion, which might have become the hands of Hercules; and he then, with a wound from a distance, stretched lifeless a fleet leopard. And when at length he carried off his prizes, he was still in a condition to engage in new combats."
—Martial, c. 81–92 A.D.[12]

Atlas Lion

Panthera leo leo
Barbary lion
Berber lion
Egyptian lion
North African lion

The Atlas bear and the Atlas lion were sympatric predators until the late 19th century, filling the forested range of North Africa, and their stories are intertwined.

Habitat loss affected the Atlas lion just as profoundly as it had the Atlas bear, as the forests of North Africa were turned to timber for ships and homes in Rome. However, the lion suffered far worse from the *venato* circuses. At 500 pounds and 10 feet long from nose to tail tip, the Atlas lion was the largest lion subspecies, and had a magnificent mane that extended across almost half its body.[6] It was so manifestly an apex predator, it would have been a clear target for vainglorious *venatores*—gladiators who battled ferocious animals—to test themselves. Indeed, the Romans took Atlas lions in staggering numbers, each ruler seeking to present larger *venatio* games than their predecessors. Sulla in 93 BC showed 100 lions. Marcus Aemilius Scaurus presented 150 leopards, a hippopotamus, and five crocodiles. Pompey and Caesar respectively showed 600 and 400 lions.[7] Often, convicts and victims of religious persecution were fed Atlas lions when sentenced to *damnatio ad bestias*, death by wild animal.

In the common era, hunting for sport continued and other hunting increased. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the reigning governments of the Barbary coast subsidized lion hunting to protect cattle.[8] By the early 1900s, the lions were most likely to be seen in zoos, including famous specimens at the Bronx and Tower of London Zoos. The last Atlas lion to be taken in the wild was shot in 1942 on the northern side of the Tizi-n-Tichka pass.[9]

Though extinct in the wild, the Atlas lion clings to life in captivity today. Sultan Mohammed V of Morocco kept a few individuals in his private collection, which became part of what is now the Rabat National Zoo after the country's independence in 1956. By 2012, the zoo had 32 lions, about half the species' worldwide population.[10] Five more lions were born in 2021.[11]

Atlas Bear

Large Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 11 (natural armor)
Hit Points 34 (4d10 + 24)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	2 (−4)	13 (+1)	7 (−2)

Skills Perception +3
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages —
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Keen Smell. The bear has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Actions

Multiattack. The bear makes one Bite attack and one Claws attack.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage.

Atlas Lion

Large Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)
Hit Points 26 (4d10 + 4)
Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)	3 (−4)	12 (+1)	8 (−1)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +6
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages —
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Keen Smell. The lion has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Pack Tactics. The lion has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the lion's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Pounce. If the lion moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a Claw attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the lion can make one Bite attack against it as a bonus action.

Running Leap. With a 10-foot running start, the lion can long jump up to 25 feet.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 +3) piercing damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage.

Pit Beasts

Inspired by the Atlas Bear and Atlas Lion

In the gladiatorial arena, death, glory, and the spirit of combat soak into the sand like blood. This nexus of violence and spectacle calls to gods of war, ancestral spirits of warriors past, and bloodthirsty creatures from planes beyond, all of which fill the stands like spectators and manipulate the fates of combatants. Animals brought in to kill or be killed in these arenas may find themselves awakened by one or more of these magics, creating a pit beast.

Pit beasts combine the strength and ferocity of an animal with the tactical cunning of a pit fighter. While even a single pit beast can lay waste to hundreds of lesser opponents, it isn't uncommon for pit beasts to form alliances and fight in concert with each other.

Some pit beasts never leave the arenas in which they awaken, seeking renown or death in honorable combat. Others reject the hold of the arena and escape back into the wild. Such wayward pit beasts are akin to warlords of the wilds, marshaling packs of underlings to their ranks and establishing fearsome bestial kingdoms.

Pit Beast Template

Any Beast, such as a tiger, can become a pit beast. When a Beast becomes a pit beast, it retains all its statistics except as noted below.

Ability Scores. The Beast's Intelligence increases to 10 and its Charisma increases to 18.

Languages. A pit beast speaks Common.

Traits. If the Beast doesn't already have either the Martial Advantage or Pack Tactics trait, it gains one of these traits of your choice.

Martial Advantage. The pit beast has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the pit beast's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Pack Tactics. The pit beast has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the pit beast's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.



Multiattack. The pit beast makes three attacks: one with its highest damage-dealing attack (usually a Bite, Beak, or Stomp attack) and two with its secondary attack (usually Claws or Talons).

If the Beast doesn't have a secondary attack, it gains a Slam attack. A Slam uses Strength or Dexterity, whichever is higher, for its attack and damage rolls. The Slam's bludgeoning damage die is determined by the Beast's size: a Small or smaller creature deals 1d4 damage, a Medium creature deals 1d6 damage, a Large creature deals 1d8 damage, and a Huge or larger creature deals 1d10 damage.

Secondary Attack. The pit beast uses its secondary attack for various martial effects. When the pit beast hits a creature with its secondary attack, the target must succeed on a Strength saving throw (DC equals 8 + the pit beast's proficiency bonus + its Strength or Dexterity modifier) or suffer one of the following effects of the pit beast's choice:

- The target is knocked prone.
- The target drops one object it is holding at its feet.
- The target is shoved up to 10 feet away from the pit beast.
- The target is grappled (escape DC equals the saving throw DC) and restrained. The pit beast can grapple only one target at a time.

New Action: Frightful Presence. Each creature of the pit beast's choice that is within 120 feet of the pit beast and aware of it must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw (DC equals 8 + the pit beast's proficiency bonus + its Charisma modifier) or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the pit beast's Frightful Presence for the next 24 hours.

Reactions. The pit beast gains one of the following martial reactions of your choice: parry, riposte, or sentinel.

Pit Bear

Large Monstrosity, Typically Chaotic Neutral

Armor Class 11 (natural armor)
Hit Points 102 (12d10 + 36)
Speed 40 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	18 (+4)

Skills Perception +3
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages Common
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Keen Smell. The bear has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Martial Advantage. Once per turn, the bear can deal an extra 7 (2d6) damage to a creature if at least one of the bear's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Actions

Multiattack. The bear can use its Frightful Presence. It then makes one Bite attack and two Claws attacks.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage. The target must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or suffer one of the following effects of the bear's choice:

- The target is knocked prone.
- The target drops one object it is holding at its feet.
- The target is shoved up to 10 feet away from the bear.
- The target is grappled (escape DC 14) and restrained. The bear can grapple only one target at a time.

Frightful Presence. Each creature of the bear's choice that is within 120 feet of the bear and aware of it must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the bear's Frightful Presence for the next 24 hours.

Reactions

Sentinel. The bear makes a Claw attack against a creature that moves within 5 feet of it. On a hit, the target's speed becomes 0 for the rest of the turn.

Parry. The pit beast adds 3 to its AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To do so, the pit beast must see the attacker.

Riposte. The pit beast makes one secondary attack against a creature within 5 feet of the pit beast that misses it with a melee attack.

Sentinel. The pit beast makes one secondary attack against a creature that moves within 5 feet of it. On a hit, the target's speed becomes 0 for the rest of the turn.

Pit Bear

Often created by war gods or warrior spirits, pit bears are relentless fighters who rely on brute force and overwhelming power. They can be devastating when paired with other, more mobile fighters that weaken their opponent's defenses and allow the pit bear to deliver a killing blow.

Pit Lion

Pit lions overwhelm gladiatorial opponents using superior positioning and quick movements in and out of an opponent's range. These beasts often play host to eldritch, extraplanar predators or gladiators whose desire for glory outweighs even the power of death. They are not above attacking from cover or darkness to gain the advantage.

A Pit Beast's Lair

Pit beasts who remain in the arena are able to tap into the same chaotic miasma of magic that made them and turn the pit itself against their opponents. While in its lair, a pit beast has access to lair actions listed below.

The challenge rating of a pit beast increases by 1 when it is encountered in its lair.

Lair Actions

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the pit beast can take a lair action to cause one of the following magical effects:

» A gust of wind raises a cyclone of sand and dust to blind opponents. Each creature in a 10-foot radius, 20-foot high cylinder must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be blinded until the end of its next turn.

Pit Lion

Large Monstrosity, Typically Chaotic Neutral

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)
Hit Points 97 (15d10 + 15)
Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +6
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages Common
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Keen Smell. The lion has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Pack Tactics. The lion has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the lion's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Pounce. If the lion moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with its Claw attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the lion can make one Bite attack against it as a bonus action.

Running Leap. With a 10-foot running start, the lion can long jump up to 25 feet.

Actions

Multiattack. The lion can use its Frightful Presence. The lion then makes one Bite attack and two Claw attacks.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage. The target must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or suffer one of the following effects of the lion's choice:

- The target is knocked prone.
- The target drops one object it is holding at its feet.
- The target is shoved up to 10 feet away from the lion.
- The target is grappled (escape DC 13) and restrained. The lion can grapple only one target at a time.

Frightful Presence. Each creature of the lion's choice that is within 120 feet of the lion and aware of it must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the lion's Frightful Presence for the next 24 hours.

Reactions

Riposte. The lion makes one Claw attack against a creature within 5 feet of the lion that misses it with a melee attack.



» The spirits of long-dead gladiators rise at the pit beast's will, striking its opponents with ghostly weapons. Each creature in a 15-foot radius centered on a point within 120 feet that the pit beast can see must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 12 (3d6) necrotic damage.
» The magical echoes of a crowd calling for death sap the will and resolve of the pit beast's opponents. Each creature within 60 feet of the pit beast must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. Creatures that are deafened automatically succeed on this saving throw. On a failed save, the creature subtracts 1d4 from attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws it makes before the end of its next turn.

Lair Traits

A pit beast's arena may be warped by its magic in any or all of the following ways:

» Creatures in the lair become more aggressive toward each other. Every creature is considered either hostile or friendly, never neutral.
» Creatures within one mile of the lair have their sleep disturbed by dreams of their ancestors' deaths.
» The sound of cheering crowds can be heard whenever a creature makes an attack roll.

If the pit beast is destroyed, these effects fade over the course of 1d10 days.

Aurochs

Bos Primigenius

Aurochs are the wild cattle of ancient Europe, a beast ingrained in the continent's mythology and culture. Standing over 6 feet tall and weighing more than a ton, the aurochs was a keystone species for forests and grasslands ranging from modern-day Portugal to Korea.[13] With its wide horns and broad, white-striped back blanketed by a thick mantle of fur during the winter season, the aurochs was a striking animal that left an impression on the folklore of an entire continent. In the cave paintings at Chauvet-Pont-d'Arc, aurochs are depicted opposite saber-toothed tigers and cave lions.[14] At the city of Babylon, aurochs were depicted on the Ishtar Gate, the eighth gate to the inner city.[15] Hunting the aurochs was a privilege of the noble in 14th-century Germany, who would often drink from the slain aurochs' horns.[16] In the Greek myth portrayed in *The Rape of Europa*, Zeus was able to kidnap Europa by transforming into an aurochs bull. Europa was so enamored with the new white bull in her father's herds that she climbed on its back, at which point Zeus swam the Mediterranean to strand her on the island of Crete.

Over time, everything that kills species conspired to kill the aurochs, including unrestricted hunting, loss of habitat to farmland, and diseases borne from domestic cattle. The last recorded aurochs, a female, died of natural causes in Jaktorów Forest, Poland, in 1627.[17]

The aurochs is one of a handful of species scientists actively endeavor to resurrect from extinction. The project could have been ripped straight from a blockbuster movie. A multi-national team of scientists sequenced the aurochs genome in 2015 using genetic material from a 6,750 year old aurochs bone discovered in a cave in Derbyshire, England.[18] Using this sequence, the TaurOs Programme, a collaboration between European conservation groups Stichting Tauros, Rewilding Europe, and the Ark Foundation, hopes to create a modern version of the aurochs by "back-breeding" domestic species with a genetic resemblance to the original aurochs such as Limia, Podolica, and Pajuna cattle.[19] By reintroducing these ancient herbivores to areas like the Rhodope Mountains, Southern Carpathians, and Oder Delta, the program hopes to create functional ecological landscapes sustained by natural processes like forest regeneration and free-flowing rivers. These ecosystems are a step toward preserving Europe's rich biodiversity.

Aurochs

Large Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 11
Hit Points 38 (4d10 + 16)
Speed 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	10 (+0)	19 (+4)	2 (−4)	13 (+1)	6 (−2)

Saving Throws Cha +0
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages —
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Charge. If the aurochs moves at least 20 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a gore attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 9 (2d8) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Actions

Gore. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) piercing damage.

The first effort to resurrect the aurochs resulted in the so-called "Nazi supercow." In the 1920's, brothers Lutz and Heinz Heck ran parallel backbreeding programs for aurochs at the Berlin and Munich Zoos respectively. Lutz was a member of the Nazi party and shared its ideals of eugenics and a return to a heroic past with his close friend Hermann Göring, right-hand man to Adolf Hitler.[20] Göring seized private property for nature preserves he hoped Lutz would fill with mythic beasts resembling those in ancient epic poetry like *Nibelungenlied*, which Göring could then spear hunt in period dress.[21] (Heinz Heck, it should be said, did not share his brother's ideology; he was imprisoned at the Dachau concentration camp for his connections to the Communist Party and his brief marriage to a Jewish woman.)[22] The Heck brothers selected visual characteristics from a huge cross-section of breeds including Spanish fighting bulls. The result wasn't the aurochs, but a new breed called Heck cattle whose individuals vary widely in their physical characteristics and are often aggressive enough to attack without first giving a threat display.[23] Perhaps unsurprisingly, these aren't the pleasantly sympatric herbivores hoped to rewild Europe alongside humans. Lutz' stock of Heck cattle was exterminated after the war, but today there are still about 2,000 Heck cattle in existence—all of which trace back to Heinz' stock.[24]

Briar Bull

Inspired by the Aurochs

A champion of ancient forests, the briar bull nurtures the wilds and protects its deepest groves.

Wardens of the Wood. The forest springs up wherever the briar bull ventures. In its wake, the bull leaves patches of fresh grass and wildflowers like hoofprints. The wallows where it scratches down a patch of soft earth for its bed will fill with saplings and flower blossoms by dawn. When travelers stumble across an isolated woodland in the frosty tundra or a lush oasis in the desert, they might be looking upon a briar bull's woods, preserved only by the beast's nurturing magic.

Rewilders. The briar bull was conceived by the gods of nature to regenerate forests lost to droughts or wildfire. However, the bull now serves as a vanguard for nature's reclamation whenever a farmstead is abandoned or a village is laid to waste. The first patches of grass to sprout upon forgotten roads and the first vines to clutch crumbling structures often come from a briar bull's hooves.



Briar Bull

Large Monstrosity, Typically Neutral

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)
Hit Points 76 (8d10 + 32)
Speed 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	10 (+0)	19 (+4)	5 (−3)	18 (+4)	6 (−2)

Saving Throws Cha +0, Wis +6
Senses passive Perception 14
Languages understands Sylvan but can't speak
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Charge. If the briar bull moves at least 20 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a Gore attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 9 (2d8) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Land's Stride. Moving through difficult terrain costs the briar bull no extra movement. It can also pass through plants without being slowed by them and without taking damage from them if they have thorns, spines, or a similar hazard.

Actions

Multiattack. The briar bull makes one Gore attack and one Hoof attack.

Gore. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) piercing damage.

Hoof. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage and the target must make a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be restrained by roots and vines until the end of its next turn.

Spellcasting. The briar bull casts one of the following spells, using Wisdom as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 14):

1/day: *entangle*, *plant growth*, *spike growth*

Hell Cow

Inspired by the Heck Cattle

When fiends from the underworld can't personally destroy and despoil, they relish the chance to employ others to do evil on their behalf. The so-called hell cow is one such fiendish tool: a breed of briar bull corrupted by the environment of the Lower Planes and magically crossbred with all manner of demons and devils. The result is a hateful beast that attacks on sight with hellfire-infused horns and hooves. By design, hell cattle can't be domesticated, nor even tamed. They can be found in abundance on the Lower Planes and around the rare permanent bridges to the underworld on the Material Plane.

Embers of Hell. Hellfire is unlike any mortal flame: it burns with a heat that scorches the body and soul alike at temperatures unseen on the Material Plane. An ember of hellfire is placed inside every hell calf at birth, an agonizing procedure that kills many calves outright. The result, however, is a terrible breath of flame to rival a dragon's.

Hell Cow

Large Fiend, Typically Evil

Armor Class 12 (natural armor)
Hit Points 63 (6d10 + 30)
Speed 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	9 (−1)	21 (+5)	8 (−1)	10 (+0)	6 (−2)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities fire
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages understands Infernal but can't speak
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Charge. If the hell cow moves at least 20 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a Gore attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 7 (2d6) fire damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Actions

Gore. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) fire damage.

Hoof. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage plus 7 (2d6) fire damage.

Hellfire Breath (Recharge 5–6). The hell cow exhales fire in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 24 (7d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.



Barbados Racer

Erythrolamprus perfuscus
Tan ground snake

"Racer" is a name given to several genera of highly-active, fast-moving constrictor snakes, including *Drymobius*, the neotropical racers; *Masticophis*, the whip snakes or coachwhips; and *Alsophis*, racers found on other Caribbean islands. Most of these snakes are small, mildly venomous, and rear-fanged, making them harmless to humans. Though they are called constrictors, many such snakes kill by pinning and smothering their prey, usually small rodents and birds, with their coils.

The Barbados racer was first described in writing in 1657 by Richard Ligon, who noted that it was four and a half feet long and likely to devour young domestic pigeons if given the chance.[25] A British expatriate, Ligon witnessed the colonization of Barbados for sugar plantations. Heavy development on Barbados continued in the centuries following his writing. Numerous introduced species like mongoose, cats, and rats meant that despite a comparatively recent last sighting in 1963, the Barbados racer was listed as extinct by the IUCN in 2016.[26]

Blink Snake

Inspired by the Barbados Racer

In fields of tall grass, a sound like twigs snapping warns travelers to keep their eyes to the ground. That snap is the tiny shockwave of a blink snake on the hunt.

Convergent Evolution. The blink dog and the blink snake both possess similar teleportation abilities, useful for catching supernaturally elusive prey in the Feywild. However, the two creatures are unrelated, despite what their names would suggest. While the blink dog was bred by high elves to hunt displacer beasts, the blink snake appears to have naturally manifested its teleportation to ambush its favorite prey: fairies and sprites.

Living Snare. When a blink snake is threatened by a much larger creature, it teleports directly around the creature's neck in an attempt to strangle it. This tactic has earned it the moniker "garrotte snake" among experienced trackers. Despite its size, adult blink snakes have been known to bring down centaurs, dire wolves, and even the occasional harpy.

Barbados Racer

Small Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 3 (1d6)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	1 (−5)	10 (+0)	3 (−4)

Senses passive Perception 10
Languages —
Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) piercing damage.

Constrict. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) bludgeoning damage, and if the target is a Tiny creature it is grappled (escape DC 10). Until this grapple ends, the creature is restrained and the racer can't constrict another target.

Blink Snake

Medium Monstrosity, Unaligned

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 55 (10d8 + 10)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	1 (−5)	10 (+0)	3 (−4)

Senses blindsight 10 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages —
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage.

Constrict. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 14). Until this grapple ends, the creature is restrained, and the snake can't constrict another target.

Teleport (Recharge 4–6). The blink snake magically teleports, along with any equipment it is wearing or carrying, up to 40 feet to an unoccupied space it can see. Before or after teleporting, the blink snake can make one Bite or Constrict attack.

Bluebuck

Hippotragus leucophaeus
Blue antelope
***Bloubok* (Afrikaans)**

The bluebuck was the first large African mammal to become extinct in the modern era. Named for its steely blue color, the bluebuck was smaller and rarer than its extant cousins, the sable and roan antelopes.[27] It stood only four feet tall at the shoulder and ranged across a fragment of the south-western Cape Province.[28]

Like other animals of the region, the bluebuck featured prominently in the art and mythology of the indigenous San peoples. The South African folk tale *Story of the Hare* features a bluebuck unsuccessfully guarding a store of food from the fabulous predator inkalimeva.[29] Elsewhere, cave paintings in the Caledon River Valley show no fewer than six bluebucks side-by-side, perhaps inspired by a Bushman's trance and meticulously painted thereafter.[30]

However, the bluebuck's mysterious bluish coat and relative rarity also enticed European hunters. Even as its habitat was converted to agriculture, the bluebuck was the subject of avid hunting, leaving no survivors past 1800.[31] The entire body of evidence for the animal in European science consists of "a few short descriptions written in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, four mounted specimens in museums, as well as some horns and skulls, and three drawings."[32] Much like blue roan horses, the animal's striking coloration is the result of lighter yellow-gray hairs over a dark base coat. Unfortunately, this namesake color is lost to history; none of the remaining specimens, each hundreds of years old, exhibit the animal's original blue.

Moonlight Scimitar

When a duskhorn's antlers are harvested from a corpse and carved to a bladed edge, each horn can form a *moonlight scimitar*, a magical weapon that harnesses the duskhorn's mastery over moonlight.

Moonlight Scimitar
Weapon (scimitar), uncommon (requires attunement)

You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon. The scimitar also has 4 charges. While attuned to it, you can expend 1 charge to cast one of the following spells (save DC 13): *darkness, darkvision, misty step,* or *moonbeam.*

The weapon regains 1d4 charges daily at dusk. If you expend the scimitar's last charge, roll a d20. On a 1, the scimitar crumbles into dust and is destroyed.

Bluebuck
Medium Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 13
Hit Points 4 (1d8)
Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	2 (−4)	14 (+2)	5 (−3)

Senses passive Perception 12
Languages —
Challenge 0 (10 XP)

Charge. If the bluebuck moves at least 25 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a ram attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 2 (1d4) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 11 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Actions

Ram. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) bludgeoning damage.

Duskhorn
Inspired by the Bluebuck

Superstitious hunters speak of glimpsing a duskhorn in the same breath as seeing a ghost: both are rare emanations of the night itself, and both presage dark times.

Spirits of the Moon. Druids have long understood that all things, from rocks and trees, to the moon itself, are imbued with a spirit of life. The moon's spirit manifests in eight mystical beasts—the duskhorns—each of which represents a phase of the lunar cycle. Moonlight incarnate, duskhorns are nocturnal, retreating into the deepest parts of the forest by day. Should a duskhorn ever be slain, the moon itself sheds a tear, a condensed drop of moonlight, which falls to the world and manifests a new duskhorn where it lands.

Nightbringers. A duskhorn's presence foretells longer nights and a supernaturally prominent moon overhead. By nature, duskhorns migrate across the land, for if one remains somewhere for too long, the night grows progressively longer until the sun doesn't rise at all. This endless night is a haven for creatures of darkness: chiefly vampires, shadows, drow, and lycanthropes, which would relish the opportunity to build an empire around a captured duskhorn.

Duskhorn

Large Monstrosity, Typically Neutral

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 142 (15d10 + 60)
Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	17 (+3)	19 (+4)	8 (−1)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)

Skills Perception +5, Stealth +6
Damage Vulnerabilities radiant
Damage Resistances cold, necrotic
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages understands Sylvan but can't speak
Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Charge. If the duskhorn moves at least 25 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a ram attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 14 (4d6) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 16 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Lunar Sight. Magical darkness doesn't impede the duskhorn's darkvision.

Magic Resistance. The duskhorn has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Actions

Multiattack. The duskhorn makes one Ram attack and one Hooves attack.

Ram. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d10 + 5) necrotic damage.

Hooves. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

Darkmoon Beam (Recharge 5–6). The duskhorn gathers the moonlight stored in its horns and fires it in a 60-foot line that is 10 feet wide. Each creature in that line must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the creature takes 31 (7d8) necrotic damage and its movement speed is reduced to 0 until the end of the duskhorn's next turn. On a successful save, the creature takes half as much damage and its speed isn't reduced. The duskhorn can't use this ability while in daylight.





Bramble Cay Melomys

Melomys rubicola
***Maizub kaur mukeis* (Mer)**

As of 2016, one in six species was at risk of extinction from climate change.[33] The first mammalian extinction caused directly by climate change could have been anything, but it turned out to be a little brown rat on a precarious island.

Bramble Cay is a tiny basalt island in the Torres Strait at the northernmost point of the Great Barrier Reef, between Australia and Papua New Guinea. With the same footprint as the average shopping mall and its highest point at just 10 feet above sea level, it is a diminutive island by any metric.[34] It's known as Maizab Kaur by the native Mer people, but its English name comes from the HMS *Bramble*, the ship that carried the first Europeans to discover the island in 1845. Lieutenant Yale and his crew found the most isolated mammals in the world, large rats dashing away from beneath overturned turtle shells.[35] The rats were melomys, part of a genus of mosaic-tailed rats from northern Australia. How these travelers came to be on the island is still a mystery; perhaps they crossed a lost land bridge or floated over on driftwood. In their new home, the rats were largely nocturnal, feeding on the island's native plants and perhaps bird or turtle eggs.[36]

The first recorded population assessment in 1978 estimated several hundred melomys on Bramble Cay.[37] As sea levels rose between 2004 and 2014, Bramble Cay was inundated with ocean waters, destroying 97 percent of the plants on the cay and flooding caves the melomys called home.[38] An extensive survey in 2014 revealed no living members of the species, and no credible recorded sightings after 2009. Since sea level rise and increasing numbers of tropical storms were the most likely ecological factors, researchers determined that human-caused climate change directly drove this mammal extinct. The Queensland state government officially recognized its extinction in 2016; federal recognition followed three years later.

Conservation biologists showed gaps in legislation and enforcement were also culpable in this preventable extinction.[39] "The Bramble Cay melomys was a little brown rat," said Tim Beshara, a spokesman for advocacy group The Wilderness Society. "But it was our little brown rat and it was our responsibility to make sure it persisted. And we failed."[40] Since then, however, Australia has stepped out as a leader in conservation action. The country's Threatened Species Action Plan 2022–2032 makes Australia one of the few countries with an objective for zero new extinctions, and actively includes First Nations Peoples in the management and recovery of threatened species and threatened ecological communities.[41]

Melomys

Tiny Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 10
Hit Points 1 (1d4 – 1)
Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
2 (–4)	11 (+0)	9 (–1)	2 (–4)	10 (+0)	4 (–3)

Senses darkvision 30 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages —
Challenge 0 (10 XP)

Keen Smell. The melomys has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +0 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 piercing damage.

Raftlings

Inspired by the Bramble Cay Melomys

Raftlings—ratling mousefolk with an inborn talent for sailing rafts and eventually naval vessels—inherited a tradition of ship rats spanning centuries. These mousefolk and their descendants have inborn sealegs and a keen ear for the winds. Despite navigating every sea and major river in the world, raftlings crews often go unnoticed thanks to their diminutive size. Raftlings are fierce fighters, making for deadly foes or staunch allies to any traveler on the seven seas.

Raftling Code. Raftlings hold to a loosely-enforced code, a set of guidelines governing the behavior of all seafaring mousefolk, though commitment to the code varies considerably from crew to crew. The tenets considered universal are that the captain's word is law on their own vessel, no fellow raftling should face a sea lion alone, and calling any raftling a "pie rat" is punishable by summary execution.

Raftling Captain

Small Humanoid (Mousefolk), Any Alignment

Armor Class 15 (studded leather)
Hit Points 55 (10d6 + 20)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +3, Dex +5, Wis +2
Skills Athletics +3, Deception +4
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages Common, Rodentia
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Scurry. The captain can move through the space of any hostile creature as if it were difficult terrain.

Squeeze. The captain suffers no penalty for squeezing into a space that is only large enough for a Tiny creature.

Actions

Multiattack. The captain makes two attacks.

Rapier. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

Reactions

Sealegs. When the captain sees a hostile creature move within 60 feet of it, the captain moves up to its movement speed without provoking opportunity attacks.



Raftling Buccaneer

Small Humanoid (Mousefolk), Any Alignment

Armor Class 13 (leather armor)
Hit Points 10 (3d6)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)

Skills Acrobatics +4, Survival +2
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages Common, Rodentia
Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Scurry. The buccaneer can move through the space of any hostile creature as if it were difficult terrain.

Squeeze. The buccaneer suffers no penalty for squeezing into a space that is only large enough for a Tiny creature.

Actions

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Reactions

Sealegs. When the buccaneer sees a hostile creature move within 60 feet of it, the buccaneer moves up to its movement speed without provoking opportunity attacks.

MOUSEFOLK

This creature uses the Mousefolk race, available in *Valda's Spire of Secrets*.

Mousefolk characters can choose the following option when selecting a Mousefolk Lineage:

Raftling Sealegs. Whenever a hostile creature you can see within 60 feet moves, you can use your reaction to move up to half your speed without provoking opportunity attacks.

You can use this trait a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus and you regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest.

Bubal Hartebeest

Alcelaphus buselaphus buselaphus
***Yachmur* (Hebrew)**
Northern hartebeest
Bubal antelope
Bubal

Standing some 4 feet high at the shoulder with an elongated, melancholy face and lyre-shaped horns, the Bubal hartebeest was a striking feature of northern Africa from the time of King Solomon.

The legacy of the hartebeest stretches back to the Old Testament, where it is mentioned under the name *yachmur*—often translated "fallow deer"—as one of the animals served daily at the table of King Solomon.[42] Accounts from ancient writers abound: the Greek *boubalos* and Latin *bubalus* are usually used to indicate an antelope, and appear in works by Herodotus, Dio Cassius, Strabo, Polybius, Diodorus Siculus and Oppian.[43] (In point of fact, these words are the root of the English word "buffalo," and by the time of ancient Rome had come to refer to the water buffalo or perhaps the aurochs.)[44] Remnants of the Bubal hartebeest, particularly its distinctive lyre-shaped horns, have been found in Egyptian sites including Abadiyeh, Fayum, and the Tombs of Sakkara.[45]

As with any well-known game animal, the Bubal hartebeest was taken for granted, and its nomenclature has added no small amount of mystery to it. "Antelope" is one of the most generally applied names in the animal kingdom, and refers to almost any hollow-horned ruminant that isn't an ox, sheep, or goat.[46] Blanket categorizations such as this have uses in conversation, but are frustratingly imprecise for classification. In 1766, the Prussian zoologist Peter Simon Pallas classified the Bubal as *Alcelaphus buselaphus buselaphus*. The genus Alcelaphus is monotypic, containing just one species of hartebeest with eight subspecies, each distinguished by size, horn shape, and distribution on the African continent. From Morocco to Egypt, the Bubal hartebeest was a common grazing animal in northern Africa, possibly ranging to what is now Palestine and Syria. As late as 1738, large herds were reported north of the Atlas mountains.[47] The Bubal's major predator was the Atlas lion, now also extinct in the wild.

Hartebeest

Large Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 11
Hit Points 13 (2d10 + 2)
Speed 50 ft., climb 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	2 (−4)	10 (+0)	3 (−4)

Senses passive Perception 10
Languages —
Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Charge. If the hartebeest moves at least 20 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a ram attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 7 (2d6) damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 12 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Sure-Footed. The hartebeest has advantage on Strength and Dexterity saving throws made against effects that would knock it prone.

Actions

Hooves. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one prone creature. *Hit:* 7 (2d4 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

Ram. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

The hartebeest's decline began with the French conquest of Algeria between 1830 and 1903. French military officers were eager to hunt Africa's native game, as breathless correspondence from the time includes outlines, with accounts of herds fleeing over the rocks "with much more ease than men."[48] The last wild Bubal was reported in Missour, Morocco in 1925, though the sighting is unconfirmed; the female which died in a Paris Zoo in 1923 is usually considered the last of its kind.[49] Ironically, Bubal hartebeests survived for over 18 years in captivity and could be easily acclimated to handling.[50] Given these favorable conditions, a captive breeding program would likely have succeeded, but none was attempted.

Lyrehorn

Inspired by the Bubal Hartebeest

As the story goes, the first lyrehorn was a musician obsessed with his artistry. While rehearsing a performance in the woods, he bragged of his skill to an archfey of the Grimm Court of Faerie, who cursed him for his hubris with the head of an antelope. Every lyrehorn today claims to be that first tragic bard, just one of many lies they tell for their carnivorous lifestyle.

Living Lyres. Musicians by nature, the lyrehorn earns its name by weaving its horns with strings to form a permanent instrument upon its head. The strings, however, bear their own story. Classical luthiers use a material called catgut—a fiber scraped from the wall of animal intestines—to make the finest strings for musical instruments. Lyrehorns, as well, make their strings from the guts of animals, a long succession of victims that it lures and devours.

Hunger of Harpers. Despite their bacchanalian habits and jovial demeanor, lyrehorns harbor a bottomless appetite for mortal flesh, and will use any ruse to sate it. Hungry lyrehorns often lurk at the edge of dark groves, playing spellbinding music to lure their next meal from the path. Other times, they follow the clamor of good cheer to festivals and, dressing as a traveling bard, devour anyone they can isolate by the evening's end. Anywhere a lyrehorn wanders, beautiful music and violent disappearances follow.

Whenever it can, the lyrehorn disembowels its victims to craft new strings from the entrails, adding unique notes and new spells to its repertoire. Different creatures yield bespoke foci for spells, so a lyrehorn with a diverse collection of strings makes for a uniquely dangerous spellcaster.

Improved Lyres

A lyrehorn's power grows as it adds strings made from new kinds of creatures to its horns. Depending on the strings already in its lyre, a lyrehorn may cast the following additional spells with its Spellcasting trait:

Aberration: ***(3/Day)*** *blindness/deafness*
Celestial: ***(1/Day)*** *banishment*
Dragon: ***(1/Day)*** *dominate person*
Fey: ***(3/Day)*** *invisibility*
Fiend: ***(1/Day)*** *phantasmal killer*
Giant: ***(3/Day)*** *enlarge/reduce*
Humanoid: ***(3/Day)*** *hold person*
Monstrosity: ***(1/Day)*** *fear*



Lyrehead

The head of a lyrehorn is a grim but potent magical instrument.

Moonlight Scimitar
Wondrous item, instrument, rare (requires attunement by a bard)

You must be proficient with string instruments to use the lyre. It has 5 charges. You can use an action to play the lyre and expend 1 or more charges to cast any of the following spells from it: *command* (1 charges), *enthrall* (2 charges), *hypnotic pattern* (3 charges), or *confusion* (4 charges). The lyre regains 1d4 + 1 expended charges daily at dusk.

A lyrehead with additional strings might be able to cast additional spells, as detailed in the Improved Lyres sidebar. A spell requires a number of charges equal to its spell level.

Lyrehorn

Medium Fey, Typically Chaotic Evil

Armor Class 13
Hit Points 135 (18d8 + 54)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	17 (+3)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	19 (+4)

Skills Deception +10, Perception +4, Performance +7
Senses passive Perception 14
Languages Common, Sylvan
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Inner Tempo. Magic can't put the lyrehorn to sleep.

Magic Resistance. The lyrehorn has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Actions

Multiattack. The lyrehorn makes two Claw attacks and one Hoof attack.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) slashing damage.

Hooves. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 14 (2d10 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

Toccata (Recharge 5–6). The lyrehorn strums a fierce melody from its strings. Each creature within 60 feet of the lyrehorn that can hear it must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the target takes 22 (4d10) psychic damage and is stunned until the end of its next turn. On a successful save, it takes half as much damage and isn't stunned. Constructs and Undead are immune to this effect.

Spellcasting. The lyrehorn casts one of the following spells, using Charisma as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 15):

3/day each: *command*, *enthrall*, *hypnotic pattern*
1/day: *confusion*

Reactions

Glissando. When a creature within 60 feet of the lyrehorn hits the lyrehorn with an attack, the lyrehorn plucks a sliding series of notes from its strings. The attacker must reroll the attack and take the new result, potentially causing the attack to miss. The lyrehorn must have both hands free to use this reaction.

"A Naturalist's Sojourn in Jamaica"

"When Mr. Wilkie's party first landed in their late visit, they surprised some five Seals on shore. They immediately succeeded in heading a 'Bull,' or Male Seal, both big and burly, and killed him. He proved to be an aged patriarch, with teeth nearly worn to the stumps, and a hide gashed and seamed with scars, got in many a fierce fight; —and about ten feet in length.

In the scramble which the Seal makes to regain the water, nothing is to be remarked but the violence and impatience with which he jerks his body forward; but when he plunges from the shore into the sea, it is no small treat to see the suddenness with which the uncouth animal, so unwieldy and helpless on land, becomes gracefully alert in the ocean. The command with which he strikes through the water, the velocity with which he cleaves the flood, the ease with which he winds the mazes of the rocks, and dashes forward into the hidden recesses of the deep, are beautifully interesting in a creature looking so essentially a quadruped. When the boat is afloat again, the Seals come trooping out to reconnoitre. At a depth of about three feet they paddle about, gazing up through the clear liquid with an expression of countenance beaming with curiosity and intelligence. They dodge around the boat, occasionally ascending to the surface, to renew their inspirations of air, and to look upon their island home, to ascertain whether they may return thither and be at rest.

A grown-up cub about four feet long had been taken by the people. One Seal was observed more persevering in her watchfulness and assiduity to regain the shore, than the rest. This was conjectured to be the dam of the slaughtered young one. The maternal instinct did not exhibit any stronger emotion than this anxious vigilance. The young one was sufficiently grown to be no longer dependent on the mother. Had it been still sucking, there was enough to show that the parental passion would have merged fearlessness into fury, and inquietude for the safety of its young, into unsparing vengeance for its fate."

—Richard Hill, 1843[51]

Caribbean Monk Seal

Neomonachus tropicalis
Monachus tropicalis
West Indian monk seal
Sea wolf

The Caribbean monk seal was a charming, curious tropical carnivore that fell victim to unregulated hunting for its oil and its fur.

Christopher Columbus's account of the seal may be the earliest European description of an animal that is now extinct. During his 1494 voyage, Columbus visited an island he called Alta Vela in what is now the Dominican Republic. "As they were leaving that island they killed eight seals which were sleeping in the sand," Columbus' son Ferdinand recorded. "As that island is uninhabited and the animals are unaccustomed to men, they let themselves be killed with sticks."[52] Columbus had stumbled on a haul-out site, a place seals use to rest and reproduce between time spent in the water. At the time of Columbus' visit, it was common for the seals to haul out in groups of 500 or more on isolated islands, keys, and atolls surrounded by shallow, reef-protected waters; the total population is estimated to have been some 300,000 individuals.[53] The seals harvested by Columbus's crew would have fed them well, as adult Caribbean monk seals could be up to eight feet long and 400 pounds.[54] Their common name refers to the way the cowl of fatty skin on their necks resembled the habits worn by monks.

Caribbean Monk Seal

Medium Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 9 (2d8)
Speed 20 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)	3 (−4)	13 (+1)	6 (−2)

Senses passive Perception 11
Languages —
Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

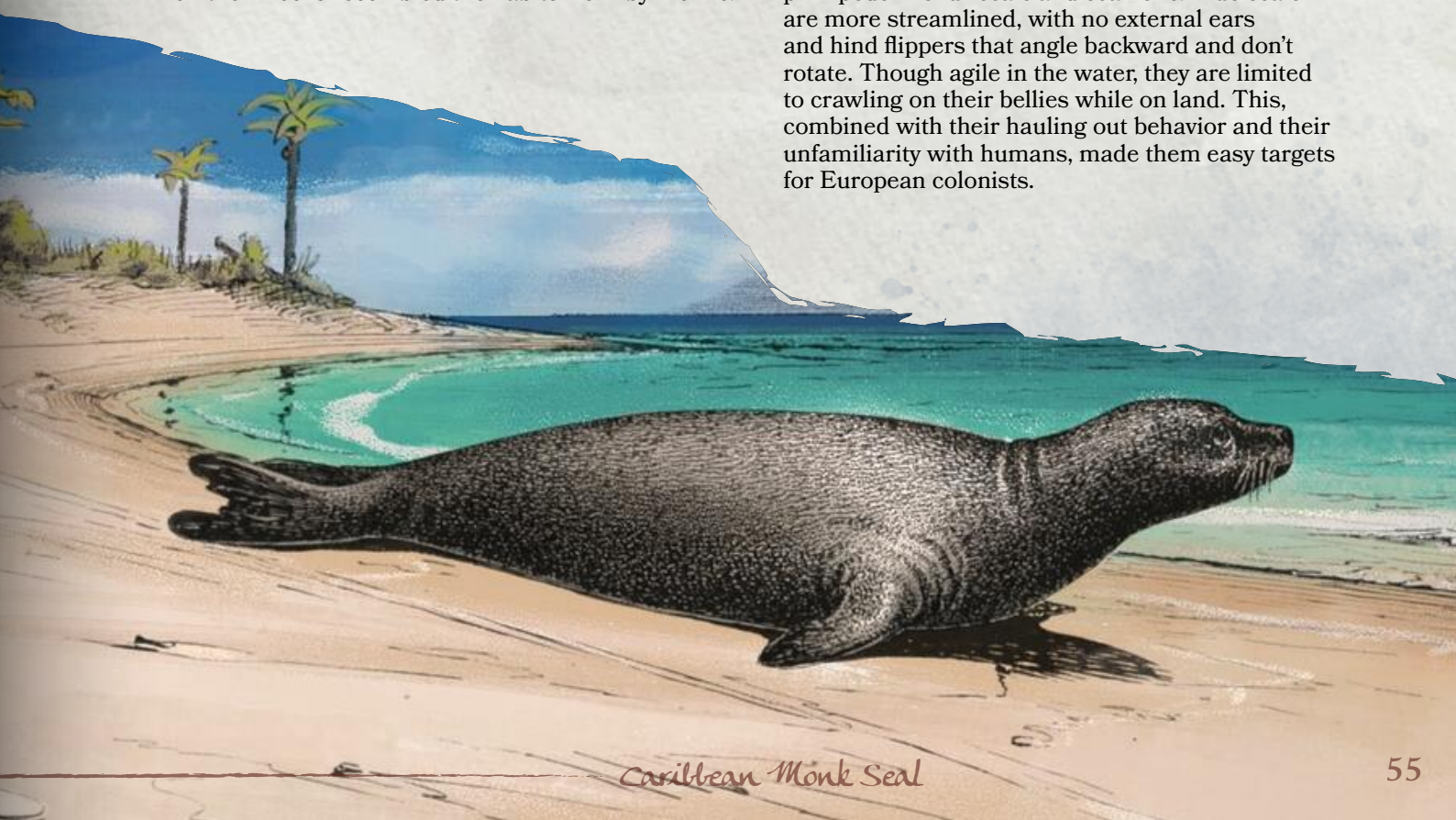
Hold Breath. The seal can hold its breath for 15 minutes.

Keen Smell. The seal has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d4) piercing damage.

Caribbean monk seals are true seals, a family more specialized for marine life than other pinnipeds like fur seals and sea lions. True seals are more streamlined, with no external ears and hind flippers that angle backward and don't rotate. Though agile in the water, they are limited to crawling on their bellies while on land. This, combined with their hauling out behavior and their unfamiliarity with humans, made them easy targets for European colonists.



For the next few centuries, *N. tropicalis* was harvested for every consumer good possible. Seal meat was rich, but thought to spoil easily. Seal skins were used to make a variety of leather goods, some rumored to have remarkable properties: a girdle made from this seal's pelt was believed to relieve lower back pain, and sailors claimed the seal's fur would stand on edge in rough seas but lie flat in calm ones. The most widespread use, however, was for oil. Blubber was processed and used for lamp and cooking oil, lubrication, and even coating the bottom of boats. In 1856, guano gatherers visiting the Triangle Keys found around 100 barrels of skins and skeletons left behind by sealers in favor of the blubber; the visitors made a bonfire of these remnants.[55] By the early 1900s, the Caribbean monk seal was all but extinct throughout most of its original range. The last reliable sighting was at Seranilla Bank, Colombia, in 1952.[56]

The first legal protection for the Caribbean monk seal was under Jamaica's Wild Life Protection Act in 1945, far too late to save the seal. Protection from international bodies like the IUCN and the U.S. Endangered Species Act (still in its infancy) followed in 1967, even though the species was likely extinct already. At least nine aerial and boat surveys between 1949 to 1997 failed to locate living specimens.[57] After waiting a customary 50 years from the last sighting and providing a five-year status review, the National Oceanic And Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) declared the species extinct in 2008.[58]

Shortly after came the extinction of *Halarachne americana*, a mite that lived only in the nasal passages of the Caribbean monk seal. It was among earliest examples, if not the most dramatic, of an extinction cascade, in which an extinction of one species cause further extinctions in the ecosystem.[59]

The two other species of monk seal, the Mediterranean and Hawaiian monk seals, are still extant but currently endangered, with populations measured in the hundreds.

Monk Seal

Medium Monstrosity, Typically Neutral Good

Armor Class 16 (Unarmored Defense)
Hit Points 82 (15d8 + 15)
Speed 20 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	17 (+3)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)

Skills Acrobatics +5, Athletics +3, Insight +5, Stealth +5
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages Aquan, Common
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Hold Breath. The seal can hold its breath for 15 minutes.

Keen Smell. The seal has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Unarmored Defense. The AC of the seal includes its Wisdom modifier.

Actions

Multiattack. The seal makes three Unarmed Strike attacks or five Seashell attacks.

Unarmed Strike. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

Seashell. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) slashing damage.

Bonus Actions

Submarine Acrobatics. While underwater, the seal takes the Dash or Disengage action.

Reactions

Deflect Missile. In response to being hit by a ranged weapon attack, the seal deflects the missile. The damage it takes from the attack is reduced by 8 (1d10 + 3). If the damage is reduced to 0, the seal catches the missile if it's small enough to hold in one flipper and the seal has a flipper free.

Monk Seal

Inspired by the Caribbean Monk Seal

Monk seals are a group of awakened beasts that took up martial arts to protect their ocean home.

Magical Mutations. Poorly-cast spells and cursed magic items can result in a kind of magical run-off around bardic colleges, wizarding schools, and unstable planar gates. One such arcane pollutant transformed a family of seals, awakening their minds and evolving their bodies.

Ocean Defenders. With this new power, monk seals accepted the responsibility to protect their dim-witted kin and the rest of the ocean ecosystem they inhabit. They formed fearsome fighting teams and honed their bodies and minds to peak performance, achieving feats of athleticism and prowess in hand-to-flipper combat that would be astounding even for normal humanoids.



MONK SEAL OIL

Potion, rare

Oil rendered from the fat of a monk seal contains traces of the seal's ki, and can be used for a variety applications. Harvesting this oil from sentient seals, however, is the height of barbarism, akin to drinking the blood of a Humanoid.

A vial of this oil can cover a Medium or smaller creature, along with the equipment it is wearing and carrying (one additional vial is required for each size category above Medium). Applying the oil takes 10 minutes. The affected creature then gains the following benefits for 8 hours:

- The creature can hold its breath for up to 15 minutes and gains a swimming speed of 40 feet.
- The creature rolls a d10 in place of the normal damage for its unarmed strikes.
- Whenever the creature takes the Attack action on its turn, it can make one unarmed strike as a bonus action.
- The creature adds its Wisdom modifier (minimum 1) to its Armor Class.

Families of monk seals guard against forces for which the surface world is both unaware and unequipped: demons from the watery layers of the Abyss, power-hungry merfolk, sunken relics whose magical curses warp the world around them, and, perhaps most importantly, ancient eldritch beings from the darkest recesses of the ocean. Monk seals are often the first to know about risks to the surface world including storms, for which they have an innate prophetic sense.

Cave Monasteries. Monk seals soon learned that the safest place to make their homes and raise their young is in undersea caves inaccessible to most surface dwellers. Many find it difficult to trust outsiders, but they always protect those who cannot protect themselves and will never harm a creature in their domain until it proves itself a threat.

Carolina Parakeet

Conuropsis carolinensis
Carolina conure
***Kelinky* (Chickasaw)**
***Puzzi la nee*, lit. "head of yellow" (Seminole)**



Flocks of Carolina parakeets, North America's only native parrot, followed each other into oblivion before anything was done to save them.

Prior to European settlement of North America, the Carolina parakeet ranged across the East Coast from southern Florida to North Carolina and throughout the Midwest along the Mississippi River and its tributaries as far as eastern Colorado.[60] Instead of migrating, flocks of Carolina parakeets tended to stay in their home areas for life.[61] The birds fed on seeds like maple and beech, and the fruit of the cockleburr, a persistent weed in American forests. Though cocklebur seeds contain a compound called carboxyatractyloside (CATR) which is severely toxic to humans and livestock, the compound didn't affect the parakeet. John James Audubon proved it made the birds poisonous when he boiled the carcasses of ten parakeets and fed them to his cat. The cat disappeared, just like seven other cats Audubon had witnessed dying the previous summer after feeding on the parakeets.[62] s orchards and farms replaced their old growth forest homes, the perception of Carolina parakeets transitioned from denizen to pest. Whole flocks would forage together and were extremely destructive to mulberries, pecans, grapes, and citrus fruits; what the birds didn't eat they often tore off and threw to the ground, apparently for the fun of it.[63]

Since the Carolina parakeet wasn't as numerous as the passenger pigeon and was only occasionally edible, the parakeet's decline went largely unremarked until the nineteenth century. Audubon was the first to publicly raise the alarm, estimating their numbers had diminished by half between 1816 and 1831.[64] Deforestation was rapidly claiming the bird's habitat, and hunting as a pest, pet, or trophy wore away at its numbers. The parakeets' unique flocking behavior undoubtedly hastened this. When one bird had been wounded or killed, the rest of the flock would noisily descend toward it, perhaps to startle and drive away whatever had attacked the bird; most natural predators would flee, but for a hunter with a shotgun this was a golden opportunity to collect the entire flock.[65] The species vanished before any comprehensive conservation efforts were made on its behalf.

In the late 1880s, 16 parakeets were delivered to the Cincinnati Zoo for the price of $2.50 each.[66] Like passenger pigeons, the birds couldn't be bred in captivity; zoos and other collections relied on wild specimens to replenish their supply. Before long, there were no more wild specimens to be had. Carolina parakeets may have persisted in the wild in rural Florida, alongside some of the last ivory-billed woodpeckers, until as late as 1928.[67] However, the last confirmed sighting of a specimen in the wild was in 1904 at Lake Okeechobee.[68] One by one, the Cincinnati birds outlived all their wild kin.

Carolina Parakeet

Tiny Beast, Typically Neutral

Armor Class 13
Hit Points 2 (1d4)
Speed 10 ft., climb 10 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
5 (−3)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	6 (−2)	12 (+1)	6 (−2)

Skills Perception +4
Damage Resistances poison
Senses passive Perception 14
Languages —
Challenge 0 (10 XP)

Poisonous. A creature that hits the parakeet with a Bite or Beak attack or swallows it whole must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or take 2 (1d4) poison damage and be poisoned for 1 minute.

Actions

Talons. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 slashing damage.

The last two were a mated pair named Lady Jane and Incas. Lady Jane passed away in the summer of 1917. Incas pined for his mate for a handful of months until, on February 21, 1918, he passed away in his cage surrounded by his keepers. Though Incas was 32 years old, his keepers claimed old age wasn't the cause of death: Incas died of grief.[69]

One chilling fact remains to be told. Just as in the case of Martha, the last passenger pigeon, Incas's body was frozen in a block of ice upon his death and sent to the Smithsonian Institution in Washington for preservation; the parcel was sent, but never arrived. No one knows what happened to it.[70]

Incas, the Frozen One

Inspired by the Carolina Parakeet

Incas was the patron deity of paleosapiens. Once a towering figure draped in feathers of green, yellow, and gold, he is now a wandering demigod, coated in eternal hoarfrost and stricken mad with grief.

Decline of Divinity. The paleosapiens were a society of proud humanoids that reigned over the Material Plane alongside the dinosaurs. For millennia, their culture flourished and their civilizations held sway over vast swaths of the primordial continents, giving rise to a pantheon of gods, among which was Incas, patron deity of paleosapiens and springtime. With the divine introduction of humans, elves, dwarves, and others, alongside the decimation of dinosaurs on the Material Plane, the paleosapien people diminished to their current status as endlings, destined for extinction.

The collapse of their culture also wrought the collapse of their pantheon, leaving scant believers to empower even their mightiest gods. All paleosapien gods—save one—have vanished into the ether of the Upper Planes, leaving Incas utterly alone. The verdant deity is now reduced to a demigod enveloped by a layer of unending hoarfrost, wandering the world in search of a now extinct people.

Mad Grief. The paleosapians knew Incas as Laughing Song and The King in Green, always accompanied by his queen, the Lady Jane, a goddess of first autumn frost and a calm counterpoint to Incas's raucous verve. The pair once ruled together over a divine host thousands strong. In the precipitous decline of their pantheon, celestials and demigods were stripped of worshippers and power, vanishing one by one. The Lady Jane was the last to vanish, driving Incas to madness.

Late in the afternoon of our arrival we started a flock of seven Parquets from a productive patch of thistles which were their favorite food. Evidently their meal was finished and they were ready to retire, for they darted like startled Doves through the pines, twisting and turning in every direction, and flying with such rapidity, they were soon lost to view; the ring of their sharp, rolling call alone furnished proof it was not all a vision.

–Dr. Frank M. Chapman, 1889[71]

Incas vacillates between rage, depression, and insane scheming to resurrect his lost queen, never quite reaching acceptance of his grief. In occasional moments of lucidity, Incas remembers the halcyon days when his people were in their prime. In this rare, restful state, he is an adept statesman and a gifted poet, capable of sharing the details of forgotten historical events, discussing the finer points of spellcraft, and helping navigate the delicate terms of a contract with fairness and grace.

Frozen Patron. The grief that claws at Incas's sanity takes the form of a sparkling rime on his feathers. Incas's wild attempts to reconcile that grief might compel him to search for rare spell components, reconstruct flawed resurrection rituals, or enact ludicrous schemes for revenge on the humanoids of the Material Plane. Though Incas retains the last dregs of his divine power, he often requires the services of adventuring parties to retrieve what he needs. Those who fail in these endeavors inevitably find themselves frozen in pillars of ice.



DEATH OF DIVINITY

Contrary to popular belief, gods aren't immortal. Divine beings are empowered by their worshippers, whom they symbiotically gift with miracles. When those worshippers dwindle, due to competition between rival gods, deaths of worshippers, or irrelevance of a god's domain, a god's power diminishes until it fades into demigod status, and eventually vanishes entirely.

The death of a god mirrors how a species goes extinct, if one imagines worshippers as food and divine domains as habitats. Perhaps a world of shifting beliefs could have the same disastrous results as deforestation, as gods can no longer rely on their old domains for survival.

Even after a god's death, however, some facet of its divinity, a vestige, persists in a realm called the Void. These godly echoes are tormented by the Void's nothingness and empowered by memories of their existence, rather than direct worship. When such a vestige is forgotten entirely, it is consumed by the Void, to no one's notice. It is certainly possible to bring a nearly-forsaken god back from the brink of death through worship, but it might also be possible to return a vestige to the status of godhood. However, no such deed has ever been attempted.

Incas

Large Celestial, Neutral Evil

Armor Class 19 (natural armor)
Hit Points 190 (20d10 + 80)
Speed 40 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	19 (+4)	18 (+4)	20 (+5)	13 (+1)	23 (+6)

Saving Throws Con +9, Cha +11
Skills History +10, Insight +6, Perception +6
Damage Immunities cold
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 16
Languages Common, Elvish, Sylvan
Challenge 16 (15,000 XP)

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Incas fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Magic Resistance. Incas has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Actions

Multiattack. Incas makes three attacks.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage plus 9 (2d8) cold damage.

Hoarfrost Gaze. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +11 to hit, range 100 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (3d8) cold damage.

Icy Clutches (Recharge 6). Incas reaches out and grasps two creatures he can see within 10 feet of him. Each target must succeed on a DC 19 Dexterity saving throw or be covered in ice and restrained. A restrained creature must repeat the saving throw at the end of its next turn. On a success, the effect ends for it. On a failure, the creature is petrified in ice until freed by the *greater restoration* spell or other magic.

Spellcasting. Incas casts one of the following spells, requiring no material components and using Charisma as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 19):

At will: *calm emotions*, *fog cloud*, *minor illusion*, *sending*
3/day each: *animal messenger*, *enthrall*, *sleet storm*
1/day each: *hypnotic pattern*, *resurrection* (as an action)

Legendary Actions

Incas can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Incas regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Gaze. Incas makes an attack with his Hoarfrost Gaze.

Chill Wings. Rime falls from Incas as he flaps his wings. Each creature within 10 feet of Incas must make a DC 19 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 7 (2d6) cold damage and can't take reactions until the end of its next turn. Incas can then fly up to half his flying speed.

Dazzling Plumage (Costs 2 Actions). A shifting pattern of dazzling hues leaps from Incas's feathers. Any creature that can see Incas must succeed on a DC 19 Wisdom saving throw or be stunned for one minute. A stunned creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of its turn, ending the effect on itself on a success. Once a creature succeeds on this saving throw, it is immune to Incas's Dazzling Plumage for the next 24 hours.

Dodo

Raphus cucullatus
Didus ineptus
Kermis goose
***Griffeendt* (Dutch)**
***Walghvogel* (Dutch)**

In *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, Lewis Carroll's Dodo organizes a Caucus Race—a vaguely circular race of no particular duration which, the Dodo decides after a great deal of thought, everybody wins. It's a perfect piece of surrealist nonsense for one of the most well-known and absurd birds in history.

As extinction stories go, the dodo's is ridiculous. Its only population lived on coastal regions of the uninhabited island of Mauritius in the Indian Ocean just east of Madagascar. A lack of natural predators allowed the dodo to become huge, flightless, and slow, with a deformed beak best suited to fighting other dodos for fallen fruit.[72] The Portuguese called its island Cerne (or Swan) Island, possibly because of the dodo.[73] It was discovered by Dutch sailors in 1598, for whom a forty-pound flightless pigeon without the instinct to flee was a stew waiting to happen. However, they seemed to regret eating the bird because they swiftly named it *walghvogel* ("disgusting bird").[74] By the time Dutch settlers arrived on Mauritius in 1640, the species was practically extinct; introduced predators like rats, cats, pigs and monkeys did the rest by 1681.[75]

The dodo went extinct too fast to garner a solid body of evidence. Most of what we know about the bird is romanticized, conjectured, or a near miss. We know from the stews that dodos swallowed stones to aid in digestion.[76] Almost all of the skeletal evidence of dodos was discovered in a Mauritian swamp called Mare aux Songes; this paleontological goldmine was nearly paved over by development for the Mauritius International Airport, and is now only a kilometer or two from the runway. The airport had the good sense to erect a memorial to Mare aux Songes and the dodo, but it's in the wrong spot.[77] Later authors may have used the name "dodo" to refer to the Mauritius red rail (*Aphanapteryx bonasia*), making their evidence suspect; the Mauritius red rail was itself extinct in 1693.[78] There is even record of a mysterious "white dodo" on the neighboring island of Réunion, though written accounts of that species could just have easily referred to a white ibis or a bird that never existed at all.[79] Many museums exhibit "stuffed" dodos; all are fakes made from the feathers of other birds, most of the oldest and best having been made by the Rowland Ward Corporation in Piccadilly, London.[80] The one entire stuffed dodo resided in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford until 1755 when, on annual inspection, it was found to be in such bad condition that it was removed from display; only the head and the foot survive to this day.[81]

And yet despite all of those missteps and misimaginings, or perhaps because of them, the dodo is much beloved. There's a lot of poetry, good and bad, about the dodo. Sir Thomas Herbert's 1634 account is the most prosaic:

> *…Her eyes are small and like to Diamonds, round and rowling; her clothing downy feathers, her traine three small plumes, short and inproportionable, her legs suiting to her body, her pounces sharp, her appetite strong and greedy.*

It's a funny-looking bird with a funny-sounding name that never knew what hit it. There isn't a more fitting icon of extinction.

Dodo

Small Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 10
Hit Points 3 (1d6)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	2 (−4)	10 (+0)	5 (−3)

Damage Vulnerabilities bludgeoning
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages —
Challenge 0 (10 XP)

Actions

Beak. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d4) piercing damage.

Dödó

Medium Fey, Typically Chaotic Neutral

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)
Hit Points 88 (16d8 + 16)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	18 (+4)

Damage Immunities psychic
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, stunned
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages Common, Sylvan
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Inscrutable Mind. The dödó is immune to scrying and to any effect that would sense its emotions, read its thoughts, or detect its location.

Stupefying Gaze. When a creature that can see the dödó's eyes starts its turn within 30 feet of the dödó, the dödó can force it to make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw if the dödó isn't incapacitated and can see the creature.

On a failed save, the creature's thoughts become muddled and it has disadvantage on the next attack roll, saving throw, or ability check it makes. If it fails its saving throw by 5 or more, the creature is instead subjected to the *confusion* spell for 1 minute (no concentration required by the dödó). While confused in this way, the creature is immune to the dödó's Stupefying Gaze.

Unless surprised, a creature can avert its eyes to avoid the saving throw at the start of its turn. If the creature does so, it can't see the dödó until the start of its next turn, when it can avert its eyes again. If the creature looks at the dödó in the meantime, it must immediately make the save.

Actions

Beak. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d10 + 2) piercing damage.

Galumph! The dödó speaks a frabjous, uffish word. Each creature within 60 feet of the dodo that can hear it must make a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw. A creature takes 15 (2d10 + 4) psychic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Spellcasting. The dödó casts one of the following spells, requiring no spell components and using Charisma as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 14):

1/day each: *enlarge/reduce*, *hallucinatory terrain*, *hypnotic pattern*



Dödó

Inspired by the Dodo

Dodos of the Material Plane are lesser cousins of Feywild dödós which dwarf them in size and power. Standing 6 feet tall and bedecked in an ill-matched assortment of clothes, dödós are polarizing members of fey society.

Mind of Its Own. Attuned to the convoluted logic of its magical world, the Feywild dödó is governed by methods and goals that are totally opaque to others. It never pronounces its short name the same way twice. It will often organize extravagant tea parties it never plans to attend, run ticker-tape election campaigns for offices that don't exist, or arrange nonsensical sporting events wherein it declares everyone the winner. This chaotic mental landscape is so potent that no divination magic can penetrate the dödó's thoughts, and even meeting its eyes can scramble the minds of more straightforward beings. Creatures that disrupt the dödó's incomprehensible plans may, through no fault of their own, find themselves the target of its ire.

Elephant Bird

Aepyornis maximus

The elephant birds of Madagascar are a family of flightless birds so enormous they likely gave rise to the legend of the roc.

Like ostriches, emus, and cassowaries, elephant birds were ratites—flightless, terrestrial birds whose sternum lacks the keel structure to which wing muscles attach to gain leverage for flight. Elephant bird skulls suggest brains with smaller optic lobes and larger olfactory bulbs, much like the kiwi of New Zealand. Both birds traded sight for smell in a nocturnal, foraging lifestyle among forests with few predators.[82]

There are three genera of elephant bird, each extreme in its own way. The most graceful belonged to the genus *Mullerornis*, a slender elephant bird estimated to weigh around 220 pounds.[83] The genus *Aepyornis* contains 10-foot tall, half-ton birds that laid the largest eggs ever discovered: over a foot in length, with the combined volume of 180 chicken eggs, the theoretically largest an egg could possibly be.[84] The genus *Vorombe* (created in 2018) contains the largest bird on earth, *Vorombe titan*, weighing up to an estimated 1,600 pounds.[85]

> *"When they found an Aepyornis with a thigh a yard long, they thought they had reached the top of the scale, and called him Aepyornis maximus. Then someone turned up another thigh-bone four feet six or more, and that they called Aepyornis titan … if they get any more Aepyornises, he reckons some scientific swell will go and burst a blood-vessel."*
>
> *H. G. Wells, Aepyornis Island*

Elephant birds of all three genera ranged over the entirety of Madagascar, from the deciduous forests in the north to the arid scrubland and otherworldly-looking giant succulent woodlands in the south. The vast majority of them are thought to have gone extinct due to arrival of human hunters or changing climate at the end of the last Ice Age, and Madagascar continues to be a testing ground for these theories.[86] However, *Aepyronis maximus* probably survived in remote corners of the island well into the modern era. The French claimed Madagascar as a colony in 1642, and in 1658 the first French governor Étienne de Flacourt described what the natives called *voroupatra*, "'a large bird which haunts the Ampatres [now the Androy] and lays eggs like the ostriches; so that the people of these places may not take it, it seeks the most lonely places'."[87] In 1840 a French sailor named M. Dumarele described a nearly-complete egg used by natives to carry the rum they bought from a French ship; the shell was "the thickness of a Spanish dollar" and held "the almost incredible quantity of thirteen quart wine bottles of fluid".[88] Expeditions in 1851 uncovered three complete eggs; a few years later, enough bone fragments had been collected to construct a complete skeleton.[89] No live specimens or first hand sightings were ever described in the scientific record. The world's largest bird quietly went extinct sometime in that 200-year span.

The elephant bird survived far longer in legends of the roc. *The Travels of Marco Polo*, dictated in 1298, contains the first Western mention of the roc, a massive bird with 60-foot feathers.[90] The far older legend is in the *Arabian Nights* in Sinbad's second voyage, a bird of such monstrous size that it could snatch elephants from the plains and carry them to the tops of mountains to feed. While no location is given in the original story, the bird is associated with Madagascar because of Marco Polo's account—which is how the elephant bird got its name.

Elephant Bird

Large Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)
Hit Points 102 (12d10 + 36)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	2 (−4)	13 (+1)	5 (−3)

Skills Perception +3
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages —
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Keen Smell. The bird has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d10 + 4) piercing damage.

Voroupatra

Gargantuan Monstrosity, Typically Unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 248 (16d20 + 80)
Speed 120 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
29 (+9)	8 (−1)	20 (+5)	3 (−4)	10 (+0)	8 (−1)

Saving Throws Str +13, Dex +3, Con +9, Wis +4, Cha +3
Skills Athletics +13, Perception +4
Senses passive Perception 14
Languages —
Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Actions

Multiattack. The voroupatra makes one Beak attack and one Talons attack.

Beak. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 27 (4d8 + 9) piercing damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 19). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the voroupatara can't use its beak on another target.

Talons. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 23 (4d6 + 9) piercing damage and the target must make a DC 19 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Rock. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, range 60/240 ft., one target. *Hit:* 25 (3d10 + 9) bludgeoning damage.

Throw Creature. The voroupatra makes a Beak attack against a creature it is grappling. If the attack hits, the creature is also thrown up to 120 feet away from the voroupatra, taking 31 (9d6) bludgeoning damage from the fall.

The vorouptara can also choose to make a Rock attack targeting a creature it can see within 240 feet, using the thrown creature as a projectile.

Voroupatra

Inspired by the Elephant Bird

Three-toed footprints bigger than a rhinoceros mark the earth-shaking passage of a voroupatra over the plains. Rivaled only by rocs in size, these immense birds are opportunistic omnivores, feeding on anything they can swallow. With their long, powerful strides, they can run down and snap up even the fastest terrestrial creatures.

Moving Mountains. A sleeping voroupatra can seem like a dark hillside on the open plains where it makes its home. Rising from its curled position, the voroupatra makes an awe-inspiring sight as it stretches to its full height of ninety feet, with legs like tree trunks and a neck that reaches above the walls of the tallest castles. Many caravaneers have passed the night in the shadow of a sleeping bird unawares, only to find it gone as the sun rises.

Trebuchets with Wings. Females of the species are generally larger than males, as they guard the nest from dragons, owlbears, and the like. A single voroupatra egg can weigh as much as forty pounds and is a nutrient-rich incentive for monstrous predators. To protect its nest the voroupatra simply throws would-be egg-eaters a great distance, splattering them somewhere over the horizon. Observing this behavior, humans were inspired to create the superior siege engine: the trebuchet.



Eucladoceros

Eucladoceros dicranios
Bush-antlered Deer

The bush-antlered deer towered over its modern day contemporaries from its antlers to its hooves. Weighing in at more than 660 pounds, roughly the size of a modern-day elk, the bush-antlered deer sported the most breathtaking antlers in history, spreading up to five and a half feet wide with at least 12 points on each pedicle.[91] Seven unique species of the deer lived across Eurasia during the early Pliocene to early Pleistocene—between 2 and 5 million years ago.[92] *Eucladoceros dicranios*, the type species* for the genus, covered the western part of that range, most notably near a vast lake stretching across miles of sediment between what are now the Pratomagno and Chianti hills in Upper Tuscany.[93] Eucladoceros walked in prehistoric forests among giant, widely-spaced deciduous trees, digging up nutritious plants from the loamy soil with its massive antlers.

As glaciers swept back and forth over the land and the earth's crust shifted and cracked beneath it, the massive Tuscan lake drained away into the Arno river during the Pleistocene era. The receding waters carved through the sediment on the lake bed, creating rolling hills and huge, striking formations called the Balze cliffs—Italy's "Grand Canyon." Buried in these 300-foot-high sand and gravel cliffs, fossils of *E. dicranios* play a part in one of the most important fossil records in the world. Fossil hunters from the Renaissance to the present day have discovered and described Upper Valdarno Plio-Pleistocene vertebrate fossils.[94] Today they are helping us understand what happens to a world experiencing massive climate change.[95]

Along with key scientific discoveries, these cliffs are part of the legacy of Renaissance art. Leonardo da Vinci painted them in the background of the *Mona Lisa*, and they inspired the Valle dell'Inferno in Dante's *Divine Comedy*.[96]

***Type Species.** The species upon which the genus name is based, and with which the genus remains associated.

Eucladoceros
Large Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 10
Hit Points 21 (3d10 + 3)
Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	2 (−4)	10 (+0)	6 (−2)

Senses passive Perception 10
Languages —
Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Charge. If the eucladoceros moves at least 20 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a ram attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 4 (1d8) damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Actions

Hooves. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one prone creature. *Hit:* 8 (2d4 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

Ram. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

Mornhart
Inspired by the Eucladoceros

The mornhart is the great solar deer of sun-drenched forests and vineyards. Its magnificent antlers catch sunlight and convert it into magical radiance.

Minor Gods of Harvest. When a mornhart draws near, days stretch on and the sun shines more brightly, causing crops to flourish. Farmers regard the mornhart as an auspice of grand harvests and a sign of fortune. Some humanoids even venerate the mornhart as a harvest god, erecting shrines adorned in mirrors and gems to catch the mornhart's light, and leaving offerings of wheat and corn.

However, if a mornhart dwells in one location for too long, the sun's amplification becomes unbearable. Unprotected individuals suffer sunburns and heatstroke, weeds grow rampant, and crops wither on the vine. Usually, mornhart migrations spread their blessings across the countryside, but if one should be captured or anchored to one spot, the never-ending midday sun could spell disaster.

Dusk and Morn. As embodiments of the sun and moon, the mornhart and duskhorn are natural enemies, and avoid each other whenever possible. The shifting day and night that accompany them can wreak havoc, particularly at twilight when both are active. The two rarely come to blows, however, except for when a total eclipse of the sun drives them both to temporary insanity.

Mornhart

Large Celestial, Typically Neutral

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)
Hit Points 136 (13d10 + 65)
Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	15 (+2)	21 (+5)	8 (−1)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)

Skills Perception +3, Survival +4
Damage Vulnerabilities necrotic
Damage Resistances fire, radiant
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages understands Sylvan but can't speak
Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Charge. If the mornhart moves at least 20 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a ram attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 14 (4d6) damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 16 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Illumination. The mornhart sheds bright light in a 30-foot radius and dim light for an additional 30 feet.

Magic Resistance. The mornhart has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Actions

Multiattack. The mornhart makes one Ram attack and one Hooves attack.

Ram. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d10 + 5) radiant damage.

Hooves. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

Flash of Radiance (Recharge 5–6). The mornhart gathers the sunlight stored in its antlers and fires a beam of radiance. Each creature other than it in a 30-foot-radius sphere centered on itself must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the creature takes 31 (7d8) radiant damage and is blinded until the end of its next turn. On a successful save, the creature takes half as much damage and isn't blinded. The mornhart can't use this ability while in an area of magical darkness.



Mornhammer

A pair of antlers from a mornhart, which weigh 50 pounds each, can be carved into a weighty, multi-pronged warhammer. This weapon, called a *mornhammer* is imbued with the power of the morning sun.

Mornharts shed their antlers yearly. A *mornhammer* crafted from shed antlers doesn't regain charges, whereas one harvested from a mornhart corpse regains charges daily at dawn.

Mornhammer
Weapon (warhammer), uncommon (requires attunement)

You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon. The hammer sheds light as a torch. The hammer also has 4 charges. While attuned to it, you can expend 1 charge to cast one of the following spells (save DC 13): *blindness/deafness* (Blindness option only), *faerie fire*, *flaming sphere*, or *shield of faith*.

The weapon regains 1d4 charges daily at dusk. If you expend the hammer's last charge, roll a d20. On a 1, the hammer crumbles into dust and is destroyed.

Florida Fairy Shrimp

Dexteria floridana

The extinction of the Florida fairy shrimp is an all-too-common, gut-punch story of too little, too late. The species was known from a single population living in a pool just south of Gainesville, Florida. This tiny crustacean swam upside down, scraping food from the surface of the water with its 11 pairs of legs and using the feathery setae on its face for motility and oxygen absorption. It was originally described in 1956, but was reclassified as an entirely separate genus in 2002, making it even more unique.[97] Returning to review the animal for protection under the Endangered Species Act in 2010, researchers found the pool had been paved over by developers—rendering the species extinct.[98]

Fairy shrimp, order *Anostraca*, are a versatile and vital species appearing in inland pools all over the world. Their most amazing feature is their ability to diapause—to enter a dormant state where growth and metabolism are arrested—as egg cysts. In this state, the eggs can remain viable for centuries,[99] reaching widely dispersed habitats and displaying diverse speciation as species become endemic to small areas.

The story of the Florida fairy shrimp is one of many like it in the southeastern United States, which is home to more unique species of freshwater animals than anywhere else in the world.[100] The Mobile River Basin alone is a more diverse ecosystem for some groups of animals than the Amazon or Mekong rivers.[101] Nearly half of all extinctions in the continental United States since the 1800s have occurred among creatures that lived in the Mobile River Basin.[102]

***Endemic.** Only appearing in one place. A species can be endemic to a single peninsula, a single island, or a single mountaintop pool.

STATBLOCK RESOLUTION

In video games, resolution may be expressed in terms of polygon count or display size. In 5th edition, "resolution" can be thought of as the ability to represent different creatures with accuracy through statistics like size, creature type, ability scores, or movement speed. This book strains the game's resolution in entries like the giant cheetah and ivory-billed woodpecker, whose speed and size don't perfectly match their real-life counterparts. With no effective attacks, a frog is perhaps the smallest creature the game can represent. Therefore, the fairy shrimp, which is similar to a sea monkey, can't be represented with monster statistics.

Shrimp Fairy

Inspired by the Florida Fairy Shrimp

As their name suggests, shrimp fairies resemble miniature bipedal crustaceans with large eyes, wispy antennae, and four arms. These fey stand only about an inch tall, rendering them inconspicuously diminutive to denizens of the Material Plane.

Swimming Sprites. Dwelling in the ponds and streams of the Feywild, shrimp fairies could be considered aquatic kin to pixies and sprites. Whereas pixies dart about in the treetops between hidden enclaves, shrimp fairies build elaborate underwater towns, accessible only if one can breathe water or hold their breath for minutes at a time. Pools in the Feywild are often capricious things, appearing a few inches deep with clear water, but actually plunge hundreds of feet into unseen depths. It is within these watery sanctuaries that shrimp fairies dwell.

Bubblers. Shrimp fairies are blessed with neither the spellcasting of pixies nor the martial prowess of sprites, but do command a unique type of bubbly magic. With a wave of its four arms, a shrimp fairy can conjure a magical bubble to swell into existence, even around other creatures. Then, with a little jab, it can burst the bubble and unleash a wave of kinetic force. A trio of shrimp fairies can conjure an overwhelming number of bubbles, defending their pools through sheer bubbly deterrence.

Shrimp Fairy

Tiny Fey, Typically Chaotic Neutral

Armor Class 14
Hit Points 20 (8d4)
Speed 10 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
1 (−5)	18 (+4)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	19 (+4)

Skills Performance +6
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages Aquan, Elvish, Sylvan
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Amphibious. The shrimp fairy can breathe air and water.

Actions

Multiattack. The fairy uses Conjure Bubble twice, Pop Bubble twice, or uses each action once.

Conjure Bubble. The fairy creates a magical bubble around itself or a creature of Large size or smaller that it can see within 60 feet of it. Alternatively, it creates a 5-foot diameter bubble in an unoccupied space it can see within 60 feet of it. If a bubble encloses a creature, it moves with it.

A bubble has AC 8 and is immune to psychic damage. If a bubble takes any damage, it pops, subjecting each creature within 5 feet of it to the effects of Pop Bubble.

Spells and other magical effects can't extend through a bubble or be cast through one. Attacks can't penetrate through a bubble, but an enclosed creature can attack the bubble itself to pop it.

The fairy can have up to 5 intact bubbles at one time.

Pop Bubble. The fairy magically pops a bubble that it can see. Each creature other than the fairy within 5 feet of the bubble must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw, taking 4 (1d8) force damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one. Bubbles within 5 feet of it also pop, potentially causing a chain reaction.



Elegant Dancers. Just because they reside in watery enclaves doesn't mean that shrimp fairies are reclusive. Like many fey, shrimp fairies are gregarious and political, but their high-pitched, piping voices are difficult for even fey to hear. Therefore, shrimp fairies often communicate with elaborate ballet performances, made even more complex by synchronized swimming elements. This method is interpretive at best, but fairies usually find the meaning of a dance obvious, even if it would confound mortal viewers.

Gastric Brooding Frog

Rheobatrachus silus

Very few frog species protect their young, and those that do utilize some bizarre tactics. As a rule of thumb, frogs which lay their eggs in larger bodies of water give less care to their young. Eggs laid in lakes or rivers are simply laid in sufficiently large numbers to ensure that some survive—a quantity over quality approach to parenting. Other frog species protect their young by laying their eggs in foam nests, while others still remain in close proximity to their eggs to protect them from predators, or even embed their tadpoles into the skin of their back.[103]

The most unique strategy, however, belonged to the gastric brooding frog. After laying her eggs, the female frog would ingest them and brood them in her stomach. She could suppress the production of stomach acid, allowing her tadpoles to develop into fully-formed froglets which she then regurgitated. No other vertebrate is known to exhibit this behavior.[104]

There were two species of gastric brooding frog, southern and northern, both native to small creek systems in mountains near the Queensland coast.[105] The southern gastric brooding frog, Rheobatrachus silus, was described in 1973, but was extinct in the wild by 1981, followed by the death of the last individual in captivity in 1983.



The next year, the northern gastric brooding frog was discovered and described. It was known to science for less than a year before also going extinct, last seen in the wild in 1985 despite extensive searching.[106] Studies on gastric brooding frogs showed they never moved more than 175 feet between seasons.[107]

We don't know exactly what drove gastric brooding frogs extinct, but the leading theory points to the fungal disease chytridiomycosis. A chytrid fungus called *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis*, or "*Bd*", interrupts the ability of frogs to absorb electrolytes through their skin, effectively causing a heart attack. It was introduced to Australia along with the African Clawed Frog, which was imported for research purposes and was notable for being used in the first widespread method of pregnancy testing.[108] Chytridiomycosis is a catastrophic plague among frogs, and is primarily responsible for rendering amphibians the world's most endangered class of animals. The group's extinction rate is 45,000 times higher than the background rate.[109]

The gastric brooding frog also stands as an example of how challenging de-extinction truly is. In 2013, after six years of attempts, researchers at the University of New South Wales' Lazarus Project were able to successfully transplant frozen genetic material from the extinct frog into the nucleus of the related great barred frog. Those embryos managed to replicate the gastric brooding frog's DNA—a remarkable breakthrough. However, none of the embryos survived more than a few days.[110]

Gastric Brooding Frog

Tiny Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 11
Hit Points 1 (1d4 − 1)
Speed 20 ft., swim 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
1 (−5)	13 (+1)	8 (−1)	1 (−5)	8 (−1)	3 (−4)

Skills Perception +1, Stealth +3
Senses darkvision 30 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages —
Challenge 0 (0 XP)

Amphibious. The frog can breathe air and water.

Standing Leap. The frog's long jump is up to 10 feet and its high jump is up to 5 feet, with or without a running start.

Actions

Regurgitate (1/Day). The frog regurgitates a froglet, which has the same statistics as the frog but doesn't have the Regurgitate action.

Froglet of Holding

Medium Monstrosity, Unaligned

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)
Hit Points 60 (8d8 + 24)
Speed 20 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	2 (−4)	10 (+0)	3 (−4)

Skills Perception +2, Stealth +3
Damage Immunities acid
Senses darkvision 30 ft., passive Perception 12
Languages —
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Amphibious. The froglet can breathe air and water.

Juvenile Pocket Dimension. The froglet contains a small pocket dimension large enough to contain Small objects.

Standing Leap. The froglet's long jump is up to 20 feet and its high jump is up to 10 feet, with or without a running start.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d10 + 2) piercing damage. If the target is Small or smaller, it is grappled (escape DC 13). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the froglet can't bite another target.

Regurgitation. The froglet regurgitates something from its extradimensional stomach. Roll a d4; the result indicates what is produced:

1. A signet ring, book, or other trinket
2. Partially digested food
3. A live beast of Small or Tiny size
4. Roll twice, ignoring 4s

Swallow. The froglet makes one Bite attack against a Small or smaller target it is grappling. If the attack hits, the target is swallowed, and the grapple ends. The swallowed target is blinded and restrained, it has total cover against attacks and other effects outside the froglet, and it takes 10 (3d6) acid damage at the start of each of the froglet's turns. The froglet can have only one creature swallowed at a time.

If the froglet takes 15 damage or more on a single turn from a creature inside it, the froglet must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw at the end of that turn or regurgitate all swallowed creatures and objects, each of which falls prone in a space within 10 feet of the froglet. If the froglet dies, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained by it and can escape from the corpse using 10 feet of movement, exiting prone.

Frog of Holding

Inspired by the Gastric Brooding Frog

The first wizards to hide pocket dimensions in leather bags took their inspiration from the frog of holding. This froglike monstrosity contains a naturally-occurring pocket dimension just large enough to brood its young. While a frog of holding incubates a froglet in this way, air from its own lungs and its body heat circulate within the pocket dimension to create a perfect, protected environment. When the froglet develops its own pocket dimension, it is nearly ready for the mother to "birth" it by regurgitating it into the world. Maintaining a stable connection between its own bodily functions and these nested interdimensional spaces is part of the frog of holding's unique magic.

Luxury Accessories. While artificial *bags of holding* have become much easier and less dangerous to create, those with expensive or discerning tastes may prefer natural bags of holding created from a frog of holding's stomach. The high price of these bags entices the occasional poacher. However, the unwary, unskilled, or simply unlucky may find themselves swallowed by their quarry—and then swallowed again.

Using a Frog of Holding's Stomach

It is challenging to remove the stomach of a frog of holding without damaging it. The harvester must use a set of leatherworker's tools and make a DC 17 Intelligence (Nature) check. On a success, the stomach is removed intact and functions as a *bag of holding*. On a failure, the stomach ruptures and becomes just a loose organ. If the check fails by 5 or more, the stomach explodes, dealing 4d6 force damage to objects and creatures within 10 feet of the frog.



Frog of Holding

Large Monstrosity, Unaligned

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)
Hit Points 136 (13d10 + 65)
Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	13 (+1)	20 (+5)	2 (−4)	11 (+0)	3 (−4)

Saving Throws Con +8
Skills Perception +3, Stealth +4
Damage Immunities acid
Senses darkvision 30 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages —
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Amphibious. The frog can breathe air and water.

Extradimensional Gullet. The frog contains an extradimensional space identical to a *bag of holding*. The space contains one **froglet of holding**.

Standing Leap. The frog's long jump is up to 25 feet and its high jump is up to 10 feet, with or without a running start.

Actions

Multiattack. The frog uses Swallow if it is grappling a creature, then makes one Bite attack.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (3d8 + 3) piercing damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 14). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the frog can't bite another target.

Regurgitate. The frog regurgitates one creature within its extradimensional space, which falls prone in a space within 10 feet of the frog. The frog regurgitates a froglet of holding, if it has one swallowed.

Swallow. The frog makes one Bite attack against a Medium or smaller target it is grappling. If the attack hits, the target is swallowed, and the grapple ends. The swallowed target enters the extradimensional space inside the frog, is blinded and restrained, and has total cover against attacks and other effects outside the frog. A swallowed creature takes 14 (4d6) acid damage at the start of each of the frog's turns. The frog can have two creatures swallowed at a time.

If the frog takes 15 damage or more on a single turn from a swallowed creature, the frog must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw at the end of that turn or regurgitate all swallowed creatures, each of which falls prone in a space within 10 feet of the frog. If the frog dies, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained by it and can escape from the corpse using 10 feet of movement, exiting prone.

Golden Toad

Incilius periglenes
Alajuela toad
Monte Verde toad
Orange toad

At the beginning of each rainy season, a single mountaintop in Costa Rica was covered in golden toads like the coins in a dragon's hoard.

"I wondered if someone had dipped them in enamel paint," biologist Jay M. Savage said of the time he encountered the toad in 1964, becoming the first to describe it to modern science. "Everywhere we looked we saw bright blotches of orange standing out against the dark soil. Each blotch was a male toad."[111] Unlike the drab olives and greens of most of their family (*Bufonidae*, the true toads), golden toads are brilliantly colored; the males range from a uniform golden- to reddish-orange, and the females are mottled black, yellow, and scarlet.[112]

The toads emerged only in a tiny part of the forest and for a brief window of time, a phenomenon known as "explosive breeding." They lived in a 3-mile radius of rainforest east of the town of Monteverde in the Cordillera de Tilarán, near the continental divide some 5,200 feet above the level of the Caribbean Sea and the South Pacific.[113] The constant ocean winds at this height stunted the growth of the trees and covered them in clouds and mist, giving the area the name "elfin forest."[114] In 1972, this area became part of about 40 square miles of rainforest protected by the Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve. The golden toads spent almost the whole year underground amid the tangled tree roots, emerging only for a few days or weeks in April or May to breed and lay eggs in the tiny rain pools that formed at the bases of the trees.[115] During the 1987 breeding season, one kitchen sink-sized breeding pool hosted 133 toads.[116]

The golden toads disappeared from the world as enigmatically as they appeared. Due to the difficulty in reaching them at the right time, golden toads were scientifically documented only on a handful of occasions after their discovery, but testimony from Wolf Guindon, a ranger in the reserve, confirms the toads were present for at least 17 consecutive years from 1971 to 1987.[117] Then, in 1988, the frogs were curiously absent. Biologist Martha L. Crump recalled her only sighting that year: "One afternoon after tromping through the rain and mud for five hours, I finally see in front of me the first reddish orange male sitting like a rubber bathtub toy next to a pool of water. Eagerly I rush to pick him up and measure him, then stop and decide to just admire him. I don't need to know his exact body length. As I continue down the path, I tell myself that surely his companions will soon arrive."[118] Crump's sighting would be one of only ten or eleven that year in the entire reserve.[119] In 1989, only one toad was seen, possibly the same male Crump had encountered the previous year; intensive searches in 1990 failed to reveal any golden toads.[120] With no golden toads sighted thereafter, the IUCN declared the golden toad extinct in 2004.[121]

The golden toad's extinction is attributed to the amphibian plague chytridiomycosis, which has driven the extinction of 90 amphibian species, including the gastric brooding frog, and precipitated the dire decline of hundreds more.[122] [123] [124] The golden toad has become an icon for extinction and for conservation efforts worldwide.

Golden Toad
Tiny Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 11
Hit Points 1 (1d4 – 1)
Speed 20 ft., swim 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
1 (–5)	13 (+1)	8 (–1)	1 (–5)	8 (–1)	3 (–4)

Skills Perception +1, Stealth +3
Senses darkvision 30 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages —
Challenge 0 (0 XP)

Amphibious. The frog can breathe air and water.

Standing Leap. The frog's long jump is up to 10 feet and its high jump is up to 5 feet, with or without a running start.

Not to be confused with the golden frog



Midas Toad

Inspired by the Golden Toad

In a bid to achieve the coveted transmutation of lead into gold, an alchemist infused a toad with basilisk blood and powdered gold, creating the first Midas toad.

Philosopher's Toad. The Midas toad bears a curse of elemental magic that transmutes any creature that touches it into solid gold. Though this would normally litter its domain in golden idols, each frozen in horror, the toad's transmutative magic also enables it to consume gold outright, bite by bite. Once a victim is petrified in gold, the toad feasts for a week or more, leaving only a few gilded scraps for would-be treasure hunters.

Hidden Treasures. Despite their brilliant golden bodies, Midas toads have become experts at hiding themselves from avaricious eyes. The toads burrow into the loose earth of inaccessible mountain rainforests, arising only rarely to hunt by transmuting beasts to gold.

Perhaps due to a mistake in the alchemist's original formulation or due to a quirk of the toad's nature, no Midas toad can be kept in captivity for long. A captured toad always dies within 48 hours, and rarely transmutes more than a few creatures during its time in captivity. Such a catch still reaps a small fortune, but not enough to fill a dragon's hoard.

Midas Toad

Small Elemental, Unaligned

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 77 (14d6 + 28)
Speed 20 ft., burrow 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	2 (−4)	13 (+1)	3 (−4)

Skills Stealth +3
Senses darkvision 30 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages —
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Amphibious. The toad can breathe air and water.

Gold Tooth. The toad can eat solid gold without requiring an ability check. Its Bite attack ignores the damage threshold of gold. If the toad makes a Bite attack targeting a solid gold object or gold petrified creature and deals 10 or more damage, it grows to Medium size as per the spell *enlarge/reduce* for 24 hours.

Midas Touch. A creature that touches the toad must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the creature magically begins to turn to gold and is restrained. It must repeat the saving throw at the end of its next turn. On a success, the effect ends. On a failure, the creature is petrified into gold until freed by the *greater restoration* spell or similar magic.

Standing Leap. The toad's long jump is up to 15 feet and its high jump is up to 10 feet, with or without a running start.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage plus 5 (1d10) poison damage, and the target is subject to the toad's Midas Touch trait.

Great Auk

Pinguinus impennis
Garefowl
Northern penguin
"The Wobble" (New England)
***Gejrfugl* (old Norse)**
***Isarukitsoq*, "stump-winged" (Inuit)**

Great auks were perhaps the greatest seabird in the ocean, and the worst bird anywhere else. They were flightless, could run no faster than a man's walking pace, and could hardly climb at all. For the two months of the year that nesting pairs of auks raised their young on dry land, they were incredibly vulnerable. The species survived by choosing nesting sites that were nearly impossible for anything but a great auk to reach.

The intersection of that Venn diagram between habitable and inaccessible shrank as warming seas pushed the creature farther and farther north and human seafaring technologically advanced. At first, the great auk could only be taken by the most committed hunters, like the native Beothuk people of Newfoundland who invented a special crescent-shaped canoe to hunt great auks on an island they called Apponath.[125] In the 1600s, European settlers would later call that same island Funk Island. The seemingly unquestionable abundance of the auks led sailors to harvest them by the ton. With no wood for fuel, these sailors burned the oily bodies of some auks to roast the others, until the Funk Island colony was totally extinct.[126] That story was repeated over and over again on other islands across the northern Atlantic.

The last nesting colony lived on an island off the coast of Iceland named Geirfuglasker or "Garefowl Rock." A five-acre islet at the end of a lava-rock skerrie, Geirfuglasker was protected by howling winds, rough seas, and inaccessible terrain. It seemed like it could be a permanent refuge for the auk. But in 1830, it blew up. A volcanic eruption sank the island beneath the sea, and the surviving auks fled to nearby Eldey Island—which was much easier to reach.[127]

Three fishermen entered Eldey Island on June 3, 1844 to find the last living pair of auks for a foreign merchant. Jón Brandsson and Sigurður Ísleifsson strangled the adults and Ketill Ketilsson crushed their egg beneath his boot.[128]

Today Funk Island is a protected reserve where more than a million seabirds come to nest every year. The great auk's legacy is that of the conservation movement that began too late to save it.[129]

Great Auk

Medium Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 9
Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)
Speed 10 ft., swim 70 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	8 (−1)	13 (+1)	4 (−3)	13 (+1)	6 (−2)

Skills Perception +3
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages —
Challenge 1/4 (30 XP)

Hold Breath. The great auk can hold its breath for 30 minutes.

Actions

Beak. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d10 + 2) piercing damage.

I caught it close to the edge - a precipice many fathoms deep ... I took him by the neck and he flapped his wings. He made no cry. I strangled him.





Garefowl

Inspired by the Great Auk

A reclusive ice bird of the far north, the garefowl commands elemental ice, forming glaciers wherever it steps.

Birds of the Hoarfrost. Though clumsy on land, the garefowl is an agile predator within its native polar waters. Leaping from the ice, it shoots through the water like a bullet, seizing fish as it swims. The garefowl is never devoid of suitable icy habitats to leap from, as it can leverage its innate elemental magic to spin up structures of ice, crystal-by-crystal. An unusual patch glacier in a southerly ocean usually means a garefowl is nearby.

Ice Hulks. When a ship sails arctic waters, the winter ice forms a deadline: if the ship can't escape the encroaching ice sheets, it will freeze in place until perhaps spring. Such ice-locked vessels are sitting ducks and ready-made nests for the garefowl, which prefers to lay its eggs at the center of frozen ships. Bringing its polar magic to bear against such a trapped ship, the garefowl freezes it into a glacial prison: an ice hulk.

Garefowl

Medium Monstrosity, Typically Neutral

Armor Class 14
Hit Points 97 (15d8 + 30)
Speed 10 ft., swim 80 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)	7 (−2)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)

Damage Immunities cold
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages —
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Snow Camouflage. The garefowl has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide in snowy terrain.

Actions

Beak. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d12 + 4) piercing damage.

Glacier Formation (Recharge 5–6). Ice crystals form and grow to fill a 20-foot cube centered on a point the garefowl can see within 60 feet of it. The area of the glacier is difficult terrain. Any creature in the glacier's space must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or take 18 (4d8) cold damage and be restrained by the ice for 1 minute, or until it or another creature within reach of it uses an action to succeed on a DC 13 Strength check to break away the ice.

Each 5-foot-cube section of ice has AC 12, 15 HP, vulnerability to fire damage, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. Reducing a section of ice to 0 hit points destroys it and frees any creature trapped within that section.

Though they always begin with a single ship, the garefowl's ice hulk grows with each vessel it acquires, forming a chaotic iceberg of frozen and ruined ships. Boundless treasures likely await within, but so does the ice-manipulating garefowl, and usually a pack of winter wolves, the garefowl's longtime allies. Whenever an ice hulk drifts southward and begins to melt, foolhardy adventurers mount expeditions to recover the ships' lost cargo, at the risk of being frozen and added to the hulk's mass. Rarely they escape, and even more rarely with spectacular treasure on hand.

Guam Flying Fox

Pteropus tokudae
Guam flying fox

Only about 6 inches long and weighing a third of a pound, the Guam flying fox was among the smallest of the megabats (family Pteropodidae).[130] It wasn't even the largest on its own island, which it shared with the much larger Mariana fruit bat (*Pteropus mariannus*). This may have been why the Guam flying fox was considered rare by local hunters, residents, and collectors; the local Chamorro culture considered the flesh of the bat a delicacy.[131] Only three individuals were ever collected: two adult males in August 1931 and a female at Tarague Cliff, a limestone forest, in March 1967. The bat likely fed on the fruits and flowers of evergreen shrubs typical of Guam's limestone forests, and would have been a key pollinator and seed carrier in that ecosystem.

The bat's extinction was caused by a mix of factors including introduction of exotic species, forest alteration and degradation, and overhunting.[132] In August 1984, 17 years after a confirmed sighting, the Guam flying fox was added to the list of species protected under the Endangered Species Act. Along with the ivory-billed woodpecker, it was one of the "lost 23" proposed for delisting in 2021 due to extinction.[133]



Flying Fox

Small Monstrosity, Unaligned

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 3 (1d6)
Speed 40 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (−1)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)	2 (−4)	12 (+1)	7 (−2)

Skills Perception +5
Senses passive Perception 15
Languages —
Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Keen Sight and Smell. The fox has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight or smell.

Pack Tactics. The fox has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the fox's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Guam Flying Fox

Tiny Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 1 (1d4 − 1)
Speed 5 ft., fly 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
2 (−4)	15 (+2)	8 (−1)	2 (−4)	12 (+1)	4 (−3)

Skills Perception +5
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages —
Challenge 0 (10 XP)

Keen Sight and Smell. The fox has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight or smell.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +0 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 piercing damage.

Flying Fox

Inspired by the Guam Flying Fox

A small canid with large, bat-like wings, the flying fox is a favored familiar of wizards and druids. Unlike their terrestrial cousins that nest in underground burrows, flying foxes roost by the dozens in the rafters and steeples of universities and cathedrals. Spellcasters prize the fox for its adventurousness, as well as its ability to prey upon birds, frogs, and small mammals that would otherwise infest their schools. As such, many a flying fox has been a wizarding apprentice's first target for spells like *sleep* and *enlarge/reduce*, and many have subsequently been adopted as wizardly pets or unofficial mascots.

Haast's Eagle

Harpagornis moorei

The largest eagle in history sits firmly at the intersection of history and folklore, with three separate extinctions creating its legend.

New Zealand's apex predator on land was not a lion or a tiger, it was an eagle. As the isolated island ecosystem had no large endemic mammals, its most critical niches were instead occupied by birds. The moa, a giant ostrich-like animal much like Madagascar's elephant bird, took on the role of large grazer and primary consumer, an ecological niche filled elsewhere by antelope and gazelles. The role of predator, then, fell to Haast's eagle. Weighing over 30 pounds—some 30 percent larger than its largest modern cousin—Haast's eagle hunted moas by launching itself from the high treetops of New Zealand's forests and bearing its prey to the ground with massive talons.[134] These claws were so impressive that Julius Haast, the naturalist who formally described the eagle in 1871, named it *Harpagornis* after the harpax, the seven-foot grapnel Roman navy used to board enemy ships.

The first Polynesian settlers of New Zealand arrived in the late 13th century, and the extinction of the moa soon followed, rendering it the final megafauna extinction of the Late Quaternary period.[135] By 1350, almost all of the lowland forest Haast's eagle called home were burned or hunted out by human settlement. The great predator eagle was likely extinct by 1400.[136]

Māori legends told of the man-eating hakawai[137] which could carry men off into the night sky. The hakawai may have gotten its physical description from the largest bird with which the Māori were familiar; if Haast's eagle could kill a moa, it could certainly kill a man. But the hakawai's call—an eerie onomatopoeia of its own name followed by a jet-fighter-like roar—comes from another, much smaller bird. The South Island snipe (*Coenocorypha iredalei*), a softball-sized bird like a sandpiper, performed the call in an impressive nocturnal aerial display that has been heard and recorded, but never witnessed by humans. The snipe went extinct in the early 1960s after the introduction of Pacific rats to its native island.[138]

Haast's Eagle

Medium Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 13
Hit Points 22 (4d8 + 4)
Speed 10 ft., fly 80 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	17 (+3)	13 (+1)	3 (−4)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)

Skills Perception +3
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages —
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Fell Swoop. If the eagle moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a Talons attack on the same turn, that target takes an extra 4 (1d8) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Keen Sight. The eagle has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Actions

Multiattack. The eagle makes one Beak attack and one Talons attack.

Beak. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

Talons. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) slashing damage.

Hakawai

Inspired by Haast's Eagle

The hakawai is an invisible killer that descends from the stars to prey on unwary travelers.

Starlight Hunter. Hakawai can make themselves completely invisible. Perching at the highest point in the forest and watching for suitable prey, they strike with a clap of thunder that shatters the bones of even the largest beasts.

Sacred to the Gods. When the hakawai first flew into the heavens, it caught the attention of the gods of the four winds. They blessed the bird for its bravery as it reached the edge of the atmosphere, fixing . The gods fixed stars in its wings and thunder in its talons, and granted it the power to pass out of mortal sight. In remittance, hakawai serve as messengers of the gods, carrying their divine word to those who share the language of the wind.

Call of Ill Omen. The roaring call of the hakawai foretells doom: imminent war, a massive storm that will swallow ships at sea, or even the assassination of a king. If the call repeats day in and day out, it might be possible to forestall further disaster by driving the bird away or compromising with it. Slaying a hakawai, however, is sure to incur the wrath of the gods.



Hakawai

Huge Monstrosity,
Typically Chaotic Neutral

Armor Class 16
Hit Points 187 (22d12 + 44)
Speed 20 ft., fly 80 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	17 (+3)	15 (+2)	9 (−1)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +7, Con +6, Wis +7
Skills Perception +7
Damage Resistances thunder
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 17
Languages understands Auran and Celestial but can't speak
Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Ambusher. The hakawai has advantage on attack rolls against any creature it has surprised.

Fell Swoop. If the hakawai moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a Talons attack on the same turn, that target takes an extra 9 (2d8) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 16 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Keen Sight. The hakawai has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Actions

Multiattack. The hakawai makes one Beak attack and one Talons attack.

Beak. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d12 + 4) piercing damage.

Talons. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) slashing damage 9 (2d8) thunder damage.

Superior Invisibility. The hakawai magically turns invisible until its concentration ends (as if concentrating on a spell). Any equipment the hakawai wears or carries is invisible with it.

Legendary Actions

The hakawai can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The hakawai regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Detect. The hakawai makes a Wisdom (Perception) check.
Beak. The hakawai makes one Beak attack.
Thunderclap (Costs 2 actions). The hakawai summons thunder from its wings. Each creature within 10 feet of the hakawai must succeed on a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw or take 11 (2d6 + 4) thunder damage and be knocked prone. The hakawai can then fly up to half its flying speed.

Hawaiian Honeyeaters

Family *Mohoidae*

Island ecosystems like Mauritius, Reunión, Guam, and the Galapagos are more fragile than their mainland counterparts. "That insularity, in and of itself, greatly increases any species' vulnerability can no longer be denied," ornithologists Conant, Pratt, and Shallenberger argued in 1998. "Any small island endemic might well be considered inherently endangered."[139] Hawaii, the world's most remote archipelago composed of volcanic islands with an economy based largely on tourism, is especially vulnerable. Nothing shows this more poignantly than the island's most magnificent songbirds, the honeyeaters: family Mohoidae, the only complete extinction of an entire avian family in the modern era.

The native Hawaiians called them "'ō'ōs" for their call, described as a distinctive "owow, owow, -ow!" with the final note a shriek that could be heard half a mile away.[140] Each island in the archipelago had its own 'ō'ō, and each 'ō'ō was unique, though all would have lived similarly. They were large birds, around a foot long. The Hawaii 'ō'ō, largest and best known of the birds, fed by drinking nectar from the flowers of ochias, lehuas, lobelias, and other plants with its long, tubular tongue. Very few organisms subsist entirely on nectar, and the 'ō'ō supplemented its diet with insects, molluscs, and even bananas.[141]



The honeyeaters' extinction was caused by a variety of direct and indirect human impacts. Novel predators like domestic pigs, dogs, and the Pacific rat arrived with the first Hawaiians, and habitat destruction for farming followed.[142] Hawaiian birds were vulnerable to diseases from introduced birds and mosquitoes.[143] Many 'ō'ōs were hunted for their magnificent feathers. By the time scientists in the modern era arrived to document these birds, they were all but extinct already.

The islands of Hawaii, at the time of writing, were the final home for 135 species listed as extinct by the IUCN—15 percent of all species in the world so categorized.

Hawai'i 'ō'ō

Moho nobilis

The 'ō'ō native to Hawaii's eponymous Big Island was the largest and most magnificently feathered of its family. The birds lived in tall trees in the middle and lower forests of Hawaii, gathering together in the late spring and early summer to breed and raise their young.[144]

The ali'i, or Hawaiian nobility, chose this bird as their royal symbol. Its golden plumes and black body feathers adorned their most important regalia: their 'a'ahu ali'i (robes), 'ahu 'ula (capes), and kāhili (staffs). The feathers used for these symbols were painstakingly collected from the 'ō'ō, rendering an object fit for nobility. A single 'ahu 'ula, like the one given to British explorer James Cook as a visiting dignitary in 1778, would have contained thousands of feathers and taken years to craft. The kāhili was a staff of state carried only by servants of the ali'i; it was made from the long bones of enemy kings and adorned with feathers from Hawaii's songbirds and birds of prey.[145] The Kamehameha dynasty made a law against killing the 'ō'ō, and the accepted practice was to snare the bird, pluck a few of the golden feathers, and release it back into the wild. There is no telling how closely this law was followed, however, and with the fall of the Kamehamehas it seems to have been abandoned entirely.

In 1898, more than one thousand 'ō'ōs were shot in the woods north of the Wailuku river by lei hunters who had abandoned the snare for the far deadlier shotgun.[146] There is no doubt that other factors like deforestation and introduced avian malaria also contributed to the bird's decline.[147] The last record of the Hawai'i 'ō'ō was that of a bird heard on the slopes of Mauna Loa in 1934.[148]



Kauaʻi ʻōʻō

Moho braccatus
Dwarf ʻōʻō
ʻōʻō ʻaʻa

The last surviving member of the Mohoidae family was also the smallest, the Kauaʻi ʻōʻō. The yellow feathers for which this family of birds was prized occurred only adorned small patches on the Kauaʻi ʻōʻō's thighs. These birds were cavity nesters, making their homes in the snags of the iconic ʻōhiʻa lehua trees and feeding on the flowers.[149] Both the male and female of the birds were known to sing in duet with each other. According to Munro, the bird was common all over Kauai in 1891, but soon succumbed to the same pressures that killed its fellows; on four visits between 1928 and 1936 he could not hear or see it.[150] The bird survived by retreating to high ground: the Alakaʻi Swamp on the slopes of Waiʻaleʻale, 3,500 feet above sea level, the last refuge of several endangered birds. Conant, Pratt, and Shallenberger's 1975 expedition to the swamp produced the only known photos and video of the Kauaʻi ʻōʻō. Even at the time, it was a doomed population. By 1981, only one breeding pair remained; the female vanished in 1983 after Hurricane Iwa. The male of the pair may have survived his mate by at least three years. In 1986 Jim Jacobi, a researcher at the Pacific Island Ecosystems Research Center, visited the swamp with their colleague John Sincock, a career conservationist who was retiring that year, to look for the bird one last time. In 2018 he described the encounter this way:

> *"It came so close that we didn't even need binoculars. He was looking at us, calling. On an ohiʻa tree. I took out my tape recorder, clicked it on. The bird sang again, then flitted away. I quickly rewound my tape and then I played it again to see what I got, and I turned up the volume so John and Pete could hear it. And then, bam! All of a sudden, the bird came right back. I thought, this is great, it came back! And then it hit me: The reason it came back is it heard another bird. And it hadn't heard another bird in, you know, how long. And it turns out this was probably the last one there was."*[151]

Jacobi's recording is available in the Cornell Ornithology Lab, and can be heard on an episode of author John Green's podcast *The Anthropocene Reviewed*. Despite extensive surveys in 1989, 1994, 1996, and 2000, the Kauaʻi ʻōʻō has not been heard or seen in the wild again.[152]

Kioea

Chaetoptila angustipluma

Distinct from the other members of its family, the kioea had magnificent brown, yellow, and green feathers. The bird's first description came from Charles Pickering and Titian Ramsey Peale, who visited Hawaii in 1842: "It is very active and graceful in its motions, and is disposed to be musical ... they are generally found about those trees which are in flower."[153] The only specimens were taken by a local shopkeeper, naturalist, and collector named J. Mills in 1859 on the slopes below the crater of Kilauea, Hawaii. Ornithologist Walter Rothschild illustrated the kioea from these specimens for his book *Extinct Birds* (1907), which is the bird's most prominent legacy.





Molokai ʻōʻō

Moho bishopi
Bishop's ʻōʻō

Much of the knowledge we have of vanished Hawaiian birds, including the Molokai ʻōʻō, comes from the work of British naturalist Walter Rothschild, whose illustrations are featured in this section. His agent Henry Palmer collected the first specimens of the bird at Kalauaaha in 1892, from which Rothschild published the first description of the species.[154] Rothschild named the bird for Charles Reed Bishop, a prominent banker and educator who settled in Hawaii in 1846. British ornithologist R. C. L. Perkins reported seeing this bird in great numbers in 1892, but only a few years later he returned at the same season and wrote "Although the trees were, as before, one mass of flower, hardly a single O-O was to be seen. The only noticeable change was that cattle were wandering over the flow and beginning to destroy the brushwood, just as they had already reduced the formerly dense forest bordering the flow to the condition of open parkland."[155] The last corroborated sightings of the Molokai ʻōʻō came from another of Rothschild agents, New Zealand born ornithologist George Campbell Munro, in 1904.

Oʻahu ʻōʻō

Moho apicalis
Yellow-tufted Bee-eater

The Oʻahu ʻōʻō was tThe first of the ʻōʻōs to be driven to extinction. The history of the bird is inexorably tied with the Kamehameha Dynasty, kings of the islands from about 1795 to 1874. In a strange and tragic way, Kamehameha II, also known as King Liholiho, was responsible for their description to modern science. In 1823, the king and his wife Kamamalu visited England with a party of retainers, hoping to learn about European laws and customs so as to establish a new legal and social system in the islands. Only months later, in July 1824, the king and his wife died of measles. As a gesture of diplomatic courtesy, the British government returned their bodies and their surviving retinue to the Hawaiian Islands later that year on board the H.M.S. *Blonde*.[156] The first Oʻahu ʻōʻō specimen brought to Europe was collected by the naturalist on that expedition, Andrew Bloxam.[157] The Oʻahu ʻōʻō was only collected on one other occasion, by the German naturalist Ferdinand Deppe in the hills behind Honolulu in 1837. By the time it was formally described and classified in 1860, the Oʻahu ʻōʻō hadn't been seen in 23 years. Nothing was recorded of its habits, and all that remains of the bird today is a half dozen museum specimens.

Honeyeater

Tiny Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 13
Hit Points 1 (1d4 – 1)
Speed 10 ft., fly 45 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
5 (–3)	16 (+3)	8 (–1)	2 (–4)	14 (+2)	8 (–1)

Skills Perception +4, Performance +3
Senses passive Perception 14
Languages —
Challenge 0 (10 XP)

Actions

Beak. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 piercing damage.



Feathered Dragons

Inspired by the Hawaiian Honeyeaters

The lineages of chromatic and metallic dragons derive from a common ancestor, a primordial creature of fearsome power. However, few dragons know that this early ancestor bore feathers as well as scales. Feathered dragons represent a majestic lineage of true dragons separate from their reptilian kin, bearing analogous but radically distinct powers and personalities.

Soulsongs. Whereas other dragons are attuned to metals, colors, and elemental forces, feathered dragons draw their power from primal emotions, such as joy and terror. Their breath weapons—the emblem of a true dragon—form beautiful yet haunting songs, rather than destructive waves of elemental energy. Each feathered dragon's song is unique to its kind, and elicits overwhelming emotion in others.

Feathered dragons are classified by their song's emotion. The dirge of a despair dragon casts a grim lethargy over those who hear it, whereas a wrath dragon's battle anthem stirs listeners into a frenzy.

Fantastical Feathers. As their name suggests, feathered dragons are adorned with magnificent plumage instead of scaly hides. Their magic is concentrated in these feathers, and even discarded molt bears vast arcane potential. A feather plucked from a feathered dragon's plume might serve as the foundation for a *dragonfeather quill* or the core for a magic wand, whereas hundreds of feathers might be assembled into *dragonfeather armor*, a *dragonfeather cape*, or one of a dozen other dazzling magic items.

Arcanists have long sought feathered dragon plumage for its magical potential, as the feathers can fuel spells that otherwise demand costly material components. As such, mages and poachers alike have a keen interest in draconic feathers.

Hoard of Words. Good and evil dragons alike covet wealth and amass all they collect into a hoard. These piles of gold, gems, fine art, and magic items are an essential part of draconic nature, helping to focus a dragon's power and continue its lineage.

Feathered dragons, too, obsess over a kind of wealth, but instead collect words: riddles, grudges, nightmares, the last words of the dying, and even names. This hoard is etched into the dragon's memories, serving the same purpose as a typical dragon's hoard. Unlike piles of gold and silver, however, a feathered dragon's hoard of words is weightless and freely tradable, allowing them to thrive in cities where other dragons would struggle. This way of life seems incomprehensible to other dragons, and older wyrms might even consider it blasphemous.

Feathered Dragons

Challenge	Dragon
4	Joy Dragon
6	Despair Dragon
9	Fear Dragon
11	Wrath Dragon
13	Pride Dragon



Joy Dragon

Medium Dragon, Typically Chaotic Good

Armor Class 13
Hit Points 78 (12d8 + 24)
Speed 40 ft., fly 80 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	17 (+3)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Con +4, Wis +2, Cha +4
Skills Perception +2, Performance +4
Damage Resistances radiant
Senses blindsight 10 ft., darkvision 30 ft., passive Perception 12
Languages Common, Draconic
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Flyby. The dragon doesn't provoke an opportunity attack when it flies out of an enemy's reach.

Actions

Multiattack. The dragon uses its Joysong and makes one Beak attack.

Beak. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d10 + 3) piercing damage plus 4 (1d8) radiant damage.

Joysong. Each creature of the dragon's choice that is within 120 feet of the dragon and can hear it must succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw or become charmed for 1 minute. While charmed, a creature regards the dragon as a thing to be celebrated and protected. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the dragon's Joysong for the next 24 hours.

Feather Burst (Recharge 5–6). The dragon launches razor-sharp feathers of magical force in all directions. Each creature other than the dragon within a 20-foot radius sphere centered on the dragon must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw, taking 21 (6d6) radiant damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. The area is considered difficult terrain until the start of the dragon's next turn.

Reactions

Feathered Bulwark. In response to being attacked, feathers of magical energy swirl around the dragon imposing a −10 penalty to the attack roll.





Joy Dragon

Inspired by the Molokai ʻōʻō

The smallest of the feathered dragons, joy dragons are swift and vibrant creatures that radiate unbridled delight.

Incessant Revelry. More so than their kin, joy dragons embrace their role as avatars as emotion, reflecting the happiness of others and bringing delight to those under a cloud of despair. They spread mirth wherever they go, always armed with a joke, smile, or encouraging word.

Joy dragons rarely dwell in one place, often traveling with musicians or carnivals and taking every opportunity to cavort with others. No opportunity to celebrate is wasted, no festivities unattended. And when no party can be found, a joy dragon makes their own.

Hoard of Jokes and Riddles. Joy dragons hold nothing in higher regard than a joke or riddle they haven't yet heard. They will happily spend hours at a campfire telling riddles by the flickering firelight or trading barbs with jesters. Among their countless riddles, a rare few contain nuggets of ancient wisdom or forgotten knowledge, their answers ranging from magical command words to the truenames of legendary creatures.

Despair Dragon

Inspired by the Kauaʻi ʻōʻō

Like shadows of death, despair dragons spread their wings over cemeteries, mausoleums, and tombs.

Death Sense. Despair dragons have the uncanny ability to predict the time of a creature's death down to the hour. These portents of doom never specify the manner of death, but are seldom wrong. Though this has fueled superstition that despair dragons are emissaries of a death god—or worse, killers themselves—despair dragons follow death, not the other way around.

Hoard of Last Words. True to their macabre nature, despair dragons collect last words. Illustrious last words, such as those uttered by monarchs and heroes before an untimely demise, have little appeal to despair dragons. Their interest is in intimate farewells, expressions of regrets, and embraces of finality. The last words of an endling, the final member of its species, would be a despair dragon's holy grail.

Perfect Memory. A despair dragon remembers every moment of its life with absolute clarity, and can accurately recall everything it has seen or heard.

Regional Effects

A despair dragon's graveyard is warped by its presence in one or more of the following ways:

- Ravens, crows, and vultures congregate in flocks and speak in whispers with fragments of conversation snatched from the dead.
- Within its boundaries, nonmagical illumination sheds only dim light and the sun always appears to be just on the horizon.
- As an action, the dragon can sense the presence of any poisoned, petrified, or dying creature within one mile of itself. It knows the creature's type and the distance to the creature, but not the creature's identity.

If the dragon is killed or takes a new lair, these effects fade after 1d10 days.

Fear Dragon

Inspired by the O'ahu 'ō'ō

Though the feathers of a fear dragon are the darkest of their kind, their plumage isn't black. Under any light, their feathers gleam with suppressed blues, greens, and purples scarcely brighter than the void of an eclipse.

Nightmare Hoard. The call of a fear dragon draws a creature's deepest nightmares to the surface, whitening knuckles and sending a chill down the spine. Most creatures flee before seeing the dragon's terrible countenance. Of those who remain, fear dragons are irresistibly curious. Are they bereft of nightmares or comfortable among them? What visions did the dreadsong inspire? Those who offer up answers to these questions fill the fear dragon's hoard of nightmares. Each

Despair Dragon

Large Dragon, Typically Neutral

Armor Class 14
Hit Points 127 (15d10 + 45)
Speed 40 ft., fly 80 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Dex +7, Con +6, Int +5, Wis +3
Skills Arcana +5, History +5, Perception +3, Stealth +10
Damage Resistances necrotic
Damage Immunities force
Condition Immunities charmed
Senses blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages Common, Draconic, telepathy 120 ft.
Challenge 6 (1,800 XP)

Flyby. The dragon doesn't provoke an opportunity attack when it flies out of an enemy's reach.

Death Sense. The dragon can detect the exact location of any creature within 60 feet of it that doesn't have all of its hit points.

Actions

Multiattack. The dragon uses its Gloomsong and then makes a Beak attack and a Talons attack.

Beak. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d10 + 4) piercing damage.

Talons. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage.

Gloomsong. Each creature of the dragon's choice that is within 120 feet of the dragon and can hear it must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or be incapacitated and unable to move for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw when a creature attempts to rouse it as an action and at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the dragon's Gloomsong for the next 24 hours.

Feather Burst (Recharge 5–6). The dragon launches razor-sharp feathers of magical force in all directions. Each other than the dragon within a 30-foot radius sphere centered on the dragon must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw, taking 28 (8d6) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. The area is considered difficult terrain until the start of the dragon's next turn.

Reactions

Feathered Bulwark. In response to being attacked, feathers of magical energy swirl around the dragon imposing a −10 penalty to the attack roll.

Fear Dragon

Large Dragon, Typically Neutral

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)
Hit Points 133 (14d10 + 56)
Speed 40 ft., fly 80 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	19 (+4)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +8, Con +8, Wis +4, Cha +6
Skills Intimidation +6, Perception +4
Damage Resistances psychic
Condition Immunities frightened
Senses blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages Common, Draconic
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Dragon's Sight. Magical darkness doesn't impede the dragon's darkvision.

Flyby. The dragon doesn't provoke an opportunity attack when it flies out of an enemy's reach.

Actions

Multiattack. The dragon uses its Dreadsong and then makes one Beak attack and one Talons attack.

Beak. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d10 + 4) piercing damage plus 9 (2d8) psychic damage.

Talons. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage.

Feather Burst (Recharge 5–6). The dragon launches razor-sharp feathers of magical force in all directions. Each other than the dragon within a 30-foot radius sphere centered on the dragon must make a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw, taking 42 (12d6) psychic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. The area is considered difficult terrain until the start of the dragon's next turn.

Dreadsong. Each creature of the dragon's choice that is within 120 feet of the dragon and can hear it must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A frightened creature must take the Dash action and move away from the dragon by the safest available route on each of its turns, unless there is nowhere to move. If a frightened creature ends its turn in a location where it can't see the dragon, it can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the dragon's Dreadsong for the next 24 hours.

Reactions

Feathered Bulwark. In response to being attacked, feathers of magical energy swirl around the dragon imposing a −10 penalty to the attack roll.

nightmare imbues the dragon's feathers with new shades of darkness, rendering its countenance all the more terrible.

Relinquishing Fears. Offering one's nightmares to a fear dragon also drains them of terror. Though the nightmares still arrive, they swim in a calm catharsis and the faint melody of the dreadsong, allowing one to sleep soundly. Fear dragons regard this as a kind of trade: fear in exchange for solace, poignance, or escapism.

Regional Effects

Fear dragons lurk in unwelcome locales just beyond the borders of cities and towns: in deep caves, underneath "cursed" monuments, and within gnarled forests. Such a lair might bend to the dragon's magic in the following ways:

- Any creature with darkvision can see 30 feet further than it normally could using the sense.
- The fear dragon can sense the presence of any sleeping creature within one mile of itself, as long as the creature has an Intelligence score of 6 or higher. The fear dragon knows the creature's type and the distance to the creature, but not the creature's identity.
- The fear dragon can use its action to communicate telepathically with any dreaming creature within one mile of itself. On waking, the dreaming creature must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, it remembers the conversation in only the vaguest of terms.

If the dragon is killed or takes a new lair, these effects fade after 1d10 days.



Wrath Dragon

Inspired by the Kioea

Wrath dragons are winged specters of fury, kings of blinding rage.

Battle Anthems. Itinerant by nature, wrath dragons migrate between gladiatorial arenas, war camps, and besieged castles, setting up temporary lairs wherever they travel. Like vultures to carrion, wrath dragons are drawn to combatants.

Among these hotbeds of violence, the dragon always hums its ragesong, inflaming hatred and stoking tensions until the battle reaches a fever pitch. The ragesong is a battlecry, an anthem that blinds those who hear it with a white-hot rage that discerns neither friend nor foe. The wrath dragon lives for these directionless melees and the bitter resentment that follows.

Hoard of Grudges. AA wrath dragon's hoard reads like a record of wrongs. The dragon covets grudges small and large, from petty resentments to grand vows of revenge. Every "I'll show them" and "Just you wait," is a precious part of the wrath dragon's hoard. Together, they stoke the white-hot fires of the dragon's ragesong.

Regional Effects

A battleground under the influence of a wrath dragon changes in one or more of the following ways:

- The sounds of drums and battlecries can be faintly heard at random intervals.
- Vultures and other birds of prey circle overhead, awaiting fresh carrion.
- Each creature within one mile of the wrath dragon has advantage on saving throws made to avoid or end the frightened condition on itself.

If the dragon is killed or takes a new lair, these effects fade after 1d10 days.

The Last Witnesses

"In July 1975 we spent a week in one of Hawai'i's last strongholds for native birds, the fabled Alaka'i Swamp on Kaua'i. We were fortunate to find all but one of Kaua'i's historically known native bird species. At that time, we assumed that this relatively large wilderness area, under no obvious threat, would remain a refuge for endangered birds at least for the near future. Thus, although our observations contributed to subsequent publications, we published no general summary of our expedition. Time has shown that our optimism was naive; we made some of the last observations and tape recordings, and took some of the last (or only) photographs, of several species, and made the last natural history studies of several others under anything resembling 'normal' conditions.

On 2 July we awoke to the song of the 'ō'ō (06: 15). Shortly after the dawn chorus ceased and the sun was up, a single 'ō'ō appeared near our campsite and provided our first look. Interestingly, the bird did not visit us on subsequent mornings, indicating that it may have deviated from its usual feeding route to "check us out" that first day…Each day birds sang at 10–20 minute intervals until about 10:30, when song became less frequent. Duetting by the pair was frequent throughout the day…On 3 July we located an apparent feeding territory of a pair of Kaua'i 'ō'ō downstream from our camp. It included several large, heavily flowering ohi'a' trees from which the pair excluded all other birds…We surmised that the birds had several such feeding areas or territories that they patrolled systematically because they would leave this area for 20–40 min at a time, usually flying off to the northeast and returning northwest… Besides taking nectar from ohi ' a ' flowers the birds foraged for insects from masses on the larger branches and among small branches and foliage."

—Conant, Pratt, & Shallenberger, 1998[158]



Wrath Dragon

Huge Dragon, Typically Neutral Evil

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 184 (16d12 + 80)
Speed 40 ft., fly 80 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	22 (+6)	20 (+5)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	21 (+5)

Saving Throws Dex +10, Con +9, Wis +5, Cha +9
Skills Insight +5, Intimidation +9, Perception +5
Damage Immunities force
Condition Immunities frightened
Senses blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 90 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages Common, Draconic
Challenge 11 (7,200 XP)

Flyby. The dragon doesn't provoke an opportunity attack when it flies out of an enemy's reach.

Actions

Multiattack. The dragon uses its Ragesong and then makes one Beak attack and one Talons attack.

Beak. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (2d10 + 6) piercing damage plus 5 (1d10) force damage.

Talons. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d6 + 6) slashing damage.

Feather Burst (Recharge 5–6). The dragon launches razor-sharp feathers of magical force in all directions. Each creature other than the dragon within a 30-foot radius sphere centered on the dragon must make a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw, taking 45 (10d8) force damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. The area is considered difficult terrain until the start of the dragon's next turn.

Ragesong. Each creature of the dragon's choice that is within 120 feet of the dragon and can hear it must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw or become frenzied for 1 minute. While frenzied, a creature chooses the targets for its attacks, spells, and abilities randomly from among the creatures it can see within range, and it must make an opportunity attack if any creature provokes one. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the dragon's Ragesong for the next 24 hours.

Reactions

Feathered Bulwark. In response to being attacked, feathers of magical energy swirl around the dragon imposing a −10 penalty to the attack roll.

Pride Dragon

Huge Dragon, Typically Lawful Neutral

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)
Hit Points 195 (17d12 + 85)
Speed 40 ft., fly 80 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	23 (+6)	21 (+5)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)	21 (+5)

Saving Throws Dex +11, Con +10, Wis +7, Cha +10
Skills Intimidation +10, Perception +7, Performance +10
Damage Immunities force
Senses blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 17
Languages Common, Draconic
Challenge 13 (10,000 XP)

Flyby. The dragon doesn't provoke an opportunity attack when it flies out of an enemy's reach.

Magic Resistance. The dragon has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Actions

Multiattack. The dragon uses its Crownsong and then makes one Beak attack and one Talons attack.

Beak. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (2d10 + 6) piercing damage plus 5 (1d10) force damage.

Talons. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d6 + 6) slashing damage.

Crownsong. Each creature of the dragon's choice that is within 120 feet of the dragon and can hear it must succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw or grovel for 1 minute. A groveling creature falls prone and ends its turn. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the dragon's Crownsong for the next 24 hours.

Feather Burst (Recharge 5–6). The dragon launches razor-sharp feathers of magical force in all directions. Each creature other than the dragon within a 30-foot radius sphere centered on the dragon must make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw, taking 36 (8d8) force damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. The area is considered difficult terrain until the start of the dragon's next turn.

Nametake (Recharge 6). A creature that the dragon can see or hear within 60 feet of it must succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw or lose its name. An affected creature can't speak its own name, and its name is magically erased from written records and the memories of other creatures.

The dragon can restore any name it has taken as an action. All the names the dragon has taken are restored when it dies. The *wish* spell or similar magic can restore a name.

Legendary Actions

The dragon can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The dragon regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Swipe. The dragon makes a Talons attack.

Recharge. The dragon rolls a d6, and regains the use of its Feather Burst on a roll of a 5 or 6. If it rolls a 5 or 6 and its Feather Burst is already available, it instead regains 13 (2d12) hit points.

Feather Strike (Costs 3 Actions). The dragon shoots feathers of magical force at up to two creatures it can see within 60 feet of itself. Each target must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 17 (5d6) force damage.

Pride Dragon

Inspired by the Hawaii ʻōʻō

Kingmakers of the oldest dynasties, pride dragons become patrons of monarchs, spreading their wings over palaces and unifying fiefdoms in their domains. Some pride dragons rule as figureheads of their domain, but most prefer to be the power behind the throne, guiding their kingdoms with cunning and ferocity.

Crownsong. The most powerful song of the feathered dragons, the crownsong is the triumphant anthem of a monarch at the height of their power, compelling all who hear it to bend the knee. A pride dragon varies this melody from ruler to ruler, communicating its hopes for the regime and matching the temperament of the reigning lord.

Hoard of Names. A pride dragon collects names, consuming entire identities and legacies as it does so. When a pride dragon strips away a creature's name, it magically erases written records and memories of the creature's identity, leaving behind only smudges and mysteries. In doing so, it expunges birthrights and landholdings, marriages and criminal records. For some, this represents the blessing of new beginnings ; for many, it is a nightmare of obscurity. Only the dragon remembers the creature's original name, and only it can restore it.



A Pride Dragon's Lair

Pride dragons usually claim a palace or castle as their lair. A pride dragon encountered in its lair has a challenge rating of 14.

Lair Actions

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the dragon takes a lair action to cause one of the following effects; the dragon can't use the same effect two rounds in a row.

» One creature the pride dragon can see must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or be charmed by the dragon until initiative count 20 on the next round. A creature charmed in this way obeys to the best of its ability any command the dragon issues that isn't directly harmful to the creature. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the charmed condition ends for it, the creature is immune to this lair action for the next 24 hours.

» The pride dragon chooses one creature it can see within 30 feet of it. If the creature is carrying 100 or more gold pieces, the coins briefly animate into a golden snake under the dragon's control. The snake attacks the target with a +7 bonus to hit, dealing 14 (4d6) piercing damage on a hit.

Regional Effects

The region containing a pride dragon's lair is warped by the dragon's magic, which creates one or more of the following effects.

» Creatures bearing an insignia or crest of the dragon's choice appear resplendent: their armor gleams, their clothes don't fray, and their equipment remains in impeccable order.
» Golden rays of sunlight highlight the dragon's lair, emphasizing its prominence.
» A regal melody can be heard on the wind.

If the dragon is killed or takes a new lair, these effects fade after 1d10 days.

Draconic Magic Items

Dragon feathers are prized components for magical spells or wondrous items. Sometimes dragons collect their molted feathers and gift them to humanoids; other times, hunters carefully pluck the feathers from the hide of a dead dragon.

A single dragon feather can be consumed in place of a spell's material component with a value of up to 500 gold pieces. The following are wondrous items commonly crafted with the plumes of feathered dragons.

Dragonfeather Armor

Armor (studded leather or hide armor), rare (requires attunement)

Dragon feathers lay in glistening rows over this armor. While wearing this armor, you gain a +1 bonus to AC and have resistance to force damage.

The armor has 3 charges. When you are attacked, you can use your reaction and expend one or more charges to cause one of the following effects:

- *1 Charge:* Feathers of magical energy swirl around you, imposing a −10 penalty to the attack roll.
- *1 Charge:* Razor-sharp magical feathers deal 2d10 force damage to the attacking creature.
- *3 Charges:* The attack misses you, regardless of its roll. Additionally, you teleport up to 30 feet in a cloud of feathers to an unoccupied location you can see.

The armor regains 1d3 expended charges daily at dawn.

Magic Item Set. Attuning to both this weapon and a *dragonfeather quill* requires only a single attunement slot. While you are attuned to both items, this armor's bonus to AC increases to +2.

Dragonfeather Cape

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

This cape of yellow feathers has 3 charges. You can use your action and expend 1 charge to flourish the cape dramatically. Each creature of your choice that is within 30 feet of you and can see you must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or become charmed for 1 minute. While charmed, a creature regards you as a thing to be celebrated and protected. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the cape's effect for the next 24 hours. When the effect ends, a creature realizes that you used magic to influence it.

The cape regains 1d3 expended changes daily at dawn.

Dragonfeather Quill

Weapon (dagger), uncommon (required attunement)

This feather quill bears a magical razor edge along its perimeter, allowing it to be used as a dagger. You have a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon. On a hit, the quill deals force damage instead of piercing. Additionally, it returns to the wielder's hand immediately after it is used to make a ranged attack.

Magic Item Set. Attuning to both this weapon and another *dragonfeather quill*, a *set of dragonfeather armor*, a *dragonfeather cape*, or *dragonfeather robes* requires only a single attunement slot. While you are attuned to both items, this weapon's bonus to attack and damage rolls increases to +2.

Dragonfeather Robes

Armor, very rare (requires attunement)

These black robes are embroidered with yellow, white, and gold dragon feathers. While wearing these robes, you have a +2 bonus to AC and resistance to force damage. Additionally, you can use your bonus action to gain a flying speed equal to your walking speed until the end of your turn. If you end your turn in the air without anything holding you aloft, and you are within 30 feet of the ground, you float gently to the ground. Otherwise, you fall.

Scepter of the Dynasty

Rod, very rare (requires attunement by a sorcerer, warlock, or wizard)

While holding this rod, you gain a +2 bonus to spell attack rolls and to the saving throw of your spells.

Additionally, you can use the specter to cast the *command* spell as a bonus action, without expending a spell slot. When you cast the spell in this way, you can only issue the command, "Approach," "Grovel," or "Halt."

Heath Hen

Tympanuchus cupido cupido

The boisterous heath hen was ubiquitous among the Pilgrims and other early North American colonists. Its extinction sparked one of the first conservation movements in American history, which continues to this day.

By the time of European settlement of the American Northeast, heath hens were abundant across the Eastern Seaboard from southern Maine through Long Island, New Jersey, eastern Pennsylvania, Virginia, and North Carolina.[159] More closely related to grouse than chickens, the bird was named for the heath family of plants. These low grasses and shrubs like cranberry, huckleberry, and rhododendron shared the hen's habitat in the understory of pine forests, or "pine barrens." It was an ecosystem kept clear by regular fires that the heath alone could survive. Native Americans used such fires as a tool of land management, relying on the hardiness of the plants to repopulate the area.[160]

Heath hens were famous for the way they courted their mates. Around sunrise, whole colonies of birds would gather at ancestral mating grounds, called leks, as the males put on a spectacular performance. They would stamp, scratch, bow, jump, and turn half circles in the air. As they inflated the bright orange gular sacs beneath their beaks, the pinnae feathers on their necks would protrude like horns.The sounds of these lekking grounds were like the "subdued and distant echo of many medium-pitched steam whistles," wrote Edward Howe Forbush, state ornithologist of Massachusetts. They could be heard more than a mile away.[161]

The heath hen still thrived when its pine barrens and plains were turned into farmland, which were similar enough to its original ecosystem in terms of nesting sites and food.[162] It gained a reputation as a poor man's food since it was so common as a game bird. Servants in the colonial era would bargain with employers not to be served heath hen as dinner more than two or three times a week. The birds were even seen on Boston Common, the center of the city, in its early days. But as New England urbanized during the Industrial Revolution, this overhunting and habitat loss completely extirpated the heath hen from the mainland. By 1870, the last colony of heath hens lived on a strip of fire-swept heath called the Great Prairie on the island of Martha's Vineyard.[163]

The colony became the subject of one of America's earliest conservation movements. In 1908, the Massachusetts commonwealth acquired 600 acres of the old Great Prairie and appointed a warden to manage the population of birds there and protect them from poachers.[164] Over the next 20 years, the colony's numbers varied until disease, inbreeding, and infertility ran their course. By 1928, there was only one bird left, a male nicknamed "Booming Ben." For a time, he was the most protected bird in the world. On March 11, 1932, Booming Ben visited the empty lekking ground on Martha's Vineyard to call for a mate he couldn't know would never come. He didn't return the next day, or the next, and the following year he didn't appear at all.[165]

Booming Ben left a legacy of conservation in the United States. His former lekking ground, the Great Prairie reserve on Martha's Vineyard, has grown to become the Manuel F. Correllus State Forest, 5,168 acres of permanently undeveloped land protecting the island's only freshwater aquifer.[166] Organizations like BiodiversityWorks, the Village and Wilderness Project, and Martha's Vineyard Vision Fellowship are working on sustainable ways to "undevelop" land in the Northeast and create linked natural habitats alongside affordable housing. Restoration and rewilding projects like these owe much to the lonely love bird of the Great Plains.

Heath Hen

Tiny Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 7 (2d4 + 2)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
3 (−4)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	2 (−4)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)

Skills Acrobatics +4, Performance +4
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages —
Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Actions

Talons. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) slashing damage.



Whomper

Tiny Monstrosity, Typically Unaligned

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 36 (8d4 + 16)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
3 (−4)	15 (+2)	15 (+2)	2 (−4)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Con +4
Skills Acrobatics +4, Performance +5
Damage Resistances fire, thunder
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages —
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Thunderous Rebuke. A creature that hits the whomper with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it takes 3 (1d6) thunder damage.

Actions

Talon. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) slashing damage.

Thunderous Call. The whomper performs a concussive call in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in that area must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw, taking 7 (2d6) thunder damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one.

Whomper

Inspired by the Heath Hen

Deceptively mighty for its size, the whomper bird has captured the thunderous power of prairie storms. Hunters that see the feathers on a whomper's neck standing straight up are advised to take cover immediately, for a cacophonous call is sure to follow.

Thunder Bird. Channeling the elemental power of air through the glowing orange sacs on their neck, whompers create a thunderous noise like a dragon's roar. They perform elaborate dances to match this call: jumping, scratching, and bobbing. Female whompers choose the loudest and most creative males for their mates.

When threatened, whompers can use this boisterous call as a weapon, generating a concussive force strong enough to knock a human unconscious. A colony of whompers performing this call at once magnifies the effect, uprooting trees, flattening hilltops, and razing buildings to the ground.

Fire Bird. Whompers colonies nest in grasslands that are regularly swept by magical wildfires, causing them to become resilient to heat. As such, they have become a favored familiar for evocation wizards and other spellcasters with a penchant for lighting things aflame.

Love Bird. Because of their spectacular mating displays, whompers are thought to be a creation of Cupid or some other deity of love. Temples dedicated to these gods keep conveys of the birds on their grounds and sometimes teach imitations of their mating dances to their worshippers. In addition to being a spectacularly fun dance class, this dance can also substitute the somatic components of a love priest's spells, a tidy illustration of the power of love.

Ilin Island Cloudrunner

Crateromys paulus
Bushy-tailed cloud rat
Ilin-tailed cloud rat
***Siyang* (Tawbuid)**

Since the beginning of the Holocene, the forest canopies of the Philippine islands have been home to cloudrunners: tiny, fluffy-coated rats found nowhere else in the world.

Cloudrunners make their homes within the misty rainforest treetops of their native islands. As nocturnal rodents, they search for tender young leaves, bananas, guavas, and young corn to eat by night and sleep in holes in large trees by day.[167] There are six species of cloudrunner, of which the Ilin Island cloudrunner was the smallest.[168] It is known from only a single specimen, a male, collected in 1953. The specimen's head and body are ten inches long together, and its magnificent bushy tail is eight and a half inches long on its own.[169] The specimen is still housed in the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History.

In 1988, a survey found Ilin Island's rainforests destroyed by human activity and no evidence of the island's cloudrunner.[170] However, more evidence of the cloudrunner was found in 2011, when a survey assigned fossil teeth from Ilin Island to the species, proving it was among the oldest residents of the island. An organization called Re:Wild believes the species may still be alive in the wild, and launched the first of several planned camera trap surveys in 2019, hoping to rediscover the creature. Though they didn't capture a photo of the cloudrunner, the team interviewed island locals and collected anecdotal evidence of sightings matching the Ilin Island cloudrunner's size and auburn-and-chestnut coloration.[171] Conservation efforts in the Philippines are particularly challenging for a number of reasons: the country's biodiversity is spread across 7,100 islands, 67 percent of its plant and animal species are found nowhere else in the world, and the islands are rapidly being deforested.[172] The IUCN currently lists *C. paulus* as "Data Deficient" rather than extinct.

Cloudrunner
Tiny Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 11
Hit Points 1 (1d4 − 1)
Speed 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
2 (−4)	12 (+1)	9 (−1)	2 (−4)	11 (+0)	3 (−4)

Senses darkvision 30 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages —
Challenge 0 (10 XP)

Keen Smell. The cloudrunner has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +0 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 piercing damage.



Cloud rats live alone, in pairs, or in pairs with one or two dependent young, which are born in tree-holes or hollows well above ground level...they are widely, sometimes intensively, hunted by local people for food. Hunting methods vary from opportunistic captures while hunting for other animals with dogs and guns (e.g. Panay), to directed hunts with trained dogs or snares placed at the entrances to their holes in trees or the ground.[173]



Cloudrunner Mousefolk

Inspired by the Ilin Island cloudrunner

The noble mousefolk have become a fixture in story and song since time immemorial, often for bravery belying their diminutive size. Cloudrunners are a family of mousefolk who live in sumptuous rainforests and practice an innate ancestral steam magic.

Arboreal Society. Generations of cloudrunner mousefolk dwell in sprawling, interconnected treehouses in the canopies of their native rainforests. These neighborhoods nestled far above the forest floor are practically invisible to outsiders. Despite the dizzying heights at which they live, cloudrunners don't fear falling, for their rainforests are constantly filled with mist that even the youngest cloudrunners can run atop.

Walking on Water. This ability to dash and climb across wisps of fog is the cloudrunners' namesake, and mastering the art of cloudrunning is the highest calling in their society. Cloudrunners who spend years training are dubbed adepts and often serve as scouts, protectors, and ambassadors for cloudfolk villages. Wielding this ancestral magic, adepts can produce mist at their fingertips and even transform into a cloud of smoke to escape into the rainforest.

Mousefolk

The following creature uses the Mousefolk race, available in *Valda's Spire of Secrets*.

Mousefolk characters can choose the following option when selecting a Mousefolk Lineage:

Vaporwalk. You can cast the spell *fog cloud* at will using this trait. Additionally, you can stand on visible fog and smoke as if it were a solid object. If the fog or smoke disperses while you are standing on it, you fall unless something else is holding you aloft.

Cloudrunner Adept

Small Humanoid (Mousefolk), Any Alignment

Armor Class 13
Hit Points 36 (8d6 + 8)
Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)

Skills Acrobatics +5, Nature +2, Stealth +5
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12
Languages Common, Rodentia
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Scurry. The adept can move through the space of any hostile creature as if it were difficult terrain.

Squeeze. The adept suffers no penalty for squeezing into a space that is only large enough for a Tiny creature.

Vaporwalk. The adept can stand on visible fog and smoke as if it were a solid object. If the fog or smoke disperses while the adept is standing on it, it falls unless something else is holding it aloft.

Actions

Multiattack. The adept makes two attacks.

Bolo. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) slashing damage.

Steam Blowgun. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 80/320, one target. *Hit:* 4 piercing damage.

Spellcasting. The adept casts one of the following spells, using Wisdom as the spellcasting ability:

At will: *fog cloud*
1/day: *gaseous form* (self only)

Insects

With a few exceptions, insects and other arthropods, like spiders and bees, go extinct quietly, often unnoticed and unremarked. When the Xerces blue went extinct, in the words of Mark Jerome Walters, "our world grew quieter by a whisper and duller by a hue."[174]

The grand impact caused by a single, small extinction is already intuitive. When meteorologist Edward Norton Lorenz created computer models of weather, even small changes in the initial input created massive differences in the output, leading to the notion that the flapping of an insect's wings could lead to a tornado—an idea he called the butterfly effect.

As quiet as individual insect extinctions are singularly, together they are a rushing chorus that science hasn't yet been able to quantify. "Current estimates suggest insects may number 5.5 million species, with only one fifth of these named," according to a 2019 study. "It is likely that insect extinctions since the industrial era are around 5 to 10 percent, i.e. 250,000 to 500,000 species."[175] Around 40 percent of those remaining are at risk of extinction in the next few decades.[176] If extinctions in the insect world are paper cuts, then we are bleeding from thousands of them.

"Science alone cannot assess the diminished quality of a world without the ivorybill or the Xerces blue," Walters wrote. "Psychologists have not begun to ponder the emotional toll of the loss of fellow life. Nor have theologians reckoned the spiritual impoverishment that extinction brings. To forget what we had is to forget what we have lost. And to forget what we have lost means never knowing what we had to begin with. That would be among the greatest tragedies of all."[177]

RESOLUTION OF INSECTS

In 5th edition, frogs and birds form the bottom of the monster ecosystem. Anything smaller, such as individual insects, are too tiny to represent in game terms, except when gathered together in swarms. As such, none of the insects in this section have representative 5th edition statistics.

Duke Water Beetle

Megadytes ducalis

Hidden in wetlands and freshwater streams is a miniature world of startling ferocity. The apex predators of this world are diving beetles. In their larval stage, diving beetles are called "water tigers" and hunt as ambush predators in grasses or debris just below the water's surface, breathing through spiracles in the rear of their body. They use their hollow jaws to capture mosquito larva, tadpoles, frogs, and even small fish, then inject the prey with digestive enzymes. When the internal organs have liquified, the water tiger slurps in its meal.

In their adult stage, diving beetles fly from pond to pond looking for prey. Once they find a good spot, diving beetles can capture bubbles of air beneath their hard front wings, or elytra, to remain submerged for hours at a time. These beetles hibernate submerged in mud at the bottom of pools through the winter and emerge in spring to lay eggs amongst underwater vegetation.

The duke water beetle was the largest diving beetle ever discovered, at nearly 2 inches (50 mm) long and 1.2 inches (30 mm) wide. It was known to modern science from a single specimen, a male described in 200 words by British entomologist David Sharp in 1882; the location of its capture was noted only as "Brazil."[178] In 2011, Richard Jones called it a candidate for the rarest insect in the world, as a figurehead for the many insect species whose descriptions carry the refrain "known from a single specimen."[179] With no additional specimens collected, the IUCN listed the duke water beetle as extinct in 1994.

However, in 2019, a team of researchers discovered 10 additional specimens of the species in drawers of unsorted diving beetles in historical collections at the Paris Museum. All were checked against Sharp's type specimen under microscope and macro lens, and all carried precise location data—Santo Antônio da Barra (present name Condeúba), a wetland in the southern part of Bahia, Brazil—solving a century-old mystery and finally giving hope that the miniature giant might be rediscovered alive.[180]

Giant Diving Beetles

Inspired by the Duke Water Beetle

Dryads, water nymphs, and other aquatic fey creatures use giant diving beetles as working animals in the same way that mortal creatures use domesticated dogs. These creatures share the amoral capriciousness of their fey masters, but never truly forget their role as the apex hunters of their watery domains.

Domesticated Predators. Diving beetles were bred from generations of wild stock into a panoply of breeds meant to serve different functions in the submarine world of nature spirits. They might hunt game, herd schools of fish, protect pools from intruders, or provide companionship to larger fey. Training a giant beetle is no small task; it takes a firm hand keen insight into the water beetle's mind, and perhaps years of training to prune the beetle's most dangerous instincts.

Status Symbols. If you visit the Feywild in what passes for the early fall in its helter skelter of seasons, you might find gatherings of fey creatures showing off their pet diving beetles in impromptu exhibitions. These events are a riot of color, as giant diving beetle carapaces come in a startling array of patterns and hues depending on their breed. The rules of these beetle shows are virtually indecipherable to outside observers, consisting of a complex and mercurial set of traditions, breed standards, alliances, grudges, fashions, and fads. The fey that rise to the top of this miasma earn the respect and admiration of their peers, which is as good as gold in the Plane of Faerie.

Giant Diving Beetle

Medium Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 22 (4d8 + 4)
Speed 40 ft., fly 20 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	3 (−4)	7 (−2)	3 (−4)

Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities poisoned
Senses blindsight 30 ft., passive Perception 8
Languages —
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Air Supply. The beetle carries enough air to breathe underwater for 10 minutes. If a Small or Tiny creature rides the beetle, that creature can share the beetle's air supply.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw, taking 7 (2d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Reactions

Noxious Cloud. When a creature hits the beetle with a melee attack, the beetle releases a cloud of noxious chemicals. Each creature within 5 feet of the beetle must make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 2 (1d4) poison damage and is poisoned until the end of its next turn.



Levuana Moth

Levuana iridescens
Fijian coconut moth

The Levuana moth nearly destroyed the economy of an entire country before it was stopped by a risky, incredible, improbable plan.

In the 1870's on the Fijian island of Viti Levu, outbreaks of caterpillars damaged the undersides of coconut palm leaves, causing the leaves to fall and the trees to die.[181] The caterpillars started at the tallest trees and worked their way down. For decades, the outbreaks of caterpillars ravaged coconut production on Viti Levu, threatening the native Fijian culture that relied on the coconut and its tree for food, drink, fire, clothing, and other commodities.[182] With no natural predators or parasites, the moth spread slowly but surely for over four decades, eventually reaching islands neighboring Vanau Levu, the main coconut-growing island of Fiji.[183]

As the problem grew more urgent, government entomologists considered a variety of extreme measures to curb the moth pest with exotic biological agents, including the biting green tree ant and insectivorous birds. The final consensus, however, was the Malaysian fly species *Bessa remota*, which laid its eggs inside the larvae of a similar moth (*Artona catoxantha*); the hatchlings would eat their way out, killing the moth larvae in the process. In 1925, the research team painstakingly potted 85 palm trees carrying parasitized larvae into discarded four-gallon kerosene tins, covered them in specially-designed cages, and transported them from Kuala Lumpur to Singapore by train, and then to Viti Levu by boat in a logistically improbable trip that took 26 days and crossed 20 percent of the earth's circumference.[184] The eggs inside hatched during the trip, and the flies were released on Viti Levu. By the end of 1926, the Levuana moth was virtually undetectable anywhere on the island.

Since the 1930s, this singularly effective instance of biological control has often been a point of controversy. It pitted the indigenous Fijian's way of life and the biodiversity the moth represented against each other in a situation where both could not coexist. Whether the moth is endemic to Fiji or came with sandalwood traded from China is no small part of that debate. And despite the moth being declared extinct, unconfirmed sightings occurred well into the 1950s. Scientists continue to argue for a comprehensive campaign to determine the continued presence of the Levuana moth.[185]

Scourge Worm

Inspired by the Levuna Moth

The scourge worm was concocted in the pits of hell to blight every living plant in the multiverse, but its design had a critical flaw: under the right conditions, it metamorphoses into a radiant, benevolent moth.

Metamorphosis. In its larval form, the scourge worm is a dark red, human-sized worm with fiery veins pulsating under its skin. Rows of needle-sharp legs carry it forward on its mission to devour all life, leaving nothing but burnt trenches and smoking ruins in its wake.

When fully metamorphosed, however, the scourge worm becomes a prism moth, a radiant celestial—the opposite of its juvenile form in every way. Where the scourge worm is built for desolation, the prism moth seeks to confront evil and repair its damages, including that which it perpetrated itself as a worm. It is innately benevolent, a beacon of hope to all who see its fluttering, iridescent wings.

Hope's Betrayal. Even among the legions of hell, scourge worms are a matter of contention, as their ruination is difficult to direct and their metamorphoses unpredictable. However, cunning archdevils understand the worm's grander purpose: to exploit the fragile hopes that sustain many mortals. Whenever a band of scourge worms are on a warpath, mortals will always hold out hope that, perhaps, the worm will undergo its celestial metamorphosis—instead, it almost always continues unabated. That it destroys hope, in addition to life, limb, and livelihood, makes it one of hell's finest creations.

Bargaining Chip. The specific trigger for the scourge worm's metamorphosis is a valuable secret, traded amongst high-ranking devils for rumors and favors. Resourceful adventurers might uncover the secret from their peers or time-worn grimoires. Alas, the trick for metamorphosis is simple: cast the *bless* spell and shine a radiant light on the worm.In a technicolor flash, a prism moth emerges.

Scourge Worm

Medium Fiend, Typically Neutral Evil

Armor Class 9
Hit Points 130 (20d8 + 40)
Speed 30 ft., burrow 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	9 (−1)	15 (+2)	2 (−4)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)

Damage Vulnerabilities radiant
Damage Resistances fire
Condition Immunities exhausted, frightened
Senses blindsight 30 ft., tremorsense 60 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages —
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Chitinous Legs. At the start of each of its turns, the worm deals 5 (1d10) piercing damage to any creature it is grappling.

Magic Resistance. The worm has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Metamorphosis. When the worm takes radiant damage from a creature that under the effects of the spell *bless* and doesn't drop to 0 hit points, the worm magically transforms into a **prism moth**.

Tunneler. The worm can burrow through solid rock at half its burrow speed and leaves a 5-foot-diameter tunnel in its wake.

Actions

Multiattack. The scourge worm makes one Bite attack and one Constrict attack.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage and the target must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the target takes 10 (3d6) poison damage and is poisoned for 1 minute. A poisoned target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Constrict. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d10 + 3) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 13). Until this grapple ends, the creature is restrained, and the worm can't grapple another target.

Prism Moth

Medium Celestial, Typically Neutral Good

Armor Class 13
Hit Points 91 (14d8 + 28)
Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (−1)	17 (+3)	15 (+2)	4 (−3)	13 (+1)	17 (+3)

Damage Vulnerabilities fire
Damage Resistances radiant
Condition Immunities blinded, charmed
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages understands Common but can't speak
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Color Burst. Any creature that hits the moth with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it takes 5 (1d10) radiant damage.

Iridescent Shell. While the prism moth is in bright or dim light, ranged attack rolls against it have disadvantage.

Actions

Multiattack. The prism moth makes one Bite attack and one Wings attack.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

Wings. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) bludgeoning damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Prismatic Flash (Recharge 5–6). The prism moth emits a wide ray of multi-colored light from its wings. Each creature in a 30-foot cone must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the creature takes 22 (4d10) radiant damage and is blinded. On a successful save, the creature takes half as much damage and isn't blinded. A blinded creature can repeat this saving throw at the end of its turn, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Reactions

Limited Spell Reflection. When the prism moth would take force, lightning, or radiant damage from a spell or other magical effect, it can choose to take no damage and force a random creature within 15 feet of it to take the damage instead.

Rocky Mountain Locust

Melanoplus spretus

The Rocky Mountain locust swarmed into a plague of biblical proportions that nearly halted westward expansion by American settlers.

Settlers on what are now the American Great Plains states east of Colorado and west of the Mississippi had just weathered the unusually hard winter of 1873 and dry early summer of 1874. These were lean, desperate times for the settlers, but ideal conditions for the larvae of *Melanoplus spretus* to become the Rocky Mountain locust. In late June, instead of rain, the summer brought an estimated 15 trillion locusts out of the mountains, a blizzard of glinting wings. The swarm infested an estimated 2 million square miles, landing in piles up to a foot deep and sometimes breaking the limbs of trees they covered And then they started eating.

They ate the kernels off the wheat and left the stems standing in the field. They ate the corn down to the ground as if a lawn mower had passed through. They ate the peaches from the trees and left the pits to dangle. They ate the green of the onions, then burrowed down and ate the bulb to its roots. They ate whole watermelon patches clean. They ate tobacco, barley, strawberries, potatoes, and beans, every blade of grass and every leaf from the trees. And when there was no food left to eat, they kept eating.

They shredded curtains and clothing. They ate the leather harnesses off the horses. They ate the wool off the sheeps' backs. They scoured the handles of pitchforks, eating the salt from farmer's sweat that had soaked into the wood. They ate the paint off the houses. They ate, in the words of one frontier farmer, "everything but the mortgage."

A desperate array of low-tech and high-tech solutions were deployed against the locusts—blankets and tarps, fires, trenches, even a horse-drawn "hopperdozer" and suction device—but all were ultimately overwhelmed by sheer numbers. The plague of 1874 caused an estimated $200 million in crop damage alone; only one affected family in ten had enough food to survive the winter. The flow of west-bound emigrants fell by as much as 20 percent, and Kansas alone lost a third of its population as settlers returned east. Many who stayed died of starvation.

Federal and state governments responded with large-scale relief efforts, providing rations and supplies to homesteaders who had lost their crops. In the spring, many states paid bounties for locusts by the bushel. Nebraska required every able-bodied man between the ages of 16 and 60 to work at

Plague of Locusts

Gargantuan Swarm of Tiny Beasts, Typically Chaotic Evil

Armor Class 12 (natural armor)
Hit Points 253 (22d20 + 22)
Speed 20 ft., burrow 10 ft., fly 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
3 (−4)	18 (+4)	13 (+1)	1 (−5)	7 (−2)	1 (−5)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, slashing
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained, stunned
Senses blindsight 10 ft., passive Perception 8
Languages —
Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Deafening Wings. The space the swarm occupies is difficult terrain and heavily obscured. Any creature within this space is deafened.

Recurring Nightmare. Once each year, if the swarm spends at least 24 hours in the same location, it lays eggs that will hatch into a new **plague of locusts** in a year and day. It takes 30 days of work, a *wish* spell, or similar magic to remove these eggs completely.

Storm of Wings. The swarm is always at the center of a cloud of locusts 50 miles in diameter. Within that area, no crops can grow, Large or larger vehicles move at half speed, Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing have disadvantage, and ranged attack rolls have disadvantage.

Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Tiny insect. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

Actions

Multiattack. The swarm makes three Bites attacks.

Bites. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 0 ft., one target in the swarm's space. *Hit:* 22 (4d8 + 4) piercing damage, or 13 (2d8 + 4) if the swarm has half its hit points or fewer.

Truth in Fiction

Unlike many other creatures presented in this book, a swarm of Rocky Mountain locusts doesn't need a magical reimagining to be match for adventuring parties. It is already a plague of biblical proportions that the game's rules can barely contain.

GRASSHOPPERS AND LOCUSTS

Grasshopper larvae have two distinct adult phases: the solitary, sedentary grasshopper, and the swarming, migratory locust. The locust phase only appears under specific weather, population, and environmental conditions, like those experienced in 1874. Locusts are smaller than grasshoppers with longer wings, better suited to long-distance flights.

least two days eliminating locusts at hatching time or face a $10 fine. A late frost helped control the locust numbers in 1875, and, though occasional infestations occurred over the coming decades, the locusts seemed to disappear as mysteriously as they had come. The last known individuals were collected in 1902. The leading theory by Jeffery Lockwood suggests that after "mast" migrations like these, Rocky Mountain locusts retreated to valleys in Montana and Wyoming to replenish their numbers; when these valleys were claimed by the vast anthropological and ecological reshaping that accompanied westward expansion, the locust were eliminated, despite our best efforts, by accident.[186]

Saint Helena Earwig

Labidura herculeana
St. Helena giant earwig

In the understory of a pirate cove, a battle for supremacy took place on a miniature scale as a native apex predator was usurped by invaders from across the sea.

With large cerci at the ends of their long, flat bodies, earwigs are instantly recognizable. These paired appendages serve a variety of purposes for arthropods, including sensory organs as in crickets. For earwigs, the cerci are pinching weapons used to battle for dominance with other males or, by the few omnivorous and predatory species, to capture prey.[187] The world's largest earwig, *Labidura herculeana*, was discovered on Saint Helena, a remote, volcanic island covering just 47 square miles of the south Atlantic.

Saint Helena has a long history of piracy. Portuguese, British, and Dutch sailors on trading voyages to the Indian Ocean in the sixteenth century used the island to rest and resupply; in fact, Portuguese sailors who fell ill often stayed on the island to recover before being picked up by the next fleet headed home.[188] As the island became an important stop for merchants on the Cape Route from Europe to Asia, it became an equally important part of the parallel route called the Pirate Round. After St. Helena's discovery by famous British pirate Sir Francis Drake in the late sixteenth century, English warships began to harass Portuguese ships near the island, and Dutch pirates raided Portuguese settlements there.[189] Britain established a colony in 1659, fortifying the island and forcing other nations to rely on colonies elsewhere like the Dutch port at the Cape of Good Hope. British explorer James Cook visited the island in 1775 on his second voyage; his third would bring him to the Big Island of Hawaii and contribute to the extinction of the Hawai'i 'ō'ō. Saint Helena has been inhabited by humans ever since, with a resident population of over 4,400 people at the 2021 census.[190]

Beneath the feet of settlers, merchants, and pirates alike, the St. Helena giant earwig lived and grew to enormous size for its kind. On average, adult male earwigs of this species were 1.4 to 2.1 inches long; the largest specimen collected had a total length of more than 3 inches.[191] This may be a case of island gigantism, like the dodo. First discovered in 1789, these massive insects lived on Prosperous Bay Plain, a key biodiversity area on the northeast part of the island, where they lived under flat stones and near burrows in the loose soil used as escape routes.[192]

Little attention was paid to Saint Helena's native life over the first few centuries of its habitation. Soil erosion, habitat degradation, and introduced predators contributed to a massive decline in the island's biodiversity. The giant earwig was recorded again in 1962 and live specimens were captured in 1967, but the earwig hasn't been sighted since. The IUCN declared the species extinct in 2014, citing that its habitat "has been degraded ... by the removal of nearly all surface stones, under which specimens were then found, for construction purposes".[193] Given that the island is underserved by scientific review and there are no records from before the first wave of habitat destruction in the 17–18th centuries, the giant earwig is echoed by some 47 other probable extinctions among St. Helena invertebrates; if these extinctions were confirmed, then the number of insect extinctions from St. Helena would increase the known global insect extinctions by more than 25 percent.[194]

The St. Helena government has designated Prosperous Bay a national park and nature reserve.[195] A conservation plan for invertebrates on the island is in place as of 2016.[196]

Ashen Hulk

Inspired by the Saint Helena Earwig

Kin to the subterranean, insectoid umber hulk, the ashen hulk dwells in volcanic lava tubes and uses a pair of titanic pincers to prey on anything that draws near.

Obsidian Burrowers. Ashen hulks dwell among the igneous rocks of dormant or active volcanoes, utilizing natural caves and lava tubes to lie in wait and ambush prey. With colossal pincers mounted on their abdomens, an ashen hulk approaches rear-first to immobilize its prey, and uses its surprisingly flexible abdomen to position its mandibles for a killing blow.

Beyond its sheer size, the ashen hulk leverages a glassy carapace of obsidian to shield it from attack. Though this material is extraordinarily hard, it is also brittle, and shatters under enough force.

Ashen Hulk

Large Monstrosity, Typically Neutral Evil

Armor Class 20 (natural armor)
Hit Points 114 (12d10 + 48)
Speed 30 ft., burrow 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	13 (+1)	19 (+4)	6 (−2)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)

Damage Immunities fire
Senses darkvision 120 ft., tremorsense 60 ft., passive Perception 12
Languages —
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Obsidian Shell. The first time the ashen hulk takes 10 or more damage from a single attack, its AC decreases by 3. This reduction lasts until the ashen hulk finishes a short or long rest.

Siege Monster. The ashen hulk deals double damage to objects and structures.

Tunneler. The ashen hulk can burrow through solid rock at half its burrow speed and leaves a 5 foot-wide, 8-foot-high tunnel in its wake.

Actions

Multiattack. The ashen hulk makes one Mandibles attack and one Pincers attack.

Mandibles. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (2d10 + 5) piercing damage.

Pincers. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) piercing damage and the target is grappled (escape DC 16). Until this grapple ends, the ashen hulk can't use its Pincers. At the start of each of the grappled creature's turns, it takes 9 (2d8) piercing damage.



Monstrosities of Burden. A few tribes of foul, subterranean troglodytes have captured and trained ashen hulks to burrow underground passages for their raids. When sufficiently motivated, an ashen hulk can bore into the foundations of dwarven mountains or through the walls of drow cities, opening them up for assault. Naturally, the ashen hulk itself is the vanguard of such attacks, bearing its pincers to meet the first line of defense.

Xerces Blue

Glaucopsyche xerces

The California Gold Rush, 1848 to 1855, brought some 300,000 people from all over the world, each hoping to recreate the sudden discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill and strike it rich. Among them was a Frenchman named Pierre Lorquin, who had no luck finding gold, but instead found 13 new-to-science species of butterfly on the sand dunes west of San Francisco.[197] Described in 1852 by Lorqiun's friend Jean Alphonse Boisduval, a naturalist at the Museo de Pari, one of Lorquin's specimens was named after the Persian king who fought the Spartans at Thermopylae: the Xerces blue.[198]

The entire life cycle of Xerces blues was a song in harmony with its ecosystem. Like many other butterflies, Xerces blues laid their eggs on specific host plants that would feed the larvae on hatching; in this case, legumes in the *Lotus* and *Lupinus* families like bird's-foot trefoil and deerweed.[199] Once hatched, the larvae were tended by local ant species who fed harmlessly on a sugary substance secreted by the larvae in exchange for protecting them from predators and parasites.[200] Adult butterflies were on the wing from March to April each year, a period known as their flight.[201] They would range from Twin Peaks to North Beach and from the Presidio national park south to Lake Merced, a strip of dune-covered coast protected by the chill Pacific ocean fog.[202] Male Xerces blues had brilliant wings the color of sky, and the females were a rusty brown; both had a scintillating pattern of white spots on the underside of their wings.

As San Francisco's population boomed, the Xerces blue's dune-covered coastal range gradually became the Sunset District of the city and the Golden Gate Recreational Area. Eucalyptus and Monterey pines were planted to form windbreaks and stabilize the dunes, replacing the *Lotus* and *Lupinus* plants.[203] Introduced Argentine ants, now the most common species in the county, replaced the native ant species that tended the larvae.[204] Finally, city lots began to replace the dunes themselves, until the Xerces blue became one of the first American insects to go extinct due to urban development. The last specimen was collected in the Presidio near Lobos Creek in 1941 by entomology professor Harry Lange. Returning to the spot some 50 years later, Lange remembered, "There were no real surveys of the Xerces at the time, and we had no idea it was close to extinction. I always thought there would be more. I was wrong."[205]

COURTS OF FAERIE

Fey society is organized into networks of shifting alliances and grudges known as fey courts, which are headed by their most powerful members, archfey. No one can accurately say how many fey courts exist, but the following four are the most important to creatures in this book.

Emerald Court. Led by an ancient treant named Raraebol Otrium, the Emerald Court safeguards the Feywild's forests from corruption. Nymphs, blue shepherds, and other fey attuned to the land count themselves among the ranks of the Emerald Court.

Grimm Court. Named for the enigmatic archfey Sister Grimm, the Grimm Court finds grand importance in manipulating the fates of mortals, whether for their own amusement or as self-styled guidance. Such fey follow their own inscrutable codes, delivering ethical lessons to inferior humanoids through curses and poetic punishments with little tact or equity.

Lark's Court. Pranksters and tricksters, the fey of the Lark's Court have raised practical jokes to an artform. Nothing is off the table for their pranks, including kidnapping, robbery, permanent disfigurement, and even murder, if the punchline is good enough. Kawauso are members in good standing of this court, following the example of its capricious, shapeshifting archfey Bluetongue.

Rose Court. United by their sense of charity, fey of the Rose Court do everything in their power to help others, providing shelters and safe havens for fey creatures in the Material Plane and for humanoids lost in the Feywild. The court's internal rules and priorities are set by a group of senior archfey known as the Council of Seven Thorns. One such archfey, Aoibie the Shining Princess, is responsible for awakening the trio of avian enforcers known as the Rose Court Wrens.

The Xerces blue's name is now borne by the Xerces Society, one of the most prominent invertebrate conservation organizations in the world. A de-extinction project for the Xerces blue is underway using CRISPR technology and genetically similar butterflies like the silvery blue. The project has yet to find a suitable donor, or to accomplish "germline editing" to make changes heritable by the next generation. However, scientists agree the project still has value by drawing attention and energy to conservation efforts, such as migration corridors for extant species like the green hairstreak.[206]



Blue Shepherd Sprite

Tiny Fey, Typically Neutral Good

Armor Class 15 (leather armor)
Hit Points 12 (5d4)
Speed 10 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
3 (−4)	18 (+4)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +8
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages Common, Elvish, Sylvan
Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Beast Speech. The blue shepherd can understand the noises and motions of animals as if they were speech, and its speech can be understood by animals.

Actions

Staff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 slashing damage.

Shortbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 40/160 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned for 1 minute. If its saving throw result is 5 or lower, the poisoned target falls unconscious for the same duration, or until it takes damage or another creature takes an action to shake it awake.

Summon Swarm (Recharge 6). The sprite calls a **swarm of insects** from the land surrounding it. The swarm appears in an unoccupied space within 15 feet of the sprite. The blue shepherd can use a bonus action on subsequent turns to give simple commands to the swarm, such as "Attack that creature" or "fetch that object," which the swarm follows to the best of its ability. The swarm lasts until it is reduced to 0 hit points or until the blue shepherd uses an action to dispel it.

Invisibility. The blue shepherd magically turns invisible until it attacks or casts a spell, or until its concentration ends (as if concentrating on a spell). Any equipment the shepherd wears or carries is invisible with it.

Blue Shepherd Sprite

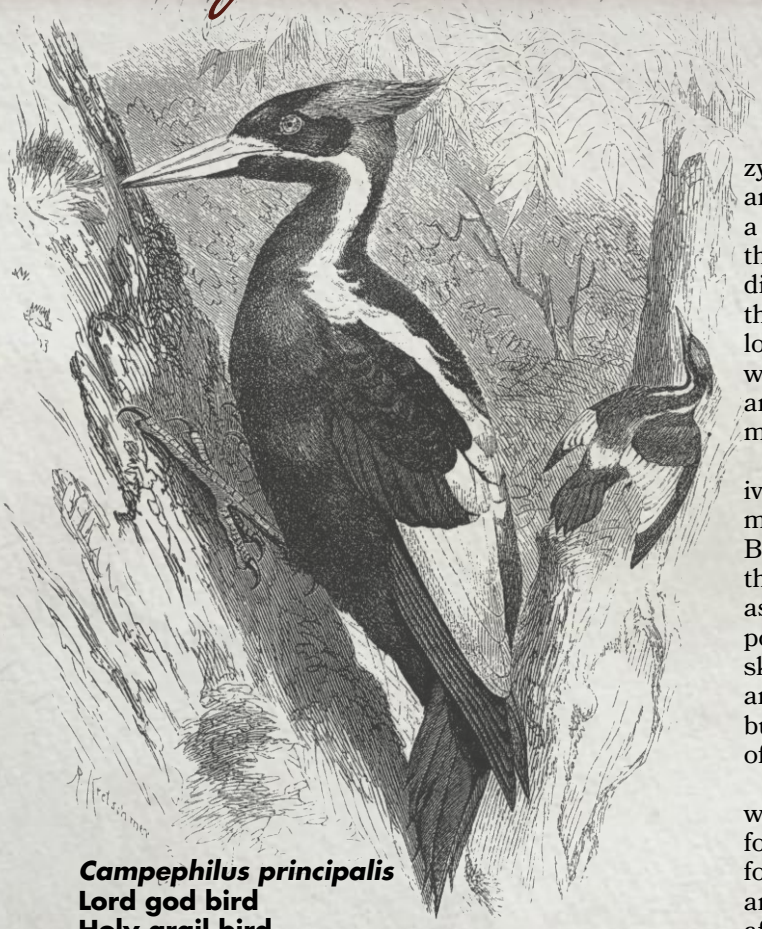
Inspired by the Xerces Blue

Even insects need a caretaker, and the blue shepherd sprite is one of the few fey creatures who recognize the value in that calling. Blue shepherds divide the world neatly into two camps: creatures larger than themselves are "thuds," and every thud is an idiot; whereas creatures smaller than themselves are a vulnerable flock, deserving of protection.

Pastoral Protectors. Blue shepherd sprites hold dominion over sandy strips of land—their pastures—which they will protect with typical fey guile and cunning. If an intruder enters a blue shepherd's pasture, a beast will report it to the shepherd, who will respond in kind. Sometimes, the shepherd needs only to issue a warning or play a trick on the intruder, but when pressed, it can call uncountable insect allies to its aid. To humanoids, the shepherds' bestial allies, knowledge of their pastures, and ability to disappear at will makes them seem omniscient—gods that rule over fractions of an acre. The shepherds relish this characterization, and take every opportunity to cultivate it.

Translator of Beasts. The blue shepherd's ability to communicate directly with animals makes them valued allies for rangers and druids. However, a blue shepherd will agree to serve as translator only if it can be convinced that no harm will come to the animals involved, or to its personal domain. In such a role, a blue shepherd can negotiate with beasts as small as a housefly or as large as a wooly mammoth, not to mention other fey creatures.

Ivory-Billed Woodpecker



Campephilus principalis
Lord god bird
Holy grail bird
***Tit-ka* (Seminole)**

The ivory-billed woodpecker is an iconic bird of the American south, an object of devotion not unlike the questing beast of Arthurian legend.

On October 18, 1820, John James Audubon began his journey down the Ohio River to paint all the birds of America in their natural habitats. Four months later, his quest brought him to the junction of the Arkansas and Mississippi rivers, where he slogged through the old-growth pine and cypress swamps of the American south to shoot his first ivory-bill.[207]

It would have been a magnificent specimen. Male ivory-bills had a wingspan of nearly three feet across and a body 21 inches long—so large that you might be likely to exclaim, as many witnesses did in the 19th century, "Lord God, what a bird!" Females had a stark black-and-white coloration, to which the males added the distinctive red triangular crest at the back of their head. It had long, strong, zygodactyl talons: two facing front, one facing rear, and another to the side, with which it could exert a tremendous grip on trees. Together with its bill, the woodpecker could bore a nest seven inches in diameter out of a tree trunk. This eponymous bill, though not made of ivory, was around three inches long and made of keratin-covered bone. Unlike most woodpeckers, the ivory-bill's bill was somewhat flat and beveled at the end, resembling a wood chisel more than a thin cone.[208]

Long before Audubon began his quest, the ivory-billed woodpecker had achieved an almost mythic status among Native American warriors. British naturalist Mark Catesby reported seeing these warriors with headdresses of the bird's skulls, as the warriors hoped they would inherit the bird's power to drill holes through their enemies. The skulls of ivory-billed woodpeckers were far-reaching and valuable trade goods, selling for two or three buck skins per bill, and appearing in grave mounds of warriors hundreds of miles away.[209]

Like the passenger pigeon, the ivory-billed woodpecker declined with the old-growth American forests it called home, as European settlers cleared forests for homes and burned timber for fuel on an industrial scale. The beginning of the end came after the Civil War and the Great Chicago fire, as impoverished post-war southerners with forests and labor to sell met demand for lumber from the north. The lumber boom of the 1880s and '90s was on.[210]

By the 1930's, after decades of logging, the ivory-bill was clinging to existence in a single tract of forest along the Tensas River in Louisiana, owned by the Singer Sewing Machine Company. A young doctoral student named James Tanner took up his own quest to save the Singer Tract and the bird it protected. Much of what we know about the ivory-bill comes from his research. When the Singer Company sold logging rights on the tract to the Chicago Mill and Lumber Company in 1938, Tanner outlined a land management plan for the company he hoped would allow logging and the ivory-bill to coexist. His recommendations were ignored, as were the efforts of many others working to save the Singer Tract such as John Baker, president of the Audubon Society, and President Franklin Roosevelt. As logging continued, the last sighting in the Singer Tract was in January 1944.

Ivory-Billed Woodpecker

Small Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 14 (4d6)
Speed 10 ft., climb 10 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	2 (−4)	14 (+2)	7 (−2)

Skills Perception +4
Senses passive Perception 14
Languages —
Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Borer. The woodpecker deals double damage to objects and structures made of wood.

Flyby. The woodpecker doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when it flies out of an enemy's reach.

Actions

Beak. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Birdwatchers and ornithologists continue to search for the bird with unwavering devotion. "It's completely tied up in our sense of what is sacred and our human need to just not let go and to find this thing," said Kieran Suckling, Executive Director of the Center for Biological Diversity. "So it remains the holy grail of ornithology to this day."[211]

On September 29th, 2021, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service declared the ivory-billed woodpecker and 22 other species extinct, proposing to remove their protection under the Endangered Species Act. Of these, only the status of the ivory-billed woodpecker remains hotly contested at the time of writing.

The Questing Bird

Inspired by the Ivory-Billed Woodpecker

Heroes throughout the ages have sought the questing bird in search of fame, fortune, or foresight. Few find the bird, and fewer still return with their coveted answers.

Winged Oracle. Since time immemorial, the gods have entrusted questing birds with their most precious secrets. These celestials act as repositories for divine intelligence—revelations and cosmic insights too grievous for mortal minds. By sealing these secrets away, the gods can hide slivers of knowledge even from one another.

Questing birds are also fonts of divination magic, capable of glimpsing the past, the future, and distant corners of the world at the present. With all this knowledge, they migrate across the planes, perching in the most remote trees and awaiting petitioners that might glean some of their insights.

Quixotic Quests. When adventuring parties meet an impossible conundrum, such as finding the location of a lich's hidden phylactery or finding a shrine buried in a sandswept desert, a questing bird is sure to have the answer. This can prompt a daisy chain of smaller quests: procuring divination magic to seek the questing bird, journeying to the bird's remote nest, and finally proving one's worth to garner the bird's favor.

> I have always imagined, that in the plumage of the beautiful Ivory-billed woodpecker, there is something very closely allied to the style of colouring of the great VANDYKE. The broad extent of its dark glossy body and tail, the large and well-defined white markings of its wings, neck, and bill, relieved by the rich carmine of the pendent crest of the male, and the brilliant yellow of its eye, have never failed to remind me of some of the boldest and noblest productions of that inimitable artist's pencil.
>
> —John James Audubon[212]



Many seekers become obsessed with finding the bird, lured by the promise of catharsis or even the fame of having found the legendary bird at all. However, the bird perceives slices of the future, and might choose to endlessly evade a petitioner if it finds them unworthy. Others still are magically compelled by a deity to seek the bird and thereby prove themselves worthy of a divine revelation—such a quest is sometimes a curse to wander the world forever in search of an answer. It's no wonder that so many heroes spend their lives and go their graves seeking the legendary questing bird.

Questing Bird

Small Celestial, Typically Lawful Good

Armor Class 15
Hit Points 99 (18d8 + 18)
Speed 15 ft., fly 90 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	20 (+5)	13 (+1)	18 (+4)	21 (+5)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Dex +8, Wis +8, Cha +7
Skills History +7, Insight +8, Religion +7
Damage Resistances radiant; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened
Senses passive Perception 15
Languages all
Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Elusive. The bird has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide and avoid being tracked.

Flyby. The bird doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when it flies out of an enemy's reach.

Portent. Whenever the bird is hit by an attack, roll a d6. On a 6, the attack misses, regardless of roll.

Actions

Multiattack. The questing bird makes two Beak attacks and one attack with its Talons.

Beak. Melee Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 10 (1d10 + 5) piercing damage plus 4 (1d8) radiant damage.

Talons. Melee Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (1d6 + 5) slashing damage.

Spellcasting. The questing bird casts one of the following spells, using Wisdom as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 16):

At will: *augury*, *detect evil and good*, *detect thoughts*, *sending*, *zone of truth*
1/day: *divination*, *find the path*, *legend lore*, *locate creature*, *locate object*

Jamaican Poorwill

Siphonorhis americana
Jamaica least pauraqué

The Jamaican poorwill was nine and a half inches long, nocturnal, and camouflaged for the forest floor of its island home. The bird was so perfectly able to escape detection that modern science hasn't formally recorded its call, diet, or breeding habits. Were it not for four specimens taken in Jamaica in the mid-1800s, the last of which was taken near Linstead, St. Thomas-in-the-Vale in November 1860, the Jamaican poorwill would be forgotten to time. As a ground-dwelling bird, it would have been particularly vulnerable to introduced predators like rats and mongooses.

Jamaican Poorwill

Tiny Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 1 (1d4 – 1)
Speed 5 ft., fly 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
2 (–4)	15 (+2)	8 (–1)	2 (–4)	12 (+1)	5 (–3)

Skills Stealth +4
Senses darkvision 30 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages —
Challenge 0 (10 XP)

False Appearance. If the poorwill is motionless at the start of combat, it has advantage on its initiative roll. Moreover, if a creature hasn't observed the poorwill move or act, that creature must succeed on a DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check to discern that the poorwill isn't a part of its background.

Frogmouth. The poorwill has advantage on attack rolls against Tiny creatures.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +0 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 piercing damage.

Almost everything known about the Jamaican poorwill is inferred from knowledge of other nightjars. Many nightjars, like the whippoorwill and poor-me-one, are named for their call; this may be why the Jamaican poorwill is also called the "pauraqué." The most striking feature of this family of birds is their wide, gaping mouth, which granted them an advantage in hunting airborne insects and allowed them to take larger game than usual. The American nightjar chuck-will's-widow (*Antrostomus carolinensis*), despite being only 12 inches long, has been found with the remains of both hummingbirds and sparrows in its stomach. The family's scientific name comes from an old superstition, likely born of their gaping mouths and nocturnal habits, that they subsisted by milking goats: *Caprimulgidae*, Latin for "goatsucker."

Nightjar

Inspired by the Jamaican Poorwill

Laying in wait half-buried in the ground at crossroads and leylines, nightjars are extraplanar predators that draw their victims into the Ethereal Plane's misty embrace.

Lures in the Dark. Nightjars sleep during the day, relying on their camouflage to conceal themselves, and at night, they call to prey with a beautiful, irresistible song. The song rarely sounds the same to any two people; survivors might warn others not to approach the musical sound of "*whip poor will,*" "*chip fell out a white oak,*" or "*twixt-hell-and-white oak*."

Living Traps. Victims of a nightjar's bite find themselves in the misty gray of the Ethereal Plane, the realm where nothing begins or ends. Spellcasters that have mastered interplanar travel might return from a nightjar's bite, if they survive the initial trauma. All others, however, are simply trapped in limbo until the emptiness of the Ethereal Plane drains their life or the nightjar decides to regurgitate its meal.





Nightjar

Medium Monstrosity, Typically Chaotic Evil

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 136 (21d8 + 41)
Speed 10 ft., fly 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	7 (−2)	15 (+2)	6 (−2)	13 (+1)	21 (+5)

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +1
Senses darkvision 30 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages —
Challenge 5 (2,300 XP)

False Appearance. If the nightjar is motionless at the start of combat, it has advantage on its initiative roll. Moreover, if a creature hasn't observed the poorwill move or act, that creature must succeed on a DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check to discern that the nightjar isn't a part of the floor.

Actions

Dimensional Swallow. The nightjar opens a portal to the Ethereal Plane in its mouth. Each creature within 5 feet of the nightjar must succeed on a DC 16 Strength saving throw or be drawn into the Ethereal Plane. At the start of each of its turns, a creature on the Ethereal Plane takes 18 (4d8) force damage. A creature on the Ethereal Plane can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, returning to the space it left or the nearest unoccupied space on a success.

A creature on the Ethereal Plane can only affect and be affected by other creatures on the Ethereal Plane. Creatures that aren't there can't perceive or interact with it, unless they have the ability to do so.

Habitat, Language, and Memory

Like ghosts who linger only until no living person remembers their name, extinct species disappear first from their habitats, then from language, then from memory altogether. The Japanese river otter is like such a ghost watching its memory die.

A team of Japanese researchers looked at 135 years of otter-related newspaper articles in Japan and found the otter's disappearance from public discourse took place in five distinct phases: "1) familiar animal in the Meiji era, 2) economic value in the Taisho era, 3) no interest in war time, 4) needing protection during the high economic growth period, 5) symbolic value after its extinction." This process also occurred for other endangered species like the Oriental white stork. "Local people were indifferent to the otter in the 1960s when effective conservation measures for wild populations had to be taken," the team concluded. "Moreover, recent decrease of the otter-related news indicates that conservation actions including re-introduction are necessary before the otter totally fades out from the memory of people."

After these five phases of disappearance, the otter disappears from language itself. In 2007, the word "otter" was cut from the Oxford Junior Dictionary, along with more than 30 other nature words like "dandelion" and "beaver." In their place are definitions of digital and electronic terms like "MP3 player," "blog" and "cut and paste." Oxford University Press said its selections were based on the "language children will commonly come across at home and at school." However, the decision sparked outrage from naturalists and authors like Margaret Atwood who claim it deliberately disconnects childhood from nature to the detriment of society, culture, and the environment.

With no one to speak its name the otter passes out of memory altogether. Once that happens, there will be no one to protect animals like it. As noted Washington naturalist Robert Pyle said in 2011, "What is the extinction of a condor to a child who has never seen a wren?"[213]

Japanese River Otter

Lutra nippon
Lutra lutra whiteleyi
***Nihon-kawauso* (Japanese)**

The otter is perhaps the most charming creature on land or water. They are energetic, playful, and vocal, so it's no small wonder they have been mythologized for centuries.

The islands of Japan were a land of wetlands, marshes, and bogs—"the country of many dragonflies and rich reed beds." In this ideal environment, Japanese river otters thrived for centuries in such great numbers that no one thought to count them.[214] So ubiquitous were these otters that they were immortalized as *yokai*, a type of creature in Japanese folklore that includes the turtle-shelled *kappa* and the nine-tailed *kitsune* fox. Stories about the otters imagined them as a river-dwelling spirit called a *kawauso*. Whereas kitsune plied their puckish trade in the forests, the kawauso dwelled in shallow waters near the shore to fool boatmen and fishermen.

The decline of the Japanese river otter began in the 1900s as industrial pollution raised the acidity of rivers and decreased fish populations, overfishing led to otters being trapped and killed in nets, and military demand for their waterproof pelts created unsustainable hunting practices.[215] The last Japanese river otter sighting occurred in 1979. Despite several searches in the intervening decades, the Japanese Ministry of the Environment declared the species extinct in 2012.[216]

Japan's otters were so similar to the Eurasion otter (*Lutra lutra*), they were originally considered a subspecies; they were re-classified on the basis of genetic analysis in the 1990s, using samples taken from stuffed specimens in museum collections.[217]

Kawauso

Inspired by the Japanese River Otter

When an otter lives an exceptionally long life, it may become a kawauso, a shape-changing creature with an impish sense of humor. Kawauso wait by rivers in the form of beautiful young women in straw hats to play tricks on passing sailors and fishermen. Most are satisfied with a good prank, and can even be hospitable to those who play along and put on a good show. Others, however, entertain carnivorous urges to drag foolish fishermen to a watery grave and devour them.

River Otter

Tiny Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 13
Hit Points 1 (1d4 − 1)
Speed 25 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
3 (−4)	14 (+2)	8 (−1)	2 (−4)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)

Skills Acrobatics +4, Perception +3, Survival +3
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages —
Challenge 0 (10 XP)

Hold Breath. The otter can hold its breath for 8 minutes.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 piercing damage.

Innate Illusionists. Kawauso can change the appearance of their surroundings or summon illusory creatures to trick the unwary. Their favorite pranks include convincing passersby to sumo wrestle rock or trees, directing riverboats down small waterfalls, and drawing men into trackless marshes on the promise of a romantic tryst. If their deception is discovered, they cast illusions to flee until another suitable mark arrives.

Social Creatures. Like the otters from which they sprang, kawauso are social creatures, living in small family groups of two to five individuals. They are usually quite loyal to one another, so that a good turn done to one kawauso may curry favor with the whole family.





Kawauso

Medium Fey, Typically Chaotic Neutral

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)
Hit Points 72 (16d8)
Speed 30 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (−1)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Int +4, Cha +5
Skills Deception +5, Perception +2, Performance +5
Senses passive Perception 12
Languages Common, Sylvan
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Hold Breath. The kawauso can hold its breath for 10 minutes.

Magic Resistance. The kawauso has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Mimicry. The kawauso can mimic any sounds it has heard, including voices. A creature that hears the sounds can tell they are imitations with a successful DC 13 Wisdom (Insight) check.

Actions

Bite (Otter or Fey Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

Claw (Otter or Fey Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) slashing damage.

Dagger (Humanoid or Fey Form Only). *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Spellcasting. The kawauso casts one of the following spells, using Charisma as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 13):

At will: *minor illusion*
3/day each: *blur*, *silent image*
1/day each: *hallucinatory terrain*, *mislead*

Bonus Actions

Change Shape. The kawauso transforms into a Humanoid, an otter, or back into its true Fey form. Its game statistics, other than its size, are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

Japanese Wolf

Canis lupus hodophilax
Honshū wolf
***Yamainu* (Japanese)**

Humanity's relationship to wolves is inextricably linked to our attitudes toward wildness itself. In Japan, this attitude turned from reverence for a benign god to hatred for a demon in the historical blink of an eye.

The islands were home to a number of canids, but the one most commonly called the Japanese wolf stood just 22 inches high at the shoulder, nowhere near the size of today's more well-known wolf species.[218] Like the Tasmanian tiger, understanding the Japanese wolf is complicated by understanding the many names it carried and the many creatures to which those names were applied. A single, consistent name for Japan's subspecies of wolves is a surprisingly recent construct. Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Japanese names, rooted in holistic Confucian philosophy, took into account ecological, social, cosmological, and even fantastical roles when describing wolves (*ōkami*), sick wolves (*byōrō*), mountain dogs (*yamainu*), honorable dogs (*oinu*), big dogs (*ōinu*), wild dogs (*yaken*), bad dogs (*akuken*), village dogs (*sato inu*), domesticated dogs (*kai inu*), and hunting dogs (*kari inu*).[219] Linnaean taxonomy for the Japanese wolf is still contested, but based on the work of Conraed Temminck in 1839 is commonly sorted into *Canis lupus hodophilax* (the Honshū wolf) and *Canis lupus hattai* (the Hokkaido wolf).[220]

The Japanese names encompassed religion and folklore that pictured the Japanese wolf as a divine benefactor. Shinto called it *Ōguchi no Magami*, the Large-Mouthed Pure God who guarded the dangerously sacred places beyond the walls of Japan's palaces and its recently civilized capital.[221] The Ainu, indigenous people of Japan, called it the Howling God for its voice.[222] Tradition holds that the legendary Prince Yamato Takeru, lost in the mountain passes of the Karisaka, was rescued and guided to safety by a white wolf; in turn, the prince built the Shinto shrine Mitsumine Jinga to honor the wolf.[223] Stories of such a benign watchdog who kept the inherent dangers of the mountain at bay called it *okuri inu* or *okuri ōkami*, and gave specific if conflicting instructions for how to honor the wolf for its help, on pain of its violent displeasure.[224] Even the Linnaean name for the wolf, *hodophilax*, is derived from Greek words for "guardian of the way."

This reverent attitude toward wolves was tested in the 1730s as wolves began going mad. Wolf attacks suddenly became more violent and deadlier than they had ever been; one victim was bitten 48 times in a single, berserk attack.[225] The cause was a novel disease that scholar Noro Genjō called *kyōkenbyō* in 1736—more commonly known as rabies.[226] The rabies virus impairs neural function in its victims, frequently leading to intense delirium and violence. It must have seemed as though *okuri ōkami* had become a demon after all.

Persecution of wolves was elevated to government policy during the period of Japanese history called the Meiji Restoration. After two hundred and fifty years of samurai rule, the Satchō alliance replaced the shogunate with the new, centralized Meiji government in 1868. In 1873, the government appointed an Ohio rancher named Edwin Dun to oversee the establishment of a modern livestock industry. Dun enforced the killing of wolves with institutionalized bounties for wolf pelts and the indiscriminate, harmful practice Dun had learned in the American Midwest of lacing bait corpses with strychnine.[227] For centuries, Japanese farmers had prayed to the wolf to protect their crops from deer, hares, and the annual incursion of wild boar.[228] Suddenly, they saw the wolf as a threat to their livestock, just as American farmers had.

The last credible record of a wild Japanese wolf was a male killed near Washikaguchi, in the Honshū prefecture, in 1905.[229] With his death, the Howling God went silent forever.

Japanese Wolf
Small Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 9 (2d6 + 2)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	3 (−4)	13 (+1)	8 (−1)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +4
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages —
Challenge 1/4 (25 XP)

Keen Hearing and Smell. The wolf has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

Pack Tactics. The wolf has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the wolf's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (2d4 + 2) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 11 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.



Okuri-Ōkami

Medium Celestial, Typically Lawful Neutral

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 90 (12d8 + 36)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	19 (+4)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	19 (+4)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Wis +6, Cha +4
Skills Perception +6, Stealth +6, Survival +6
Damage Resistances radiant
Condition Immunities charmed, paralyzed, poisoned
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 16
Languages understands all languages but can't speak
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Actions

Multiattack. The okuri-ōkami can use its Mark ability and then makes two attacks.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d4 + 4) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Mark. The okuri-ōkami mystically marks a creature it can see. Until the okuri-ōkami marks another creature, it deals an extra 4 (1d8) damage to the marked creature whenever it hits the creature with an attack. Additionally, other creatures have disadvantage on attack rolls against the marked creature and the okuri-ōkami doesn't provoke opportunity attacks from the marked creature. This effect ends early if the okuri-ōkami can't see the marked creature when it ends its turn.

Bonus Actions

Rampage. When the okuri-ōkami reduces a creature to 0 hit points with a melee attack on its turn, the okuri-ōkami can take a bonus action to move up to half its speed and make a bite attack.

Okuri-Ōkami

Inspired by the Japanese Wolf

Travelers that set out alone down mountainous paths sometimes spot a snow white wolf following them close behind. This is no ordinary wolf, but a mountain spirit known as an okuri-ōkami.

Mountain Watchdog. Remote mountainous terrain can swallow an unwary traveler in an instant. Precipitous drops, winter cold, and prowling monsters such as trolls and wyverns make the okuri-ōkami's domain uniquely dangerous.

However, when the okuri-ōkami stalks lone travelers down mountainous paths, it isn't hunting them, but protecting them along their journey. The wolf guides the traveler back to their destination and ensures no harm comes to them. Then, the spirit simply departs.

Laws of the Spirit. However, the white wolf isn't merely a benign omen. Strict but inscrutable customs guide the okuri-ōkami's conduct. If a traveler means to harm another on the path or disrespects the mountain itself, the wolf strikes in a fury and rips the traveler to shreds. It is said that tripping and falling along the path is enough to enrage the wolf spirit, unless one can deceive the wolf into believing that the fall was intentional. Intruding upon shrines or making too much noise in the presence of an okuri-ōkami is also grounds for provocation.

Lupinclad

Inspired by the Japanese Wolf

Inspired by the general outline of a wolf, if not its grace or agility, lupinclads are constructs of jittering steam-powered pistons and steel that clatter through sacred groves and pristine mountain passes in the name of progress.

March of Progress. Metropolitan arcanists see the whole of nature as a problem to be solved. By their reasoning, great, walled cities exist with such density because of the inherent danger of magical, monster-infested old growth forests. To claim more farmland, more wealth, and a more prosperous citizenry, they developed a tool to rid the world of those pesky sacred groves: lupinclads.

These vaguely wolf-shaped constructs contain mass-produced engines of steam and magic, driven by rudimentary construct cores with basic directives. Commands such as "clear that forest" or "drive out the fairies" do little to disguise their bluntness as an instrument: they rampage, kill, and leave barren land for peasants to farm.

Poisonous Construction. Factories can churn out lupinclads at a remarkable pace, but the industrial process leaves industrial byproducts. The blood of a lupinclad (if it can be called that) is profoundly toxic to all living things, and coats its joints and teeth in a caustic, poisonous slime. Even when a pack of lupinclads is successful in exterminating a glade of treants or driving out an enclave of fairies, the forest withers and dies thereafter, leaving barely arable land for their creators to reclaim. The designers might even claim the byproducts are part of the plan, though lethal factories and environmentally-degrading constructs make for a remarkably short-sighted plan.

For all of its downsides, the common folk of some cities have embraced lupinclads as the way of the future. Promises of abundant farmland and riches can easily sway the masses, even moreso when the alternative is a grim, poisonous factory.

Constructed Nature. The lupinclad doesn't require air, food, drink, or sleep.

Lupinclad

Medium Construct, Typically Lawful Evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 26 (4d8 + 8)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)	3 (−4)	12 (+1)	5 (−3)

Condition Immunities frightened, exhaustion, poisoned
Damage Immunities poison
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages understands one language spoken by its creator but can't speak
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Pack Tactics. The lupinclad has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the lupinclad's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Toxic Body. A creature that hits the wolf with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it takes 3 (1d6) poison damage.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (2d4 + 3) piercing damage plus 3 (1d6) poison damage.



Malagasy Hippopotamus

Hippopotamus lemerlei
Malagasy pygmy hippopotamus

The oldest man in the small Madagascar village recalled when a creature the size of a cow wandered into camp. Due to its dark skin, flat feet, and large teeth, the man called it a *kilopilopitsofy* ("floppy ears" in the Malagasy language). It made deep, drawn-out grunts during its curious, snuffling passage through the camp, but escaped into the water when disturbed.[230]

This story from 1976 may describe a living Malagasy hippopotamus, an Ice Age dwarf that persisted long enough into the Holocene to inspire its own cryptid. Paleontologists rarely have the opportunity to consider oral traditions in their work, but radiocarbon dating shows some subfossil animals in Madagascar survived until the time of European contact.[231] It's possible these creatures even persisted into the previous century or longer.

There were two species of hippopotamus native to Madagascar: *Hippopotamus lemerlei* and *H. madagascariensis*. How they ended up on the island is a mystery, although it's possible the determined Nile hippo (*H. amphibius*) may have crossed to the island sometime during the Pleistocene. Madagascar's insular environment lacked predators but had a limited food supply, making a smaller size advantageous for successive generations (a phenomenon known as island dwarfism).[232] Its estimated size was around 840 pounds, a quarter the size of the Nile hippo.[233]

Since the Nile hippo is so similar, the subfossil remains of the Malagasy hippo tell us a lot about what kind of environment Madagascar must have had at the time, such as lowland freshwater estuaries where the hippo would have thrived.[234] Radiocarbon dating indicates that the species went extinct 500 to 1,000 years ago, but we don't know exactly how.[235] It may have been due to massive wildfires on Madagascar, climate change and extensive drought, hypervirulent disease, or overhunting after humans arrived on the island.[236]



Dwarf Hippopotamus

Medium Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 12 (natural armor)
Hit Points 93 (11d8 + 33)
Speed 40 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	2 (−4)	10 (+0)	5 (−3)

Senses passive Perception 10
Languages —
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Hold Breath. The hippopotamus can hold its breath for 5 minutes.

Trampling Charge. If the hippopotamus moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a bite attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the hippopotamus can make one stomp attack against it as a bonus action.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack*: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) piercing damage.

Stomp. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one prone creature. *Hit:* 12 (2d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

Listener

Inspired by the Malagasy Hippopotamus

While most layers of the underworld feature hellfire and lava pits, the underworld's borderlands are dominated by acid swamps, where noxious fumes capture damned souls and pools of acid engulf wayward planar travelers. Quasits and other minor demons patrol these borderlands under the supervision of lieutenants called listeners. These grotesque demons are mostly ears and mouth. When motionless, they resemble nothing so much as a small hill. However, when speaking, they reveal a gaping maw of oversized teeth.

King of the Hill. Listeners love secrets and might be convinced to overlook a potential victim for a scrap of tantalizing gossip. Secrets that concern petty grievances and its personal rivals are especially sumptuous.

Ever contentious, listeners vie with each other for control of larger and larger territories. If a listener thinks a secret it has learned might threaten another listener or a high-ranking demon, it will gossip to its most talkative underlings, spreading the rumor in the most deniable way possible.



Listener

Medium Fiend (Demon), Typically Neutral Evil

Armor Class 12 (natural armorr)
Hit Points 130 (20d8 + 40)
Speed 40 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	9 (−1)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +1
Damage Immunities acid, poison
Condition Immunities poisoned, prone
Senses blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages all
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Echolocation. The listener can't use its blindsight while deafened.

Hear Thoughts. The listener can hear the surface thoughts—what is most on its mind in that moment—of each creature within 60 feet of it. A creature with an Intelligence of 3 or lower or doesn't speak any language is unaffected.

Magic Resistance. The listener has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Keen Hearing. The listener has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing.

Actions

Multiattack. The listener makes two Bite attacks, or it makes one Bite attack and uses Chew.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 9 (1d10 + 4) piercing damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 16) and restrained. The listener can have only one creature grappled at a time.

Chew. The listener makes one Bite attack against a creature it is grappling. If the attack hits, the creature takes an extra 11 (2d10) piercing damage.

New Zealand Laughing Owl

Sceloglaux albifacies
White-faced owl
***Whēkau* (Maori)**

With its short, feeble wings and long, powerful legs, there's little doubt the New Zealand laughing owl spent most of its life at ground level. Standing just over a foot tall, this tenacious bird would force its way as deep as 15 feet into small caves or the fissures in limestone outcrops to nest in a warm, dry place.[237]

No recording exists of the owl's eponymous laugh, but it is described as "a series of dismal shrieks frequently repeated," and "a peculiar laughing cry, uttered with a descending scale of notes."[238] The birds generally only made this cry as they were moving, meaning it was a pretty reliable indicator of approaching rain.[239] .

The owls were also listless in daylight, which gave them the impression of being quite tame. New Zealand-born naturalist Walter Buller recounts one story in which a man traveling down the coast of the country's south island observed the bird beside the road:

> *He dismounted from his horse and caught the bird. Then, selecting a retired nook in the adjoining woods, he drove a thick pole into the ground and secured his captive by the leg, allowing a sufficient length of flax to permit of the Owl moving freely over the ground. On his return by the same road two days later he found that the bird had snapped, or in some way had got disengaged from, the string, and was perched on the top of the pole, permitting itself to be recaptured without the slightest resistance. He took it on with him to Nelson, and, not knowing its value, sold it to the narrator for a few shillings. It now graces the elegant collection in the Nelson Museum.*[240]

Buller also contended the bird had unusual taste in music. He recounted the story of a settler who claimed, "It could always be brought from its lurking place in the rocks, after dusk, by the strains of an accordion. Soon after the music had commenced the bird would silently flit over and face the performer, and finally take up its station in the vicinity, and remain within easy hearing till it had ceased."[241]

The New Zealand laughing owl was the victim of a solution. Hoping they would provide food and sport, European settlers introduced rabbits to New Zealand in the 1830s. These multiplied like—well, like rabbits. By the 1870s, they were such an agricultural pest they threatened to collapse the territory's burgeoning farm economy. Despite objections on behalf of native birds from Buller and naturalists like him, farmers demanded stoats be brought from Britain to control the rabbits. Domestic cats, frequently carried on sailing ships to control rats, joined the fight as well.[242] By the 1880s, the rabbit population had declined, but many of New Zealand's bird's declined along with them. The huia, bush wrens, native thrushes, quails, stitchbirds, saddlebacks, kākāpō, little spotted kiwi, and laughing owl were among the species lost as collateral damage.[243]

The last credible laughing owl specimen was discovered dead in July 1914; its discoverer, one Mrs. Airini Woodhouse, displayed the specimen stuffed under a glass dome in her home.[244]

New Zealand Laughing Owl

Tiny Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 11
Hit Points 1 (1d4 – 1)
Speed 30 ft., burrow 15 ft., fly 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
2 (–4)	13 (+1)	8 (–1)	2 (–4)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)

Skills Perception +3
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages —
Challenge 0 (10 XP)

Keen Hearing and Sight. The owl has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or sight.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 piercing damage.

Laughing Owl

Tiny Monstrosity, Unaligned

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 35 (10d4 + 10)
Speed 30 ft., burrow 15 ft., fly 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
2 (−4)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)	8 (−1)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)

Skills Perception +3, Performance +5, Stealth +4
Condition Immunities frightened
Senses darkvision 30 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages —
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Magic Resistance. The laughing owl has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Actions

Talons. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) slashing damage.

Hideous Laughter. The owl chooses up to three creatures it can see within 60 feet of it. Each target must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, a target takes 7 (2d6) psychic damage and perceives everything as hilariously funny. The creature falls prone and becomes incapacitated and unable to stand until the end of its next turn. A creature that can't hear the owl, is immune to being charmed, or has an Intelligence score of 4 or less isn't affected.

Reactions

Cutting Laughter. When a creature makes an attack roll against the laughing owl, the owl can use its reaction to interrupt the attack with a loud shriek. Roll a d8 and subtract the number rolled from the attack roll.

Laughing Owl

Inspired by the New Zealand Laughing Owl

These adorable, bright-eyed birds possess a mind-affecting laugh that inspires pain, excitement, and lethargy in those who hear it.

Enchanted Laugh. Laughing owls are always giggling to themselves, as if recalling the punchline of a delightful joke. Their namesake laughter is contagious, spreading to anyone who hears it until the listener collapses in a heap of hilarity. But this laughter isn't altogether jovial. The owl's enchantment forces a listener to giggle until their lungs hurt, to cross their eyes, and strain their mind. As quickly as the joke passes, a migraine sets in. Thankfully, a wad of cotton in the ears is enough to block out the owl's cackling.

Birds of Bards. Laughing owls have a particular affinity for music, often gathering around skilled musicians and remaining until their performance is finished. Because of this, and because they naturally dwell in stone caves or crevices, laughing owls can often be found nesting in the walls of bardic colleges. In fact, these birds are so synonymous with bards that a few songs even credit the laughing owl's cackle for inspiring the *vicious mockery* cantrip.



New Zealand Laughing Owl

Northern White Rhinoceros

Ceratotherium simum cottoni
Nile white rhinoceros
Square-lipped rhinoceros

The northern white rhinoceros is a focal point for the most critical questions of the extinction crisis.

Among the hierarchy of land animals, the white rhinoceros is second only to the elephant in sheer weight and power. Its horns are composed of solid keratin, the same material as human hair and fingernails, and grow from a well-buttressed pediment in the skull.[245] The white rhino is one of only five extant species of rhinoceros, and is perhaps the most recognizable, with gray skin and two prominent horns. Instead of a triangular snout and pointed lips for browsing food from low-hanging branches, the white rhino has a square-shaped muzzle for grazing the African savannah.

The white rhino's historical range is separated between two subspecies, with very little overlap. The southern white rhino ranged south of the Zambezi river in Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, and South Africa, whereas the northern white rhino was endemic to a narrow belt of grassland west of the Nile River, comprising parts of Uganda, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Chad, and the Central African Republic.[246] At the time of its description to science in 1903, the northern subspecies was still numerous in this original range.[247]

Despite its power and resilience, the rhino is easily hunted, owing to its slow speed and predictable habits. The white rhino is particularly nonaggressive, approachable in the wild and tractable in captivity.[248] Poaching for meat, hide, and ivory drove the northern white rhino into precipitous decline starting in the 1960s, with civil wars in neighboring Sudan creating well-armed poaching gangs and making it impossible to police rhino habitats. By the turn of the century, the only wild population lived in what is now Garamba National Park in the DRC.[249] As this population dwindled to just 10 individuals in 2005, plans were made to export some of its rhinos to Ol Pejeta Conservancy in Kenya.[250] This translocation could not be completed, and there have been no confirmed sightings of the rhinos in the wild since 2011.[251] In December 2009, Ol Pejeta Conservancy instead began its breeding program with four captive northern white rhinos from the herd at Dvůr Králové Zoo in the Czech Republic: two males, Sudan and Suni, and two females, Nájin and her daughter Fatu.[252] The four rhinos became some of the most famous and well-protected animals in the world, watched by armed guards 24 hours a day. As individuals in Dvur Kralove and the San Diego Zoo Safari Park passed away without producing offspring of their own, the Ol Pejeta rhinos became the only members of their species left in the world. Suni died at the age of 34 in 2014, and Sudan followed in 2018. With his death, the species was declared functionally extinct.

Nevertheless, the campaign to save the northern white rhino persists. Ol Pejeta, Dvůr Králové, and several other organizations have formed the BioRescue consortium, and are developing advanced assisted reproductive technologies to achieve their goal. Although Nájin was retired from the program in 2021 after an in-depth ethical risk assessment, the consortium has successfully collected Fatu's oocytes 10 times and produced 22 viable embryos from her eggs, half of them sired by Suni and the other half sired by Angalifu who lived in the San Diego Zoo.[253] The team is currently working to optimize a transfer protocol to implant the embryos in surrogate southern white rhino (SWR) female recipients, and hopes that Fatu's offspring will form a new northern white rhino population that can step back into their ecological role as keystone grazers in Central Africa.

Rhinoceros

Large Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 11 (natural armor)
Hit Points 45 (6d10 + 12)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	8 (−1)	15 (+2)	2 (−4)	12 (+1)	6 (−2)

Senses passive Perception 11
Languages —
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Charge. If the rhinoceros moves at least 20 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a gore attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 9 (2d8) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Actions

Gore. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) piercing damage.

Ivory Rhinoceros

Large Construct, Chaotic Good

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)
Hit Points 95 (10d10 + 40)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	8 (−1)	19 (+4)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13
Damage Resistances poison, psychic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't adamantine
Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned
Languages Common, telepathy 120 ft.

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP) for a pair of ivory rhinoceri

Concussive Charge. If the rhinoceros moves at least 20 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a gore attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 9 (2d8) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or be stunned and knocked prone.

Dual Creature. Ivory rhinoceri are always encountered in a pair. The rhinoceri are independent and take their own turns in combat, but share a pool of 95 hit points. Both rhinoceri die if this pool is reduced to 0.

Actions

Gore. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

Figurine of Wondrous Power: Ivory Rhinoceri

Inspired by Nájin and Fatu, the final Northern White Rhinoceri

Wondrous item, artifact (requires attunement)

Carved by the artificer Scrimshander from the horns of two magnificent beasts, the intricate craftsmanship of this *figurine of wondrous power* depicts a pair of lifelike rhinoceri standing side-by-side. Legends recall that the rhinoceri animated of their own accord and gored Scrimshander to death as retribution for their creation. Whether the artificer set out to craft a sentient artifact is lost to history; perhaps, the spirits of the animals slain for their horns possessed the rhinoceri of their own accord.



Figurine of Wondrous Power. A *figurine of wondrous power* is a statuette of a beast small enough to fit in a pocket. While attuned to the figurine, if you use an action to speak the command word and throw the figurine to a point on the ground within 60 feet of you, the figurine becomes two **ivory rhinoceri**. If the space where the rhinoceri would appear is occupied by other creatures or objects, or if there isn't enough space for the rhinoceri, the figurine doesn't transform into the rhinoceri.

The rhinoceri are friendly to you and your companions. They understand your languages and obey your spoken commands. If you issue no commands, the rhinoceri defends themselves but takes no other actions.

The ivory rhinoceri exist for 6 hours. At the end of the duration, the rhinoceri revert to their figurine form. They revert to a figurine early if they drop to 0 hit points or if you use an action to speak the command word again while touching one of the rhinoceri. Once the figurine has transformed, it can't do so again until 7 days have passed.

Random Properties. The figurine has the following randomly determined properties:

» 1 major beneficial property
» 1 minor detrimental property

Ivory Aspect. While attuned to the figurine, you can cast each of the following spells using this item without expending a spell slot or material components: *animal friendship*, *barkskin* (self only, with the appearance of ivory and scrimshaw), *commune with nature*, *enhance ability* (Bear's Endurance and Bull's Strength options only), *spirit guardians*, and *warding bond*. Once you cast a spell using this item, you can't cast that spell with it again until the next dawn.

Death Curse of the Endling. If you die while attuned to the figurine as a result of a creature dealing damage to you, that creature must succeed on a DC 25 Wisdom saving throw or be cursed with the *death curse of the endling* (see sidebar).

Sentience. The rhinoceri is a sentient chaotic good item with an Intelligence of 10, a Wisdom of 16, and a Charisma of 12. It has hearing and darkvision out to a range of 120 feet. The rhinoceri can speak and understand Common, and can communicate with creatures within 120 feet telepathically.

Personality. The rhinoceri are a mother and daughter, fiercely protective of one another and quickly enraged by those they deem as hunters. They may transform of their own accord when an animal nearby is slain, and they despise those who wield certain weapons: principally bows, spears, and nets.

The rhinoceri believe that more of their kind might exist in the world, sequestered in some far-off corner of the savannah, and desire to search endlessly for their kin.

Destroying the Figurine. The figurine is nigh-indestructible, garnering at worst superficial scratches from the most destructive forces. However, if the spirits of the extinct rhinoceri trapped within the figurine can be resurrected, the figurine would be left powerless. Doing so is no mean feat, for once a creature is driven extinct, the souls of the dead are forever cut off from the mortal world. The extinction of the ivory rhinoceri sequestered their souls within the figurine, forever trapped between life and death.

If some unprecedented magic—greater even than the *wish* spell—should be discovered to reverse an extinction, the figurine would revert to nonmagical ivory.

DEATH CURSE OF THE ENDLING

Killing the final member of a species—known as an endling—is a crime more terrible than fratricide, regicide, or any other named murder, for it sounds the death knell for an entire species. As such, the gods have crafted a metaphysical punishment for this crime: a death curse.

When a creature kills an endling, it must succeed on a DC 25 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the creature and its first generation of descendents is afflicted with the *death curse of the endling*, which can only be removed via a *wish* spell or divine intervention. A creature afflicted with the death curse fails in most mortal endeavors: it has a −10 penalty to attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws. Moreover, when a creature afflicted with the curse begins dying and is stabilized, it retains its failed death saving throws, which persist until it accumulates three and dies. A cursed creature can't be magically returned to life.

Passenger Pigeon



Ectopistes migratorius
***Woyi* (Cherokee)**
***Jah'gowah*, "big bread" (Seneca)**

There has never been a bird as numerous as the passenger pigeon. At the time of European settlement, passenger pigeons comprised an estimated 25 to 40 percent of North America's bird life.[254] Accounts of passenger pigeon flights suggest they moved in flocks of more than 3 billion individuals, blocking out the sun for days at a time. The largest nesting on record covered 850 square miles of central Wisconsin in 1871.[255] The sheer weight of so many animals was enough to rip limbs from trees and destroy undergrowth, reshaping the landscape like a tornado or a wildfire—made entirely of birds.

Passenger pigeons took advantage of "mast fruiting" of beech and oak trees, using the eyes of billions of birds to determine which of America's forests were producing an unusual number of beech nuts or acorns that season.[256] The birds could fly an estimated 60 miles an hour to reach those forests in remarkable time.[257] They would be absent from certain areas for years, then descend in their dizzying numbers seemingly without warning.

European settlers hunted the birds on an industrial scale, rather than the more sustainable methods practiced by Native Americans.[258] Westward expansion was largely carried on the backs of wild game so abundant and easily caught. In the 1870s, passenger pigeons were slaughtered so recklessly that it strained the market: dry goods stores couldn't preserve or sell so many birds, butchers couldn't process them, gunpowder and birdshot were scarce, and even the rifles used by the hunters were fired so fast and so long they overheated and couldn't be reloaded until they cooled.[259] The last wild flocks had disappeared by the early 1880s. In the summer of 1910, the last passenger pigeon in the world died at the Cincinnati Zoo. She was named Martha.

Passenger Pigeon

Tiny Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 2 (1d4)
Speed 10 ft., fly 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
2 (−4)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	2 (−4)	12 (+1)	6 (−2)

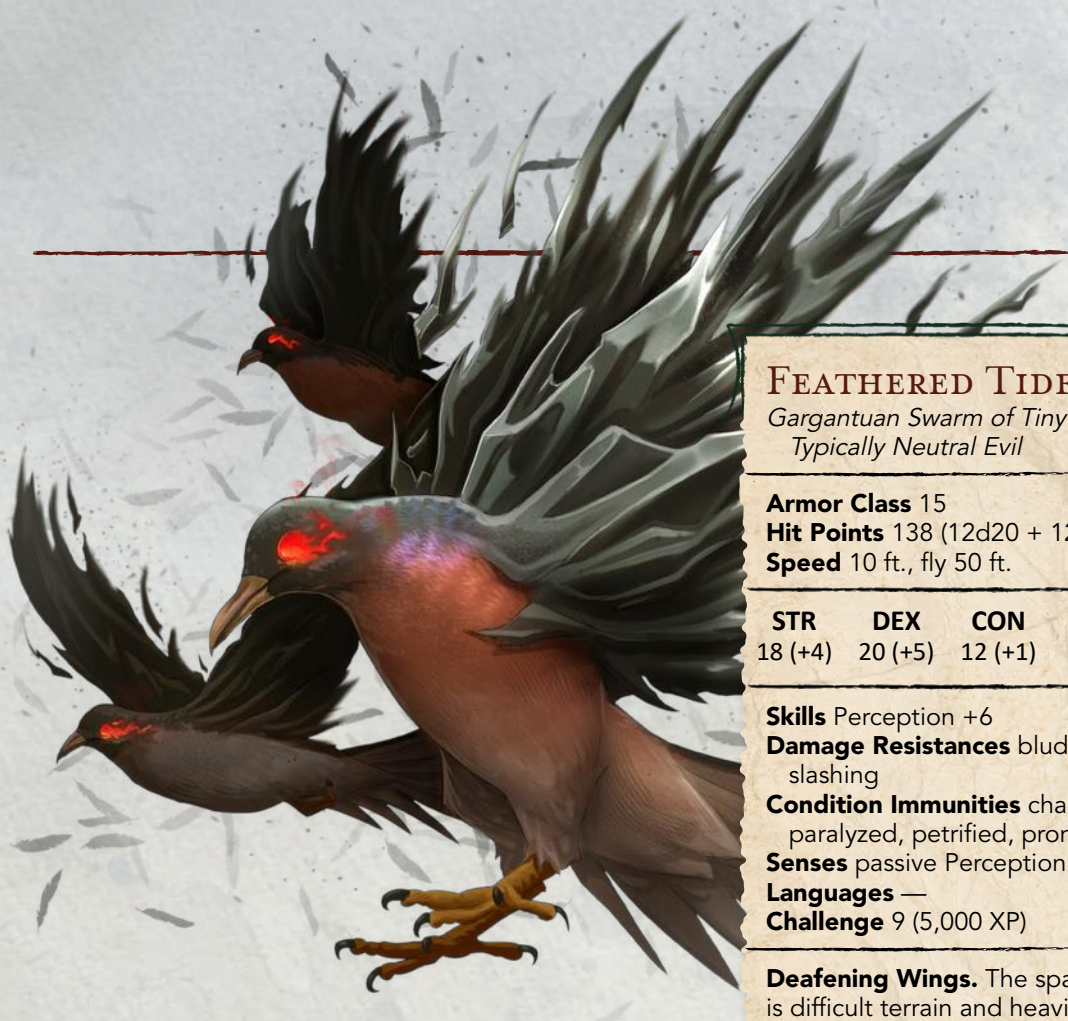
Skills Perception +3
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages —
Challenge 0 (0 XP)

Migratory Recall. The passenger pigeon can perfectly recall any path it has traveled.

Actions

Wing. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 bludgeoning damage.

"I cannot describe to you the extreme beauty of their aerial evolutions, when a hawk chanced to press upon the rear of the flock. At once, like a torrent, and with a noise like thunder, they rushed into a compact mass, pressing upon each other towards the center. In these almost solid masses, they darted forward in undulating and angular lines, descended and swept close over the earth with inconceivable velocity, mounted perpendicularly so as to resemble a vast column, and, when high, were seen wheeling and twisting within their continued lines, which then resembled the coils of a gigantic serpent"



The Feathered Tide

Inspired by the Passenger Pigeon

Nothing is more terrible to the countryside than a feathered tide: an agglomeration of birds imbued with the chaotic winds of a tornado, destroying and consuming all in their path.

Ruination of Wings. The feathered tide is a juggernaut of a flock, starting with a single bird that enlists others into its swarm. Perhaps the gods of the four winds imbue a bird with the power of a storm, or perhaps a few such birds are created when a flock is drawn into a tornado and survives its raging eye. Regardless of the cause, the feathered tide grows by enveloping entire migrations and setting them into a single catastrophic mass, dozens of miles across. When the feathered tide beats its wings in unison, tornados follow, and the land below is swept clean by ravaging winds.

Migrating Millions. Passenger pigeons are akin to floods, earthquakes, and hurricanes: a natural phenomenon that only divine intervention or stupendous effort could interdict. However, a few scholars have discovered that, at the heart of every feathered tide, a single core swarm controls the larger mass, providing the initial impulse that all other birds follow. If one were to disperse or destroy this swarm, the outermost birds would be freed, and the feathered swarm would disperse.

Feathered Tide

Gargantuan Swarm of Tiny Beasts, Typically Neutral Evil

Armor Class 15
Hit Points 138 (12d20 + 12)
Speed 10 ft., fly 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	20 (+5)	12 (+1)	9 (−1)	15 (+2)	6 (−2)

Skills Perception +6
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, slashing
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained, stunned
Senses passive Perception 16
Languages —
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Deafening Wings. The space the swarm occupies is difficult terrain and heavily obscured. Any creature within this space is deafened.

Storm of Wings. The swarm is always at the center of a cloud of passenger pigeons 50 miles in diameter. Within that area, Large or larger vehicles move at half speed, Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing have disadvantage, and ranged attack rolls have disadvantage.

Swarm. The feathered tide can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Tiny passenger pigeon. The feathered tide can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

Actions

Multiattack. The swarm makes two Wings attacks.

Wings. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 0 ft., one target in the feathered tide's space. *Hit:* 22 (4d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage, or 17 (3d8 + 4) if the feathered tide has half its hit points or fewer. The target must succeed on a DC 16 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Tornado (Recharge 5–6). The swarm flies in a corkscrew formation, beating up a cyclone at its center. Any creature within the swarm's space must succeed on a DC 16 Strength saving throw or be thrown 120 feet into the air, taking 42 (12d6) bludgeoning damage from the fall.

Pink-Headed Duck

Rhodonessa caryophyllacea
***Gūlāb-sīr* (Hindi)**

Until the twentieth century, the lowland reaches of the Ganges and Brahmaputra rivers were a vast stretch of marshes and wetlands. The tall grasses and seasonal flooding rendered this terrain inaccessible, along with other dangers to travelers, including tigers, crocodiles and malaria.[260] Amid this wilderness lived a roseate jewel of the country: the pink-headed duck.

With bright pink feathers covering its head and most of its neck, the pink-headed duck was uniquely striking. A reclusive bird by all accounts, the pink-headed duck lived in still pools enclosed by tall grasses where they could feed on waterweeds and insects. Its small, yellow-white eggs were remarkably spherical. Though usually spotted alone, the birds were sometimes observed in small groups of six to eight, and never in flocks larger than forty.[261] These small flocks weren't desirable targets for game hunters, as they tended to dive rather than fly if disturbed and reportedly didn't taste very good.[262]

As the pink-headed duck's habitat, parts of what is now Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, and Nepal, were developed from empty marshland into some of the most populous areas in the world, the duck's ability to evade hunters vanished. The bird was regularly offered in the markets of Calcutta starting around 1875, but dwindled to almost nothing by 1900. The population of the birds has always been quite small; one estimate from available genetic material suggests it was never more than 25,000 individuals.[263] Captive populations were never an option to replace wild birds, as captive pink-headed ducks never bred. The collector Jean Delacour, for example, at the Chateau de Clères in Normandy, France, had a pair of live birds in the 1920s who lived for more than a decade without even attempting to breed.[264]

Throughout the winter of 1923, an ornithologist named Sir David Elias Ezra placed newspaper advertisements offering to pay 100 rupees for pink-headed ducks and drakes. He may not have known that the daily wage for an unskilled worker at the time was about half a rupee a day, and his advertisements created a huge incentive for hunters and bird-catchers to collect the remaining birds— a lethal blow for the species that almost certainly led to its extinction in the wild.[265] The date of the last confirmed sighting in the wild is given variously as 1926, 1933, or 1936. A rumor suggests that the last captive specimen survived in London until 1945.[266]

The bird remains a paramore for bird watchers, one of the most sought-after birds in Asia, and notable expeditions in 1980 and 2017 ended in unconfirmed sightings.[267] Officially the bird is classified as critically endangered rather than extinct.[268]

Pink Hydra

Inspired by the Pink-Headed Duck

Pink hydras are beguiling behemoths known for their beautiful plumage and unpredictable personalities.

Solitary Terrors. Five-headed pink hydras dwell alone in isolated marshes and wetlands, coming together only during the spring to mate and raise their broods. The males are extremely territorial, and will attack interlopers to their ponds without warning. Seasoned adventures learn to separate the wheezy whistle and bright feathers of the male from the powerful honk and brown plumage of the females, as the latter are easier to avoid.

Beguiling Plumage. Unlike their reptilian kin, pink hydras bear an innate enchantment magic that beguiles those who see its coruscating feathers. These feathers are easily stitched into magic items, such as winged boots and feather tokens. Eccentric collectors sometimes hatch pink hydra eggs in their menageries to harvest their feathers for magic items, though the benefits are often outweighed by the danger of a pink hydra reaching adulthood.

Duck

Tiny Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 13
Hit Points 1 (1d4 – 1)
Speed 15 ft., fly 60 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
5 (–3)	14 (+2)	8 (–1)	2 (–4)	13 (+1)	6 (–2)

Skills Perception +3
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages —
Challenge 0 (10 XP)

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 slashing damage.



Pink-Headed Hydra

Huge Monstrosity, Chaotic Evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 172 (15d12 + 75)
Speed 30 ft., fly 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	12 (+1)	20 (+5)	2 (−4)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)

Skills Perception +6
Senses darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 16
Languages —
Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Magnificent Mind. The hydra has advantage on saving throws against being charmed and is immune to magical sleep.

Multiple Heads. The hydra has five heads. While it has more than one head, the hydra has advantage on saving throws against being blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, stunned, and knocked unconscious.

Whenever the hydra takes 25 or more damage in a single turn, one of its heads dies. If all its heads die, the hydra dies.

At the end of its turn, it grows two heads for each of its heads that died since its last turn, unless it has taken fire damage since its last turn. The hydra regains 10 hit points for each head regrown in this way.

Reactive Heads. For each head the hydra has beyond one, it gets an extra reaction that can be used only for opportunity attacks.

Wakeful. While the hydra sleeps, at least one of its heads is awake.

Actions

Multiattack. The hydra makes as many Bite attacks as it has heads.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d10 + 5) piercing damage.

Dazzling Charm (Recharge 5–6). The hydra emits a dazzling cascade of pink-hued light from its feathers. Each creature within 15 feet of the hydra must make a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the creature is charmed by the hydra until the end of its next turn. It must use its action to make a melee weapon attack against one creature it can see within range that is hostile to the hydra. On a successful save, the creature takes 6 (1d12) psychic damage and isn't charmed.

Pyrenean Ibex

Capra pyrenaica pyrenaica
Spanish Tu
***Bucardo* (Aragonese, Spanish)**
***Bouquetin* (French)**

The Pyrenean ibex is the only animal that can claim to have gone extinct twice.

The Iberian Peninsula, mostly made up of Spain and Portugal, was home to four subspecies of Iberian ibex, a mountain goat characterized by large, flexible hooves, and short legs that helped it run and climb on steep, rocky slopes. One of these subspecies, the Pyrenean ibex, was named for its original range in the Pyrenees Mountains, which run from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean Seas and form the border between Spain and France. Adult males stood around 32 inches high at the shoulder and bore horns nearly the same length that curved backward.[269]

The Pyrenean ibex lived different lives in different seasons. In the summer months, Pyrenean ibex rams had coats of short, grayish-brown fur and would range from their mountains' base to the highest peaks at elevations of some 10,000 feet.[270] During winter months, the ibexes would grow winter coats of long, buff-colored fur and undercoats of white wool, along with the ram's long, distinctive beard,[271] and descend to the warm, southern slopes for the November mating season. When the ibexes returned to the higher mountains in April, females would isolate themselves from the males to give birth to the year's single kid in early May,[272] and the cycle began anew.

The species's decline was slow but steady, as extinction pressures outpaced conservation efforts. Pyrenean ibexes faced competition from other species for food, diseases transferred from domestic livestock, infertility and inbreeding problems, and climatic conditions like landslides affecting their delicate seasonal rhythm and limited food supply.[273] The Pyrenean ibex was also an attractive hunting trophy. The Spanish government took steps to save the ibex, including creating Ordesa National Park in 1918, declaring it a protected species in 1973, and implementing a management plan in 1993. Unfortunately, the animal didn't survive well in captivity, and efforts to cross-breed it with members of other subspecies proved unsuccessful.[274] Researchers from Advanced Cell Technology, Inc. (ACT) captured the last Pyrenean ibex, named Celia, in 1999 and took a tissue sample from her ear. Celia was found dead the following summer, her skull apparently crushed by a falling branch.[275]

Pyrenean Ibex

Small Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 10
Hit Points 3 (1d6)
Speed 40 ft., climb 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)	2 (−4)	10 (+0)	5 (−3)

Senses passive Perception 10
Languages —
Challenge 0 (10 XP)

Charge. If the ibex moves at least 20 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a ram attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 2 (1d4) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 10 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Sure-Footed. The ibex has advantage on Strength and Dexterity saving throws made against effects that would knock it prone.

Actions

Ram. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) bludgeoning damage.

While attempts to resurrect the extinct aurochs made use of "back breeding", or selective breeding from extant species of cattle, the de-extinction project for the Pyrenean ibex was done through cloning. ACT researchers spent ten years with Celia's tissue sample, cryopreserved in liquid nitrogen, and a process called interspecies nuclear transfer cloning. Researchers added DNA from Celia's tissue to the developing eggs of similar goats, then implanted those eggs in surrogate mothers.

Over the course of 10 years, 439 embryos were created from the original tissue sample. Of them, only 57 were suitable for implantation, of which only seven resulted in pregnancies. Only one resulted in a live birth.[276] This newborn ibex died after several minutes due to breathing difficulties from malformed lungs. "At present it can be assumed that cloning is a not very effective way to preserve endangered species," the researchers concluded. "However, in species [such] as bucardo, cloning is the only possibility to avoid its complete disappearance. The present work encourages to appropriately store somatic tissues and cells of all endangered species or suitable animals, as they may be useful for future cloning-based conservation programs".[277]

Caprageist

Inspired by the Pyrenean Ibex

The mages that pioneered the peculiar magic of time—chronomancy—instantly understood that control over time also yields command over mortality, for if one doesn't age, one need never die. To prove their theory, they thrust a lowly mountain goat outside of time, creating a being of terrible undeath.

Remnant Ear. To maintain its immortality, the caprageist rips off one of its own ears and buries it in the ground. At that moment, the caprageist becomes suspended in time between life and death: its body becomes immune to the degradation of aging and it gains newfound alacrity and power. If the caprageist is ever slain, a new one regenerates from the buried ear, rips off its own ear, and begins the cycle anew.

The caprageist jealously guards its ear's resting place, which gradually becomes unmoored from time. Just as a stone forms eddies in a stream, time twists into chaotic forms across the caprageist's mountainous home: the seasons blur together, the sun and moon crawl in spirals across the sky, and creatures upon the mountain age faster, slower, or not at all.

Cult of the Twice-Dead. Though the mages that created the caprageist are long dead (having been aged drastically in their temporal experiments), others have taken note of the goat's immortality and its mountain of convoluted time. Acolytes have formed a cult dedicated to the goat's immortality, setting up residence upon the mountain in locations that drastically slow their aging. Remoteness and convoluted time have reduced some to madness and others to fervor, but all would give their lives to protect the Twice-Dead Goat.

Undead Nature. The caprageist doesn't require air, food, drink, or sleep.



A Caprageist's Lair

A caprageist will choose a single mountain as its lair, and range from its highest peak to its lowest stones. While in its lair, a caprageist has access to lair actions listed below.

Lair Actions

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the caprageist can take a lair action to cause one of the following magical effects; the caprageist can't use the same effect two rounds in a row:

- The flow of time is briefly disrupted. Every creature in the lair must reroll initiative. The caprageist can choose not to reroll.
- Once-solid terrain becomes degraded and unsteady, creating a landslide at a point the caprageist can see within 120 feet. Each creature in a line 30 feet long and 10 feet wide must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or be knocked prone.
- Each creature within 60 feet of the caprageist must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the creature has disadvantage on Strength-based attacks, ability checks, and saving throws until initiative count 20 on the next round.

Caprageist

Medium Undead, Neutral Evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 172 (23d8 + 69)
Speed 40 ft., climb 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)	2 (−4)	13 (+1)	20 (+5)

Saving Throws Dex +7, Con +8, Wis +6, Cha +10
Damage Immunities necrotic, poison
Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages —
Challenge 13 (10,000 XP)

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If the caprageist fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Rejuvenation. If it has a buried ear, a destroyed caprageist gains a new body in 1d10 days, regaining all its hit points and becoming active again. The new body grows from the buried ear.

Sure-Footed. The caprageist has advantage on Strength and Dexterity saving throws made against effects that would knock it prone.

Turn Immunity. The caprageist is immune to effects that turn undead.

Actions

Multiattack. The caprageist uses Convolute Time and a Ram attack.

Ram. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage plus 9 (2d8) necrotic damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 17 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Convolute Time. The caprageist uses one of the following chronomantic effects at random:

1. *Haste.* Until the start of its next turn, the caprageist gains a +2 bonus to its AC, has advantage on Dexterity saving throws, and makes one additional Ram attack when it attacks.
2. *Shunt Through Time.* The caprageist chooses one creature it can see within 120 feet of it to make a DC 18 Charisma saving throw. On a failed save, the creature vanishes. At the end of its next turn, the creature reappears where it was or in the nearest unoccupied space and takes 18 (4d8) force damage.
3. *Slow.* Time slows in a 20-foot-radius sphere, centered on a point the caprageist can see within 120 feet of it. Each creature in the area, other than the caprageist, takes a −2 penalty to AC and Dexterity saving throws, and can't use reactions. A creature that begins its turn in the area can't make more than one melee or ranged attack during its turn.
4. *Stasis.* The caprageist chooses a creature it can see within 120 feet of it to make a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the creature is paralyzed until the end of its next turn.

Legendary Actions

The caprageist can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The caprageist regains spent legendary actions at the beginning of its turn.

Paradoxical Transposition. The caprageist chooses a creature it can see within 120 feet, teleporting and swapping places with that creature.
Ram. The caprageist makes a Ram attack.
Convolute Time (Costs 2 actions). The caprageist uses Convolute Time.

Quagga

Equus quagga quagga

This South African zebra went extinct before anyone figured out what it truly was.

Living in South Africa during the time of Dutch colonization, the quagga was a plains zebra distinguished by its reddish-brown coat with white hindquarters and stripes on only the front half of its body. In writings of the time, it was customary to refer to any local zebra as a quagga, making it as difficult to pick out the species as it was to pick out a single quagga from the herd. One of the only reliable accounts of the quagga in its natural habitat comes from the British military engineer William Cornwallis Harris in 1840:[278]

> *On those sultry plains which are completely taken possession of by wild beasts, and may with strict propriety be termed the domains of savage nature, it occurs in interminable herds; and, although never intermixing with its more elegant congeners, it is almost invariably to be found ranging with the white-tailed gnu and with the ostrich, for the society of which bird especially it evinces the most singular predilection. Moving slowly across the profile of the ocean-like horizon, uttering a shrill, barking neigh, of which its name forms a correct imitation, long files of quaggas continually remind the early traveller of a rival caravan on its march. Bands of many hundreds are thus frequently seen doing their migration from the dreary and desolate plains of some portion of the interior, which has formed their secluded abode, seeking for those more luxuriant pastures where, during the summer months, various herbs thrust forth their leaves and flowers to form a green carpet, spangled with hues the most brilliant and diversified.*

The Dutch settlers of the seventeenth century, known as Boers, sometimes kept quaggas as guard horses for herds of domestic cattle, trusting the temperamental horses to raise the alarm with their distinctive cry and quite probably attack any intruders.[279] For a brief time during the 1830s, imported quaggas were used as harness animals in London carriages; exactly how the animals were broken to harness is unknown, but they were almost certainly gelded for the purpose.[280]

Despite their export as exotic pets, colonists ultimately saw the free-ranging herds of quagga as competitors to domestic cattle. Because they were also seen as abundant, and because of the confusion surrounding the name "quagga," the creature went extinct almost before anyone realized it. The last quagga in the wild was killed in 1878, a scant 30 years after Cornwallis' "interminable herds."[281] The last quagga in captivity, an unnamed mare, died in the Artis Magistra Zoo in Amsterdam on August 12, 1883.[282] The zoo sent word to hunters to find another, not realizing the animal no longer existed.[283]

In 1984, the quagga became the first extinct animal to have its genome sequenced, confirming the quagga as a subspecies of the plains zebra and launching the field of ancient DNA that would contribute to our knowledge of many other lost species like the aurochs and the giant beaver.[284] Just as in the case of the aurochs, the quagga became the subject of an arguably successful program of de-extinction through back breeding. Beginning in 1987, with the sequenced genome and living plains zebra, the Quagga Project at Cape Town University has created a nearly identical breed called Rau quaggas after one of the project's originators.[285]

Quagga

Large Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 10
Hit Points 13 (2d10 + 2)
Speed 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	2 (−4)	11 (+0)	9 (−1)

Senses passive Perception 10
Languages —
Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Herd Camouflage. Attack rolls against the quagga have disadvantage if at least one of its allies is within 5 feet of it and isn't incapacitated.

Actions

Hooves. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (2d4 + 3) piercing damage.

USING A TIGERHORSE PELT

A tigerhorse's pelt retains the creature's innate color-shifting magic, and can be used to create a *robe of scintillating colors* if the pelt is carefully painted using a *pot of marvelous pigments*. Crafting the robe requires two weeks of downtime and proficiency with leatherworker's tools and painter's supplies.

Tigerhorse

Large Monstrosity, Typically Chaotic Evil

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)
Hit Points 119 (14d10 + 42)
Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +5
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages understands Abyssal, Common, and Infernal but can't speak
Challenge 5 (3,900 XP)

Active Camouflage. The tigerhorse has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks.

Dizzying Pattern. The tigerhorse projects a disorienting illusion, causing attack rolls against it to have disadvantage. If the tigerhorse is hit by an attack, this trait is disrupted until the end of its next turn. An attacker is immune to this effect if it doesn't rely on sight or it can see through illusions.

Keen Smell. The tigerhorse has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Actions

Multiattack. The tigerhorse makes one Bite and one Hoof attack.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d10 + 4) piercing damage.

Hoof. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

Nauseating Pattern (Recharge 5–6). Writhing tendrils of orange and black light flash from the tigerhorse's fur. Each creature within 30 feet of the tigerhorse that can see it must make a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the creature takes 14 (4d6) psychic damage and is stunned until the end of the tigerhorse's next turn. On a successful save, the creature takes half as much damage and isn't stunned.



Tigerhorse

Inspired by the Quagga

The tigerhorse is a tall tale made real by a sadistic god.

Living Folk Tale. In an unremarkable tavern on a cold winter night, a group of farriers and stablehands traded stories over mugs of mulled wine. Their games of oneupmanship resulted in a story about a tigerhorse—half tiger, half horse. The tavern goers never dreamed their tall tale would ever be more than a ridiculous story, perhaps used to hurry their children to bed.

However, the story echoed down to the Lower Planes and came to the ears of an animalistic, capricious god who laughed at its audacity. With a smile of crooked fangs, the god made the tigerhorse flesh and blood to wreak havoc on the world.

Writhing Stripes. The tigerhorse was designed to be an unparalleled predator. Its stripes are imbued with a living illusion magic that changes pattern to match its surroundings, rendering it nearly invisible in the tall grass. When it strikes, the tigerhorse unleashes a burst of nauseating patterns to disorient its prey.

Dual Nature. Tigerhorses embody the most successful attributes of both the hunter and the hunted. This inner conflict between the urge to run and to stalk, to fight and to flee, makes the tigerhorse irritable and unpredictable. No creature living is more obstinate by nature than a tigerhorse on the prowl. If it is ever corralled, it will throw itself against the walls of its enclosure until it either escapes or bashes itself to death.

Rabbs' Fringe-Limbed Tree Frog

Ecnomiohyla rabborum

The last Rabbs' fringe-limbed tree frog was a refugee from a silent plague that shifted the balance of the world.

In the tropical rain forests of Mesoamerica, the forest canopy is a world unto itself, home to vibrant plants and animals like bromeliads, parrots, jaguars, and a group of frogs sometimes called "marvelous" frogs. These frogs, also called fringe-limbed tree frogs (genus *Encnomiohyla*), are characterized by scalloped fringes of skin on their forearms and webbed feet with large disks at the end of their toes. When threatened, they can leap from tree tops and use their oversized feet to glide and orient during the descent.

One such species, Rabbs' fringe-limbed tree frog, has been observed to leap safely from heights of almost 30 feet.[286] The male Rabbs' frog would choose a tree with a suitable water-filled hole where tadpoles could grow, then call for females to come and lay their eggs there.[287] They filled the Panamanian rainforest with their call, a single "grrrrrck" repeated at regular intervals. The male frogs would stay half submerged in the pools with the tadpoles, allowing the tadpoles to eat the dead skin off their backs.[288]

Starting in the late 1980s, hundreds of frog species worldwide began to disappear from arenas in which they had previously been abundant. It took until 1998 to definitively identify the culprit as the chytrid fungus *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis* (abbreviated "*Bd*").[289] This fungus interrupts a frog's ability to absorb moisture through their skin and causes cardiac arrest. The resulting disease, chytridiomycosis, can have up to a 100 percent mortality rate among infected frogs.[290]

By the time the fungus was identified, it was already a global pandemic driving species to extinction almost faster than they could be identified. The gastric brooding frog in Australia and the golden toad in Costa Rica were early victims.

In 2004, *Bd* arrived in Panama. Powerless to stop the invisible killer, a consortium of biologists met in Atlanta to propose a radical rescue mission: extract as many individuals as possible from the path of the disease and relocate them to biotically isolated containment units where they could be bred in captivity and reintroduced when, or if, a solution to the chytrid crisis could be found. The pilot project took place in El Valle de Antón, Panama, in 2005.[291] Among the frogs collected in that expedition were three Rabbs' fringe-limbed tree frogs, two males and a female; the expedition determined they were members of a previously-undiscovered species and named it in honor of amphibian conservation advocates George and Mary Rabb. One of the male frogs was transported to the just-constructed frogPOD—a retrofitted gray shipping container—at the Atlanta Botanical Garden, and to the care of biologist Mark Mandica. Mandica's then two-year-old son named the frog Toughie, "Because he's the only one that made it!" And the name stuck.[292]

Mandica cared for Toughie for 12 years: taking measurements, monitoring Toughie's health, and participating in advocacy projects like National Geographic's Photo Ark. Rabbs' fringe-limbed tree frog wasn't recorded in the wild after 2007 and scientists were unable to coerce the frog to reproduce in captivity. The last female died in 2009, and the other male died in 2012. One morning in 2014, Mandica recorded Toughie's only vocalization in the frogPOD, as Toughie perhaps called for a mate he couldn't know would never come.[293] The morning of September 28, 2016, Toughie was found dead in his enclosure, marking what scientists believe is the extinction of his species. "As a scientist, I like to be right, but in this case, I hope I'm wrong," Mendelson wrote in a New York Times op-ed two weeks later. "There is a chance that a population of Rabbs' frogs remains hidden in the Panamanian forest."[294] Reactive conservation efforts, he warned, may be ineffective, and amphibians like Toughie prove that the time to save a species is while it is still abundant.

Fringe-Limbed Tree Frog

Tiny Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 11
Hit Points 1 (1d4 – 1)
Speed 20 ft., swim 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
1 (–5)	13 (+1)	8 (–1)	1 (–5)	8 (–1)	3 (–4)

Senses passive Perception 9
Languages —
Challenge 0 (0 XP)

Amphibious. The frog can breathe air and water.

Glide Webbing. The frog takes no falling damage if it falls 30 feet or less.

Standing Leap. The frog's long jump is up to 10 feet and its high jump is up to 5 feet, with or without a running start.

The Most Destuctive Pathogen Known to Science

"If it were a human pathogen, it'd be in a zombie film," biologist Dan Greenberg told National Geographic in 2021.[295] The fungal pathogen *Bd* is the most destructive pathogen known to science, responsible for more extinctions than any other invasive species including rats and cats. As of July 2021, *Bd* had infected 1,375 frog species, more than doubling known species infections since 2013. The pathogen had spread to 93 of 134 (69 percent) by the same year, up from 56 of 82 (68 percent) countries in 2013.[296] All over the world, places once filled with frogs are empty and silent after a *Bd* infection.

This unprecedented extinction crisis is poised to begin again. A novel species of chytrid fungus, *Batrachocytrium salamandrivorans* or *Bsal*, revealed itself in 2010 by devastating fire salamander populations in the Netherlands.[297] As its Latin roots imply, *Bsal* "eats" the skin of salamanders, causing extensive epidermal necrosis, lesions, and death. While *Bd* is present all over the world, *Bsal* has not been detected in North America as of the time of writing. The U.S. has the highest biodiversity of salamanders in the world, especially in Appalachia and the southeast where they serve critical roles in their ecosystems as both predator and prey; laboratory tests have confirmed *Bsal* would kill and spread among these species, just as *Bd* has among frogs.[298]

How *Bsal* migrates through species is not yet fully understood, but the international pet trade is a major source of concern. Conservation organizations like the Center for Biological Diversity have called for an end to this importation.[299] To address these issues, organizations and experts from Canada, the United States, and Mexico formed the North American Bsal Task Force in 2015. The organization has created a monitoring network for *Bsal* incursion and a rapid response plan should the fungus be detected.



Zephyrog

Inspired by Rabbs' Fringe-Limbed Tree Frog

Using the parachute-like webbing on their feet, giant flying frogs known as zephyrogs perch in high mountaintops and ambush their prey from above.

Masters of Wind. Instead of wings, zephyr frogs—zephyrogs—have feet the size of wagon wheels with membranes stretching between their toes. Swirling winds pulled from the Elemental Plane of Air fill the membranes and lift the frog, allowing it to soar through the air. The same elemental connection enables the frog to hold its breath indefinitely and create small whirlwinds with a wave of its webbed feet.

Aerial Ambushers. The zephyrog's skin is usually mottled brown and green with a bluish white stomach, making them difficult to spot from above and below. The enormous frog hunts much like falcons or hawks, gliding above its prey before descending upon unsuspecting badgers, goats, sheep, giant insects, or even black bears, and swallowing them whole.

After feeding, however, the zephyrog's full belly renders it too heavy to fly, creating a window of vulnerability as it digests its prey. In much the same way as they pluck prey from above, giant eagles snatch up grounded zephyrogs for a nutritious meal.

Cloud Ponds. Whereas other frogs raise their broods in ponds, zephyrogs lay their weightless eggs in puffy, slow-moving clouds. There, the eggs hatch into floating tadpoles and eventually grow into froglets that resemble an amphibious flock of birds. With greater size comes greater weight, however, and the froglets must eventually descend to their mountaintop domains as they reach adulthood. Only a few eggs develop into full-fledged zephyrogs, as sudden squalls, hungry falcons, and other hazards winnow the numbers down to a handful that grow to dominate their mountains.

Magical Mounts. Trainers that specialize in raising or taming exotic flying mounts, such as griffons and hippogriffs, will sometimes raise a zephyrog from a tadpole as a challenge. Doing so takes even more patience and resilience than usual, but forges an unbreakable bond between frog and rider that lasts for the frog's entire life. A zephyrog that loses its rider can't be trained to take another one, and customs dictate that such a zephyrog should be released into the wild.



Zephyrog

Large Monstrosity, Unaligned

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)
Hit Points 133 (14d10 + 56)
Speed 20 ft., swim 40 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	16 (+3)	19 (+4)	3 (−4)	11 (+0)	3 (−4)

Senses passive Perception 13
Languages —
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Glide Webbing. The zephyrog takes no damage from falling if it isn't incapacitated.

Inner Breath. The zephyrog can hold its breath indefinitely while it isn't incapacitated.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d10 + 5) piercing damage plus 5 (1d10) poison damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 16). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the zephyrog can't bite another target.

Swallow. The zephyrog makes one Bite attack against a Medium or smaller target it is grappling. If the attack hits, the target is swallowed, and the grapple ends. The swallowed target is blinded and restrained, it has total cover against attacks and other effects outside the zephyrog, and it takes 27 (6d8) acid damage at the start of each of the zephyrog's turns. The zephyrog can have only one target swallowed at a time and can't fly while a creature is swallowed by it.

If the zephyrog takes 20 damage or more on a single turn from a creature inside it, the zephyrog must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw at the end of that turn or regurgitate the swallowed creature, which falls prone in a space within 10 feet of the zephyrog. If the zephyrog dies, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained by it and can escape from the corpse by using 10 feet of movement, exiting prone.

Summon Whirlwind (Recharge 5–6). The zephyrog creates a 15-foot-radius sphere of wind centered on a point it can see within 60 feet of it. Each creature in that area must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 27 (6d8) bludgeoning damage and is pushed to the nearest point outside of the sphere. On a successful save, a creature takes half as much damage and isn't pushed.

Reactions

Defensive Gust. When the zephyrog would be hit by a ranged attack, it imposes disadvantage on the attack roll, potentially causing the attack to miss.

Round Island Burrowing Boa

Bolyeria multocarinata

The burrowing boa was a slender, three-foot-long, brown-and-black snake that rooted its way through loose topsoil and the fallen litter of palm trees using its pointed snout and cylindrical head and body. It was native to a small range of volcanic islands near Mauritius but named for Round Island, a tiny basalt islet around two-thirds of a square mile in area. The burrowing boa's spiral to extinction began in 1844 when goats and rabbits were released on the island. These invaders denuded the island of its native flora, causing catastrophic erosion under cyclones and seasonal rains. By 1974, intensive searching discovered only one living Round Island boa.[300]

Round Island is the longest-running island conservation project in the world, having been a nature reserve since 1957. In 1974, the island was home to more species of threatened plants and animals per acre than any other piece of land in the world.[301] The goats were eradicated in 1976 and 1979 by shooting, and the rabbits in 1986 by poisons.[302] As a result, populations of many endemic species rebounded, including the keel-scaled boa (*Casarea dussumieri*) and the Round Island ground skink (*Leiolopisma telfairii*); however, several expeditions between 1982 and 1989 determined it had been too late to save the burrowing boa.[303]

Burrowing Boa

Tiny Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 13
Hit Points 2 (1d4)
Speed 30 ft., burrow 15 ft

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
2 (−4)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	1 (−5)	10 (+0)	3 (−4)

Senses blindsight 10 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages —
Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 1 piercing damage.

Spikehead

Inspired by the Round Island Burrowing Boa

Spikeheads are serpentine constructs tipped with a four-part adamantine skull that pierces flesh, worked stone, and even plate armor with ease.

Dug Too Greedily. The simplest way to hide magic from prying eyes is a few feet of good, solid stone. For this and many other reasons, dwarves favor rock-cut architecture deep underground for their kingdoms and vaults.

Long ago, a greedy wizard enlisted a devil to devise a machine that could burrow into any dwarf stronghold and lay bare its riches. The construct they invented, known as a spikehead, was a snakelike machine capable of tunneling through solid rock.

However, the wizard got more than he bargained for. Once the spikehead was unleashed, it honeycombed the dwarven mountain with small, winding tunnels. The more the spikehead dug, the deeper the wizard could scry, but the weaker the foundations became. As homes and battlements alike began to crumble, the dwarves responded with a vengeance, hunting down the wizard and destroying the spikehead's blueprints. But it was too late. Dozens of spikeheads escaped into the mountains, where they continue to menace miners and feed on natural adamantine veins to this day.

Collector's Item. Living and dead spikeheads alike are popular items on the black market. Dead spikeheads are worth their weight in adamantine, whereas those in working order are brokered as thieving devices to crack open otherwise impenetrable vaults. Others still might acquire a brood of spikeheads to safeguard their catacombs or valuables from subterranean thieves. Those who employ spikeheads do so at their own peril, both from overzealous hunters that still wish to eradicate the machines, and from the whirling constructs themselves.

Constructed Nature. A spikehead doesn't require air, food, drink, or sleep.



Spikehead

Medium Construct, Unaligned

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)
Hit Points 78 (12d8 + 24)
Speed 40 ft., burrow 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	3 (−4)	14 (+2)	1 (−5)

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +4
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages understands the languages of its creator but can't speak
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Armor Piercing. If the spikehead moves at least 20 feet toward a target and then hits it with a Spike attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 10 (3d6) piercing damage, and the spikehead can move to the opposite side of the target.

Magic Resistance. The spikehead has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Actions

Multiattack. The spikehead makes one Spike attack and one Whirring Blades attack.

Spike. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (2d12 + 3) piercing damage.

Whirring Blades. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (4d4 + 3) slashing damage.

$300 in a Hole

"Some seventy-five years ago, and for many years thereafter, my father, who was a fur-buyer, used to have nearly all the furs taken on islands of Penobscot Bay, from the mouth of the Penobscot eastward to Frenchman's Bay…I saw and handled many of these mink. Their fur was much coarser and was more of a reddish color than that of the inland, or as they were called then, the 'woods mink,' to distinguish them from the 'sea mink.' These sea mink were usually extremely fat, and the skins had an entirely different smell from that of the woods mink. I could with my eyes shut pick them out from the woods mink by their peculiar smell. In the old days, when mink were judged by size instead of by fineness and color, as was done later, these sea mink used to bring considerably more than others on account of their great size. On this account they were persistently hunted. Yet scarcely any were trapped on the islands. Instead they were shot or hunted with dogs trained for the purpose. As the price of mink rose, they were hunted more and grew scarcer, till in the sixties, when mink skins brought eight or ten dollars apiece, parties who made a business of hunting any small ledge where a mink could live. They carried their dogs with them, and, besides guns, shovels, pickaxes and crow-bars, took a good supply of pepper and brimstone….
If [the otters] were in crevices of the rocks where they could not be got at and their eyes could be seen to shine, they were shot and pulled out by means of an iron rod with a screw at the end. If they could not be seen, they were usually driven out by firing in charges of pepper. If this failed, then they were smoked with brimstone, in which case they either came out or were suffocated in their holes. Thus in a short time they were nearly or quite exterminated."

—Manly Hardy, 1903[304]

Eight to ten dollars in 1860 had the same purchasing power as $297 to $370 dollars does in 2023, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Sea Mink

Mustela macrodon
***Mousebeysoo,* "wet thing" (Abenaki)**

"On the shores and islands of Penobscot Bay and the adjacent coast there exist numerous shell-heaps, the majority of which were made by Indians," reported ornithologist Daniel Webster Prentiss. "They vary greatly in size, some being an acre in extent, while others cover but a few square yards."[305] These shell-heaps, or middens, were used to dispose of household refuse by indigenous peoples like the Penobscot Nation for whom the bay is named. In one of these middens, Prentiss discovered the shockingly large skull of a mink, twice the size of the extant American mink (*Neogale vison*). Prentiss' discovery of this skull, published in 1903, was the first time the sea mink was described to modern science. It had already been extinct for nearly ten years.

The sea mink is a ghost made from bones and the stories of fur traders. It was called a "fyshe like a greyhound" by Sir Humphrey Gilbert (who would have referred to any animal living in salt water as a "fyshe"), a kind of "martin" by William Wood, a "Red and Smooth Otter" by French settler Lahontan, and "fisher cat" and "sea mink" in written records from settlers and fur traders throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[306] Wood described the creature as "being good for fur for its bigness," as a single sea mink was up to three feet in length and produced a pelt nearly twice the size of those of its inland cousins.[307]

The sea mink likely lived similarly to the American mink: in long, underground burrows, and feeding on rodents, crabs, fish, and birds. Thanks to its dense undercoat and oily guard hairs, mink fur is soft, durable, and water resistant. The sea mink would have been more completely adapted to water than its inland cousin, which by comparison is sometimes called the wood mink.

Although Native American peoples of the Atlantic coast certainly hunted the sea mink, it was the unregulated fur trade, in stiff competition with European markets, that drove the sea mink to extinction. Fur hunters would use specially trained dogs to find and corner sea minks in their dens, then break open the den with picks, shovels, or crowbars; failing that, they would smoke the creatures out with burning sulfur or pitch, black pepper fired from muzzleloading guns, or even powder charges.[308] By the 1860s sightings of the sea mink were rare, and the last confirmed specimen was taken by a fur trader in 1880 from an island near Jonesport, Maine.[309] Another specimen, taken in 1894 from Campobello Island, New Brunswick, was purchased from a private collection in the 1960s by the Smithsonian Institution; the team there argued it was more likely an American mink.[310]

Sea Mink

Small Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 13
Hit Points 4 (1d6 + 1)
Speed 25 ft., swim 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
5 (−3)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	2 (−4)	12 (+1)	3 (−4)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +5
Damage Resistances cold
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages —
Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Keen Hearing and Smell. The mink has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

Marine Agility. While in water, the mink can take the Dash action as a bonus action.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 piercing damage.





Skin Taker

Inspired by the Sea Mink

A skin taker is created when bones of creatures killed for their meat and hide are piled together. The trauma and instincts imbued in these scraps coalesce inside a skull, manifesting as a keen, vengeful intelligence and a wispy, incorporeal body. Once awakened, the skin taker seeks to assemble a physical body for itself from the patchwork scraps surrounding it. Inevitably, it finds these insufficient and unsuitable, and seeks out skin and bones from other sources—living or dead. It grows in power as it adds these to its form.

Debt Collector. The skin taker is drawn to garments and armor made of leather or fur, which it might incorporate into itself. Offering a skin taker leather or hide armor might placate it, but if no such tribute is made, the skin taker will flay anyone it encounters in revenge.

Exogenous Shelter. The skin taker's skull anchors it to the Material Plane. If the creature is slain, its spirit persists and reassembles itself from bestial shreds unless the skull is shattered into pieces smaller than a fingernail.

Skin Taker

Medium Undead, Typically Lawful Evil

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)
Hit Points 119 (14d8 + 56)
Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (−2)	19 (+4)	19 (+4)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Dex +7, Wis +4
Skills Perception +4
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities necrotic, poison
Condition Immunities poisoned
Senses darkvision 30 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages —
Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Disassembled Movement. The skin taker can move through any opening large enough for its skull without squeezing.

Rejuvenation. If the skin taker is destroyed, it gains a new body in 1d10 days, regaining all its hit points and becoming active again. The new body appears within 5 feet of the bone pile from which the skin taker originated. This trait doesn't function if the skin taker's remains are sprinkled with holy water, or if a *dispel magic* or *remove curse* spell is cast on them.

Skin Sense. The skin taker knows the location of any creature within 120 feet of it as long as that creature is wearing clothing made of hides or fur, leather armor, studded leather armor, or hide armor. The skin taker has advantage on attack rolls against such a creature.

Actions

Multiattack. The skin taker makes three Claw attacks.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (3d6 + 4) slashing damage.

If the target is wearing nonmagical leather, studded leather, or hide armor, the skin taker slices a piece from the armor and absorbs it. The armor takes a permanent and cumulative −1 penalty to the AC it offers, and the skin taker gains a +1 bonus to its own AC (to a maximum of +4). If the skin taker reduces a piece of armor to an AC of 10, the armor is destroyed.

South Florida Rainbow Snake

Farancia erytrogramma seminola
Eel moccasin

The rainbow snake is a striking feature of the misty wetlands and cypress swamps that were also home to the ivory-billed woodpecker. Its shimmering blue-black scales have scarlet stripes along its back, with a belly of bright yellow scales underneath, dotted red and black. Adults can grow to more than four feet long and live and hunt almost exclusively in the water; their principal food is the American eel (*Anguilla rostrata*), for which the snakes have earned the common name "eel moccasin."[311]

The common rainbow snake (*Farancia erytrogramma erytrogramma*) is widespread throughout America's southeastern states. The South Florida rainbow snake (*Farancia erytrogramma seminola*) is a subspecies distinguished by the heavy stripes of black on its belly that extend to the lower rows of scales along its back.[312] It is known from three specimens collected at Fisheating Creek near Lake Okeechobee, Florida: one collected in 1949 and two in 1952.[313] The Fisheating Creek population remained a popular paramour for amateur herpetologists, producing decades of unconfirmed sightings that led the Center for Biological Diversity to seek protection for the South Florida rainbow snake under the Endangered Species Act. In response, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service declared the snake extinct in 2011.[314] Despite this, searches for the South Florida rainbow snake continue, and the Florida Museum of Natural History considers the population only "potentially extinct."[315]



Rainbow Snake
Tiny Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 13
Hit Points 2 (1d4)
Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
2 (−4)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	1 (−5)	10 (+0)	3 (−4)

Senses blindsight 10 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages —
Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Night Scale. The rainbow snake has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks while in dim light or darkness.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 1 piercing damage.

Nightfire Wyrm
Inspired by the South Florida Rainbow Snake

Nightfire wyrms are limbless dragons that dwell in deep swampland and fuel their powers by manipulating light.

Shadow of the Swamp. Light is a precious resource in swamps, and nightfire wyrms thrive by absorbing what little is available. Under cover of darkness, their scales ripple in a myriad of hues, mimicking anything from a bonfire's glow to the bobbing of a distant torch. These illusions guide desperate travelers deeper into their territory where the wyrm's invisibility and nimbleness grant it a deadly advantage.

Black Dragon Rivalry. Nightfire wyrms aren't the only dragon to claim dominion over swampland. Adult black dragons and nightfire wyrms have been known to feud over territory for centuries, manipulating small armies of goblinoids, kobolds, and adventurers against one another in bids for supremacy. Though a nightfire wyrm loathes direct combat with such a fearsome rival, it is content to hide from and beguile a black dragon that ventures into its swampy lair, striking only when its blow is most advantageous.



Nightfire Wyrm

Huge Dragon, Typically Chaotic Evil

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 184 (16d12 + 80)
Speed 45 ft., swim 45 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	23 (+6)	21 (+5)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	20 (+5)

Saving Throws Dex +10, Con +9,
Skills Deception +9, Perception +9, Stealth +10
Damage Resistances lightning, radiant
Condition Immunities blinded
Senses blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 19
Languages Draconic
Challenge 11 (7,200 XP)

Amphibious. The wyrm can breathe air and water.

Light Absorption. If the wyrm takes fire, lightning, or radiant damage, the wyrm rolls a d6 and regains a use of its Radiant Breath on a roll of 5 or 6.

Magic Resistance. The wyrm has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Shadow Invisibility. The wyrm is invisible while in dim light or darkness.

Actions

Multiattack. The wyrm makes one Bite attack and two Tail attacks.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (2d10 + 6) piercing damage.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d8 + 6) bludgeoning damage.

Radiant Breath (Recharge 5–6). The wyrm exhales light in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 17 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 55 (10d10) radiant damage and is blinded until the end of the wyrm's next turn. On a success, a creature takes half as much damage and isn't blinded. A blinded creature can repeat this saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Spellcasting. The wyrm casts one of the following spells, requiring no material components and using Charisma as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 17):

At will: *dancing lights*, *light*
3/day each: *color spray*, *darkness*, *daylight*

Steller's Sea Cow

Hydrodamalis gigas
Steller's rhytina

Steller's sea cow, the last of the Pleistocene megafauna, represents a tragic paradigm of anthropogenic extinction.

Measuring up to 30 feet long and weighing around 14,000 pounds, this gentle Arctic giant ranged throughout the Pacific coast before changing climates at the end of the Pleistocene confined it to a small strip of ocean near what is now Bering Island.[316] The island was named for explorer Vitus Bering, who was shipwrecked there during the historic expedition that ended his life and would soon spell extinction for Steller's sea cow.

In 1741, Bering launched the Great Northern Expedition to chart the far eastern reaches of Siberia and western coast of North America, attempting to establish a northern sea route from Europe to the Pacific. It was one of the largest exploration enterprises in history. Bering's shipmate aboard the *St. Peter* was the expedition's naturalist, Georg Wilhem Steller. Within months, the *St. Peter* was shipwrecked on an isolated island at the edge of the known world. Food stores were nearly non-existent and winter was fast approaching. The crew's salvation came in the form of the remnant population of Pleistocene giants grazing on the shallow-water vegetation around the island.

True to his mission, Steller spent his time writing detailed accounts of these creatures he named "sea cows" and the other novel species on the island like the sea otter. Steller wrote:

> *These animals live in herds together in the sea, males and females usually going with one another, pushing the offspring before them all around the shore…With their feet they scrape the seaweed from the rocks, and they masticate incessantly. When the tide recedes, they go from the shore…but with the rising tide they go back again to the beach, often so close that we could reach and hit them with poles. They are not the least afraid of human beings…they have an extraordinary love for one another, which extends so far that when one of them was cut into, all the others were intent on rescuing it and keeping it from being pulled ashore by closing a circle around it.*[317]

Steller had no reason not to imagine a limitless supply of the creatures he had named. His discovery nearly coincided with that of the American mastodon along the Ohio River in 1739, and predated George Cuvier's work establishing the concept of extinction in 1796. In fact, there were no more than two thousand sea cows on the island, and they would be exhausted within 27 years.[318] When in the summer of 1742 the men who survived the winter returned to Kamchatka, fur traders were keen to recreate Steller's journey, harvesting sea otter furs and feeding on sea cows as they wintered on Bering Island. As sea otter populations plummeted from overhunting, sea urchin populations exploded, competing with the sea cows for the limited grazing in kelp beds.[319] The already fragile population was hunted for food, even though the animal's sheer bulk made it inefficient to harvest and only one in five sea cows killed was actually eaten.[320]

The last living sea cow in the wild was spotted by fur traders in 1768. The species' disappearance helped cement the idea of extinction in the public and scientific consciousness, and provided a Rosetta stone for species collapse still studied today.

Steller's Sea Cow

Huge Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 13
Hit Points 138 (12d12 + 60)
Speed 10 ft., swim 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	7 (−2)	20 (+5)	2 (−4)	13 (+1)	2 (−4)

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages —
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Hold Breath. The sea cow can hold its breath for 30 minutes.

Actions

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (1d12 + 6) bludgeoning damage.



Íppodiac

Inspired by Steller's Sea Cow

Drifting among mountains like living nebulae, íppodiacs are unpredictable omnivores covered in constellations.

Starlight Drifters. While they can supplement their diet by grazing on pines and other high-altitude vegetation, íppodiacs feed primarily by absorbing starlight. Herds of íppodiacs gather in the northern reaches of the world where months pass without the sun cresting the horizon. There, the night sky is clearer than anywhere else, and íppodiacs can feast on aurora borealis.

Imprinted Constellations. As íppodiacs graze on starlight, they absorb the very same energies that divination wizards draw upon to cast *auguries*. This process imprints stars on their hides, eventually assembling entire constellations. Mature íppodiacs bear complete astrological calendars on their skin, from which they project a panoply of magical effects to defend themselves from astral predators.

Mercurial Alignment. Íppodiacs' personalities shift with the movement of the heavens. Their alignment runs the gamut from lawful to chaotic and good to evil—sometimes in the same day. Sometimes, a herd of íppodiacs will graze placidly for months before descending in a blind rage to level entire towns.

Roll a d8 to determine the alignment of an íppodiac or group of íppodiacs:

d8	Alignment
1	Lawful Good
2	Lawful Neutral
3	Lawful Evil
4	Neutral Good
5	Neutral Evil
6	Chaotic Good
7	Chaotic Neutral
8	Chaotic Evil

Íppodiac

Huge Celestial, Alignment Varies

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)
Hit Points 264 (23d12 + 115)
Speed 10 ft., fly 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	7 (−2)	20 (+5)	6 (−2)	13 (+1)	19 (+4)

Saving Throws Str +11, Con +8, Wis +6,
Skills Insight +6, Nature +3, Perception +6
Condition Immunities prone
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 16
Languages understands Celestial but can't speak
Challenge 14 (11,500 XP)

Actions

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 42 (8d8 + 6) bludgeoning damage.

Constellation. The íppodiac activates three of the magical constellations on its body at random (reroll duplicates), choosing one to three targets it can see within 120 feet.

1. *Taurus.* The targeted creature must make a DC 17 Strength saving throw. On a failed save, the target takes 36 (8d8) force damage and is knocked prone. On a successful save, the target takes half as much damage and isn't prone.

2. *Aries.* The targeted creature must make a DC 17 Strength saving throw. On a failed save, the target takes 21 (6d6) force damage and is pushed up to 30 feet away from the íppodiac. On a successful save, the target takes half as much damage and isn't pushed.

3. *Pisces.* The targeted creature must succeed on a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the target's speed is halved for 1 minute. Additionally, the creature can't take reactions, and it can take either an action or a bonus action on its turn, not both. The creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

4. *Aquarius.* The targeted creature must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw or fall asleep and remain unconscious for 1 minute. The target awakens if it takes damage or another creature takes an action to wake it. This constellation has no effect on constructs and undead.

5. *Capricorn.* The targeted creature must make a DC 17 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the target takes 10 (4d4) cold damage and is stunned. On a successful save, the target takes half as much damage and isn't stunned. A stunned creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

6. *Sagittarius.* An arrow of starlight toward the target. The target must make a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw taking 55 (10d10) radiant damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

7. *Scorpio.* A stinger of magical force lashes out at the target. The target creature must make a DC 17 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the creature takes 36 (8d8) poison damage and is poisoned until the end of its next turn. On a successful save, a creature takes half as much damage and isn't poisoned.

8. *Libra.* Chains of magical force connect the íppodiac and the targeted creature. The creature must make a DC 17 Constitution saving throw. The creature takes 21 (6d6) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. The íppodiac regains hit points equal to half of the necrotic damage taken.

9. *Virgo.* The targeted creature must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw or be charmed by the íppodiac for 1 hour, or until the íppodiac harms the creature.

10. *Leo.* The targeted creature must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened of the íppodiac for 1 minute. A frightened creature can repeat this saving throw at the end of its turn, ending the effect on itself on a success.

11. *Cancer.* Pincers of astral energy spring from the ground to grasp the targeted creature. The creature must make a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the target takes 21 (6d6) force damage and is restrained. On a successful save, the target takes half as much damage and isn't restrained. A restrained creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

12. *Gemini.* Roll twice on the constellation table, ignoring 12s.

Legendary Actions

The íppodiac can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The íppodiac regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Constellation. The íppodiac uses one random constellation.

Stephen's Island Wren

Traversia lyalli
Lyall's wren

Legend has it that the Stephen's Island wren was both discovered and rendered extinct by a single pet cat named Tibbles. As is so often the case, the real story is less dramatic, though no less tragic, than its retelling would suggest.

Stephen's Island is a rocky wedge of land surrounded by cliffs in the windy, hazardous Cook Strait, nestled between the North and South islands of New Zealand.[321] In 1892, the New Zealand government began to construct a lighthouse on the island. F.W. Ingram, one of the construction workers, made the first sighting of what would become known as the Stephen's Island wren that year.[322] It was an olive-colored, yellow-chinned flightless bird barely 4 inches long.[323] The lighthouse opened in January 1894 with a staff of 17 people, including three keepers, their families, and a teacher.[324] David Lyall, an assistant keeper and amateur naturalist, took an interest in the birds being left on his doorstep by the pet cats the lighthouse staff had brought to the island. Lyall observed the olive-colored wren on only two occasions, both at twilight running very fast like a mouse between holes in the rocks and never rising into the air. In July, Lyall sent a specimen of this wren by steamer ship to prominent New Zealand-based naturalist Walter Buller, who pronounced it "entirely distinct from anything hitherto known."[325]



The rest of 1894 was a breathless race for the wren's future. The contestants were: Lyall, the assistant lighthouse keeper; Henry Travers, a well-known bird dealer who recognized the commercial value in the bird's fragile state; Walter Buller, the naturalist who described Lyall's type specimen; Walter Rothschild, another British naturalist who was also working on descriptions of Hawaii's ʻōʻōs at the time; and the descendants of the pregnant cat that had escaped from the lighthouse early in the year. Lyall collected specimens of the wren throughout the year and provided them to Travers, who facilitated a bidding war between Buller and Rothschild. The two naturalists competed bitterly to be the first to publish a description of the bird and earn the coveted right to classify this new species. Rothschild's *Traversia lyalli* ultimately won by a scant four months, despite Buller's publication being already in press at the time.[326] Travers earned a tidy sum of money selling the 16 or so specimens he collected that year, deliberately trading on the bird's threatened status to increase their value.[327] The cats, for their part, flourished on the island—Lyall wrote that by the end of the winter they were wild and "making sad havoc among the birds."[328] The wren itself, earthbound and with no experience of mammalian predators or the politics of academia, never stood a chance. By March of 1895, despite extensive searching, Travers could find none living on the island.[329]

One 1895 newspaper editorial summed up the deadly race with sad irony. "This is probably a record performance in the way of extermination. The English scientific world will hear almost simultaneously of the bird's discovery and its disappearance before anything is known of its life history or its habits."[330]

The story of the Stephen's Island wren's discovery and extinction at the hands of a single cat in less than a year was told and retold until extensive

Stephen's Island Wren

Tiny Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 1 (1d4 − 1)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
2 (−4)	14 (+2)	8 (−1)	2 (−4)	12 (+1)	6 (−2)

Skills Perception +3
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages —
Challenge 0 (0 XP)

Actions

Beak. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 piercing damage.

historical research by the Ornithological Society of New Zealand in 2004 set the record straight. One strange detail remains, though: no legitimate historical source corroborates that the cat in the story was in fact named Tibbles.

Tibbles

Inspired by the cat fabled to have killed the Stephen's Island Wren

Most devils work tirelessly to steal souls from mortals and use them to ascend the ranks of hell. The tiger-headed fiends known as rakshasa, however, take a less militant approach. They are hedonistic charlatans that use their illusory powers to blend in with humanoid societies and enjoy the finer things the Material Plane has to offer. Rakshasa aren't above making Faustian bargains of their own, trading power and influence to hubristic acolytes, but they always secure the better end of the deal for themselves.

The rakshasa that calls herself "Tibbles" is particularly adept at such bargains, and has kept the name she used in her favorite fiendish scheme. While posing as a wealthy merchant, the rakshasa met a penniless trapper named Thurston West who had discovered a unique island bird. West would do anything to make his fortune. Knowing the value of scarcity, the rakshasa promised West that she could sell the birds for a vast sum, such that West would be wealthy even after the rakshasa deducted the majority of the sale as a commission. The rakshasa then transformed into a tabby cat named Tibbles, joined the family of the island's lighthouse keeper, and systematically eliminated the rest of the birds on the island, driving it to extinction. She then sold the captured birds for a king's ransom. Of all the elaborate identities she has crafted over her near-immortality, Tibbles is her favorite.

Tibbles has the statistics of a **rakshasa** with the following additional action:

Change Shape. Tibbles magically transforms into a Beast with a challenge rating of 3 or less. Tibbles can choose whether her equipment falls to the ground, melds with her new form, or is worn by the new form. Tibbles reverts to her true form if she dies or falls unconscious. Tibbles can revert to her true form using a bonus action.

While in a new form, Tibbles's stat block is replaced by the stat block of that form, except Tibbles keeps her current hit points, hit point maximum, Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores, this action, and languages.

Rose Court Wrens

Inspired by the Stephen's Island Wren

The Rose Court Wrens are a trio of humanoid birds who live, work, and fight as a single, indistinguishable unit.

Knights of the Rose Court. Much like the devils of hell, the lords of faerie have a keen sense of irony. The tiger-fiend Tibbles wasn't as thorough as she thought, and when three mouse-sized birds fell into the Feywild as refugees of her slaughter, an archfey named Aoibie took pity on them. With the magic of the Rose Court, Aoibie awakened the three birds and inducted them into fey society. The wrens swore an oath that no one else shall endure the same indignity Tibbles visited on them, and that they would work tirelessly to root out and eliminate such injustice from their world. And so the Rose Court Wrens were born.

Aoibie, struck by the wrens' passion, dubbed them knights of her court and gifted them a trio of keen fey weapons: a fairy dust musket, an ironwood buckler, and a mithral rapier to aid them on their single-minded mission. Unfortunately, this single-mindedness makes the wrens easy for cunning fey nobility to manipulate. Often, the knights are often sent on wild snipe hunts in the Material Plane by their capricious colleagues.

Honor, Justice, and Vengeance. The Rose Court Wrens have sworn themselves to dispense fairness and justice wherever they go, but, in their view, honor doesn't extend to cats. Humanoid, fiend, beast—the knights see no difference: all felines are their bitter enemies and they will attack such a creature on sight.

Roleplaying the Wrens

The Rose Court Wrens form a classic heroic trio. **Kamaka** (*she/her*) is brash and hot-tempered, **Hunapo** (*she/her*) is cool and logical, and **Anewa** (*he/him*) keeps the balance between them. The trio are inseparable and speak as if they were one character, finishing each other's sentences and declaring things in unison. If none of the player characters understand Sylvan, the GM may use this hidden language for the knights to confer amongst themselves and then deliver their verdict in one voice.



Rose Court Wrens

Trio of Small Humanoids (Awakened Beasts), Lawful Good

Armor Class 16 (elven chain)
Hit Points 120 (16d6 + 64)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	20 (+5)	18 (+4)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	17 (+3)

Skills Perception +4
Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, slashing
Damage Immunities psychic
Condition Immunities grappled, prone
Senses darkvision 30 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages Common, Sylvan
Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Feline Enmity. The wrens have advantage on attacks against feline creatures.

Triplicate Fighter. The wrens are three creatures magically working in unison. The wrens can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the wrens can move through any opening large enough for a Tiny humanoid.

The wrens have advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks and on saving throws against being blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, stunned, and knocked unconscious.

At the start of the wrens' turn, choose one wren to lead the trio, each of which grants an additional trait and determines their attacks:

Anewa: The knights don't provoke opportunity attacks when leaving a hostile creature's space.
Hunapo: The knights gain a +3 bonus to Armor Class.
Kamaka: The knights gain a +3 bonus to saving throws.

Actions

Multiattack. The wrens make up to three attacks.

Shield Rush (Kamaka Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) force damage, and the creature must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Rapier (Hunapo Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) piercing damage and the creature must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be blinded until the end of its next turn.

Fairy Dust Musket (Anewa Only). *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (3d8) radiant damage.

Tarpan

Equus ferus ferus

The allegorical Ship of Theseus poses the question: if every part of the boat is replaced, board by board, is it still the same ship? This question is repeated in the tarpan, one of the oldest wild horses in existence.

Wild horses have lived on the Eurasian continent since the Pleistocene era. Their earliest depictions are in cave paintings across Europe, including those at Lascaux, an estimated 30,000 years old.[331] However, wild horses began to disappear in post-glacial periods as forests in Europe replaced open plains, limiting their range.[332] Their descendants diverged into perhaps three subspecies. The forest horse or Diluvian horse, once classified *Equus caballus sylvaticus*, occupied the forests of central Europe as far west as the Rhine; this population had vanished by the Middle Ages as agriculture claimed its habitat.[333] The Przewalski's horse—pronounced "sha-val-ski"—classified *E. c. przewalskii*, was formerly native to the steppes and deserts of Kazakhstan, Sinkiang, Mongolia, and southern Siberia.[334] Though it had become extinct in the wild by the 1970s, a captive breeding program at the Prague Zoo successfully reintroduced the Przewalski's horse to its native habitat in the late 1980s, leading to wild herds that now thrive in the Khomyn Tal reserve and Gobi B national park.[335] Przewalski's horse has never been domesticated, and remains difficult to handle despite its many years in captivity.[336] The third subspecies is the now extinct tarpan, *E. ferus ferus*, native to the steppes of southern Russia and Ukraine as far east as the Volga River.[337] This was a stocky but diminutive animal, only four to five feet tall at the shoulder, with a distinctive mouse-dun coat and faint zebra-like stripes that grew shaggy and may have turned white in the harsh Siberian winters.[338] At close quarters, the tarpan was a fierce opponent, capable of driving off wolves and known to kill rival horses almost twice their weight.[339]

Domestication proved to be the defining factor in the tarpan's extinction as understood today, as the tarpan could interbreed with domesticated horses. Wild tarpan herds couldn't keep pace with the rapid proliferation of domestic horses, resulting in a collective bias toward the genes of domesticated horses—thus, the tarpan was gradually bred out of existence.[340]

Hunting for sport, food, and protection further pressured the tarpan toward oblivion. Dohner (2001) described the species' turbulent final years: "The last purebred Tarpan herd disappeared by the 1870s. Sometime between 1875 and 1890, the last known wild Tarpan mare was killed accidentally when she was chased off a cliff during an attempted capture. Another purebred Tarpan survived in a Russian zoo until 1909."[341]

There have been no less than three attempts to resurrect the tarpan from extinction in the same manner as the aurochs, surrounded by similarly troubling circumstances. The first came from the Polish biologist Tadeusz Vetulani from 1936 to 1939. Vetulani worked with Konik ponies, whose bloodline was thought to extend back to the first Diluvian horses in Poland's Białowieża forest, one of the last old-growth forests in Europe.[342]

The second attempt came after the German occupation of Poland in 1941, when management of Białowieża was seized by the Nazi party and turned over to Lutz Heck. High-ranking Nazi officials like Herman Göring trusted Heck to recreate within Białowieża a wilderness untouched by human hands and a hunting ground for rare and reconstructed ancient species like the aurochs. This campaign reflected the Nazi concept of *Lebensraum* ("living space",) a nationalistic philosophy that used pseudo-Darwinist theories to justify ethnic cleansing and animal exploitation. Even as Białowieża's Jewish inhabitants, Polish resistance fighters, and Soviet partisans were deported and executed en masse, Heck had Vetulani's horses rounded up and brought to the Munich and Berlin zoos to supply his own breeding program. Vetulani decried this "management" as a "gruesome and elaborate exploitation not only of our natural resources and

Tarpan

Medium Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 10
Hit Points 13 (2d8 + 4)
Speed 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	2 (–4)	11 (+0)	7 (–2)

Senses passive Perception 10
Languages —
Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Actions

Hooves. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (2d4 + 3) bludgeoning damage.



material goods but also of our blood—in the most literal sense—and religious heritage."[343] After the war, the care and breeding of the Heck horses and the stewardship of Poland's part of the forest returned to Polish hands.[344]

A few of Heck's "bred-back" tarpans were exported to the United States after the war, leading to the third attempt to resurrect the tarpan, this time by a private rancher in central Oregon. In the mid-1960s, Harry Hergardt began breeding a handful of these tarpans with American mustangs, feral animals descended from Colonial Spanish horses. Over the course of 25 years, he produced a herd of around 100 horses with a startling resemblance to the original tarpan, including its stand-up mane, rotund stomach, and thick head.[345] The Hergard horse has hooves that are much harder than those of a domestic horse, and don't need to be shod. When Hergardt died in 1990, local ranchers Gordon and Lenette Stroebel continued the project, maintaining the tarpan's tenuous connection to the present. After the Stroebel's retirement in 2012, the herd relocated to a ranch in Princeton, Oregon, where mother-daughter team Sue Ramsay and Helen Aldrich planned to work with the Stroebels to continue to safeguard the breed.[346]

However, even the Stroebels agree an exact genetic recreation of the tarpan can never exist. "We have had numerous discussions about this," said Stroebel. "It all comes down to who can create the best look-alike."[347]

Rimecharger

Huge Monstrosity, Typically Neutral Evil

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 114 (12d12 + 36)
Speed 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	8 (−1)	17 (+3)	6 (−2)	13 (+1)	7 (−2)

Skills Athletics +6
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages understands Giant but can't speak
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Cold Absorption. Whenever the rimecharger is subjected to cold damage, it takes no damage and instead regains a number of hit points equal to the cold damage dealt.

Inexorable. The rimecharger's speed cannot be reduced by spells and other magical effects.

Actions

Hooves. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) cold damage.

Concussive Stomp (Recharge 5–6). The rimecharger stamps its hooves to emit a wave of concussive energy in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the creature takes 13 (3d8) thunder damage and is knocked prone. On a successful save, the creature takes half as much damage and isn't knocked prone.

Rimecharger

Inspired by the Tarpan

In the bitter cold of the world's arctic reaches, frost giants reign in battle-tested supremacy alongside their fearsome winter wolf hunting dogs. When frost giants wage war, however, their jarls ride into battle astride rimechargers, the swiftest winter beast.

Frozen Herds. Rimechargers roam in herds through their arctic home. They neither eat nor drink, but subsist entirely on ice, transmuting it to elemental energy within their stomachs. Sea ice is a delicacy, and on rare occasions herds of rimechargers will swim out to feed on a passing iceberg. Only a few wild herds of rimechargers exist, and competition among them is fierce. Stallions will often steal mares from other herds, and colts will attempt to divide their herds in bouts for supremacy. The sound of their conflict, like the cracking of thick ice on a frozen lake, can be heard from miles away.

Tortoises

Turtles (order *testudines*) are nature's tanks, adventuring in full plate armor and more concerned with taking a hit than avoiding one. The giant land-dwelling members of the order, tortoises, were first found 563 miles off the western coast of Ecuador as the sole inhabitants of the islands which share their name: Galápagos, Spanish for "tortoise."

At the dawn of the modern era, the Galápagos were regarded by passing ships from both sides of the Atlantic as a sort of meat larder. Sir Thomas Herbert, the same English traveler who spoke so adoringly of the dodo, said of the tortoises, "The Ile has no humane inhabitants. Those creatures that possesse it, have it on the condition to pay tribute (without exception) to such ships as famine, or foule weather force to anchor there."[348] Glowing accounts of tortoise herds in the thousands covered the islands like paving stones and made delicious, fatty eating in the late 1600s and early 1700s. French and English navy ships often took all the tortoises they could hold, especially as tortoises could live for months on board a ship with seemingly no adverse effects.[349] When French settlers began working to establish a port of call on the island, they brought domestic cattle that competed with the tortoises for grazing, as well as pigs and rats that destroyed tortoise nests and ate the young. Tortoises began going extinct from their individual islands almost before they could be properly understood as unique species.

The IUCN lists eight species of tortoise as extinct (detailed below), and while each is individually valuable, they can be equally represented with the Tortoise stat block found in this section.

Giant Tortoise

Medium Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)
Hit Points 65 (10d8 + 20)
Speed 5 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	7 (−2)	14 (+2)	2 (−4)	12 (+1)	5 (−3)

Condition Immunities charmed
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages —
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Heavy Body. The giant tortoise has advantage on saving throws against being knocked prone. If the tortoise is knocked prone, it must use its action and all its movement to stand up again.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (3d6 + 3) piercing damage.

TORTOISE SPECIES	CLASSIFICATION	YEAR OF EXTINCTION[358]
Pinta Island Giant Tortoise	*Chelonoidis niger abingdonii*	2012
Floreana Giant Tortoise	*Chelonoidis niger niger*	1850
Saddle-Backed Rodrigues Giant Tortoise	*Cylindraspis vosmaeri*	1800
Mauritian High-Fronted Tortoise	*Cylindraspis triserrata*	1700
Seychelles Mud Turtle	*Cylindraspis indica*	1760
Mauritian Domed Tortoise	*Cylindraspis inepta*	1700
Rodrigues Lesser Tortoise	*Cylindraspis peltastes*	1800

Pinta Island Giant Tortoise

Chelonoidis niger abingdonii

Lonesome George, the last Pinta Island giant tortoise, is perhaps the world's most famous endling. He was the subject of a decades-long breeding program to save his species in which he largely refused to participate.

Even at the time of his discovery, Lonesome George was as much an object of mythic speculation as Melville's white whale. In 1959, fishermen released three goats on Pinta Island; by 1970, they had given rise to a population of some 40,000 and destroyed any suitable tortoise habitat on the island.[350] Biologist József Vágvölgyi photographed a Pinta Island giant tortoise during a visit to the island in December 1971, seemingly unaware it had been 65 years since any tortoises had been recorded there. In March of '72, Vágvölgyi met the visiting tortoise expert Peter Pritchard, and when he casually mentioned his tortoise sighting Pritchard was stunned. "I practically lost my teeth," Pritchard recalled.[351] Pritchard joined several other scientific expeditions to Pinta Island that same month and brought the tortoise to the Charles Darwin Research Station (CDRS) on Santa Cruz. Word soon spread of the solitary reptile's discovery. The American media named him for the hen-pecked husband in *The George Gobel Show*, and the name Lonesome George stuck.[352] Comparing the tortoise to Vágvölgyi's photograph, Pritchard realized George was probably the last Pinta Island tortoise on the planet.[353]

For decades, scientists searched for a partner of George's own species to begin a breeding program, with no success. In early 1992, the CDRS took a radical step in introducing him to two females from nearby Isabella Island (*C. becki*), a population thought to be most genetically similar.[354] George actively avoided interacting with these females, and in fact resisted every animal husbandry technique researchers could use. Speculation abounds. One travel brochure called George "the world's oldest gay tortoise," though homosexuality is as difficult to establish in George's case as heterosexuality. Since he became an adult in isolation, George simply may not have known how to interact with other tortoises. Or perhaps male competition may be a necessary component of tortoise reproduction. Whatever the case, Lonesome George never produced live offspring.

Lonesome George was found dead of natural causes the morning of June 24, 2012.[355] His exact age was unknown but estimated to be around 130, which is young for a giant tortoise. His body was taxidermied at the American Museum of Natural History, a process that took over 18 months.[356] In 2017 the 7-foot-tall, 165-pound specimen was returned to Santa Cruz, where it carries on George's legacy today as a conservation icon.[357]



Using a Tortoise as a Mount

A giant tortoise can easily carry a man, and therefore can be used as a mount by creatures of Medium size or smaller. Doing so slows most characters to a crawl, but the tortoise doesn't seem to mind, so you might as well.



Lonesome George

Inspired by the Pinta Island Giant Tortoise of the same name

Throughout history, cultures from around the world have described a character with eerie similarity. He has been called the Vast Remembrancer, the Witness of Creation, or the Mountain that Moves, but for the last few hundred years, they've simply called him Lonesome George.

George is a colossal tortoise, dwarfing every living thing on the Material Plane. His shell carries a literal mountain and his footfalls cause earthquakes.

Timeless and Venerable. Lonesome George's enormity is matched only by his age. He was among the first beings created on the Material Plane, reportedly sculpted by the primordial god responsible for creating every mountain, river, and forest. In his years, George watched the birth of magic, dragons gain their colors, dwarves emerge from the mountains, and empires rise and fall like the tides. And throughout it all, George has walked.

Circumnavigating the globe several times, George's pace is literally glacial. However, time and patience are on George's side, and he has never been reported to stand still. Sometimes his stroll takes him through the sea, yet he continues, unimpeded by oceanic depths.

His age and singularity are the reason for his moniker: surely, any such being would be lonesome.

Inexorable Wisdom. Despite his age, George's memory is supernaturally keen. He can recall vignettes and snippets going back to the dawn of time, but has trouble constructing a rigorous history—he didn't see most of the big events, after all.

But more so than knowledge, Lonesome George is a repository of wisdom. There is no mystery that George can't elucidate, no ethic that George can't speak to. For centuries, wise men have sought out George to climb the "Mountain of Wisdom" and bring his teachings back to the world. Sometimes, these insights are obvious: be nice to your neighbor. Other times, they are profound.

Lonesome George

Gargantuan Celestial (Titan), Neutral

Armor Class 20 (natural armor)
Hit Points 192 (11d20 + 77)
Speed 5 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
25 (+7)	3 (−4)	24 (+7)	20 (+5)	30 (+10)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Str +13, Con +13, Wis +16
Skills Arcana +11, History +17, Insight +16, Nature +11
Damage Resistances acid, cold, force, lightning, psychic, thunder
Damage Immunities fire, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Condition Immunities charmed, exhausted, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, prone, restrained
Senses truesight 60 ft., passive Perception 20
Languages Common, Draconic, Primordial, Sylvan
Challenge 19 (22,000 XP)

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Lonesome George fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Lethargic Aura. Lonesome George creates an area of slowed time, as per the spell *slow* (DC 21), in a 30-foot-radius sphere centered on himself. At the start of each of his turns, George decides whether the aura is active.

Actions

Stomp. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 28 (2d20 + 7) bludgeoning damage and the target is knocked prone.

Legendary Actions

Lonesome George can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. George regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Stomp. George makes a Stomp attack.
Time Surge (3 Actions). George distorts time around him in a 1-mile radius around himself. One minute passes for George while other creatures in the area experience mere seconds. George can move up to 50 feet without provoking opportunity attacks and make three Stomp attacks.

The Tasmanian Gothic

"If accounts from Port Jackson and some persons who have been here can be credited, a quadruped not quite so pleasant [as the kangaroo] to live in the neighborhood of, is also an inhabitant of Van Diemen's Land—Traces of a Carnivorous Beast have been found in many parts, like a Leopard or a Panther, but I do not hear that any person belonging to the Settlement has seen the animal itself—Labillardiere in his Voyage in search of Perouse in 1792 speaks of being ashore here & being disturbed by the Howlings of a Beast, that came pretty near them—That at another time a quadruped the size of a large dog spring from some bushes—it was whitish Spotted with black—and in the woods they found a large upper Jaw and Vertebrae of an animal certainly carnivorous. I suspect however that it may be only a variety of the wild Dog, or rather Wolf of this Country…"

—George Prideaux Harris, 1804[359]

"When the comparatively small island of Tasmania becomes more densely populated, and its primitive forests are intersected with roads from the eastern to the western coast, the numbers of this singular animal will speedily diminish, extermination will have its full sway, and it will then, like the Wolf in England and Scotland, be recorded as an animal of the past: although this be a source of much regret, neither the shepherd nor the farmer can be blamed for wishing to rid the island of so troublesome a creature. A price is already put upon the head of the native Tiger, as it is called; but the fastnesses of the Tasmanian rocky gullies, clothed with impenetrable forests, will, for the present, preserve it from destruction."

—John Gould, 1863[360]



Thylacine

Thylacinus cynocephalus
Marsupial wolf
Tasmanian tiger
Tassie tiger
Ghost tiger

Before British settlers arrived in the late 1700s, an entire ecosystem developed in the dense forests of the island of Tasmania, with marsupials and monotremes filling the ecological niches occupied elsewhere in the world by placental mammals. Where Europe had badgers and other mustelids, Tasmania had Tasmanian devils. Where the Americas had wolves and coyotes, Tasmania had thylacines.

The extinction of the thylacine began when settlers from England and mainland Australia brought with them non-native species that formed the backbones of their home culture.[361] Herding dogs and their wild descendants competed for the same food and habitats used by thylacines. Reports spread of thylacines killing domestic sheep, on whose backs the livelihoods of those early settlers was carried, despite the minimal recorded losses inflicted by thylacines and other predators.[362] The thylacine became so universally and violently hated that between 1835 and 1910, a concerted effort was made to exterminate the species from the island entirely.[363] Most experts agree it worked.

The last known thylacine in the world was named Benjamin. He spent the end of his life pacing the floor of a concrete-floored enclosure at Hobart's Beaumaris Zoo in Tasmania, before passing away on September 7, 1936. Archival footage of Benjamin is now the only way to ever see a ghost tiger.[364]

Occasional unconfirmed sightings have led a growing number of amateur researchers in recent years to believe thylacines are still extant in the wild. Their small size, excellent camouflage, and reclusive habits may have helped the Tasmanian bush protect the species. Where the Americas have the sasquatch, Tasmania has the tassie tiger.

Thylacine

Small Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 9 (2d6 + 2)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	3 (−4)	12 (+1)	9 (−1)

Skills Perception +3
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages —
Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Forest Walker. The thylacine has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage.





Ghost Tiger

Medium Monstrosity, Typically Chaotic Neutral

Armor Class 13
Hit Points 71 (11d8 + 22)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +5
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages understands Sylvan but can't speak
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Incorporeal Movement. The tiger can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

Keen Smell. The tiger has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage plus 4 (1d8) force damage.

Induce Dream (Recharge 5–6). One creature of the tiger's choice within 60 feet of it must succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw or be charmed for 1 minute. While charmed, the target is incapacitated and has a speed of 0. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. This effect ends for the charmed creature if it takes any damage or if someone else uses an action to shake the creature out of its stupor.

Ghost Tiger

Inspired by the Thylacine

Phantasmal and enchanting, the ghost tiger is a creature that dwells between the planes, consuming the dreams of mortals and imparting nightmares upon those most deserving.

Dream Eaters. When a ghost tiger stalks into town under cover of night, it phases through walls and windows to enter a bedroom and creep up to the foot of the bed. The beast opens its jaws impossibly wide and draws in the invisible threads of the dreamer's mind. Then, its meal consumed, the ghost tiger departs, leaving behind a dreamless night's sleep and the faint memory of an eerie, gossamer glow lighting one's room.

Ghost tigers are highly empathetic creatures, sensing the emotions of dreamers and consuming their most terrible nightmares. Such dreams provide ample sustenance for a ghost tiger and liberate the dreamer from experiencing the nightmare. As such, folk legend maintains that ghost tigers bear the spirits of ancestors, visiting their cherished loved ones from beyond the grave and granting them peace. Sages, by contrast, believe that the tigers originate from some far off dream realm, and slip into our world via the Ethereal Plane.

Revenants of Nightmare. Occasionally, when a ghost tiger visits the bedside of someone tormented by the deeds of others, the tiger can be overwhelmed by the wave of nightmares. Dreams borne of anxiety or phobias are one thing, but those born of a tragedy or abuse are another entirely. These nightmares transform the usually benign and peaceful ghost tiger into a revenant tiger, a creature bent on exacting revenge against those who harmed the dreamer. Naturally, the name pays reference to the revenant, an undead creature returned to seek revenge, in much the same manner as the tiger.



A revenant tiger is terror made manifest—its bite imparts a cold panic and its gaze provokes nightmarish visions. Implacable, the revenant tiger will hunt its quarry (or quarries) to the ends of the earth, and phase through any wall or barricade that stands in its way. Only once its quarry is slain does the tiger return to its docile state.

Revenant Tiger

Medium Monstrosity, Typically Lawful Evil

Armor Class 14
Hit Points 130 (20d8 + 40)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	19 (+4)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)

Skills Perception +6, Stealth +7
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16
Languages understands Sylvan but can't speak
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Magic Resistance. The tiger has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Incorporeal Movement. The tiger can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

Keen Smell. The tiger has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Actions

Multiattack. The tiger makes two Dreadful Bite attacks, or three Dreadful Bite attacks if all are against targets that are frightened.

Dreadful Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage plus 4 (1d8) force damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened of the tiger for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Release Nightmare (Recharge 5–6). One creature of the tiger's choice within 60 feet of it must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or take 27 (6d8) psychic damage and be paralyzed for 1 minute. A creature that is frightened of the revenant tiger has disadvantage on its saving throw. Creatures that can't be frightened automatically succeed on this saving throw. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Translucent Amastra Snail

Amastra pellucida

Amastra pellucida was formally described to science in 1895 from a specimen taken by D.D. Baldwin in the Waianae Valley on the Hawaiian island of Oahu. This air-breathing land snail was less than an inch long, with a beautiful spiraling shell on its back. The shell was so thin as to be translucent, showing the snail's pulse. "The action of the heart is plainly visible through the thin texture of the shell," Baldwin wrote. "When first collected the pulsations were about fifty per minute, growing slower and fainter from day to day until the animal died."[365] Despite this, the shell was very strong due to the white ribs running along the spirals of the shell.[366]

The translucent amastra snail has not been found since, and was declared extinct in 1994.[367]

Inevitable Snail

Inspired by the Translucent Amastra Snail

An inevitable snail is a subtle, insidious curse meant to rob the target of their sanity along with their life.

Transmuted Killers. Inevitable snails are the result of a powerful transmutation ritual known only to gods and inscrutable archfey in which an ordinary snail is rendered invisible, enlarged to the size of a bear, granted humanlike intelligence, and magically bound to a quarry. The snail moves directly toward its quarry, never slowing or deviating from its path, until it can touch its victim, instantly and completely draining the victim's life force.



Inevitable Snail

Medium Monstrosity, Typically Neutral

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 102 (12d8 + 48)
Speed 10 ft., climb 10 ft., swim 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	5 (−3)	19 (+4)	9 (−1)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)

Skills Perception +8, Stealth +0
Condition Immunities exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained, unconscious
Senses darkvision 30 ft., tremorsense 60 ft., passive Perception 18
Languages —
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Amphibious. The snail can breathe air and water.

Faultless Tracker. A quarry is designated by the snail's creator. As long as the snail and its quarry are on the same plane of existence, the snail knows the distance to and direction of its quarry. The snail also knows the location of its creator.

Invisibility. The snail is invisible.

Actions

Death Touch. *Melee Spell Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 22 (4d10) necrotic damage and the target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. A frightened creature has disadvantage on this saving throw. If the target fails its saving throw fails by 5 or more, the creature is reduced to 0 hit points. Otherwise, on a failed save the target becomes frightened for 1 minute. A frightened target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the frightened condition on itself on a success.

Disturbing Harbingers. Long before the snail reaches its quarry, the snail's psychic influence fills its mind with unease. At first, this manifests as a vague unrest. As the snail approaches, this grows into a persistent, acrid, loamy scent perceptible only to the quarry. Nearer still and the quarry suffers terrifying nightmares, leaving them unable to speak.

The longer this psychic influence persists, the more permanent its effects become. Often, the snail's quarry goes stark raving mad before the snail ever catches them.

Warrah

Dusicyon australis
Antarctic wolf
Falkland Islands fox
Falklands wolf
***Aguará* (Guaraní)**

This curious canid refuses classification, and was known as a fox, wolf, jackal, even a mariner and a vampire in its time.

In 1690, when Captain John Strong set foot on what he would label the Falkland Islands aboard the H.M.S. *Welfare*, he found a storm-battered, treeless archipelago with no human inhabitants. Sea birds, insects, and marine mammals like seals and dolphins lived there in droves, but the archipelago supported only one terrestrial predator: a large fox-like creature soon dubbed the warrah. Measuring four to five feet long and only two feet high at the shoulder, the creature had a wolflike face but a foxish coat, with yellow, brown and black fur, black ears, and a white-tipped tail.[368] The warrah's jaws indicated it was an opportunistic omnivore much like a jackal, scavenging along the shore or hunting prey like ground-nesting birds or seal pups.[369]

Much ink has been spilled over how to classify the warrah. First designated *Canis antarcticus*, biologists debated whether it was a jackal, fox, dog, or wolf.[370] It wasn't until 2009 that a phylogenetic analysis determined the warrah was the last member of a distinct South American genus of canids called *Dusicyon*, surviving thousands of years longer than its brethren. The warrah's closest extant relative is the maned wolf (*Chrysocyon brachyurus*), a bizarrely long-limbed canid from the central countries of South America.[371]

The warrah had no fear of humans and was known to wade into the water to meet an approaching boat.[372] Sailors on the *Welfare* managed to capture a live warrah and sail with it for some months. However, the unfortunate conscript leapt overboard at the sound of the cannon when the *Welfare* came into conflict with the French.[373]

The British, French, Spanish, and Argentinians would each establish colonies on the Falkland Islands, bringing sheep and other domesticated animals with them. The warrah saw these new animals as easy prey, and so its reputation quickly transformed from curiosity to menace. Rumors even circulated that it was a vampire, drinking the blood from its victims and only eating the meat in times of dire need.[374] Even at the time, farmers reported that the warrah never attacked sheep, but simply scared the sheep into running headlong to their deaths in the island's wetlands, but sensationalized rumors continued.[375] The local government put a bounty on warrah pelts, which fur traders eagerly snapped up. The warrah had never been abundant, perhaps numbering a few thousand, and collapsed under this enormous pressure.[376]

By the time Charles Darwin visited the Falkland Islands during the voyage of the H.M.S. *Beagle* in 1834, the warrah's fate already seemed sealed. He recognized the intrinsic danger faced by species endemic to a small island, writing:

> *"The number of these animals during the past fifty years must have been greatly reduced; already they are entirely banished from that half of East Falkland which lies east of the head of San Salvador Bay and Berkeley Sound; and it cannot, I think, be doubted, that as these islands are now being colonized, before the paper is decayed on which this animal has been figured, it will be ranked among those species which have perished from the earth."*[377]

Darwin was more right than he knew; within his lifetime, the warrah became the first known canine extinction. In 1876, the last known warrah was killed at Shallow Bay, in the Hill Cove Canyon.[378]

Warrah

Small Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)
Hit Points 7 (2d6)
Speed 30 ft., burrow 5 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
2 (−4)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	3 (−4)	12 (+1)	8 (−1)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +4
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages —
Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Keen Hearing and Smell. The warrah has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Vampire Fox

Inspired by the Warrah

The pale, gaunt vampire fox is the tragic result of vampire asceticism.

Night of the Vampire Beasts. In an effort to avoid the ire of vampire hunters, a cabal of vampires once resorted to exclusively drinking the blood of live beasts. Eventually the curse of vampirism adapted to animal hosts, first infecting a red fox. From this vector, the curse spread to an alarming number of creatures, transforming once peaceful beasts into bloodthirsty undead. This influx of bestial vampires transformed once vibrant forests into mass graves for pale, desiccated corpses.

Cyclical Resurgence. Every few years, the curse of the vampire beasts resurfaces, spreading like nightmarish wildfire until all of the local fauna have all been converted or bled dry. Vampire beasts can't produce offspring, nor can they temper their bloodlust.

Even between outbreaks of animal vampirism, cunning vampire foxes can still sometimes be spotted under cover of moonlight. Perhaps, foxes make for natural carriers of the vampiric curse, or perhaps they innately understand how to avoid daylight and control their cycles of feeding.

Undead Nature. Vampire beasts don't require air.



Sensationalized Rumors

"The new colonists had, so to speak, 'no use' for the Antarctic wolf…for it developed a fatal taste for mutton. Two or three of the wolves would round up a flock, and dashing into it, kill their victims by biting them in the back of the neck. These expensive tastes were discouraged by the farmers, who destroyed the wolves by placing dead geese doctored with strychnine in their burrows."

—Graham Renshaw, 1905[379]

"In a review in the current number of Nature of Mr. Renshaw's 'Some Mammalian Types,' reference is made to the 'Antarctic wolf of the Falkland Islands exterminated by the sheep farmers in self defence.' Might I be permitted to add a word on this subject in correction of an erroneous impression current among many naturalists with regard to this animal? During a visit to the Falkland Islands in 1903, and again in 1904, I made careful inquiries with regard to the native wolf or fox. The oldest sheep farmers in the islands, men who remembered when the fox was still plentiful, insisted that it was quite a mistake to credit it with attacking sheep; this never occurred, and the reason that the farmers waged war against the foxes was because the sheep, apparently mistaking them for dogs, especially at night, in their terror ran into the bogs and swamps which abound in the islands and were consequently lost. None of the farmers whose experience went back to the time of these foxes had any memory of sheep being killed or even mauled by them."

—R. N. Rudmose-Brown, Scottish National Antarctic Expedition, Edinburgh, 1906[380]

Vampire Beast Template

Any Beast, such as a tiger, can become a vampire beast through the blood curse of vampirism. When a Beast becomes a vampire beast, it retains all its statistics except as noted below.

Type. The vampire's type is Undead.

Alignment. The vampire is typically neutral evil.

Ability Scores. The vampire's Strength and Dexterity scores become 17, if they weren't already higher.

Senses. The vampire beast has darkvision with a radius of 120 feet.

Damage Resistances. The vampire beast has resistance to necrotic damage and bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks.

Trait: Regeneration. The vampire beast regains 5 hit points at the start of its turn if it has at least 1 hit point and isn't in sunlight or running water. If the vampire beast takes radiant damage or damage from holy water, this trait doesn't function at the start of its next turn.

Trait: Vampire Weaknesses. The vampire beast has the following flaws:

Harmed by Running Water. The vampire beast takes 20 acid damage when it starts its turn in running water.

Stake to the Heart. The vampire beast is destroyed if a piercing weapon made of wood is driven into its heart while it is incapacitated.

Sunlight Hypersensitivity. The vampire beast takes 20 radiant damage when it starts its turn in sunlight. While in sunlight, it has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

Attacks. If the vampire beast doesn't have a Bite attack, it gains one. A Bite uses Strength or Dexterity, whichever is higher, for its attack and damage rolls. The Bite's piercing damage is determined by the vampire beasts's size: a Small or smaller creature deals 1d4 damage, a Medium creature deals 1d6 damage, a Large creature deals 1d8 damage, and a Huge or larger creature deals 1d10 damage.

On a hit with a Bite attack, the target takes an extra 2d4 necrotic damage. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken and the vampire beast regains hit points equal to that amount. The reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if its hit point maximum is reduced to 0.

Vampire Fox

Small Undead, Typically Neutral Evil

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 35 (10d6)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	17 (+3)	11 (+0)	3 (−4)	12 (+1)	7 (−2)

Skills Perception +5
Damage Resistance necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages —
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Keen Sight and Smell. The fox has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight or smell.

Regeneration. The fox regains 5 hit points at the start of its turn if it has at least 1 hit point and isn't in sunlight or running water. If the fox takes radiant damage or damage from holy water, this trait doesn't function at the start of its next turn.

Vampire Weaknesses. The fox has the following flaws:

Harmed by Running Water. The fox takes 20 acid damage when it starts its turn in running water.

Stake to the Heart. The fox is destroyed if a piercing weapon made of wood is driven into its heart while it is incapacitated.

Sunlight Hypersensitivity. The fox takes 20 radiant damage when it starts its turn in sunlight. While in sunlight, it has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage plus 5 (2d4) necrotic damage. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken, and the fox regains hit points equal to that amount. The reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if its hit point maximum is reduced to 0.

Yangtze River Dolphin

Lipotes vexillifer
Baiji
Whitefin dolphin
***Jiangma* (river horse)**

The Yangtze river dolphin was protected by folklore for centuries until humans caused such degradation that the river it called home could no longer support it.

For hundreds of years, fishermen and scholars knew the Yangtze river dolphin as "baiji." It was described in the *Erya*, the first Chinese dictionary, parts of which were written as early as the third century BCE. In legend, the baiji was either a "galloping white horse" carrying divinities across lakes and rivers, or a goddess in its own right who rewarded the good and punished evildoers.[381] Fishermen would release baiji caught in their nets for fear of divine reprisal.

River Dolphin

Medium Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 12 (natural armor)
Hit Points 9 (2d8)
Speed 0 ft., swim 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)	6 (−2)	12 (+1)	7 (−2)

Skills Perception +3
Senses blindsight 60 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages —
Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Charge. If the dolphin moves at least 30 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a slam attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage.

Echolocation. The river dolphin can't use its blindsight while deafened.

Hold Breath. The river dolphin can hold its breath for 10 minutes.

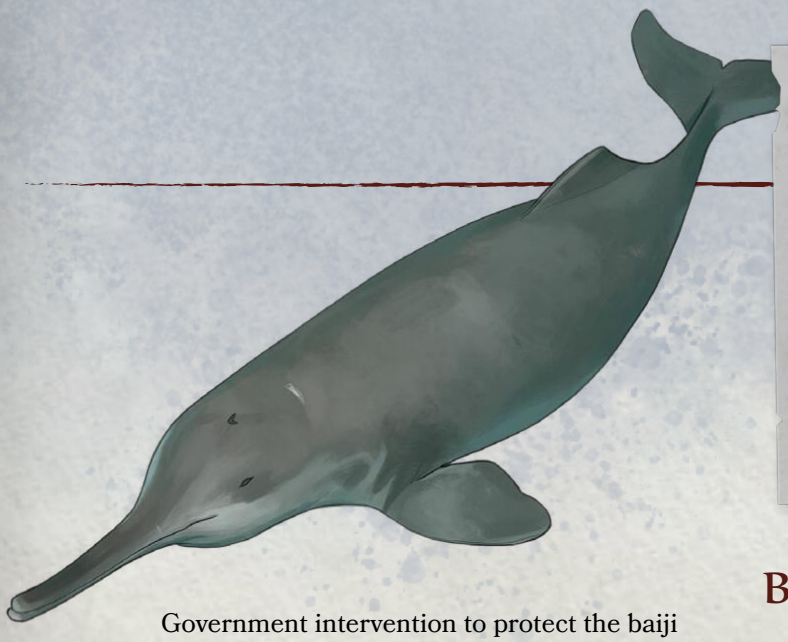
Actions

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

Baiji was one of only eight freshwater dolphins in the world, all of whom are threatened with extinction. It spanned up to seven feet long, weighed up to and 275 pounds, and ranged from the mouth of the Yangtze river over 1,180 miles to Dongting and Poyang lakes.[382] In the muddy water of the Yangtze, the baiji had no need of keen eyesight and instead relied on echolocation as it searched for bottom-feeding fish with its long, toothed beak. Small pods moved with the seasons, following eddies in shallow water near sandbars, islands, and beaches.[383]

Due to national self-isolation beginning in the Ming dynasty, the baiji wasn't known to western science until the early 1900s. Field naturalist Charles M. Hoy was the first to export a specimen, bringing a skull to the National Museum of Natural History where it was pronounced a new species and classified *Lipotes vexillifer*.[384] Only three specimens of the baiji exist in museums outside of China: Hoy's type specimen from 1914, one obtained by Clifford H. Pope at Dongting Lake, and one shipped to London by British explorers in the 1930s. Pope's method of capturing his specimen—posting notices reading "Ten Silver Dollars is to be Awarded to Whoever First Catches a Baiji"—attracted no small amount of ire from local fisherman, who were sure the goddess of the river would take her retribution on the plunderer.[385]

Beginning in 1958 with the "Great Leap Forward," rapid industrialization of the Yangtze river forced the baiji into decline. The title "goddess of the river" was relegated to meaningless superstition as, determined to make the most of the river's natural resources, fisheries harvested leather, meat, and fat from baiji.[386] Starting in the 1970s, hydroelectric projects and boat locks trapped shoals of baiji in small parts of the river that couldn't sustain them or outright killed them in machinery.[387] Waste water and chemical runoff from factories and residential areas polluted the river and depleted the baiji's food supply.[388] The baiji was often caught in bottom-long-line-hooks and net traps meant for fish.[389] The constant cacophony of passing boats fused into "a sustained shrieking blast of white noise" that effectively blinded baiji and made them vulnerable to propeller strikes.[390] Author Douglas Adams wrote that the baiji of legend "must have had led a life of extraordinary sinfulness" to deserve her reincarnations "constantly being mangled in ship's propellers, snared in fishermen's nets full of hooks, blinded, poisoned, and deafened."[391]



"There were unforgivable delays in action. you need to act long before the eleventh hour and fifty-ninth minute. The species wasn't saved and therefore that was a conservation failure. unless we consciously remind ourselves and re-examine failures in conservation, as well as successes, the same scenario is going to play out again."

–Sam Turvey, 2022[399]

Government intervention to protect the baiji began in 1984, but despite becoming as high-profile as efforts to protect the giant panda, came too late to save it. At that time about 400 baiji were believed to be living in the Yangtze; by 1997, a full-fledged search yielded just 13 confirmed sightings.[392] The last Yangtze river dolphin in captivity was a male named Qi Qi, rescued from a long-line hook in Dongting Lake, died in 2002 after 22 years at the Institute of Hydrobiology in Wuhan; nearly all photographs ever taken of baiji are of him.[393] And in 2007, after a systematic survey of the dolphin's range failed to reveal any living specimens, researchers were forced to conclude the baiji had become functionally extinct, the first human-caused extinction of a cetacean and the first documented global extinction of a megafaunal vertebrate in the 50 years since the Caribbean monk seal.[394]

The forces that drove the baiji to extinction continue to this day. The Yangtze river carries more plastic pollution than any other river in the world, and along with the 10 most polluted rivers in the world transports 88–95 percent of global plastic pollution into the sea.[395] Like many freshwater systems, the Yangtze river is drying up. In August 2022 as an historic heat wave and drought gripped the country, the river reached its lowest water level since records began in 1865.[396] The drought left many along the Yangtze without power as hydroelectric dams were shut down, and key industries were forced to stop production.[397]

Like the Nile and the Mississippi, the Yangtze river is fundamental to the culture that surrounds it, and many are reluctant to concede this symbol of the river's majesty and biodiversity may be gone for good. While no confirmed sightings have occurred since 2002, the baiji has not been officially declared extinct. Volunteers continue to search the Yangtze for signs of its river dolphin, and often try to dissuade fishermen from using the same illegal tactics like electrofishing that caused the bulk of dolphin deaths in the 1990s.[398]

Baiji

Inspired by the Yangtze River Dolphin

Baiji are minor goddesses of protection that dwell in lakes and rivers, appearing variously as ivory-skinned women, river dolphins, or in their true form: as dolphin-like mermaids.

Water Guardians. Baiji are an embodiment of flowing currents and shifting tides, the will of water made manifest. When a specific river or lake is in disharmony with those who cross it or live near its shore, a baiji rises from the waterline to restore balance. As such, they act as guardians, protecting the unwary from drowning and exacting judgment on those who might defile the waters. The tides themselves heed a baiji's commands within their domain, allowing the baiji to whip up thunderstorms or produce waves with a mere gesture. Their power doesn't diminish until the water itself is out of sight, at which point a baiji's health and sanity precipitously degrades.

Baiji are free to judge anyone that traverses their waters. When the wicked sail downriver, the baiji ensures they meet tumultuous waters and drown, whereas the innocent who fall overboard are pulled by fortuitous currents to shore. Though some might dismiss a baiji's judgements as coincidences and poor weather, wise fishermen make offerings to the water spirit before setting sail, both to show respect for the generosity of their river or lake, and to bid for safe travels.

At the Shoreline. Unlike other spirits that are bound to an aspect of nature, baiji aren't compelled to remain solely within their waters. They are free to rise from the waves as humanoid women to walk the shoreline and explore nearby villages. Numerous tales tell of a baiji maintaining a double life, living and working in a riverside village by day, but returning to the water each night. And due to the baiji's radiant appearance, such stories often end with lovestruck tragedy, as baiji can never truly abandon their domains for a life on land.



Baiji

Medium Celestial, Typically Lawful Good

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)
Hit Points 99 (18d8 + 18)
Speed 5 ft., swim 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	18 (+4)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)	19 (+4)

Skills Insight +6, Perception +6, Persuasion +6
Senses blindsight 60 ft., passive Perception 16
Languages Aquan, Celestial, Common
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Hold Breath. The baiji can hold its breath for 20 minutes.

Echolocation. The baiji can't use its blindsight while deafened.

Actions

Wave Surge. *Melee or Ranged Spell Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (4d8) cold damage.

Change Shape. The baiji transforms into a Humanoid, a river dolphin, or back into its true Celestial form. Its game statistics, other than its size, are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

Spellcasting. The baiji casts one of the following spells, requiring no material components and using Wisdom as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 14):

At will: *create or destroy water*, *fog cloud*, *water breathing*
3/day each: *cure wounds*, *lesser restoration*, *remove curse*
1/day each: *control water*

Prehistoric Megafauna

Most of the extinction stories in this book transpired within the last few hundred years, when written, photographic, or even video evidence of lost animals exists. The digital age has rendered these artifacts easily accessible. But the trend of anthropogenic extinction extends back an estimated 50,000 years—beyond the confines of written history—into what geologists might call "near time" at the end of the Quaternary period. In this liminal space between paleontology and archeology, the megafauna roamed the earth. Alfred Russel Wallace described them as "the hugest, and fiercest, and strangest forms" of animal life, akin to monsters out of fantasy.

Monsters and Megafauna

The megafauna identified today include armadillos the size of cars, 500-pound birds, and 15-foot long monitor lizards, inhabiting regions across the globe from North America to Australia. They are the quintessential monsters. "The Monster Is the Harbinger of Category Crisis," runs the heading in Jeffrey Jerome Cohen's seminal essay on monster studies. "[Monsters] are disturbing hybrids," Cohen claims, "whose externally incoherent bodies resist attempts to include them in any systematic structuration."[400]

From cyclops to Godzilla to *Jaws*, giant creatures form the backbone of the monster ecosystem. In fact, the word "monster" can simply mean "huge," because at a certain point, sheer size is enough to shift humanity's place in the food chain from predator to prey. It's no coincidence that pulp adventure writers like H. Rider Haggard and horror writers like H.P. Lovecraft emerged a generation after the proliferation of natural historians, fossil collectors, and archeologists in the late 1800s. The world had unveiled new monsters out of the misty, unfathomable past—creatures so terrible and alien that only the fearless or insane could venture down their unknown paths. Such monstrous megafauna represent massive upheavals in how we categorize not just the world around us, but also ourselves.

Megafaunal Mystery

Megafaunal extinctions, much like the monsters themselves, also defy easy explanation. They didn't occur all at once, but in pulses spanning tens of thousands of years: first in Australia, then in North and South America, then in Madagascar in the Middle Ages, and lastly New Zealand's moas as late as the Renaissance.[401] Prevailing theories on the cause of these extinctions blame either climate change or human intervention. Paul Martin of the University of Arizona argues for anthropogenic extinction, what he calls "overkill", on the basis of timing. "When the chronology of extinction is critically set against the chronology of human migrations, man's arrival emerges as the only reasonable answer," he writes.[402] Critics of this theory, however, highlight the lack of fossil evidence for these slaughtered giants in the fossil record.

In either case, the pattern aligns with extinctions in recent centuries. The *modus vivendi* of megafauna was to become "too big to kill", evading predation by growing too formidable for predators to kill or even consume. This approach inherently limited their numbers and slowed their reproduction. When faced with human hunters, unencumbered by the constraints of other predators, entire populations of megafauna could be swiftly overwhelmed and eradicated almost unintentionally. If changing climate eliminated food sources or made habitats untenable, successive generations couldn't adapt quickly enough to survive. Both scenarios have the same outcome: megafauna suddenly faced an environment in which they were unequipped to succeed.

In the modern era, humans can quickly and completely reshape the natural environment of a species' entire range or reduce entire populations below sustainable levels. We can also choose, personally and corporately, to prevent those things from happening.

DIRE BEASTS

With the mechanical usage of the dire wolf as the next step up in the hierarchy of monsters—a wolf with a higher challenge rating—the word "dire" has in game design parlance come to mean "bigger, bonier, and more bad news". Although we won't do so in naming the monsters here to preserve clarity, you might think of every megafauna as the "dire" version of its modern counterpart: dire bears, dire kangaroos, and so on.

Megafauna in Your Game

In fantasy roleplaying games, the continued success of megafauna, despite their limitations, is often ascribed to magic. Dragons, for example, are capable of flight despite the square-cube law: as an animal grows, its weight increases faster than its surface area, making flight impractical for such a large creature were it not practically made of magic. Megafauna might be the product of errant enlargement spells, or of overlapping planes of existence, or of advanced magical breeding programs. Perhaps your game is set in an older time in which overkill hasn't yet taken place, or a far future time with advanced land management techniques. The megafauna are presented below as they would have existed in life, as no changes need to be made for them to belong in a fantasy setting.

Megafauna by Challenge Rating

Challenge Rating	Monster
1/8	Giant Cursorial Owl, Long Llama
1/2	Giant Beaver
1	Dire Wolf, Giant Hyena, Giant Short-Faced Kangaroo, Terror Bird
2	Cave Bear, Giant Cheetah, Giant Wombat, Gigantopithecus, Saber-Toothed Tiger
3	American Lion, Marsupial Lion, Megaloceros, Wonambi
4	Giant Short-Faced Bear, Giant Ground Sloth
5	Elasmotherium
6	Giant Monitor Lizard, Mastodon
7	Key-Foot Glyptodon, Megalodon
9	Morningstar-Tailed Glyptodon



American Lion

Panthera atrox
American cave lion

The American lion, the largest lion species ever, stood 25 percent larger than the average African lion, with relatively longer legs.[403] This wide-ranging animal left fossil remains all across North America, from Alaska to the La Brea tar pits in California, into Mexico, and east across Nevada and Texas to Florida.[404] Fossils of the giant leopard, *P. onca augusta*, have been discovered in many of the same deposits, suggesting these two feline apex predators would have overlapped in their range. They may have peacefully coexisted, with the giant leopard favoring forests and the American lion the plains.[405]

A spectacular discovery in Alaska shed light on how the American lion lived. In 1979, gold miners unearthed a 36,000-year-old mummified steppe bison (*Bison priscus*) in the permafrost. The find became known as "Blue Babe" as a mineral in its skin called vivianite turned blue on contact with air. The bison's hide bore bite and claw marks, as well as part of an American lion's tooth, demonstrating that the American lion would have been a pack hunter chasing down large prey, just like the African lion.[406]

Though *P. atrox* is sometimes called the American cave lion, it's not to be confused with the cave lion, *P. spelaea*. This slightly smaller European contemporary ranged across most of northern Eurasia and parts of North America.[407] The two are sister lineages, thought to have diverged after crossing the Beringian land bridge between Siberia and Alaska.[408]

American Lion

Large Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)
Hit Points 90 (12d10 + 24)
Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	3 (−4)	12 (+1)	8 (−1)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +6
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages —
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Keen Smell. The lion has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Pack Tactics. The lion has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the lion's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Pounce. If the lion moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a claw attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the lion can make one bite attack against it as a bonus action.

Running Leap. With a 10-foot running start, the lion can long jump up to 25 feet.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d10 + 4) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) slashing damage.



Spinning in the undertow of time, fact and fantasy become intertwined in an embrace that baffles. The truth is reflected in a misty mirror and becomes conjecture, not fact.

—W. S. S. Holmes[488]

Bears

As impressively indomitable as modern bears seem, they pale in comparison to their prehistoric ancestors. Modern black bears weigh in at 200 to 250 pounds, and stand three feet tall when not rearing up on their hind legs. By contrast, a giant short-faced bear could weigh ten times as much and stand eleven feet tall. Nobody makes a teddy bear of such a monster. It's hard to imagine that our ancestors felt anything other than terror and perhaps revernce at a fully-grown cave bear and its ilk.

Cave Bear

Ursus spelaeus
Cave bear

Cave bears are the fulcrum where archaeology turned from mythology to history. As late as the 1700s, cave bear bones found across Europe were depicted in historical journals as belonging to dragon bones," including a famous engraving by P.J. Hain in 1672. Many of the caves where these bones were discovered were named "Dragon's Cave" or "Dragon's Lair".[409] It wasn't until 1794 that German anatomist Johann Christian Rosenmüller published a description of the creature under the name *Ursus spaleus*, from a skull found in the Gaillenreuth caves in Bavaria.[410] The 18th and 19th centuries saw cave bears become a large part of the growing European interest in natural history.

Cave bears would have stood as tall as the largest of modern-day bears and weighed about 900 to 1,000 pounds.[411] Their teeth indicate a completely vegetarian diet, unlike modern bears who are typically opportunistic omnivores.[412] Large deposits of their bones are typically found together, leading to speculation as to whether they lodged in the caves year-round, lived and died in family groups, or simply found themselves dying in the same places over tens of thousands of years. Rosenmüller, however, still ascribed a certain mythicality to the species. "If 100,000 dog skulls found in an Egyptian cave prove that these animals were considered sacred," he wrote, "I see nothing implausible in the idea that our bear bones were similarly brought into the caves by human hands, and that they should be considered the remnants or proof of a pagan reverence."[413]

Cave Bear

Large Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 12 (natural armor)
Hit Points 51 (6d10 + 18)
Speed 40 ft., burrow 5 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	10 (+0)	17 (+3)	2 (−4)	13 (+1)	5 (−3)

Skills Perception +3
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages —
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Keen Smell. The bear has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Actions

Multiattack. The bear makes one Bite attack and one Claws attack.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8 + 5) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) slashing damage.

Giant Short-Faced Bear

Arctodus simus
Bulldog bear

The giant short-faced bear stood up to 11 and a half feet high at the shoulders and weighed around 2,000 pounds, the size of a bison.[414] The feet of the giant short-faced bear pointed forward, indicating a faster gait than modern bears, whose toes point inward.[415] It was thought to have been an opportunistic carnivore, often competing with dire wolves and saber-toothed tigers for the remains of their kills.



Giant Short-Faced Bear

Huge Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 105 (10d12 + 40)
Speed 45 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	12 (+1)	19 (+4)	3 (−4)	13 (+1)	7 (−2)

Skills Perception +3
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages —
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Keen Smell. The bear has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Actions

Multiattack. The bear makes one Bite attack and one Claws attack.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (1d12 + 6) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (2d10 + 6) slashing damage.

Dire Wolf

Aenocyon dirus

The dire wolf looms as large over fantasy as the wolf itself loomed over its contemporaries. It lived alongside five other species of medium-to-large-sized canids in North America during the Pleistocene, including the dhole, *Cuon alpinus*; coyote, *Canis latrans*; gray wolf, *C. lupus*; red wolf, *C. rufus*; and the extinct jackal-sized dog *C. cedazoensis*.[416] The dire wolf ranks among the most recognized prehistoric carnivores, and possessed the most powerful bite of any placental mammal.[417] Specimens have been unearthed at over 130 sites ranging from southern Canada to the Yucatan.[418] The Rancho La Brea Tar Pits in southern California alone have yielded over 200,000 specimens, alongside those of the saber-toothed tiger *Smilidon fatalis*.[419]

The epithet "dire" doesn't just refer to the wolf's size—though the dire wolf is estimated to have weighed in at 130 pounds, about 25 percent heavier than the extant gray wolf.[420] Whereas the gray wolf exhibits a slender, cursorial form, the dire wolf was heavier with shorter legs, a larger skull, and sturdy cheek teeth. If the gray wolf is akin to a gymnast, the dire wolf is a heavyweight wrestler. Though the animal's ecology remains somewhat of a mystery, the dire wolf likely alternated between scavenging, cracking bones for marrow with its powerful jaws, and downing large herbivores like bison, ground sloths, or small mammoths.[421]

Despite its common name, the dire wolf wasn't, genetically speaking, a wolf. Using samples from dozens of specimens in museum and university collections, scientists recovered the full mitochondrial DNA of the dire wolf in 2021. They discovered that the species is not part of the genus *Canis*, but rather the last of its own separate evolutionary lineage.[422] Based on this analysis, dire wolves were reclassified into an older genus, *Aenocyon*. The study's lead author, Angela Perri, suggested this convergent evolution may be attributed to the wolf-like body being an optimal form for a predator.[423] Nature abhors a vacuum and, seemingly, loves a wolf.

Dire Wolf

Large Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 37 (5d10 + 10)
Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	15 (+2)	15 (+2)	3 (−4)	12 (+1)	7 (−2)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +4
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages —
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Keen Hearing and Smell. The wolf has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

Pack Tactics. The wolf has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the wolf's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.



Elasmotherium

Elasmotherium sibiricum
Siberian unicorn

The so-called Siberian unicorn is the best known of the *Elasmotherium*, a genus of steppe-land rhinoceros that ranged across Eurasia before recorded history. Although no intact horns have yet been found, the large boss on the skull and the muscle hump on the shoulders could have supported a horn as long as a human man. The Yakut people of Siberia have a legend about a large black bull with one horn killed by a spear; the horn was so large and heavy it had to be carried home on a sled.[424] Stories of this one-horned creature may have led to legends of unicorns that persist to this day.

Elasmotherium

Huge Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 123 (13d12 + 39)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	8 (−1)	17 (+3)	2 (−4)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Senses passive Perception 10
Languages —
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Charge. If the elasmotherium moves at least 20 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a gore attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 11 (2d10) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 17 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Actions

Gore. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (2d10 + 6) piercing damage. On a hit, the target must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or begin bleeding. Constructs, elementals, and undead automatically succeed this saving throw. A bleeding creature loses 5 (1d10) hit points at the start at each of its turns until it uses an action to staunch the bleeding or it receives magical healing.

Giant Beaver

Castoroides ohioensis

The largest rodent in North America was a beaver the size of a black bear. Unlike its modern, aquatic descendants, the giant beaver was a fossorial animal that dug burrows instead of building lodges. Its teeth were two-foot long bone shears for cutting through fleshy aquatic plants called macrophytes, in contrast to the iron-rich, chisel-like teeth modern beavers use to cut through wood. The giant beaver's inability to build lodges may have been what led to its extinction, as it had no way of engineering the kind of waterways and shallow pools it needed as the climate warmed and dried at the end of the Pleistocene.[425]

The giant beaver would have been a fearsome opponent not just for its size and strength, but also for its call. Its football-sized skull contained large resonating chambers reminiscent of whales and other animals that communicate underwater, with which it could have produced a deafening, bone-rattling sound.[426]

The type specimen, or the basis on which the species was described, was a fragment of tooth and jaw, unearthed from a peat swamp near Nashport, Ohio in 1837, by naturalist S.R. Hildreth and classified as Castoroides ohioensis by geologist J.W. Foster.[427] However, the world's most complete fossil giant beaver, at seven-eighths original bone, was discovered in 1889. The specimen, a female, had an action-packed journey through history.

"She was found by farmers in the eastern part of Indiana's Randolph County while opening up a ditch to drain a swampy area locally known as 'The Dismal," recalls Dr. Heather Lerner, director of the Joseph Moore Museum at Earlham College where the specimen is on display today. "Describing the specimen in 1890, Joseph Moore wrote, 'On account of its standing in its natural position and its wonderful tusks, it awakened a desire to save all the parts that might be found.'"[428] The college purchased the beaver skeleton that year.[429]

Just after midnight on October 24, 1924, the building housing the collection caught fire. "The floors were wood and they had just been oiled, so it went up hot and fast," Lerner says. Students who rushed into the flames to save the collection were able to rescue much of the museum's collection, including the giant beaver. "She has some pretty incredible history and some real champions who would risk their own lives to save her," Lerner says.[430]

Today the museum has its own building on Earlham College's campus, where the beaver is on public display alongside the remains of a mastodon also discovered in Randolph County.

Giant Beaver

Medium Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 11 (natural armor)
Hit Points 19 (3d8 + 6)
Speed 30 ft., burrow 5 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	2 (−4)	12 (+1)	7 (−2)

Senses passive Perception 11
Languages —
Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Hold Breath. The giant beaver can hold its breath for 30 minutes.

Actions

Multiattack. The beaver makes one Bite attack and one attack with its Claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (2d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Frightful Call. Each creature of the beaver's choice that is within 90 feet of the beaver and can hear it must succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the beaver's Frightful Call for the next 24 hours.



Giant Cheetah

Acinonyx pardinensis

Generally speaking, cats are cats, no matter how large they get. Cheetahs, however, are the exception. As the world's fastest land animal, the cheetah hunts in a high-speed, short-distance chase, which it is perfectly engineered to win. Its clavicle is joined to its scapula only by ligaments, meaning the whole body is a muscular "sling" that maximizes shock absorption and stride length.[431] While running, the cheetah's back hyperextends, increasing its stride and the lung capacity.[432] It kills mostly by strangulation, having traded the larger canine teeth of its big cat cousins for larger nasal passages with increased airflow to the lungs.[433]

A cheetah twice the size of its modern relative ranged across Europe during the late Pleistocene. Weighing in at around 180 pounds, the giant cheetah was a stockier predator capable of thriving in cold climates and bringing down larger prey.[434] Long bones and most of a spine discovered in the Massif Central, a highland region in southern France, show the giant cheetah was as specialized a sprinter as its modern counterpart.[435]

Giant Cheetah

Medium Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 14
Hit Points 77 (14d8 + 14)
Speed 90 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	19 (+4)	12 (+1)	3 (−4)	12 (+1)	8 (−1)

Skills Athletics +5, Perception +3
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages —
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Agile. The cheetah doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when it moves out of an enemy's reach.

Keen Sight. The cheetah has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d10 + 4) piercing damage.



HOW FAST IS FAST?

Fifth Edition is built for mechanical balance, not perfect simulation of the real world. One of the ways this disparity is most obvious is in movement speed. Monsters need to be fast relative to player characters and other monsters, not their own real-life analogues.

Most player characters have a top speed of 60 feet per combat round of six seconds. The fastest monster in the game is a godlike angel called a solar, borne aloft by ivory wings with a top speed of 300 feet per combat round.

Both pale in comparison to modern cheetahs, which have been reliably clocked at a top speed of 60 miles an hour or 528 feet per round. To maintain the game's mechanical balance, the giant cheetah stat block given has a movement speed representing only about 20 miles per hour.

The giant cheetah would have been slower than its modern relatives, as biomechanics like bone density and organ placement dictate larger creatures aren't necessarily faster runners despite their longer stride lengths.[489] This is especially apparent at the extremes of athleticism where the cheetah thrives. However, considering the difficulties in correlating movement speed between the game and the real world, it seems only fair to suggest the same speed for both creatures.

Giant Cursorial Owl

Ornimegalonyx oteroi
Cuban giant owl

The largest owl to have ever lived was a high-speed runner from the western edge of what is now Cuba. Standing over three feet tall[436] and weighing an estimated 18 pounds,[437] the giant cursorial owl was the largest predator on the island during the Pleistocene. Genetically, the bird's closest living relatives are owls in the genus *Strix*, barn owls or wood owls with no visible ear tufts. In adaptations and habits, however, the giant cursorial owl probably resembled the tiny burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*) in that it lived on the ground and likely dwelled in caves. Its tarsometarsus, or lower leg bone, was twice as long as that of the great horned owl (*Bubo virgiananus*), giving it slender, long legs—ideal for running down prey.[438]

Just like the dodo and the moa, *O. oteroi* was a product of island gigantism. The owl's home, the mountains and valleys of what is now the Pinar del Río province, had no mammalian predators[439] and an abundance of prey like hutias and ground sloths. These conditions allowed the owl to grow to such a magnificent size that it was initially confused with a terror bird, flightless carnivorous birds and apex predators in South America before the Ice Age.[440] The owl's pellets were also found alongside its fossil remains in Caverna de Pío Domingo, providing a window into the owl's life cycle and the ecology of Cuba during the Pleistocene.

Giant Cursorial Owl

Small Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 7 (2d6)
Speed 40 ft., fly 5 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (−2)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	3 (−4)	15 (+2)	5 (−3)

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +4
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages —
Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Keen Hearing and Sight. The owl has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or sight.

Pounce. If the owl moves at least 20 feet straight toward a Small or smaller creature and then hits it with a Talon attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 12 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the owl can make one Beak attack against it as a bonus action.

Actions

Beak. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Talon. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) slashing damage.

***Cursorial.** Anatomically adapted for running, as cheetahs or horses.

Giant Ground Sloth

Megatherium americanum

Ground sloths in the genus *Megatherium* ranged throughout both American continents until the late Pleistocene. The largest, at 20 feet long and more than 8,800 pounds, was *Megatherium americanum*, the giant ground sloth.[441] Only a mastodon rivaled it for size, so once the giant ground sloth reached maturity it faced very little risk from predators.

Giant Ground Sloth

Huge Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 12 (natural armor)
Hit Points 133 (14d12 + 42)
Speed 40 ft., burrow 15 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	2 (−4)	10 (+0)	5 (−3)

Senses passive Perception 10
Languages —
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Tripod Tail. The sloth has advantage on saving throws it makes against being knocked prone or moved against its will.

Actions

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (2d10 + 6) slashing damage.

Giant Hyena

Pachycrocuta brevirostris

The giant hyena was an oversized scavenger with a taste for marrow. Its bite force was an order of magnitude higher than its modern cousins, according to recent biomechanical analysis of the animal's jaws, and fossil remains at a den of the creatures at Venta Micena in southeastern Spain suggests they preferred femur and tibia bones from the rear legs and humerus bones from the front legs of prey.[442]



Giant Hyena

Large Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 45 (6d10 + 12)
Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	2 (−4)	12 (+1)	7 (−2)

Skills Perception +3
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages —
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Rampage. When the hyena reduces a creature to 0 hit points with a melee attack on its turn, the hyena can take a bonus action to move up to half its speed and make a bite attack.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) piercing damage.



Giant Monitor Lizard

Varanus prisca
Megalania

The giant monitor lizard was a venomous dragon in the dust. At up to 23 feet long and 4,000 pounds,[443] it was the world's largest terrestrial lizard. It lived in forests, woodlands, and grasslands across what is now eastern Australia. Based on the other fossils with which rare megalania bones have been discovered, it is thought to have been an ambush hunter of large prey like the *Diprotodon* or the giant short-faced kangaroo.[444] Similar modern creatures like the Komodo dragon and the Nile monitor are venomous, producing a haemotoxin from a gland in their jaws that acts as an anticoagulant, causing its victims to bleed out or suffer system shock even after they have escaped the creature's bite.[445]

"Megalania, and its fellow creatures of prehistoric Australia, should remind us that the world can hold more biological diversity and richness than we might often think."
–Ralph E. Molnar, 2004[490]

Giant Monitor Lizard

Huge Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)
Hit Points 147 (14d12 + 56)
Speed 30 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	7 (−2)	19 (+4)	2 (−4)	10 (+0)	5 (−3)

Saving Throws Con +7
Skills Stealth +1
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages —
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Actions

Multiattack. The lizard makes one Bite attack and one Claw attack.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (1d12 + 5) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the target takes 18 (4d8) poison damage and is poisoned. On a successful save, the creature takes half as much damage and isn't poisoned. A poisoned creature can repeat this saving throw at the end of its turn, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d10 + 5) slashing damage.



Giant Short-Faced Kangaroo

Procoptodon goliah

In Australia, kangaroos filled the ecological niche occupied by wild horses on the American plains: a herds of fast-moving herbivores acting as primary consumers for grasses and other low vegetation. Like horses, kangaroos can be surprisingly effective opponents when pressed. Adult males frequently box and wrestle each other for access to females, or stand on their thick tails to kick with both their powerful back legs simultaneously.

The largest kangaroo ever known, *Procoptodon goliah*, would have been three times as large as the modern-day red kangaroo, weighing 530 pounds, with the reach and power to match.[446] It had a distinctive brachycephalic appearance (flat-nosed, like bulldogs). From its complex teeth, paleontologists assume it was a browser rather than a grazer, eating the tough leaves and stems from the low trees in the arid and semi-arid grasslands found all over Pleistocene-era Australia.[447]

Giant Short-Faced Kangaroo

Large Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 68 (8d10 + 24)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)	2 (−4)	8 (−1)	7 (−2)

Senses passive Perception 9
Languages —
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Actions

Multiattack. The kangaroo makes one Kick attack and one Punch attack.

Kick. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d10 + 3) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Punch. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

Giant Wombat
Diprotodon optatum

The giant wombat is the largest marsupial known to have ever existed. It was a heavily-built mammal the size of a rhinoceros, up to 12 and a half feet long and 5 and a half feet tall at the shoulder.[448] Named for the two forward-facing incisors in its lower jaw, it would have been a primary consumer of the grasses and leaves of the ancient Australian forests, woodlands, and plains and a prey animal for predators like Megalania.

Paleontologist Richard Owen was the first to describe the creature formally in 1837, although he was indebted to the work of bushman George Ranken and Major Thomas Mitchell, who discovered and excavated the fossils from Wellington Caves in New South Wales.

Giant Wombat
Large Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 12 (natural armor)
Hit Points 82 (11d10 + 22)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)	2 (−4)	12 (+1)	6 (−2)

Senses passive Perception 11
Languages —
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) piercing damage.



Gigantopithecus
Gigantopithecus blacki

Gigantopithecus is a monotypic genus, meaning it has only one species, *G. blacki*. This ancestor of modern orangutans ranged through southern China during the Pleistocene. Its size isn't definitively known, but a 2017 study determined *G. blacki* weighed between 440 and 660 pounds, 20–25 percent larger than modern gorillas.[449] In life it would likely have stood over 10 feet tall.[450]

The entire fossil record for this creature consists of teeth and a few intact mandibles from caves across southern China; no full skeleton has been discovered.[451] Fossil teeth like these were frequently sold as "dragon bones" or "dragon teeth" for use in traditional Chinese medicine; one such sale was the type specimen for *Gigantopithecus*.

Gigantopithecus
Large Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 85 (10d10 + 30)
Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	7 (−2)	12 (+1)	7 (−2)

Skills Athletics +6, Perception +3
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages —
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Actions

Multiattack. The gigantopithecus makes two Fist attacks.

Fist. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d12 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

Rock. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 30/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 19 (3d10 + 4) bludgeoning damage.



Glyptodonts

At more than 10 feet long and nearly 2,000 pounds, glyptodonts were massive Pleistocene relatives of armadillos. A genus of animals encompassing at least seven species, glyptodonts were a family of lowland herbivores in the New World tropics and subtropics—the mammalian answer to the turtle. With broad shoulders, fused vertebrae, massive hip bones, and five-toed feet with hoof-like claws, glyptodonts were built for size and strength to support their massive, fused shells.[452]

Key-Foot Glyptodont

Glyptodon clavipes

Like all glyptodonts, the key-foot glyptodont had a massive skull supporting the strong jaw muscles and large, constantly-growing teeth that it used to chew fibrous plants in the jungles of what is now South America. There is some evidence to suggest that humans made use of the glyptodont's dome-like shell for shelter in inclement weather.

Key-Foot Glyptodont

Large Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 20 (natural armor)
Hit Points 105 (10d10 + 50)
Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	5 (−3)	20 (+5)	12 (+1)	7 (−2)	7 (−2)

Saving Throws Str +9, Con +8
Senses passive Perception 8
Languages —
Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Heavy Body. The glyptodon has advantage on Strength and Dexterity saving throws against effects that would knock it prone.

Actions

Multiattack. The glyptodon makes one Bite attack and one Tail attack.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d8 + 6) piercing damage.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (1d12 + 6) bludgeoning damage.

Morningstar-Tailed Glyptodont
Doedicurus clavicaudatus

The largest of the glyptodonts, the morningstar-tailed glyptodont grew to 13 feet long and weighed more than 3,000 pounds, or roughly the size of a Volkswagen Beetle.[453] The armored tail of this Pleistocene glyptodont ended in a formidable club surrounded by a cluster of spikes. Carapaces found with deep indentations to match suggest this glyptodont used its tail to fight for dominance with other glyptodonts, securing territory or access to females.[454]

Morningstar-Tailed Glyptodont
Huge Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 20 (natural armor)
Hit Points 184 (16d12 + 80)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
25 (+7)	8 (−1)	20 (+5)	2 (−4)	12 (+1)	7 (−2)

Saving Throws Str +11, Con +9
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages —
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Heavy Body. The glyptodont has advantage on Strength and Dexterity saving throws against effects that would knock it prone.

Actions

Multiattack. The morningstar-tailed glyptodont makes one Bite attack and one Tail attack.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (2d8 + 7) piercing damage.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (2d10 + 7) piercing damage.

Tail Sweep. The glyptodont sweeps its tail in a wide arc. Each creature in a 10-foot cone must make a DC 19 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the creature takes 18 (4d8) bludgeoning damage and is knocked prone. On successful save, a creature takes half as much damage and is not knocked prone.

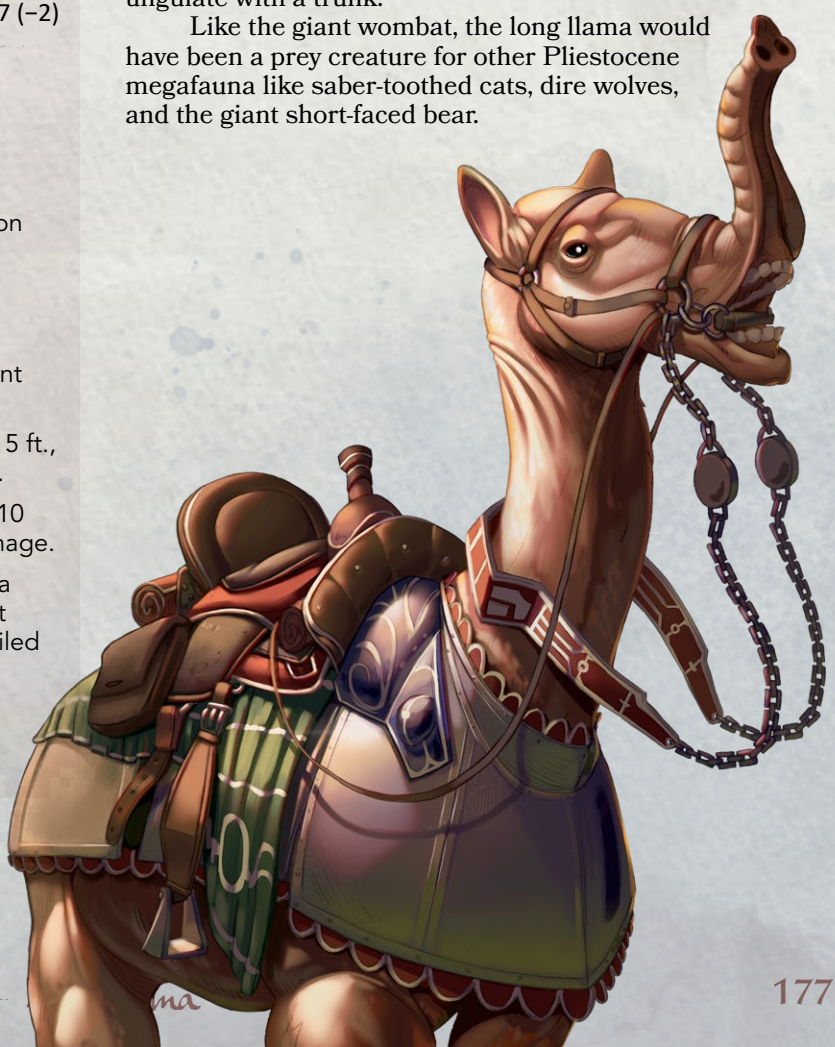
Long Llama
Macrauchenia patagonia

The long llama was a horse-sized South American ungulate with a confusing nose.

The long llama has bewildered natural historians since Charles Darwin first discovered its bones in Patagonia (now Argentina) in 1834 during his voyage on the *Beagle*. Darwin wasn't sure what it was, suggesting rather grandiosely in his notes that he fancied the leg bones and fragments of spine he had found could have belonged to a mastodon. Anatomist Richard Owen provided the binomial classification, and his findings were part of the inception of Darwin's theory.

Reconstructions of the creature frequently feature a short trunk, like that of the tapir or saiga antelope. Skulls of the long llama have the nostrils on the top of the head, a placement consistent with these other trunked mammals. Other studies suggest it would have had a nose like a moose, as no living mammal with a proboscis also has an elongated neck. However, cave paintings discovered in the Serranía La Lindosa depict a three-toed ungulate with a trunk.[455]

Like the giant wombat, the long llama would have been a prey creature for other Pliestocene megafauna like saber-toothed cats, dire wolves, and the giant short-faced bear.



Long Llama

Large Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 11
Hit Points 13 (2d10 + 2)
Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	2 (−4)	10 (+0)	5 (−3)

Skills Sleight of Hand +3
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages —
Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Short Trunk. The long llama can use its trunk to manipulate objects as if it were a hand. It can use the trunk to take the Use an Object action and wield light melee weapons. The long llama isn't proficient with these weapons, and attacks with them are made with disadvantage.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

Marsupial Lion

Thylacoleo carnifex
Pouched lion

Among the most formidable predators to ever live was the marsupial lion of Ice Age Australia. Whereas modern lions are the larger relatives of domestic cats, the marsupial lion might have been akin to an oversized Tasmanian devil (*Sarcophilus harrissi*). Comparable in size to a jaguar, this pouch-bearing lion was a squat, broad-shouldered predator spanning five feet long and weighing between 200 and 350 pounds.[456] *T. carnifex* had the most powerful bite of any mammalian predator, living or extinct.[457] Moreover, it had semi-opposable thumbs tipped with retractable "flick-blade" claws, equally useful for climbing trees and grasping prey.[458]

Ever since its discovery in 1859 by Sir Richard Owen, wildly divergent theories about the marsupial lion have been proposed.[459] Working from skulls and bone fragments, scientists have suggested it was a carnivore, a bone crusher, or a scavenger. One early hypothesis, dubbed the "melon-muncher" hypothesis, suggested a diet of cycad nuts or native cucumbers, although later discoveries showed the creature didn't have the teeth for it.[460] The discovery of a complete skeleton in 2018 finally shed light on the marsupial lion's lifestyle: it likely would have dropped from trees onto the backs of large prey like giant wombats, using its claws to grapple the beast and its shearing bite to drag the prey to the ground.[461]

Marsupial Lion

Medium Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 91 (14d8 + 28)
Speed 40 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	15 (+2)	15 (+2)	3 (−4)	12 (+1)	6 (−2)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +6
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages —
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Keen Smell. The lion has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Pounce. If the lion moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a Claw attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the lion can make one Bite attack against it as a bonus action.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d10 + 4) piercing damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) slashing damage and the target is restrained (escape DC 14). The lion can restrain only one target at a time.

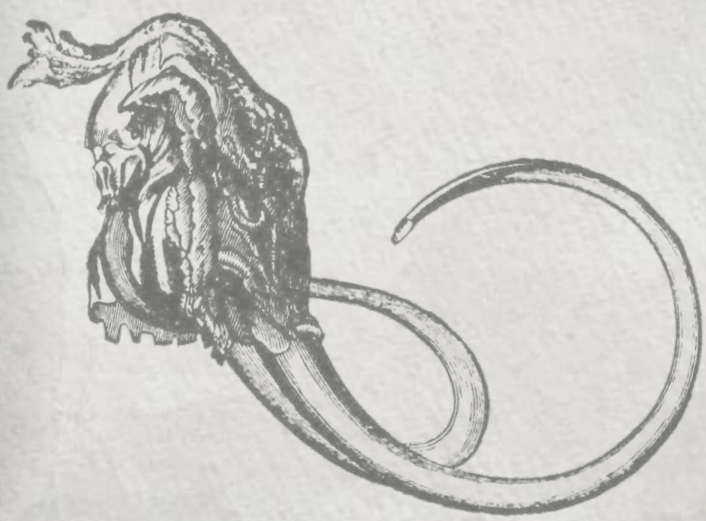
Mastodon

Mammut americanum
American mastodon

The American mastodon was the first megafauna to be discovered, and the beginning of our knowledge of extinction itself.

Early natural historians from Pliny the Elder to Linnaeus classified living and dead species without distinction because, in their mind, none was needed.[462] They assumed that all species were still present somewhere in the vast, unexplored reaches of the world. It wasn't until fossil teeth unearthed along the Ohio River, in what is now Big Bone Lick state park, made their way to the court of Louis XV that this attitude began to break down. The teeth were not flat like those of extant elephants, but cusped. From 1739 to 1796, scientists all over the world attempted to classify the teeth as variously an American elephant, a hippo, or even as pieces of two or three separate animals.[463] Even Thomas Jefferson himself commented on the American *incógnitum*, as it had come to be known, claiming it would be found alive in upcoming explorations of the American Northwest. "Such is the economy of nature," he wrote in 1781's "Notes on the State of Virginia," that "no instance can be produced of her having permitted any one race of her animals to become extinct; of her having formed any link in her great work so weak as to be broken." It was George Cuvier, anatomist at Paris's Museum of Natural History, who proposed the teeth belonged to an *espèces perdues*, or lost species.[464]

For their influence on this and other revolutionary ideas, Cuvier would come to be known as the "founding father of paleontology", and the teeth of the American mastodon its Mona Lisa.[465]



Mastodon

Huge Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)
Hit Points 126 (11d12 + 55)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
24 (+7)	9 (−1)	21 (+5)	3 (−4)	11 (+0)	6 (−3)

Senses passive Perception 10
Languages —
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Trampling Charge. If the mastodon moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a gore attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 18 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the mastodon can make one stomp attack against it as a bonus action.

Actions

Gore. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 25 (4d8 + 7) piercing damage.

Stomp. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one prone creature. *Hit:* 29 (4d10 + 7) bludgeoning damage.

Megaloceros

Megaloceros giganteus
Irish elk

The Irish elk is one of the largest deer to have lived, and carried the largest antlers ever. The creature stood nearly 7 feet tall at the shoulder, weighed 1,500 pounds or more, and carried antlers that stretched 120 feet from tip to tip and weighed up to 88 pounds.[466]

Fossil remains of the species were abundant in Ireland, preserved in peat, a spongy soil made up of partially decayed vegetation or organic matter, thousands of years ago. Fossils and pollen trapped in peat reveal details about the ancient ecologies in which the peat was formed, including the Pleistocene era of the Irish elk.[467]

Megaloceros

Huge Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 110 (13d12 + 26)
Speed 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)	3 (−4)	14 (+2)	7 (−3)

Skills Perception +4
Senses passive Perception 14
Languages —
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Charge. If the megaloceros moves at least 20 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a ram attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 7 (2d6) damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Actions

Hooves. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one prone creature. *Hit:* 22 (4d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

Ram. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (3d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

Megalodon

Otodus megalodon
Carcharocles megalodon
Megatooth shark

In archaeological terms, the megalodon is a phantom. Sharks have cartilaginous skeletons, a light and flexible frame that does not fossilize, leaving behind only their teeth. These appear in such numbers and are so broadly distributed that shark teeth are among the first fossils ever discovered, creating a mystery for early geologists. Fossil teeth were called *glossopetrae* ("tongue stones") and were thought to have fallen from the moon or formed *in situ* until 1669, when Danish geologist Neils Steensen postulated they were animal remnants.[468]

The closest comparison to megalodon is the great white shark (*Carcharodon carcharias*), the largest extant ocean predator. The great white's teeth aren't attached to its jaw, but rather "float" in cartilage above it. In this way, the teeth are retractable like a cat's claw, effectively turning the shark's mouth into a spring-loaded trap. The teeth are easily lost, however, so great whites continually grow new ones in several stacked rows. At any given time, a single great white shark has around 50 "active" teeth, and may grow up to 20,000 teeth during its lifetime.[469] All of this might be true of the megalodon as well, but instead of the fingernail-sized teeth of a great white, its teeth were the size of a human hand.

With no complete skeleton to measure, every size quoted for megalodon is an estimate. Working from comparisons of teeth across the entire jaw, however, one study determined a maximum length of around 66 feet.[470] The great white is typically 20 feet long, occasionally reaching up to 39 feet.[471] Furthermore, archaeologists don't agree upon the eras in which the megalodon dominated the oceans. Although estimates vary, it is thought to have gone extinct in the Pliocene era, as melting glaciers cooled the coastal waters where it hunted large whales and forced it into dwindling pools of habitat.[472]

Megalodon

Gargantuan Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 186 (12d20 + 60)
Speed 0 ft., swim 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	12 (+1)	21 (+5)	1 (−5)	10 (+0)	5 (−3)

Skills Perception +3
Senses blindsight 60 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages —
Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Blood Frenzy. The megalodon has advantage on melee attack rolls against any creature that doesn't have all its hit points.

Siege Monster. The megalodon deals double damage to objects and structures.

Water Breathing. The megalodon can breathe only underwater.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 24 (4d8 + 6) piercing damage.



Saber-Toothed Tiger

Smilidon fatalis

With fangs a foot long, the saber-toothed tiger was a fierce feline predator that ranged across North America throughout the Pleistocene. It was similar to a lion in length, but weighed more than twice as much—an estimated 750-970 pounds.[473] There is no consensus as to how the tiger used its namesake teeth to kill prey. Extrapolating from fossil morphology, scientists have variously suggested a conventional bite with an extended jaw-opening, a stabbing motion with the mouth closed, a "can-opener" approach to cutting through the shells of creatures like glyptodonts, or a shear bite that removed hunks of flesh in a single motion.

The fossil bones of hundreds of *Smilidon fatalis*, with its spectacular teeth, were discovered in some of the first scientific expeditions to the La Brea tar pits; the species has been a beloved fixture of the prehistoric world ever since.[474]

Despite its popularity, or perhaps because of it, there is some confusion about the saber-toothed tiger. First, it isn't a tiger; it isn't related to the modern-day tiger and there is no reason to believe it had a striped coat.[475] Second, it isn't the only sabertooth. "Sabertooth" is an ecomorph, a set of characteristics common to animals with the same ecological niche. More than 120 species with this ecomorph have been discovered, all extinct, including many that were not true cats.[476]

Saber-Toothed Tiger

Large Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 52 (7d10 + 14)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	3 (−4)	12 (+1)	8 (−1)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +6
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages —
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Keen Smell. The tiger has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Pounce. If the tiger moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a Claw attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the tiger can make one Bite attack against it as a bonus action.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d10 + 5) piercing damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) slashing damage.

Terror Bird

Titanis walleri
Florida terror bird

The moniker "terror bird" belongs to the *Phorusrhacids*, an extinct family of flightless birds remarkable for their size and carnivorous diet. Although species were native to South America, one of the largest and last to go extinct was *Titanis walleri*, discovered in what is now the states of Florida and Texas.[477] Standing six feet tall and weighing up to 330 pounds, with powerful legs and a massive beak, the Florida terror bird was a swift and deadly apex predator.[478] It was capable of running down prey at an estimated 62 miles per hour—speeds comparable to the modern cheetah.[479]

The terror bird's extinction differed from those of the megafauna lost during the Quarternary extinction event at the end of the last Ice Age, as the species likely never interacted with humans.[480] Instead, the terror bird was part of the Great American Biotic Interchange, when many North and South American fauna traded places across the isthmus of Panama during the Pliocene.[481] The terror bird likely followed its prey north, finding a new home in the southern coastal regions of what is now the United States. Accustomed to being the most dangerous predator in its ecosystem, the terror bird now found itself competing with big North American predators like saber-toothed cats.[482] This and other factors like the shifting climate and prey populations meant the terror birds didn't survive into the Ice Age.

Ironically, the extinction pressure cats exert on birds continues in the present day among smaller creatures. As of 2011, domestic cats (*Felis catus*) gone feral were responsible for the global extinction of two reptile species, nine mammal species, and 22 bird species including the Stephen's Island wren.[483]

Terror Bird

Medium Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 12 (natural armor)
Hit Points 44 (8d8 + 8)
Speed 90 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	2 (−4)	10 (+0)	5 (−3)

Senses passive Perception 10
Languages —
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Pounce. If the terror bird moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a Claw attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 12 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the bird can make one Beak attack against it as a bonus action.

Actions

Beak. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (2d4 + 2) slashing damage.

Wonambi

Wonambi naracoortensis
Rainbow serpent

Measuring up to 19 feet long and 200 pounds, *Wonambi naracoortensis* was a massive constrictor snake that likely ambushed prey at watering holes in Australia's oversized Pleistocene food chain.[484] The body of this tremendous serpent would have been about a foot in diameter, and the jaws of its flat, broad head were lined with hundreds of tiny teeth.[485]

The snake derives its name "wonambi" from an aboriginal word for the rainbow serpent, a totemic deity from the mystical realm called the Dreamtime or the Dreaming. Tribes across Australia told stories about the rainbow serpent living in certain pools or water-holes and guarding sources of power for medicine men.[486] The species name refers to the Naracoorte Caves, one of the richest deposits of Pleistocene fossil vertebrates in the world, where *W. naracoortensis* was discovered alongside the giant short-faced kangaroo, marsupial lion, and Tasmanian tiger.[487]

Wonambi

Huge Beast, Unaligned

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 102 (12d12 +24)
Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	15 (+2)	15 (+2)	1 (−5)	12 (+1)	3 (−4)

Skills Perception +3
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages —
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage.

Constrict. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 16). Until this grapple ends, the creature is restrained, and the wonambi can't constrict another target.

Reduxed Monsters

Even in a campaign that fully utilizes the reimagined animals in the Extinct Bestiary chapter and the colossal beasts in the Prehistoric Megafauna chapter, classic roleplaying game monsters are still essential. Dragons are literally the name of the game, and more challenging foes like giants, treants, and bulettes remain campaign staples. Therefore, this chapter reimagines some of the most iconic fantasy monsters for use at your table.

Parallel or Ancient

The simplest way to present these monsters is alongside their traditional variants. Perhaps the arboreal dragons presented in this chapter live in uneasy harmony with chromatic and metallic dragons by virtue of building their lairs in otherwise unoccupied forests. The land-shark bullettes might form a complex subterranean ecosystem alongside the dolphin-like dolphettes and the orca-like orcettes.

You can also present them as extinct species of these monsters, found only in untouched enclaves of nature, nestled deep within the earth, or on the plateaus of distant continents. If the arboreal dragons were largely driven extinct by the flames of dragon breath, they might only thrive in remote forests or on remote planes of existence.

Replacements or Evolutions

By contrast, you can also substitute the traditional variants of monsters with those found in this chapter. If chromatic and metallic dragons were driven extinct (a scenario that we explore in the Monster Extinctions chapter), arboreal dragons might arise to fill their ecological niche. Similarly, if the subterranean drow empire fragmented or collapsed, they might be replaced by an undersea empire of merdrow, plotting the demise of the surface world from below the waves.

Challenge Rating	Monster
1/8	Canopic Hive
1/4	Merdrow
1	Cherry Dragon Seedling
2	Dolphette, Gelatinous Sphere, Pine Dragon Seedling
3	Bamboo Dragon Seedling, Copycat
4	Oak Dragon Seedling
5	Great Gray Owlbear
6	Cherry Dragon Sapling, Merdrider
7	Cactent, Dire Werewolf, Pine Dragon Sapling
8	Bamboo Dragon Sapling, Silken Mummy
9	Cave Werebear, Oak Dragon Sapling, Orcette, Saber-Toothed Weretiger
11	Weremammoth
14	Adult Cherry Dragon
15	Adult Pine Dragon
16	Adult Bamboo Dragon, Astral Giant
17	Adult Oak Dragon

Arboreal Dragons

Arboreal dragons are a lineage of true dragons which, as their name suggests, are delineated by wood, as opposed to stones, metals, or color. Though more serpentine than their chromatic and metallic kin, these dragons wield every ounce of power and cunning expected of the apex monster.

Arboreal dragons possess a dreaded breath weapon, an innate power separating them from the lesser dragons, such as wyverns and drakes. Instead of elemental energy, however, arboreal dragons exhale petals, needles, or entire trees in a deadly barrage. Unwary interlopers in the dragon's domain are skewered amongst the treetops or sliced to ribbons on the forest floor.

The distinct stages of an arboreal dragon's life differ slightly from that of other dragons. Their draconic eggs are akin to seeds, and newly born arboreal dragons are referred to as seedlings rather than wyrmlings. As the dragons grow, they lengthen into saplings, eventually growing thicker and more gnarled as adults. Ancient arboreal dragons are fixtures of the landscape, reigning over vast forests with titanic hoards at their centers.

Arboreal Dragon Age Categories

Category	Size	Age Range
Seedling	Medium	5 years or less
Sapling	Large	6–100 years
Adult	Huge	101–800 years
Ancient	Gargantuan	801 years or more

Lair of an Arboreal Dragon

Regardless of type, arboreal dragons claim remote, wooded regions as their lairs. The forests and groves around an arboreal dragon grow thick and densely wooded, until only experienced foresters can reach the dragon's clearing at its center. Those that simply attempt to fly over the forest's canopy might be forcibly grounded by a severe thunderstorm or a raiding party of arboreal seedlings.

The only difference between an adult arboreal dragon and an ancient dragon is the ancient dragon's lair. To present an ancient arboreal dragon, use an adult dragon from this chapter with the lair actions below and the following mechanical changes:

- Increase the dragon's size to Gargantuan.
- Increase the dragon's AC by 3.
- Increase the dragon's hit points by 100.
- The dragon can make three attacks instead of two on its turn.
- The dragon's breath weapon deals an additional two dice of damage.
- Increase the dragon's Challenge Rating by 5.

Lair Actions

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the dragon takes a lair action to cause one of the following effects; the dragon can't use the same effect two rounds in a row:

- Entangling roots erupt in a 20-foot radius centered on a point on the ground that the dragon can see within 120 feet of it. That area becomes difficult terrain and each creature on the ground must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be restrained by the entangling plants. A restrained creature can be freed if it or another creature uses its action to make a DC 15 Strength check and succeeds. The roots wither and die when the dragon dies or the dragon uses this lair action again.
- The dragon magically animates two trees it can see within 120 feet of it. Each tree uses the statistics of an **awakened tree**. The trees remain animated until the dragon uses this lair action again or dies.
- A bolt of lightning strikes at a point the dragon can see within 120 feet of it. Each creature within 5 feet of that point must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 22 (4d10) lightning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Bamboo Dragons

All dragons are feared, but wise and benevolent bamboo dragons elicit reverence rather than terror. These dragons are honored protectors and spiritual anchors for entire peoples.

Hoards of Subjects. Rather than collecting coins and baubles, a bamboo dragon takes people under its stewardship and considers them as part of its hoard. Seedlings look out for the wellbeing of one or two individuals, whereas the largest bamboo dragons claim entire kingdoms as their own.

From afar, the dragon keeps a watchful eye on its charge, intervening only when things become dire. Seeing a bamboo dragon is an omen that times are precarious, but promises that brighter days are to come.

The stewardship of a bamboo dragon doesn't mitigate short term hardship, like famines and plagues, but promises improvement over centuries. Bamboo dragons promote just and kind rulers to reign over their people and strike down tyrants that would attempt to conquer them. They trust that, over the centuries of its lifetime, the benign influence of good laws and bountiful harvests will promote prosperity and expand their hoards of subjects.

Loathing of Interlopers. Bamboo dragons stand in opposition of those who might upset the delicate balance of their stewardship. They despise manipulative monsters, such as fey, doppelgangers, and psionic aberrations, that might show discord in their lands. Similarly, they are distrustful of adventuring parties that trespass on their territory. In the dragons' view, heroes rarely promote the greater good.



Bamboo Dragon Seedling

Medium Dragon, Typically Lawful Good

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)
Hit Points 52 (8d8 + 16)
Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Con +4, Wis +4, Cha +3
Skills History +3, Insight +4, Perception +4, Persuasion +3
Senses blindsight 10 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages Draconic
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) piercing damage.

Constrict. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 12 (2d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 13). Until this grapple ends, the creature is restrained, and the dragon can't constrict another target.

Shoot Breath (Recharge 5–6). The dragon exhales pointed bamboo poles in a 30-foot line that is 5 feet wide. Each creature in that area must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw, taking 18 (4d8) piercing damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Bamboo Dragon Sapling

Large Dragon, Typically Lawful Good

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)
Hit Points 142 (15d10 + 60)
Speed 40 ft., fly 80 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	18 (+4)	19 (+4)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +7, Con +7, Wis +6, Cha +5
Skills History +5, Insight +6, Perception +6, Persuasion +5
Senses blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 16
Languages Common, Draconic
Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Actions

Multiattack. The dragon makes two attacks.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) piercing damage.

Constrict. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 16 (2d10 + 5) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 16). Until this grapple ends, the creature is restrained, and the dragon can't constrict another target.

Shoot Breath (Recharge 5–6). The dragon exhales pointed bamboo poles in a 60-foot line that is 5 feet wide. Each creature in that area must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 45 (10d8) piercing damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Spellcasting. The dragon casts one of the following spells, using Wisdom as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 14):

At will: *command*, *zone of truth*
1/day each: *banishment*, *control water*, *geas* (as an action), *greater restoration*

Adult Bamboo Dragon

Huge Dragon, Typically Lawful Good

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 189 (14d12 + 98)
Speed 40 ft., fly 80 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
25 (+7)	22 (+6)	24 (+7)	21 (+5)	23 (+6)	21 (+5)

Saving Throws Dex +11, Con +12, Wis +11, Cha +10
Skills History +10, Insight +11, Perception +11, Persuasion +10
Senses blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 21
Languages Common, Draconic
Challenge 16 (15,000 XP)

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If the dragon fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Actions

Multiattack. The dragon makes two attacks.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 15 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 16 (2d8 + 7) piercing damage plus 4 (1d8) force damage.

Constrict. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 18 (2d10 + 7) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 20). Until this grapple ends, the creature is restrained, and the dragon can't constrict another target.

Shoot Breath (Recharge 5–6). The dragon exhales pointed bamboo poles in a 90-foot line that is 5 feet wide. Each creature in that area must make a DC 20 Dexterity saving throw, taking 54 (12d8) piercing damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Spellcasting. The dragon casts one of the following spells, using Wisdom as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 19):

At will: *command*, *thunderwave*, *zone of truth*
3/day each: *banishment*, *greater restoration*, *wind wall*
1/day each: *control water*, *geas* (as an action), *raise dead*

Legendary Actions

The dragon can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The dragon regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Crush. The dragon squeezes a creature that it is grappling. The creature must make a DC 20 Constitution saving throw, taking 12 (1d10 + 7) bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful save.

Recharge. The dragon rolls a d6, and regains the use of its breath weapon on a roll of a 5 or 6. If it rolls a 5 or 6 and its breath weapon is already available, it instead regains 13 (2d12) hit points.

Cast a Spell (Costs 2 Actions). The dragon uses Spellcasting.

Cherry Dragons

Cherry dragons are adorned in resplendent pink petals and a springtime aroma. Though their appearance is nothing short of majestic, most cherry dragons prefer to live incognito amongst the masses.

Shapechanging Socialites. Cherry dragons have an inordinate appetite for conversation, especially gossip. Adults spend every possible moment transformed into travelers, entertainers, or miscellaneous common folk, chatting with anyone who looks interesting. A cherry dragon might spend years building relationships and backstories for these personas to more easily walk among humanoid societies. Younger dragons without the ability to magically change shape usually settle for using their aromatic breath on lone groups of humanoids to place them in a stupor and assuage their fears enough for a pleasant conversation.

Every cherry dragon has an uncanny ability to recall stories, collecting vast libraries of tales to serve as its hoard. However, they can be notoriously forgetful with anything that isn't posed to them as a story. Those who seek to garner the favor of a cherry dragon might frame their predicament as a fictional tale, embellishing details as necessary to keep the dragon enthralled.

Informal Lairs. When a cherry dragon roots itself in a lair, it never chooses a remote location. Instead, it establishes a formal lair, where it can raise a new generation of seedlings, as well as an informal lair, appointing a tavern or village as its secondary place of residence whenever possible. Its informal lair is merely an interesting location with significance to the dragon, but the dragon protects it all the same. Villagers can go their entire lives without knowing they are under draconic protection until a cherry dragon descends on the village square to devour a cadre of bandits.



Cherry Dragon Seedling

Medium Dragon, Typically Neutral

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 22 (4d8 + 4)
Speed 40 ft., fly 60 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +4, Con +3, Wis +2, Cha +5
Skills Deception +5, Perception +2
Senses blindsight 10 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12
Languages Draconic
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 9 (2d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Constrict. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 11 (2d8 + 2) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 12). Until this grapple ends, the creature is restrained, and the dragon can't constrict another target.

Petal Breath (Recharge 5–6). The dragon exhales a whirlwind of pink petals in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 11 Dexterity saving throw, taking 14 (4d6) slashing damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Cherry Dragon Sapling

Large Dragon, Typically Neutral

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)
Hit Points 119 (14d10 + 42)
Speed 40 ft., fly 80 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	15 (+2)	17 (+3)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	19 (+4)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Con +6, Wis +4, Cha +7
Skills Deception +7, Perception +4, Persuasion +7
Senses blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages Common, Draconic
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Actions

Multiattack. The dragon makes two attacks.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) piercing damage.

Constrict. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 15 (2d10 + 4) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 15). Until this grapple ends, the creature is restrained, and the dragon can't constrict another target.

Breath Weapons (Recharge 5–6). The dragon uses one of the following breath weapons.

Petal Breath. The dragon exhales a whirlwind of pink petals in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw, taking 35 (10d6) slashing damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Aroma Breath. The dragon exhales enthralling aromatic smoke in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in the area must make a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or be charmed by the dragon for 1 minute. While charmed in this way, the creature is incapacitated and has a speed of 0. The effect ends early for a creature if it takes any damage or if someone else uses an action to shake the creature out of its stupor.

Adult Cherry Dragon

Huge Dragon, Typically Neutral

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 172 (15d12 + 75)
Speed 40 ft., fly 80 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	19 (+4)	20 (+5)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	21 (+5)

Saving Throws Dex +9, Con +10, Wis +7, Cha +10
Skills Acrobatics +9, Deception +7, Perception +7, Persuasion +10
Senses blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 17
Languages Common, Draconic
Challenge 14 (11,500 XP)

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If the dragon fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Actions

Multiattack. The dragon makes two attacks.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 15 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) piercing damage plus 4 (1d8) force damage.

Constrict. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 16 (2d10 + 5) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 18). Until this grapple ends, the creature is restrained, and the dragon can't constrict another target.

Breath Weapons (Recharge 5–6). The dragon uses one of the following breath weapons.

Petal Breath. The dragon exhales a whirlwind of pink petals in a 60-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw, taking 42 (12d6) slashing damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Aroma Breath. The dragon exhales enthralling aromatic smoke in a 60-foot cone. Each creature in the area must make a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw or be charmed by the dragon for 1 minute. While charmed in this way, the creature is incapacitated and has a speed of 0.

The effect ends early for a creature if it takes any damage or if someone else uses an action to shake the creature out of its stupor.

Bonus Actions

Change Shape. The dragon magically transforms into a Humanoid or Beast that has a challenge rating no higher than its own, or back into its true form. It reverts to its true form if it dies. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying is absorbed or borne by the new form (the dragon's choice).

In a new form, the dragon retains its alignment, hit points, Hit Dice, ability to speak, proficiencies, Legendary Resistance, lair actions, and Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores, as well as this action. Its statistics and capabilities are otherwise replaced by those of the new form, except any class features or legendary actions of that form.

Legendary Actions

The dragon can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The dragon regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Crush. The dragon squeezes a creature that it is grappling. The creature must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw, taking 10 (1d10 + 5) bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful save.

Recharge. The dragon rolls a d6, and regains the use of its breath weapon on a roll of a 5 or 6. If it rolls a 5 or 6 and its breath weapon is already available, it instead regains 13 (2d12) hit points.

Teleport (Costs 2 Actions). The dragon magically teleports, along with any equipment it is wearing or carrying, up to 120 feet to an unoccupied space it can see. Immediately after it disappears, a vortex of flower petals appears in the space it left. Each creature within 10 feet of the space it left must make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw, taking 10 (3d6) slashing damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Oak Dragons

The cruelest and most dreaded of the arboreal dragons is the mighty oak. With ambitions of tyrannical empire, oak dragons seek lesser creatures to subjugate as their unwilling hoard.

Imperious and Cruel. From the time they are seedlings, oak dragons feel an egotistical superiority over other creatures, including other arboreal dragons. They consider themselves the peak of dragonkind, and hence the pinnacle of mortal life. As such, their only natural position is in command.

Sapling oak dragons seek out weakly-defended villages or towns of humanoids to conquer and subjugate. Even if the end result is an unmitigated disaster, if a few structures remain standing and a few minions pledge fealty, the dragon considers it a narrow success.

From this stronghold, the dragon can grow its hoard of minions through vainglorious conquest of other settlements, while the largest oak dragons seek to dominate entire kingdoms. Such dragons are petty tyrants and demand castles and monuments built in their honor, the more impractically grandiose, the better.

Spiteful of Minions. Oak dragons care nothing for those under their control, and sometimes actively despise their hoards of minions. In fact, when an oak dragon is hungry, it will sometimes spurn the tithe of food it receives from its underlings and instead devour anyone nearby. This is especially likely if the dragon has suffered a recent defeat or if it suspects rebellion in the ranks.



Oak Dragon Seedling

Medium Dragon, Typically Lawful Evil

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)
Hit Points 75 (10d8 + 30)
Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Dex +3, Con +5, Wis +2, Cha +3
Skills Intimidation +3, Perception +2
Senses blindsight 10 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12
Languages Draconic
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage.

Constrict. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 14). Until this grapple ends, the creature is restrained, and the dragon can't constrict another target.

Acorn Breath (Recharge 5–6). The dragon exhales a hail of sturdy acorns in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw, taking 22 (5d8) bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Oak Dragon Sapling

Large Dragon, Typically Lawful Evil

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)
Hit Points 168 (16d10 + 80)
Speed 40 ft., climb 40 ft., fly 80 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	14 (+2)	20 (+5)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Con +9, Wis +5, Cha +6
Skills Athletics +10, Intimidation +6, Perception +5
Senses blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages Common, Draconic
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Actions

Multiattack. The dragon makes two attacks.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 15 (2d8 + 6) piercing damage.

Constrict. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 17 (2d10 + 6) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 17). Until this grapple ends, the creature is restrained, and the dragon can't constrict another target.

Timber Breath (Recharge 5–6). The dragon exhales chunks of wood in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw, taking 45 (10d8) bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Adult Oak Dragon

Huge Dragon, Typically Lawful Evil

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 202 (15d12 + 105)
Speed 40 ft., climb 40 ft., fly 80 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
27 (+8)	16 (+3)	25 (+7)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +9, Con +13, Wis +8, Cha +9
Skills Athletics +14, Intimidation +9, Perception +8
Senses blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 18
Languages Common, Draconic
Challenge 17 (18,000 XP)

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If the dragon fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Actions

Multiattack. The dragon can use its Frightful Presence. It then makes two attacks.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 15 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 17 (2d8 + 8) piercing damage plus 4 (1d8) force damage.

Constrict. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 19 (2d10 + 8) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 22). Until this grapple ends, the creature is restrained, and the dragon can't constrict another target.

Frightful Presence. Each creature of the dragon's choice that is within 120 feet of the dragon and aware of it must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the dragon's Frightful Presence for the next 24 hours.

Timber Breath (Recharge 5–6). The dragon exhales entire trees and logs in a 60-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 21 Dexterity saving throw, taking 54 (12d8) bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Legendary Actions

The dragon can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The dragon regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Crush. The dragon squeezes a creature that it is grappling. The creature must make a DC 22 Constitution saving throw, taking 13 (1d10 + 8) bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful save.

Recharge. The dragon rolls a d6, and regains the use of its breath weapon on a roll of a 5 or 6. If it rolls a 5 or 6 and its breath weapon is already available, it instead regains 13 (2d12) hit points.

Lumbering Charge (Costs 3 Actions). The dragon moves up to 40 feet in a straight line without provoking opportunity attacks and can move through the space of any Large or smaller creature. When the dragon moves through a creature's space for the first time during this move, that creature must make a DC 22 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 18 (4d8) bludgeoning damage and is knocked prone. On a successful save, the creature takes half as much damage and isn't knocked prone.

Pine Dragons

Viciously territorial pine dragons lay claim to mountain ranges and entire forested regions, hunting and devouring anyone who trespasses on its trees.

Territorial Hunter. The most monstrous of the arboreals, pine dragons are guided by an insatiable hunger and instinctive need to hunt. They prefer to lay claim on remote pine forests which camouflage them, even before they grow old enough to establish a permanent lair. This is because having a fixed territory makes it easier to stalk and kill prey, but also perhaps because pine dragons aren't very sociable, even amongst one another. Ancient pine dragons usually look after their seedlings only until they can fly, then abandon them far away from their lair. When two pines meet, they battle until one of them retreats or dies.

Hoards of Stones. As a pine dragon prowls its domain, it collects interesting and precious stones it finds and brings them back to its lair. There, its hoard is a collection of such stones, including chunks of onyx, jade, amber, and tiger's eye, but never metals such as gold or platinum. A seedling's hoard might be a small pile of pebbles, while an adult maintains a veritable mountain of gemstones. When a pine dragon becomes old enough to produce a petrifying breath, it begins to add the frozen statues of adventurers to its hoard as tokens of its victories.

If a traveler is caught in a pine dragon's domain, offering the dragon a rare gemstone or one it has never encountered will usually secure safe passage.



Pine Dragon Seedling

Medium Dragon, Typically Chaotic Evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 39 (6d8 + 12)
Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	9 (−1)

Saving Throws Dex +4, Con +4, Wis +3, Cha +1
Skills Perception +3, Stealth +4
Damage Resistances cold
Senses blindsight 10 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages Draconic
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage.

Constrict. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 14). Until this grapple ends, the creature is restrained, and the dragon can't constrict another target.

Needle Breath (Recharge 5–6). The dragon exhales a whirlwind of pine needles in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw, taking 17 (5d6) piercing damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Pine Dragon Sapling

Large Dragon, Typically Chaotic Evil

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)
Hit Points 136 (16d10 + 48)
Speed 40 ft., climb 40 ft., fly 80 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	16 (+3)	17 (+3)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Con +6, Wis +5, Cha +3
Skills Perception +5, Stealth +6
Damage Resistances cold
Senses blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages Common, Draconic
Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Actions

Multiattack. The dragon makes two attacks.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) piercing damage.

Constrict. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 15 (2d10 + 4) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 15). Until this grapple ends, the creature is restrained, and the dragon can't constrict another target.

Breath Weapons (Recharge 5–6). The dragon uses one of the following breath weapons.

Needle Breath. The dragon exhales a whirlwind of pine needles in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw, taking 42 (12d6) piercing damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Petrifying Breath. The dragon exhales petrifying gas in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in that area must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, a target begins to turn to stone and is restrained. The restrained target must repeat the saving throw at the end of its next turn. On a success, the effect ends on the target. On a failure, the target is petrified until freed by the greater restoration spell or other magic.

Adult Pine Dragon

Huge Dragon, Typically Chaotic Evil

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 184 (16d12 + 80)
Speed 40 ft., climb 40 ft., fly 80 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	20 (+5)	21 (+5)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Dex +10, Con +10, Wis +8, Cha +6
Skills Perception +8, Stealth +10, Survival +8
Damage Resistances cold
Senses blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 18
Languages Common, Draconic
Challenge 15 (13,000 XP)

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If the dragon fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Actions

Multiattack. The dragon makes two attacks.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 15 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 15 (2d8 + 6) piercing damage plus 4 (1d8) force damage.

Constrict. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 17 (2d10 + 6) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 19). Until this grapple ends, the creature is restrained, and the dragon can't constrict another target.

Breath Weapons (Recharge 5–6). The dragon uses one of the following breath weapons.

Needle Breath. The dragon exhales a whirlwind of pine needles in a 60-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw, taking 49 (14d6) piercing damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Petrifying Breath. The dragon exhales petrifying gas in a 60-foot cone. Each creature in that area must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, a target begins to turn to stone and is restrained. The restrained target must repeat the saving throw at the end of its next turn. On a success, the effect ends on the target. On a failure, the target is petrified until freed by the greater restoration spell or other magic.

Legendary Actions

The dragon can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The dragon regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Crush. The dragon squeezes a creature that it is grappling. The creature must make a DC 19 Constitution saving throw, taking 11 (1d10 + 6) bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful save.

Recharge. The dragon rolls a d6, and regains the use of its breath weapon on a roll of a 5 or 6. If it rolls a 5 or 6 and its breath weapon is already available, it instead regains 13 (2d12) hit points.

Tail Sweep (Costs 2 Actions). The dragon drags its tail in a wide arc. Each creature within 10 feet of the dragon must succeed on a DC 19 Dexterity saving throw or take 11 (1d10 + 6) bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone.

Astral Giant



Astral giants are a lost caste of giants, appointed and uplifted by the primordial gods to watch over the Astral Sea. Unlike their terrestrial kin, astral giants are living, ethereal constellations—ghostly visages, composed of points of light and radiant threads.

Ancient, Forgotten Heroes. Long before the rise of humanoid races, sprawling empires of giants dominated the Material Plane. Their civilizations played host to mighty kings, poets, builders, and legendary heroes, all now consigned to the oblivion of forgotten history. In those days, the primordial gods would reward the mightiest heroes with a type of immortality and prestige unseen since: the opportunity to join the stars and watch over the world from the constellations. Dozens of such giants were uplifted to the Astral Plane, forming a loose caste of demigods and exemplars that towered above even the storm giants.

Of course, the giant's empires and even their pantheon wouldn't last; today, giants live in isolated tribes on the edge of civilization. Yet the astral giants live on, looking down on the world as familiar constellations, awakening only when the stars align or when they are beckoned by esoteric rituals.

Astral Slumber. In their hibernation, the astral giants drift at the edge of the Astral Plane, where their points of light can be seen at night as especially bright stars. Their awakenings are heralded by signs such as eclipses and earthquakes, but are mercifully brief unless powerful magic compels the giants to remain longer on the Material Plane.

Even compared to the mightiest mortal giants, astral giants are formidable beings. Each wields weapons appropriate to their heroic legacy forged from blistering starlight. Legendary hunters might favor their iconic longbows whereas dragon slayers carry greatswords that have felled ancient wyrms. Should their weapons fail, an astral giant can call stars down from the heavens to decimate their foes.

Astral Nature. The giant doesn't need air, food, drink, or sleep.

Astral Giant

Huge Giant, Typically Chaotic Neutral

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 243 (18d12 + 126)
Speed 50 ft., fly 50 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
30 (+10)	14 (+2)	24 (+7)	20 (+5)	18 (+4)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Str +15, Dex +7, Con +12, Int +10, Wis +9, Cha +9
Skills Arcana +10, Athletics +15, History +10, Perception +9
Damage Resistances force
Damage Immunities radiant
Senses passive Perception 19
Languages Common, Giant
Challenge 16 (15,000 XP)

Magic Resistance. The giant has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Actions

Multiattack. The giant makes two attacks.

Constellation Greatsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +15 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 24 (4d6 + 10) slashing damage plus 14 (4d6) radiant damage.

Constellation Greatbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +15 to hit, range 250/1,000 ft., one target. *Hit:* 21 (2d10 + 10) piercing damage plus 14 (4d6) radiant damage.

Shooting Star (Recharge 5–6). The giant calls down a meteor to impact a point it can see within 500 feet of it. Each creature within 20 feet of that point must make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw, taking 28 (8d6) fire damage and 28 (8d6) bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Ecology of the Bulette

"I've hunted all kinds of game, but like most of you I never thought the bulette, the land shark as you call it, was anything but the stuff of legend. How could such a beast swim through the earth like a fish through water, even if it was magical?

Then, five years ago, I was in a little known and even lesser traversed area of Morn when I heard rumors of tribes that tracked such a beast, digging the earth from where the bulette had passed, taking the mud that they found, and smearing it on their plows.

I asked the reason for this strange practice and was told that it made the plows cut the earth like the prow of a boat cuts the water. I began following the source of these rumors, to the east, deeper into the interior of the sparsely populated wilderness.

I was approached by the headman of a native village shortly after my arrival on his premises. He confirmed the stories I had heard, and from what he said I began to get an idea of the nature of the beast.

It existed—that much seemed certain—and its uncanny powers must come from an ability to secrete a slime from its skin that works like the potion for transmuting rock to mud, known to some wizards and alchemists. But this secretion must be weaker than the potion in strength and duration, and it seems to work only on earth, not rock."[492]



Bulettes



Bulettes are "land sharks": dreaded burrowing predators that hunt from beneath dunes, slopes, and marshland. However, these shallow seas of sand and soil aren't merely home to the bulette, but a wide ecosystem of creatures related to the notorious land shark. The bulette's cousins, the orcette and dolphette, share its tremorsense, burrowing nimbleness, and predisposition to striking from below. However, they are bitter rivals competing for a limited supply of prey.

Dolphette

The smaller but equally aggressive dolphette eschews the bulette's solitude for a familial pod of unified hunters.

Pod Hunters. Dolphette pods circle their prey from below and strike with rapid, coordinated leaps. Were it not for the teeth and ballistic trajectories, a dolphette hunting ground might resemble a synchronized dance. Unlike a bulette's instantly lethal strike, a single blow from a dolphette is unlikely to kill a large beast or a seasoned adventurer. However, the rest of the pod's strikes are sure to finish the job.

When a pod of dolphettes are confronted by a dangerous subterranean predator, such as a bulette or a purple worm, they circle their foe and attack from all angles. Even if the strikes fail to weaken their foe, they often prove disorienting enough to secure a window for escape. The result of such a confrontation looks like a meteor strike or a landslide; circles and channels cracked earth and deep sinkholes in strangely elegant patterns.

Uncommonly Intelligent. Dolphettes are demonstrably clever, unlike bulettes and orcettes. Sages believe that dolphettes communicate with one another through a language of tremors, allowing them to coordinate and avoid underground obstacles. In fact, when one dolphette is trapped (such as in the ever-useful upside-down-bear-trap), it can communicate with the rest of its pod to help it escape.

When not actively hunting, dolphettes are curious of land dwellers, and sometimes even mischievous. A lone dolphette might steal a traveler's pack and tunnel half a mile away with it, or perform jumps for scraps of meat. However, it's unwise to forget that dolphette's are predators; their puckish nature lasts only until feeding time.

Dolphette

Medium Monstrosity, Unaligned

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 68 (8d8 + 32)
Speed 40 ft., burrow 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	13 (+1)	18 (+4)	8 (−1)	10 (+0)	5 (−3)

Skills Perception +2
Senses darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft., passive Perception 12
Languages —
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Pack Tactics. The dolphette has advantage on attack rolls against a creature if at least one of the dolphette's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Standing Leap. The dolphette's long jump is up to 30 feet and its high jump is up to 15 feet, with or without a running start.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (2d12 + 3) piercing damage.

Orcette

Huge Monstrosity, Unaligned

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 162 (12d12 + 84)
Speed 20 ft., burrow 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	9 (−1)	24 (+7)	6 (−2)	12 (+1)	5 (−3)

Skills Perception +5
Senses darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages —
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Standing Leap. The orcette's long jump is up to 30 feet and its high jump is up to 15 feet, with or without a running start.

Tunneler. The orcette can burrow through solid rock at half its burrow speed and leaves a 10-foot-diameter tunnel in its wake.

Actions

Multiattack. The orcette uses Tunneling Charge and makes one Bite attack.

Tunneling Charge. The orcette burrows near the surface, displacing earth in a line that is 10 feet wide and up to 30 feet long. This area becomes difficult terrain. A creature in this area when the orcette charges must succeed on a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw or take 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 45 (6d12 + 6) piercing damage.

Earthquake (Recharge 5–6). The bulette dives into the earth. Each creature on the ground within a 20-foot radius centered on the bulette must make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw or take 35 (10d6) bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone. On a successful save, a creature takes half as much damage and isn't knocked prone.



Orcette

Dwarfing the bulette in both size and ferocity, the black and white orcette bears the moniker "killer land whale."

Voracious Appetite. An adult orcette requires a truly staggering amount of food to sustain itself. As such, it favors large prey, such as elk and oxen, even attacking owlbears without hesitation. However, the orcette is nothing if not opportunistic, and will swallow unaccompanied travelers whole if the opportunity presents itself.

Orcettes travel across continents in search of food and mates, for if they remain in one hunting ground, their prey will rapidly diminish.

Dolphette Rivalry. Orcettes despise dolphettes, and actively hunt them whenever their hunting grounds intersect. In addition to being rival predators, dolphettes make an excellent meal, and an orcette can swallow them whole as easily as it can a human.

Cactent

Cactent

Large Plant, Typically Lawful Neutral

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 190 (20d10 + 80)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	10 (+0)	19 (+4)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)

Senses passive Perception 13
Languages Common, Druidic, Elvish, Sylvan
Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

False Appearance. If the cactent is motionless at the start of combat, it has advantage on its initiative roll. Moreover, if a creature hasn't observed the cactent move or act, that creature must succeed on a DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check to discern that the cactent isn't a cactus.

Needled Body. A creature that touches the cactent or hits it with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it takes 5 (1d10) piercing damage.

Actions

Multiattack. The cactent makes two Slam attacks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage, plus 4 (1d8) piercing damage.

Sandstorm (Recharge 6). An 15-foot-radius sphere of swirling, scouring sand appears centered on the cactent and moves with it. The sandstorm lasts for 1 minute. The area of the sandstorm is heavily obscured. When a creature enters the area for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there, it must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 10 (4d4) slashing damage.

If the cactent takes 30 damage or more on a single turn while the sandstorm is raging, the cactent must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw at the end of that turn, or the sandstorm ends early.

Nature's magic gathers where life is most precious, and in the desert, nothing is more precious than an oasis, salvation for fauna and travelers alike. When the magic concentrated in an oasis goes undisturbed for long enough, it can manifest a guardian—a cactus treant—to protect the oasis from those who would despoil it or siphon it dry.

Guardian Cactus. When a cactent awakens, it grows to towering size with the water of its oasis, assumes bulbous facial features, and separates its trunk into arms and legs. Even the youngest cactents bear the gnarled visage of an old man, hunched and wandering the desert, albeit a dozen feet tall.

Bargains of the Desert. Though a cactent is entrusted with an oasis's precious reservoir, it doesn't hoard it for itself. Instead, it judiciously distributes the water among the desert's denizens, flora and fauna alike.

People that approach that oasis are rebuffed unless they can strike a favorable deal with the cactent, usually offering tributes of food or tokens of homage in exchange for a strict ration of water. Those who take even a drop more or attempt to circumvent the cactent swiftly find themselves riddled with needles and abandoned in the sands. Cactents are as harsh as the desert—they have no patience for riddles or games, and always bargain from a position of power.



Copycat

A copycat is a specialized mimic with the ability to imitate a natural feline's movements in ways that none of its kin could hope to match. The aloofness of cats provides a perfect cloak for copycats to quietly integrate among farmsteads, villages, and cities, leaving their future victims unsuspecting until their last terrible moments.

Patient Predator. For every mimic that successfully takes down an unwary dungeon delver, there is another that is bested by a cautious adventurer. Copycats improve their odds by targeting a less savvy demographic: townsfolk. They appear in or around homes, businesses, or mansions, ingratiating themselves while avoiding being touched. Seeming to all observers to be a lost pet or perhaps a lucky new friend, the copycat will wait for a victim to be asleep and alone before attacking them at their most helpless. A copycat that remains undetected can discreetly pick off a household, or even an entire residential block.

Subtle Pantomime. Safely identifying a copycat requires careful attention to its routine and observation of minor unusual details. These may include a lack of shed fur, a disinterest in offered food, a contempt for even the notion of physical contact, and a silent, calculated regard of the creatures around it, any one of which is distressingly catlike on its own.

Speedily identifying one, however, requires only that someone touch it—the results should be quite unambiguous, as its sticky, amorphous form attacks with a flurry of pseudopods.

Copycat

Small Monstrosity, Typically Neutral

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 72 (16d6 + 16)
Speed 35 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	9 (−1)	12 (+1)	8 (−1)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +4
Damage Immunities acid
Condition Immunities prone
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages —
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Adhesive. The copycat adheres to anything that touches it. A Large or smaller creature adhered to the copycat is also grappled by it (escape DC 12). Ability checks made to escape this grapple have disadvantage.

Grappler. The copycat has advantage on attacks made against any creature grappled by it.

Actions

Multiattack. The copycat makes one Pseudopod attack and one Claws attack.

Pseudopod. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage. The target is subjected to the copycat's Adhesive trait.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (2d4 + 2) slashing damage plus 7 (2d6) acid damage.

Bonus Actions

Change Shape. The copycat transforms into a cat or back into its true form, which is amorphous. Its statistics are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. The copycat reverts to its true form if it dies.



One dead giveaway of a copycat is that, while it might appear perfectly convincing to people, it fails to deceive actual house cats for even a moment. Even where there are no outward signs, cats can sense that something is deeply wrong about the copycat and will avoid it at all costs.

Gelatinous Sphere



Unlike their tetrahedral kin, the gelatinous sphere is perfectly round, rolls around at speed, and unpredictably bounces.

Cavernous Cubes. Gelatinous spheres and gelatinous cubes are essentially the same ooze, but conformed to different habitats. A budding gelatinous ooze adapts its shape to occupy the most volume possible. In a dungeon with regular, rectangular hallways, the ooze will become a rectangular (or cubic) shape, and one in a sewer system will generally become a cylinder to fill a length of pipe. A gelatinous ooze allowed to grow without constraints, such as in a spacious cavern, becomes the largest sphere possible.

Rolling Hunters. Gelatinous spheres hunt with surprising agility. Perching uphill, a gelatinous sphere surprises its prey with a rolling charge, engulfing unwitting creatures and bouncing away to safety. The cube will roll after practically anything that moves, reducing creatures to bones and bits of equipment deposited along its path. As such, a gelatinous sphere's domain is meticulously clean, apart from coins, armor, and other debris that collect at the valleys and basins of its hunting grounds.

Gelatinous Sphere

Large Ooze, Unaligned

Armor Class 8
Hit Points 84 (8d10 + 40)
Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	7 (−2)	20 (+5)	1 (−5)	6 (−2)	1 (−5)

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, prone
Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 8
Languages —
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Standing Leap. The sphere's long jump is up to 20 feet and its high jump is up to 20 feet, with or without a rolling start.

Transparent. Even when the sphere is in plain sight, it takes a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check to spot a sphere that has neither moved nor attacked. A creature that tries to enter the sphere's space while unaware of the sphere is surprised by the sphere.

Actions

Rolling Engulf. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 10 (3d6) acid damage, and if the target is Large or smaller, it must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or be engulfed.

The engulfed creature can't breathe, is restrained, and takes 21 (6d6) acid damage at the start of each of the sphere's turns. When the sphere moves, the engulfed creature moves with it. An engulfed creature can be seen but has total cover. The sphere can hold only one Large creature or up to four Medium or smaller creatures inside it at one time.

An engulfed creature or a creature within 5 feet of the sphere can use an action to make a DC 12 Strength check to free the engulfed creature from within the sphere. If the creature making the attempt is not engulfed, it takes 10 (3d6) acid damage. On a success, the engulfed creature escapes and enters a space of its choice within 5 feet of the cube.

Bonus Actions

Bounce. The sphere jumps up to 10 feet horizontally and 10 feet vertically to an unoccupied space without provoking opportunity attacks or expending movement.

Great Gray Owlbear

Owlbear subspecies range in appearance from the snow-white polar owlbear to the diminutive pygmy owlbear, but the most imposing is the great gray owlbear, a fearsome beast of feather and fur that ranges in northern old growth forests. This rare creature has been dubbed the "Phantom of the North"—the most reclusive and dangerous of its kind.

The great gray owlbear is completely nocturnal, hunting silently at night despite being larger than its kin, owing to its thick, feathered paws. Often, the only sign that a great gray owlbear lurks nearby is the reflection of its perfectly circular eyes in the moonlight. By then, it's already too late.

Screech and Claws. Though some owlbears bellow a characteristic growl-hoot, the great gray variety emits a deafening screech, audible for miles around. Its concussive wave can knock birds out of the sky and shred limbs from trees. Once its prey is deafened and disoriented, the owlbear strikes with its talons and beak, making short work of men and beasts alike.



Great Gray Owlbear

Large Monstrosity, Unaligned

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 114 (12d10 + 48)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	15 (+2)	19 (+4)	3 (−4)	14 (+2)	7 (−2)

Skills Perception +5, Stealth +5
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages —
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Keen Sight and Smell. The owlbear has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight or smell.

Actions

Multiattack. The owlbear uses its Piercing Screech, if available. It then makes one Beak attack and one Claws attack.

Beak. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 10 (1d10 + 5) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) slashing damage.

Piercing Screech (Recharge 5–6). The owlbear emits an earsplitting screech. Each creature other than the owlbear within 20 feet of it must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 18 (4d8) thunder damage and be deafened and frightened for 1 minute. On a successful save, a creature takes half as much damage and isn't deafened or frightened. A frightened creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the deafened and frightened conditions on itself on a success.

Merdrow

Beneath roiling waves, an empire of vile merdrow plots their conquest of the overworld. This sect of aquatic elves separated from their coastal kin and dove into the sea's deepest trenches in search of their stygian goddess.

Melody from Below. Long ago, the aquatic elves heard a call from deep below—an unplaceable melody that echoed in their minds. Some who heard the song felt compelled to seek out its source, following it to a yawning trench on the ocean floor. In the bowels of that fathomless abyss, they discovered the goddess of the depths, an intangible presence of eldritch malice that plots the demise of the world above.

The elves constructed a city in that ocean trench, diverging from their brethren above with the passing of centuries until they garnered the characteric gray skin and snowy hair of the drow. Generations of listening to their goddess's song warped their minds as well, inspiring untold cruelty and paranoia.

Megalomaniac Schemes. The undersea empire of the merdrow has become obsessed with conquering the wider ocean and the surface world beyond. Their schemes border on the grandiose and take decades to unfold: causing tsunamis to wash away islands and consume the continents, raising an army of once-extinct megalodons to seize the undersea cities of merfolk, or opening a portal to the Elemental Plane of Water to drown the coastlines.

Merdrow perceive enemies within as well as without. Periodically, they scour their trenches and cities for foreign spies and collaborators, ever paranoid that their schemes will be unraveled by outsiders. When they fail to find a perpetrator, someone is inevitably executed: fed to a hungry giant squid or backstabbed with a poisoned coral dagger. No one can be trusted within the ranks of the undersea empire.

Merdrow

Medium Humanoid (Elf), Typically Neutral Evil

Armor Class 13 (leather armor)
Hit Points 22 (4d8 + 4)
Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)

Skills Perception +2
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 12
Languages Aquan, Elvish
Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Amphibious. The merdrow can breathe air and water.

Fey Ancestry. The merdrow has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put the merdrow to sleep.

Actions

Trident. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage, or 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

Mesmerizing Song. The merdrow sings a magical melody to a creature it can see within 60 feet that can hear it. The creature must succeed on a DC 11 Wisdom saving throw or be incapacitated for 1 minute. While incapacitated in this way, its speed is 0. A creature that is immune to being charmed automatically succeeds on this saving throw. This effect ends early for an affected creature if it takes any damage or if someone else uses an action to shake the creature out of its stupor.

Merdrider

Some merdrow hear their Song of the Depths as a faint tune in the back of their mind, whereas others endure a blaring chorus at all hours. Those who hear it most loudly are drawn to a bed of deep sea vents to be transformed by the goddess of the depths.

Monstrous Transformation. Many who answer the goddess's call perish in the superheated thermal vents, but those that survive are horrifically changed. Their skin is replaced with chitin, their abdomen is elongated, and their legs are multiplied fourfold, with their foremost becoming pincers. The resulting abomination is half-crab, half merdrow, an apex predator of the lowermost depths.

These monstrosities prowl the ocean floor at the command of their inscrutable goddess, venturing as far as the ocean coasts to perform assassinations and reconnaissance missions. No matter how loudly a merdrider hears their goddess's call, however, its directives are cryptic, and the merdrider may not fully understand its purpose. As such, merdriders are motivated by delusion and zeal in equal measure, acting out their interpretation of the song with directionless bloodlust or cautious experimentation, depending on their disposition.



Merdrider

Large Monstrosity, Typically Chaotic Evil

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 142 (15d10 + 60)
Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)

Skills Perception +5, Stealth +5
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages Aquan, Elvish
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Amphibious. The merdrider can breathe air and water.

Fey Ancestry. The merdrider has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put the merdrider to sleep.

Spider Climb. The merdrider can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, the merdrider has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Actions

Multiattack. The merdrider makes one Pincer attack and one Scythe attack.

Pincer. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled and restrained (escape DC 15). The merdrider has two claws, each of which can grapple only one target.

Scythe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d8 + 4) slashing damage plus 7 (2d6) poison damage.

Prehistoric Lycanthropes

All were-creatures stem from the same source: the primeval curse of lycanthropy. Those afflicted are condemned to transform into beasts or monstrous hybrids under the alabaster glow of moonlight. By day, they live a double life: that of a person desperately clinging to civility, and that of a beast thirsting for blood.

The curse of lycanthropy spreads to new hosts through a lycanthrope's bite. If precautions aren't taken, the curse embeds itself within the victim's soul, transforming them into a lycanthrope of the same kind.

Antediluvian Curses. Most lycanthropes resemble the most fearsome beasts of our forests and jungles—wolves, boars, bears, and tigers. But in rare cases, strains of lycanthropy have outlasted the beasts from which they stemmed. These lycanthropes transform into now-extinct creatures of terrible strength and proportions, even by the standards of were-creatures. Weremammoths and saber-toothed weretigers, for example, tower over mere werewolves. They are possessed by more savage instincts and a keener vulnerability to silver unseen by their contemporary kin, who often fear these progenitor beasts.

Beasts of the Pack. Though contemporary lycanthropes are solitary, cursed individuals, prehistoric lycanthopes often demonstrate a pack mentality. Dire werewolves are most at home at the head of a wolf pack, and cave werebears will seek to assemble a tribe of bears and werebears to follow them. As such, prehistoric lycanthropes claim swathes of territory, fortified by their loyal beasts, and claim ownership of any prey within.



Characters as Lycanthropes

When a player character is cursed with lycanthropy, the curse lies dormant for seven days before revealing itself with an uncontrollable transformation. During this time, a *remove curse* spell can rid the character of the curse; afterwards, only a *greater restoration* or a *wish* spell can end their lycanthropy.

The character then gains the lycanthrope's speeds in their Beast and hybrid forms and its traits, senses, and actions that don't involve equipment. The number of hit points that the character regains through the Regeneration trait is equal to their level. The character is proficient with the lycanthrope's natural attacks. All prehistoric lycanthropes use Strength for the attack and damage rolls of their natural attacks.

The GM can assume control over the character when transformed into a Beast or hybrid form, and when special conditions, such as seeing a full moon or dropping below half their hit points, are met.

Lastly, the character changes in the following ways based on its lycanthropy:

Cave Werebear. The character's Strength becomes 22 if it wasn't already higher. The character's body becomes stout and it grows thicker body hair.

Dire Werewolf. The character's Strength score becomes 18 if it wasn't already higher. The character's fingernails grow long and pointed.

Saber-Toothed Weretiger. The character's Strength score becomes 18 if it wasn't already higher. The character bears two prominent teeth resembling fangs.

Weremammoth. Only Giants can contract weremammoth lycanthropy. The Giant's Strength score becomes 24 if it wasn't already higher. The Giant bears tusks while not transformed.

Cave Werebear

Cave werebears are lonesome creatures that dwell in grottos or grand, subterranean caverns. Though their transformations are triggered by a full moon, they don't require moonlight; the moon's phase alone compels their transformations. However, their transformations also follow more seasonal tides. Cave werebears are prone to streaks of lethargy in the winter months, an inherited tendency to hibernate that diminishes their more violent lycanthropic urges.

The lycanthropy that gives rise to cave werebears confers a fever that kills most of its hosts. It is said that a lethal dose of wolfsbane can break the fever, but it does little to stem the spreading curse. Thus, cave werebears are reluctant to pass their curse to prospective hosts, even those who seek it willingly.

Cave Werebear

Medium Monstrosity, Typically Neutral Evil

Armor Class 12 (natural armor)
Hit Points 180 (24d8 + 72)
Speed 30 ft., 40 ft. in bear or hybrid form, climb 30 ft. in bear or hybrid form

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	7 (−2)

Skills Perception +5, Stealth +4
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages Common (can't speak in bear form)
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Keen Smell. The werebear has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Primal Fortitude. When the werebear fails a saving throw, roll a d6. On a 5 or 6, it succeeds instead.

Regeneration. The werebear regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn. If the werebear takes damage from a silvered weapon, this trait doesn't function at the start of the werebear's next turn. The werebear dies only if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

Actions

Multiattack. The werebear makes one Bite attack, if possible, and then makes two Claw or Warpick attacks.

Bite (Bear or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (2d10 + 6) piercing damage. If the target is a Humanoid, it must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be cursed with cave werebear lycanthropy.

Claw (Bear or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d8 + 6) slashing damage.

Pickaxe (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (1d12 + 6) piercing damage.

Bonus Actions

Change Shape. The werebear transforms into a cave bear, a hybrid Monstrosity, or back into its Humanoid form. Its game statistics, other than its speed and size, are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its Humanoid form if it dies.

Dire Werewolf

Just as dire wolves tower over their contemporary kin, dire werewolves are larger and more menacing predators than ordinary werewolves. Bloodlust is especially intense in this strain of lycanthropy. Once a dire wolf is in the throes of a hunt, it won't abandon its pursuit until its prey is slain. In the rare cases that a quarry escapes its grasp, a dire werewolf may devolve into a frenzy of violence until its hunger is sated.

These lycanthropes are prone to forming packs, recruiting wolves, winter wolves, and lesser werewolves to their side. Even while masquerading in humanoid form, this pack mentality, an aggressive us-versus-them dichotomy, dominates their thinking and entrenches them against outsiders. When suspicious villagers begin questioning the sure signs of lycanthropy, a dire werewolf may galvanize the town against a host of other scapegoats rather than be discovered.

Saber-Toothed Weretiger

The saber-toothed weretiger cuts a ghastly figure, eyes wild with malice and its namesake fangs glistening in the moonlight. These fangs are grisly tools for tearing lacerations in their prey before dealing a killing blow. This slow, gruesome hunt is the weretiger's favorite tactic, perhaps because it allows it to play with its food. To the victim, however, the experience is anything but playful.

Saber-toothed weretigers consider their lycanthropic kin to be rivals, and thus attempt to kill anyone who receives their curse. Battles for territory are frequent, bloody, and truncated. These weretigers will only ally with one another to make short work of an even more powerful rival, before turning on one another.

Dire Werewolf

Medium Monstrosity, Typically Chaotic Evil

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 157 (21d8 + 63)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +5
Senses passive Perception 14
Languages Common (can't speak in wolf form)
Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Bloodthirst. If the werewolf takes 15 damage or more on a single turn, it has advantage on attack rolls it makes until the end of its next turn.

Keen Hearing and Smell. The werewolf has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

Regeneration. The werewolf regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn. If the werewolf takes damage from a silvered weapon, this trait doesn't function at the start of the werewolf's next turn. The werewolf dies only if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

Actions

Multiattack. The werewolf makes one Bite attack, if possible, and then makes two Claw or Greatspear attacks.

Bite (Wolf or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage. If the target is a Humanoid, it must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or be cursed with dire werewolf lycanthropy.

Claw (Wolf or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage.

Greatspear (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d12 + 4) piercing damage.

Bonus Actions

Change Shape. The werewolf transforms into a dire wolf, a hybrid Monstrosity, or back into its Humanoid form. Its game statistics, other than its size and creature type, are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its Humanoid form if it dies.

VARIANT: PACK DOMINATION

Some prehistoric lycanthropes are imbued with an ancient power over beasts that allows them to form a pack of followers. These followers might hunt with their lycanthrope leader, drive out competing predators, patrol the lycanthrope's territory, or exact vengeance against those who seek to end the lycanthrope's curse.

This is represented in the following trait and action.

Pack Tactics. The lycanthope has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the lycanthrope's allies is within 5 ft. of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Pack Initiation (Recharges after a Long Rest). The lycanthrope chooses one Beast or Humanoid cursed with lycanthropy that can see or hear it within 60 feet to make a Wisdom saving throw. The DC of this saving throw is 8 + the lycanthrope's Strength modifier + its proficiency bonus. On a failed save, the creature is charmed by the lycanthrope to become part of its pack. The GM decides if a creature is appropriate to join a pack. This effect lasts until dispelled by *remove curse* or similar magic.

The lycanthope's pack consists of up to a dozen creatures whose CR total doesn't exceed that of the lycanthrope.

Saber-Toothed Weretiger

Medium Monstrosity, Typically Neutral

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 195 (26d8 + 78)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	15 (+2)	17 (+3)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)

Skills Perception +6, Stealth +6
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16
Languages Common (can't speak in tiger form)
Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Keen Hearing and Smell. The weretiger has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

Pounce (Tiger or Hybrid Form Only). If the weretiger moves at least 15 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a Claw attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 16 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the weretiger can make one Shearing Bite attack against it as a bonus action.

Regeneration. The weretiger regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn. If the weretiger takes damage from a silvered weapon, this trait doesn't function at the start of the weretiger's next turn. The weretiger dies only if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

Actions

Multiattack. The weretiger makes one Shearing Bite attack, if possible, and then makes one Claw or Pike attack.

Shearing Bite (Tiger or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d10 + 4) piercing damage. On a hit, the target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or gain a bleeding wound. Constructs, elementals, and undead automatically succeed on this saving throw. A creature loses 10 (3d6) hit points at the start at each of its turns for each of its bleeding wounds. When the creature uses an action to staunch the bleeding or it receives magical healing, it loses all of its bleeding wounds. Any creature that fails this saving throw is cursed with saber-toothed weretiger lycanthropy.

Claw (Tiger or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage.

Pike (Humanoid or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d10 + 4) piercing damage.

Bonus Actions

Change Shape. The weretiger transforms into a saber-toothed tiger, a hybrid Monstrosity, or back into its Humanoid form. Its game statistics, other than its size and creature type, are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its Humanoid form if it dies.

Weremammoth

Only giants can receive the curse of weremammoth lycanthropy, becoming hybrids of prehistoric titans. Their transformation is less pliant than other werecreatures; their prominent tusks remain no matter which form they assume, and their silhouette always betrays the hunched back and sturdy build of a mammoth. When they catch the light of the full moon, a weremammoth is at first a one-member stampede, but when the bloodlust dies down, they may remain as a mammoth for days or weeks afterward.

Most clans of giants exile those in their ranks who become cursed with lycanthropy. Thus, these wooly titans can usually be found wandering alone, crossing vast distances in search of solitude and prey.

Lycanthropy by Size

Different trains of lycanthropy are attuned to humanoids of different sizes. If a lycanthrope bites a creature that is too large or too small to be infected, the curse instead manifests as a brutal fever that usually kills the host. The following table details optional rules for were-creatures and suitable sizes for their hosts.

Category	Size
Wererat	Small
Werewolf	Medium or Small
Weretiger	Medium
Werebear	Medium
Dire Werewolf	Medium
Saber-Toothed Weretiger	Medium
Cave Werebear	Medium (Powerful Build)
Weremammoth	Large (Giant only)

Weremammoth

Huge Monstrosity, Typically Neutral

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)
Hit Points 230 (20d12 + 100)
Speed 30 ft. (40 ft., in mammoth or hybrid form)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
24 (+7)	10 (+0)	21 (+5)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	7 (–2)

Skills Perception +5
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages Giant (can't speak in mammoth form)
Challenge 11 (7,200 XP)

Trampling Charge. If the weremammoth moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with its Tusks attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 19 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the weremammoth can make one Stomp attack against it as a bonus action.

Regeneration. The weremammoth regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn. If the weremammoth takes damage from a silvered weapon, this trait doesn't function at the start of the weremammoth's next turn. The weremammoth dies only if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

Actions

Multiattack. The weremammoth makes one Tusks attack and one Stomp or Greatclub attack.

Tusks. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 29 (5d8 + 7) piercing damage. If the target is a Giant, it must make a DC 17 Constitution saving throw or be afflicted with weremammoth lycanthropy.

Stomp. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 23 (3d10 + 7) bludgeoning damage.

Greatclub (Giant or Hybrid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 20 (3d8 + 7) bludgeoning damage.

Rock (Giant or Hybrid Form Only). *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, range 60/240 ft., one target. *Hit:* 40 (6d10 + 7) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 19 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Bonus Actions

Change Shape. The weremammoth transforms into a mammoth, a hybrid Monstrosity, or back into its Giant form. Its game statistics, other than its creature type, are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its Giant form if it dies.

Silken Mummies

In the tombs of forgotten kingdoms, an incipient parasite weaves nests among the sarcophagi of long dead god-kings. When an intruder trespasses upon their nest, canopic hives and silken mummies rise to swarm the living.

Undead Hives. The arachnophage is a miniscule spider-like parasite that infests underground tombs and other sites flush with lingering incantations. Instead of spinning a web or digging a burrow, the phage bores into the bodies of larger creatures—living or dead—to construct its nest. As it multiplies, the swarm envelops the host's body in thick bands of silk resembling linens to preserve and reinforce its nest.

If the swarm's host is a living creature with a soul, however, the arachnophages hollow out the soul in the same way that a nest of termites hollows out a log, leaving behind a dull intelligence driven by the swarm's will. The shambling undead might even remember facets of its life, but its only desire is to spread the infestation to new hosts.

Scarabs of Protection. The scarab, a predatory insect with an iridescent shell, hunts and eats arachnophages, and can even overwhelm a swarm that isn't fully established. As adversaries of the arachnophage, scarab beetles are considered sacred symbols of life and renewal, and can be found emblazoned on the side of tombs and on amulets of protection.



Canopic Hive

Small Undead, Unaligned

Armor Class 6 (natural armor)
Hit Points 10 (3d6)
Speed 5 ft., climb 5 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
3 (−4)	1 (−5)	11 (+0)	1 (−5)	8 (−1)	1 (−5)

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned, prone
Senses blindsight 30 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 9
Languages —
Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Death Burst. When the hive dies, it explodes, releasing thousands of arachnophages. Each creature within 5 feet of it must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the creature's Charisma score is reduced by 1d4 and it is cursed with an arachnophage infestation. The cursed creature's Charisma score is reduced by an additional 1d4 for every 24 hours that elapse. A creature dies if this reduces its Charisma score to 0, and the corpse rises as a silken mummy 24 hours later. The curse and Charisma reduction last until removed by a *remove curse* spell or other magic.

Actions

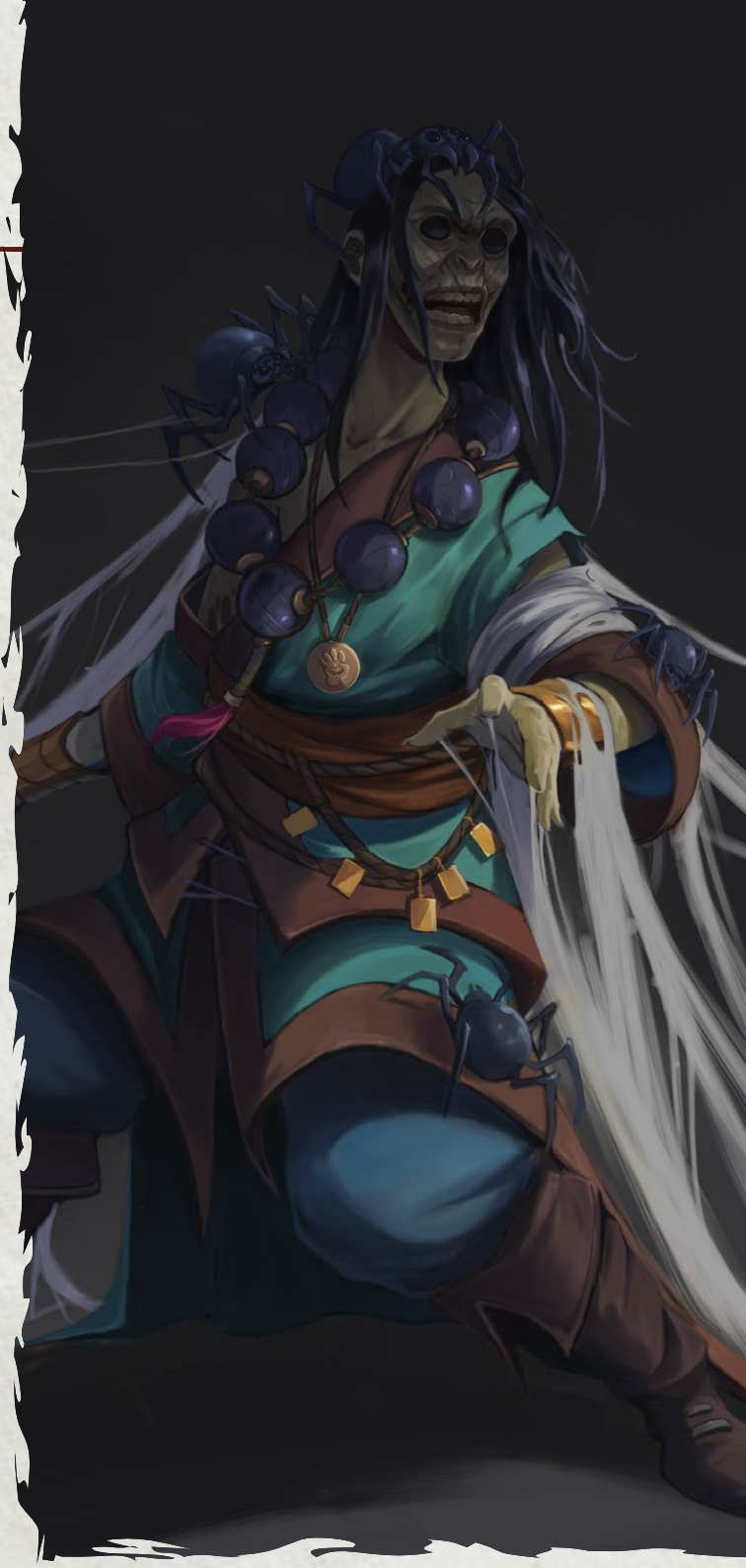
Burst. The hive explodes and dies, increasing the radius of its Death Burst trait to 10 feet.

Canopic Hive

Arachnophage hives form a distinctive urn-like shape around corpses they inhabit. After reducing the corpse to mere bones, the remnants are gathered and woven together with thick bands of webbing. Inside, the phages multiply a thousandfold and skitter along the hive's skin, working in hivemind harmony to slowly walk their canopic hive toward new potential hosts. Should they fail in their search, the sustenance of their hive can feed them for generations, or longer if their habitat is flush with magical energies.

Silken Mummy

In death, paupers and god-kings alike become food for worms. The least fortunate, however, become food for spiders. When arachnophages take root in a living being, they consume the host's soul and transform it into a shambling undead. Unlike zombies and ghouls, which entirely lack a soul, however, the phages leave behind the barest remnants of life essence—a soul so riddled with holes that it resembles a sponge—allowing their host a semblance of intelligence, easily bent to the hive's whims. The resultant silken mummy is a walking hive, encased in silk reminiscent of funerary wrappings, entirely inimical to living things.



A Silken Mummy's Lair

Though arachnophages might infest any tomb or necropolis, they form true lairs amongst the opulent burial sites of kings and emperors, where the presence of protective incantations, magical traps, and artifacts feeds the phages, in lieu of fresh corpses. Unsealing such a tomb threatens to overwhelm nearby settlements with a mummy's curse—an unceasing swarm of arachnophages—ended only with incineration or total saturation.

Lair Actions

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the silken mummy can take a lair action to cause one of the following magical effects:

» Thick, sticky webbing fills a 20-foot cube anchored to two solid objects that the mummy can see within 60 feet. The webs are difficult terrain and lightly obscure their area. Each creature that starts its turn in the webs or that enters them during its turn must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the creature is restrained as long as it remains in the webs or until it breaks free. A creature restrained by the webs can use its action to make a DC 15 Strength check. If it succeeds, it is no longer restrained. The webs are flammable. Any 5-foot cube of webs exposed to fire burns away in 1 round, dealing 2d4 fire damage to any creature that starts its turn in the fire.

» Until initiative count 20 on the next round, nonmagical flames within 120 feet of the silken mummy are instantly extinguished and spells of 1st level or lower that produce light within 120 feet of the silken mummy are dispelled.

» Blinding dust and sand swirls magically around the silken mummy. Each creature within 5 feet of the silken mummy must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be blinded until the end of its next turn.

Silken Pharoah

Silken pharaohs are the animated corpses of ancient god-kings and magi, who were entombed with magical trinkets and protective incantations. When such a corpse becomes a silken mummy, the lingering magic feeds the arachnophages, who multiply to unprecedented numbers.

The statistics of a silken pharaoh are the same as a silken nummy, with the following changes:

Challenge. The challenge rating of a silken pharaoh is 16.

Armor Class. A silken pharaoh has AC 14.

Hit Points. A silken pharaoh has 150 (20d8 + 60) hit points.

Legendary Resistances (3/Day). If the silken pharaoh fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Infesting Slam. The silken pharaoh makes its Infesting Slam attack with a +9 bonus, and deals 22 (5d8) necrotic damage on a hit.

Legendary Actions. The silken pharaoh can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The silken pharaoh regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Web. The silken pharaoh makes a Web attack.

Slam (2 Actions). The silken pharaoh makes an Infesting Slam attack.

Devour Arcana (2 Actions). The silken pharaoh casts the spell *dispel magic* targeting up to three creatures, objects, or magical effects within range. The silken pharaoh's spellcasting ability is Constitution for this effect. The pharaoh gains temporary hit points equal to the combined level of spells ended in this way times 5.

Mock Divinity (2 Actions). A blinding flash emanates from the silken pharoah. Each creature within 30 feet of the pharaoh must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or be blinded until the end of the creature's next turn.

Silken Mummy

Medium Undead, Typically Neutral Evil

Armor Class 11 (natural armor)
Hit Points 120 (16d8 + 48)
Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	8 (−1)	17 (+3)	8 (−1)	13 (+1)	1 (−5)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Damage Immunities necrotic, poison
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned
Senses blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages the languages it knew in life
Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Regeneration. The mummy regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn. If the mummy takes fire damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of the mummy's next turn. The mummy dies only if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

Turn Resistance. The mummy has advantage on saving throws against any effect that turns undead.

Web Walker. The mummy ignores movement restrictions caused by webbing.

Actions

Multiattack. The mummy makes one Web attack and two Infesting Slam attacks.

Infesting Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) bludgeoning plus 18 (4d8) necrotic damage and if the target is a creature, it must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the creature's Charisma score is reduced by 1d4 and it is cursed with an arachnophage infestation. The cursed creature's Charisma score is reduced by an additional 1d4 for every 24 hours that elapse. A creature dies if this reduces its Charisma score to 0, and the corpse rises as a new silken mummy 24 hours later. The curse and Charisma reduction last until removed by a *remove curse* spell or other magic.

Web. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* The creature is restrained by webbing. As an action, the restrained creature can make a DC 14 Strength check, escaping from the webbing on a success. The effect ends if the webbing is destroyed. The webbing has AC 10, 5 hit points, is vulnerable to fire damage and immune to bludgeoning, poison and psychic damage.

Monster Extinctions

While the Extinct Bestiary in this book imagines new monsters, this chapter imagines how familiar fantasy monsters might go extinct.

Sometimes extinctions happen naturally, such as when temperatures fluctuate, migrations are blown off course, winter comes early, or new species arrive. This is the background extinction rate, the "turnover" of life on Earth. Currently, Earth's extinction rate is at least 1,000 times higher than this background rate because, just like fantasy heroes, humans have an outsized impact on the world.[493] In turn, your fantasy world might have magical equivalents to climate change, habitat loss, pollution, and so on. This chapter leverages those parallels to explore how these forces might drive monsters to extinction.

The entries in this chapter reflect the structure of the IUCN Red List, the definitive source on the conservation status of animal, fungi, and plant species. We apply that structure to the monsters represented in your 5th Edition game by exploring four aspects:

Habitat & Ecology. How the monster lives, eats, and reproduces.
Use and Trade. Goods, services, or industries built on the monster or its products.
Threats. Specific stresses or outside forces working against the monster's continued survival.
Conservation Actions. How these threats might be mitigated or resolved.

This format helps players grapple with extinction as a force in the world, offers worldbuilding elements for monsters and their habitats, and provides setting-authentic adventure hooks.

The Unbalanced Remainder

In fantasy games, there's always another monster roaming the woods, lurking in a dungeon, or hiding under an overturned cart. These are worlds of infinite abundance in which life is spontaneously generated by divine beings and wizardly incantations. Any such universe must contend with an "unbalanced remainder," a force that affords endless resources despite the restrictions imposed by physics. Fantasy settings rely on magic as a solution: divine interventions, arcane meddling, and planes of infinite elemental energy to fuel unparalleled abundance.

Until relatively recently, myths of superabundance and nature's resilience prevailed in scientific thought as well. The oldest and most pervasive incarnation, seen as far back as Herodotus, is sometimes dubbed the "balance of nature:" the idea that the natural world is a harmonious, self-repairing mechanism. As the father of modern taxonomy, Carl Linnaeus, put it in 1959, "all natural things should contribute and lend a helping hand toward preserving every species and … that the death and destruction of one thing should always be subservient to the restitution of another."[494] This implies that extinction and forces like overhunting are simply impossible—the forces of nature would intervene to prevent it. Even if every member of a species were slain in one location, the animal still likely existed in far-off, yet-unexplored corners of the world.[495]

An immutable world, in which animals can't be driven extinct and ecosystems can't be irrevocably destroyed, is a fantasy world. The sole difference between the worlds of wizards and owlbears and those of early natural scientists is that Herodotus and Linnaeus substituted the unbalanced remainder of magic with an unbalanced remainder of "divine wisdom."

Thomas Jefferson was working from similarly flawed assumptions when he commissioned Lewis and Clark to explore the American West in 1803. He had hoped they would find the American mastodon—which he called *incognitum*—still thriving beyond the Mississippi River.[496]

Those same mastodon fossils, and the assumptions Jefferson had inherited, inspired opposition to modern ecology. George Cuvier faced resistance for his landmark work in 1796 on "lost species" which established the modern idea of extinction. And in 1859, Charles Darwin met similar backlash for his theory that scarcity—and the threat of extinction—was a motive force for speciation.

Conservation science now recognizes that superabundance and the "balance of nature" are simply fallacies. Environmentalist William Hornidae wrote, "It is time for all men to be told in the plainest of terms that there never has existed, anywhere in historic times, a volume of wildlife so great that civilized man could not quickly exterminate it."[497]

Even in fantasy stories, it's critical to imagine the point at which magic fails to solve the problem of scarcity. In this imbalance of nature, even monsters go extinct.

Monster Extinctions

The same forces that might drive elves or humans to extinction are at work among the monsters arrayed against them, with equally ruinous consequences. Climate change, habitat loss, invasive species, pollution, population growth, and overutilization can kill a monster just as certainly as a paladin's greatsword. Magic like *true resurrection* might seem like the obvious solution to these extinction pressures, but without reversing the forces that caused the extinction in the first place, no magic can restore an extinct monster to its rightful place in the ecosystem.

Aboleth

Creatures older than written history still roam the world, from red dragons hatched in the fire of the first volcanoes to krakens succored by meltwater of its first receding glaciers. When these creatures were born, aboleths were already ancient.

Habitat & Ecology. Aboleths dwell in the watery recesses of oceanic trenches, deep lakes, and the lightless expanse of the Elemental Plane of Water, rarely deigning to approach the surface. They have dominated these depths since before the rise of gods and humanoids, and still consider themselves the rightful rulers over the Material Plane.

Through telepathic domination and a transmutative curse, aboleths establish minor cults of humanoids dedicated to their pseudo-divinity, demanding fealty from these minions in the hopes of ascending to godhood. These followers are an aboleth's sole allies, for aboleths always contest one another for followers and dominion.

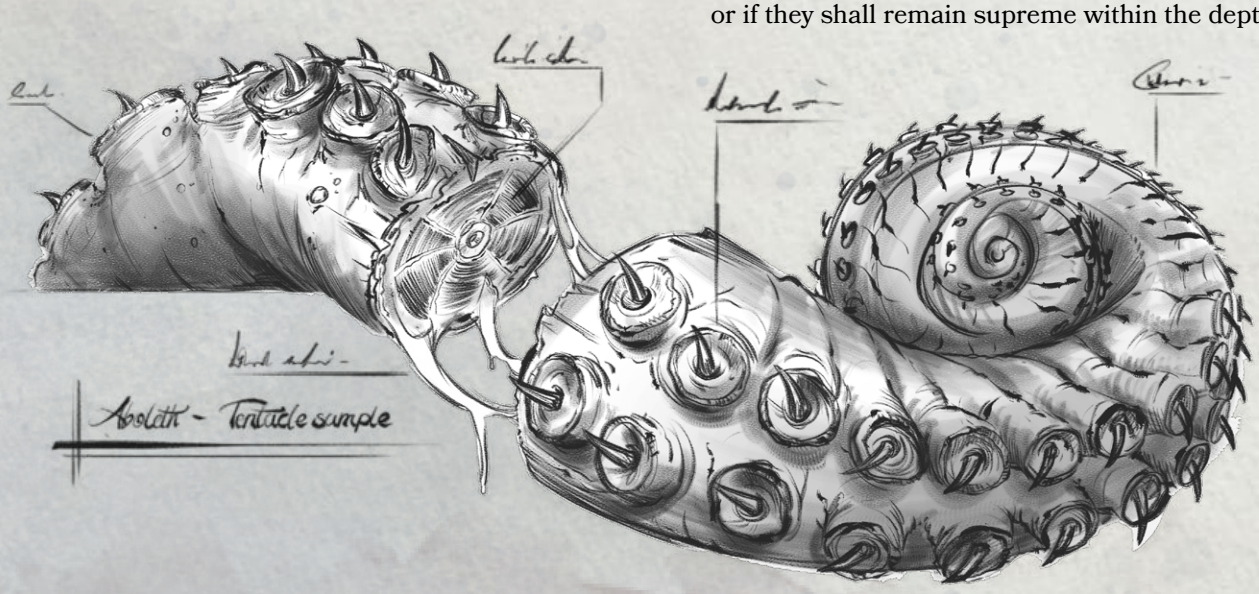
Aboleths are endlessly patient and spiteful of the gods that once overthrew their primordial empires. They scheme endlessly to expand their cults, usurp the gods, and subjugate the civilizations above.

Use and Trade. The mere presence of an aboleth is enough to warp a lake and its inhabitants through its secretions. Aboleth mucus is a stringy, transmutative substance that can be refined into *potions of water breathing*. Moreover, an aboleth's blubber can be rendered into a pungent, prismatic oil used in alchemist's fire and *potions of fire resistance*.

Threats. The continued existence of aboleths is threatened by a shrinking habitat and competing societies within it. As surface water is industrialized for docks, fisheries, and trade, aboleths lose the paths of incursion they use to renew their stock of worshipers, increasingly relegating them to deeper seas. These domains must be shared with races like merfolk and sahuagin, with whom they are bitter enemies. As a naturally mutagenic race, sahuagin are more resistant to the toxic effects of an aboleth's presence, and have developed a tradition of ritualistically hunting aboleths every hundred years.

Conservation Actions. Even when one aboleth is slain near the surface, another rises from the oceanic depths to take its place. One of the oldest phrases in history is an epithet of Deep Speech translated as "another remains"—a testament to aboleth resiliency.

However, advances in spellcraft and magic item construction have rendered new tools to penetrate into the lowest depths of the ocean: advanced *water breathing* spells that last for days, instead of hours, and submersibles based on the *apparatus of the crab* that allow a crew to scour the ocean floor. Time will tell whether the primordial reign of the aboleths ends with humanoids intruding on their final refuge, or if they shall remain supreme within the depths.



Axe Beak

Axe beaks are large, flightless birds whose namesake wedge-shaped beaks are deadly weapons in their own right. These beaks are also the best indicator of a bird's provenance: jungle birds have shorter and thicker beaks, whereas savannah birds bear longer, lighter ones. Older axe beaks show a lifetime of fighting for dominance in their beaks' scarred, chipped, and pitted edges.

Habitat & Ecology. Axe beaks are social birds that live in flocks with a complex hierarchy, usually with a patriarchal male and breeding females at the top. While they are usually nonagressive, a flock startled into stampeding can trample the average human to death under heavy footfalls or butcher them with frantic beak swings.

Use and Trade. The complex husbandry and heralding of axe beaks unites entire cultures where the birds are prominent. Children come of age when they ride their first axe beak. Experienced trainers break the birds to saddle. Warriors rise to power on the strength of their mount and their skill in mounted combat. Artisans craft elaborate barding for the birds, and ceremonial axes made from the bird's beak adorn the hips of chieftains and priests. These items, the stories they represent, and the skills needed to make them are passed onto the next generation, and the cycle begins anew.

Threats. Introduced competitors such as saber-toothed cats and blink dogs are gradually edging the axe beak out of its wild ecosystems. In its domesticated role, mounts such as steppe ponies and riding horses, which can be bred and trained in captivity with fewer risks of dismemberment, are replacing the axe beak.

Captive axe beaks also fuel a shadow industry of extreme racing and gladiatorial battles. As these industries boom, they have grown to dominate axe beak domestication, pushing traditional breeders towards other livestock. Beyond the ethical concerns, these practices perpetuate the bird's unwarranted reputation as a dangerous, unpredictable beast.

Conservation Actions. As apex predators, axe beaks are a primary indicator for an ecosystem's health. When axe beaks are extirpated from an area, they no longer control the populations of grazers and browsers, which soon exhaust the available plant life. Many areas in which axe beaks once roamed freely are now barren or overrun with invasive species. Re-releasing a viable flock axe beaks to such an ecosystem can restore it to health, sometimes more swiftly than seems possible through mundane means.



Basilisk

Reaching up to 300 pounds and six feet in length, basilisks are slow-moving, cold-blooded creatures with a ponderous, eight-legged gait. Their reputation is as a slow, dim-witted, or even stupid creatures, but basilisks hunt ingenuously.

Habitat & Ecology. Two main bio-magical adaptations form the basilisk's *modus vivendi*: its eyes and its gullet. A basilisk's eyes have the transmutative ability to petrify a creature that meets its gaze. With eyes placed on either side of its head, a basilisk has a 270-degree field of vision, making its gaze nigh inescapable. Once its prey is petrified, the basilisk is free to consume it at its leisure. Oils in its gullet create an alchemical reaction that transmutes the petrified creature back into flesh at the moment of consumption.

Basilisks mate for life and reproduce once every four years, laying a clutch of up to eight, leathery eggs at a time.

Use and Trade. Both the eyes and the gullets of basilisks are valuable ingredients for alchemy and arcana. Basilisk oil is currently the best and most

readily available antidote to petrification, and when refined to high concentrations can produce *oil of etherealness*. Basilisk eyes can be dried, pressed, or preserved in formaldehyde to create a variety of magical components for magic items and spellcraft, including magical inks, material components for the *stoneskin* spell, and potions of *flesh to stone*. Recent fashion has created a demand for basilisk teeth as armor decoration, though these confer no magical benefit whatsoever.

Basilisks are often raised in captivity despite inherent risks that the creatures will petrify each other or their keepers. Basilisks make effective guardian beasts not just for their ability to neutralize intruders, but also because they are conspicuously extravagant guardians. Someone willing to decorate their garden with the petrified bodies of animal handlers is certainly willing to dispatch a prospective thief with prejudice.

Threats. Their unique hunting mechanism makes basilisks resistant to habitat degradation, but not impervious. Desert basilisks and their smaller jungle cousins are often the first species to come into conflict with copper and black dragons respectively. Despite these rivalries, overutilization by humanoids continues to be the biggest threat to basilisk survival.

Conservation Actions. Since wild populations at a safe distance from settlements have the best chance of survival, preserving the basilisk is a matter of preserving the hot climates they call home. The differences between a desert basilisk and a jungle basilisk don't seem to extend to their valuable magical parts, and so are often of little interest to researchers. Further study is required.

Blink Dog

Though the name "blink dog" evokes an image of a snarling, teleporting hound, there are many more breeds of blink dog, domestic and wild.

Habitat & Ecology. Wild blink dogs are descended from a sporting dog bred to hunt large magical predators in the Feywild. These feral creatures closely resemble wolves or coyotes in their behavior, but blink dogs tend to be less territorial and more migratory.

Use and Trade. Many domestic breeds now carry the common name "blink dog," including the misty spaniel, the Sylvan setter, the Lavender retriever, and the wire-haired disappearing pointer. While domesticated blink dogs retain their ability to "blink," or teleport over short distances, they bear little resemblance to wild blink dogs. Depending on breed, a domestic blink dog may be as small as a handbag or as large as a mastiff, with short, long, or no hair in a myriad of colors.

Threats. Blink dogs in the wild are resistant but not immune to the extinction pressures faced by wild dogs and wolves. They can teleport across otherwise impassable obstacles, but no blink dog can teleport over the breadth of a city. They can escape traps and snares, but not without lacerations or broken limbs. Though there are fewer invasive species to compete with blink dogs, phase spiders and displacer beasts have been edging into the dogs' territory for decades.

Conservation Actions. Domesticated blink dogs require skilled trainers, as blink dogs can always escape their handlers and avoid negative reinforcement. As new methods of hunting magical creatures become available, blink dog trainers have become a rare commodity, threatening to eliminate domestic blink dogs entirely.

> Wild blink dogs can be better preserved by eliminating indiscriminate hunting, such as traps, snares, and poisoned bait. These methods kill blink dogs in equal numbers to any other animal, even if they can teleport away from a trap before succumbing to injuries.



Dragons

For all their legendary power, dragons are still subject to the same cruel arithmetic that governs all megafauna: they must add to their population faster than it is depleted.

Habitat & Ecology. Dragons are the apex predators of an entire plane of existence. The only creatures more powerful than dragons are extraplanar: gods, angels, and the primeval or extraplanar entities akin to them.

Dragons are magic incarnate. Surrounding the Material Plane are Elemental Planes of Air, Earth, Water, and Fire, each of which provides an inexhaustible supply of the universe's base components. Dragons are physical channels for these unlimited elemental energies. Every true dragon possesses a *draconis fundamentum*, a gland attached to the heart with a direct magical link to one or more elemental planes. It is this organ that makes the dragon's impossible ecology possible: metabolizing literally any organic material, supercharging the dragon's muscles for flight, and filling its lungs with elemental energy.

Each biome on the Material Plane can support only one ancient member of a dragon species: each coast has a single ancient bronze dragon, each volcanic mountain range a single ancient red. Once an adult dragon has chosen its territory, its elemental influence amplifies its environment toward a climatological extreme. A silver dragon's mountaintop is forever shielded by glacial ice and a black dragon's swamp is always lush with the wetland's caustic, living decay.

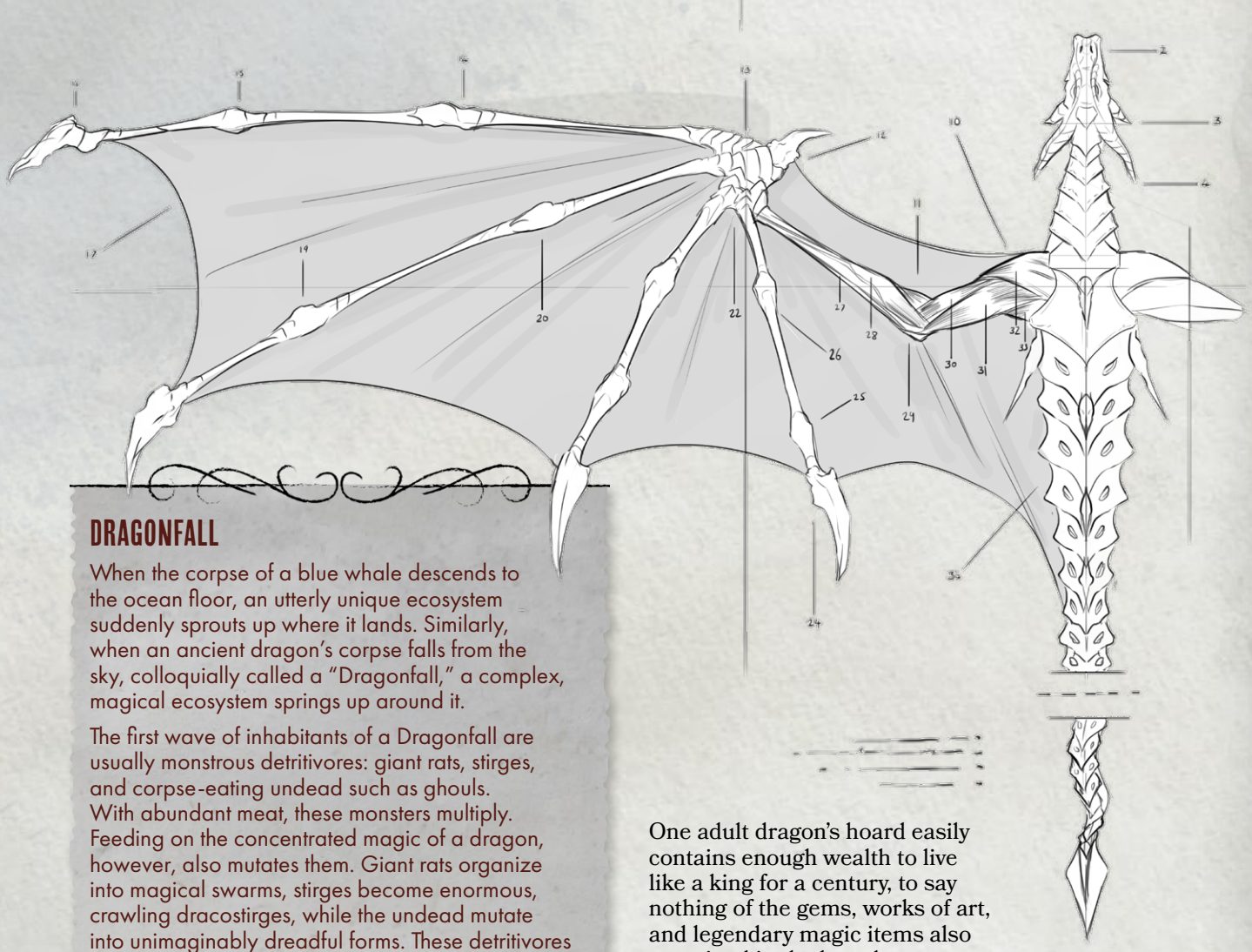
Crucially, it takes centuries to replace a true dragon. Dragons eggs take anywhere from two to three years to hatch, depending on species. Hatchlings take at least a century to reach reproductive age and can reproduce for a few hundred years afterwards. Meanwhile, the oldest dragons are so venerable as to be functionally immortal, occupying valuable lairs for millennia and denying their rivals a chance to gain a foothold in their territories.

Use and Trade. Dragons are a keystone species that help maintain healthy landscapes and biodiversity. Along with their stabilizing elemental influence on the land, dragons prey on dinosaurs, giant elk, hippogriffs, and other herbivores, helping prevent their populations from becoming larger than their habitat can support. Dragons also discourage the incursion of ruinous or aberrant predators like manticores and aboleths.

A dragon's hide, scales, claws, fangs, and bones are innately magical components, prized for their use in spellcraft and artificery. Dragon's blood, for example, has at least 12 documented uses both magical and mundane. Dragonscale armor and dragontooth weapons are prized by adventurers for their resistance to elemental forces and keenness of edge.

Harvesting the *draconis fundamentum* itself is considered an abomination by dragonkind and those who sympathize with them, but the practice is not unheard of. Legendary magic items like a *ring of fire elemental command* are often the result of this harvest. The organ is also the holy grail of xenoalchemy, the science of grafting monstrous features onto humanoid bodies. Depending on the state of the donor organ, such grafts can confer anything from a breath weapon to elemental mastery on par with a natural-born sorcerer.

Threats. As long as there have been dragons, adventurers have come to kill them. There are many rewards to slaying a dragon: a heroic reputation and the advantages of fame, the value of draconic scales and bones as trade goods, and the hoard of valuable objects collected in the dragon's lair over its lifetime.



DRAGONFALL

When the corpse of a blue whale descends to the ocean floor, an utterly unique ecosystem suddenly sprouts up where it lands. Similarly, when an ancient dragon's corpse falls from the sky, colloquially called a "Dragonfall," a complex, magical ecosystem springs up around it.

The first wave of inhabitants of a Dragonfall are usually monstrous detritivores: giant rats, stirges, and corpse-eating undead such as ghouls. With abundant meat, these monsters multiply. Feeding on the concentrated magic of a dragon, however, also mutates them. Giant rats organize into magical swarms, stirges become enormous, crawling dracostirges, while the undead mutate into unimaginably dreadful forms. These detritivores maintain an uneasy peace until the vast reserves of meat begin to dwindle, at which point they succumb to infighting and eventually scatter in search of food.

Following the exodus of many detritivores, goblinoids and monstrous humanoids such as gnolls, goblins, and orcs conquer the Dragonfall, using rudimentary tools to harvest dragon leather, scales, and other useful tissues. Prolonged exposure to draconic blood awakens magic within these residents too, leading to gnoll half-dragons, goblin sorcerers, and winged orcs. These tribes, too, eventually leave the Dragonfall when easily-harvestable materials diminish, usually laden with dragonbone weapons and dragon-leather armor.

At last, humanoids discover and utilize the bones, scales, and marrow of the Dragonfall, converting the remnants into a city dedicated to harvesting and utilizing the vast skeleton over the course of centuries. Industries of bone-mining and scale-working can jumpstart armies and economies on their own, whereas the marrow and scales fuel alchemical and technological innovation far ahead of its time. Some of the first viable airships were designed around the intact, preserved wings of a fallen dragon, and the first experiments in black powder used powdered red dragon scales as an ingredient.

One adult dragon's hoard easily contains enough wealth to live like a king for a century, to say nothing of the gems, works of art, and legendary magic items also contained in the hoard.

Along with those posed by humanoids, dragons also face threats from monstrous creatures. Occasionally, kobolds or goblins will revolt against their dragon overlord to usurp its place in their society or to redress unwarranted oppression. Dragons have a natural enemy in behirs: 40-foot-long, 2-ton serpentine monstrosities with 12 legs, limited intelligence, and a fearsome lightning breath weapon of their own. The origin of this blood feud is subject to continual speculation, but the dominant theory is that behirs were bred by storm giants to fight in their ancient war against dragons. Instinct and competition for lairs have perpetuated the feud to the present day. Perhaps a dragon's greatest threat, however, is other dragons. Set in opposition to each other by their pride, ancient grudges, and elemental natures, dragons often fight each other for natural resources or material riches.

All these conflicts are exacerbated by the increasing scarcity of suitable lair sites. While the land does bend itself to the elemental nature of a dragon that occupies it, dragons are at their most powerful when they occupy a biome suited to them. A green dragon living outside of a rainforest faces ecological disadvantages, and there are only so many rainforests to go around.

Because it takes centuries for another dragon to take the place of a fallen one, any of these threats might stress a dragon population to the breaking point.

Conservation Actions. No effort to preserve dragonkind can be successful without the participation of entire families of dragons, both metallic and chromatic. Because dragons are innately opposed to one another, nonviolent strategies for conflict resolution, such as draconic tribunals or councils, could arbitrate disputes before they escalate. Greatwyrms might already wield authority over their progeny, but an alliance between rival dragons would be necessary to quell battles between red and gold dragons, for example.

Furthermore, reducing the competition for lairs would curb draconic conflict and encourage more dragons to lay eggs. Various locations could be converted into artificial lairs, from abandoned mines, which could host red dragons, to ruined castles, which could serve as lairs for black dragons. With advanced magic, even a demiplane could act as a draconic lair.

Some dragons also possess the ultimate magical camouflage: the ability to polymorph and live anonymously among humanoids. If more dragons opted to disguise themselves, they would face no overt threat from adventuring companies or rival monsters. Furthermore, with a population of dragons integrated into society, a group could emerge whenever dragonkind verges on population collapse as a failsafe against outright extinction.

Gelatinous Cube

The byproducts of alchemical processes, oozes are mindless ichors that respond in simple, predictable ways to their environment—arguably, they're not alive at all. The most recognizable ooze, the gelatinous ooze, simply conforms its shape to occupy the most volume possible. In open environments, this ooze becomes a sphere; in sewers, it becomes a cylinder as it moves through pipes. In dungeons with rectangular corridors, it assumes its most iconic form: that of the gelatinous cube.

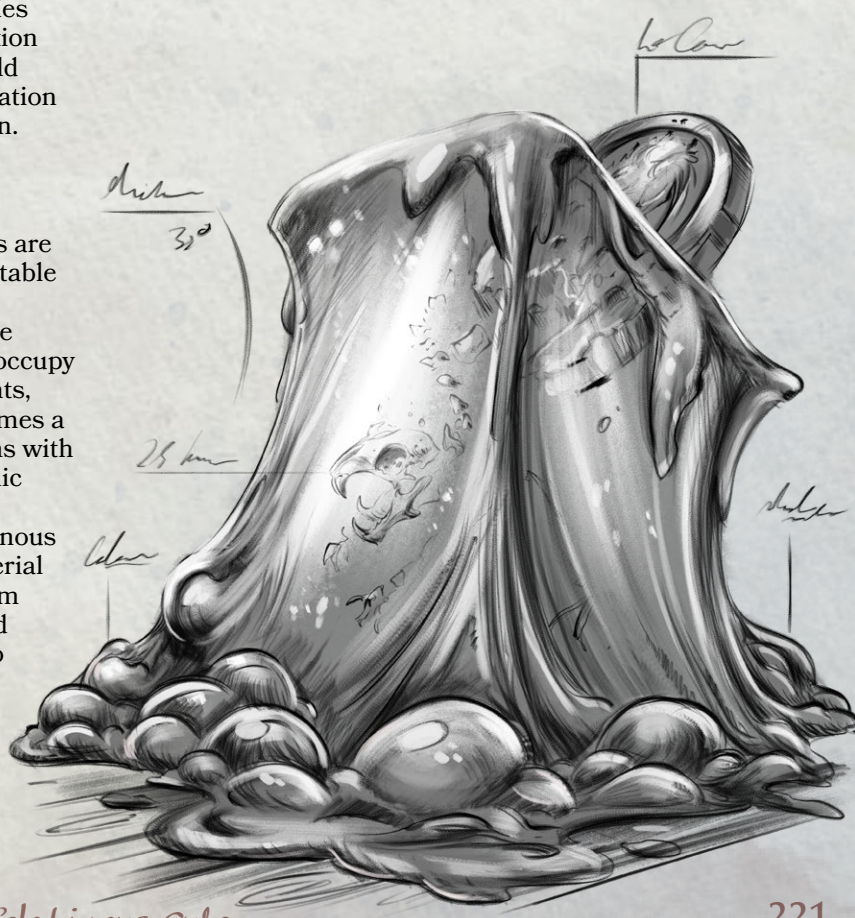
Habitat & Ecology. Like all oozes, gelatinous cubes are scavengers that scrape organic material from dark, moist environments. The ooze's form is composed of a highly acidic substance called ozoplasm that dissolves soft tissue and adds to its own mass, leaving behind bones, feathers, silicates, and metal. Gelatinous cubes often have a symbiotic relationship with rust monsters who feed on the sparkling metal in the cube's wake.

Gelatinous cubes reproduce asexually through fission, though not at a predictable size. Adrift in the frictionless, unconstrained vacuum of the Astral Plane, a spherical ooze might remain a singular organism until it reaches the size of a planet.

Use and Trade. Gelatinous cubes are most often relegated to the role of waste management. Small cubes are marketed to nobles and arcanists as an alternative to sewer systems in castles and keeps. And within urban sewers, gelatinous oozes are largely left to their own devices until they form a clog.

Threats. While they have a ready supply of habitats, gelatinous cubes are vulnerable to magical and mundane pollution. Without sufficient time to digest poisonous or caustic materials such as lye or slag, a gelatinous cube might lose its integrity and dissolve into a viscous pool. Theruphane, the vaporous magical byproduct of evocation magic, is particularly dangerous to the cube's integrity. One or two cursed magic items, left after the digestion of unfortunate adventurers, may also dissolve a cube before they can be expelled.

Conservation Actions. Further study of the cube's composition and behavior is needed to determine its limitations and proper maintenance of its habitats, but one thing is certain: it's not as simple as throwing table scraps down the latrine.



Griffon

Though folk delight in telling tales of the griffon's magical origin, these eagle-lion hybrids weren't created by a mad wizard or a fey lord's whimsy. It simply evolved to possess the strongest characteristics of its mundane cousins, the apex predators of their respective environments.

Habitat & Ecology. Griffons are aerial hunters that rely on their keen vision and sharp talons, rendering them just as dangerous on the ground as they are in the air. Whenever possible, griffons descend on their prey from great heights, breaking their quarry's neck in an instant. When prey escapes its grasp or other monsters compete for the kill, a griffon can sprint, pounce, and bite for supremacy.

Griffons have a particular taste for horses, a predilection which sparks conflict with humanoids, as well as other flying monstrosities like hippogriffs, pegasi, and perytons.

Use and Trade. Synonymous with courage in heraldry and folklore, trained griffon mounts are equally status symbols and fearsome weapons of war. An army headed by a corps of flying griffon cavalry is a daunting thing to behold.

Raising a griffon mount is no mean feat, however. Hatching griffon eggs for the task poses the least risk to life and limb, but demands almost a decade of care for each mount. Wild griffons can be trained as mounts if captured young enough, but have a tendency to buck their riders mid-flight. A horse saddle is worse than useless for a griffon, whose wings and beak create unique design requirements for its tack. Similarly, griffons can't be trained the same manner as horses; they simply fly away from incompetent trainers.

Threats. While the griffon's adaptability grants them some refuge from habitat degradation, they are still at risk from poaching. These poachers come in two varieties: horse ranchers protecting their herds and egg-sellers wishing to sell their eggs on the open market. Griffon trainers will pay up to 2,000 gold pieces for a single egg, and up to 5,000 for a hatchling—more in places where sale is restricted.

Conservation Actions. Further research into captive breeding programs and better enforcement of existing laws can reduce the impact of poaching on the species. Nonviolent techniques for repelling griffons, including disorienting mirrors and scaregriffs, have been proven effective in reducing conflict with agricultural uses.

Hippogriff

The first hippogriffs were born from the union of a male griffon and a mare. The resulting crossbreeds bear the forelimbs of an eagle and the rear half of a horse—making for surprisingly versatile flying mounts.

Habitat & Ecology. In the oversized ecosystem of monsters, from manticores to dragons, hippogriffs are frequently a prey animal. They find safety in numbers by traveling in flocks across wide swaths of prairie between mountain ranges, an instinct they inherited from their equine ancestry.

Use and Trade. With gentler dispositions, a stronger social hierarchy, and a more traditional anatomy, hippogriffs have every advantage over griffons as a flying mount. Moreover, discarded hippogriff feathers are used in the cores of magic wands, as quills for transcribing spells, and as components of *winged boots*.

Antivenoms can be refined from the blood of hippogriffs exposed to magical poisons, such as those in a manticore's tail spines. The hippogriff's large size and magical resilience make it an ideal candidate for such techniques.

Threats. Healthy hippogriff populations are a key indicator for the ecosystems they inhabit. Wild herds can grow by up to 20 percent a year, quickly outstripping the ability of the land to sustain them. However, predation by more ravenous monstrosities can cause these populations to crash.

Conservation Actions. The proud tradition of hippogriff riding is at the front lines of the species's preservation. Skilled riders carefully control the population of their chosen mount and help manage wild herds, while creating a positive relationship with other humanoids outside the tradition. Schools of transmutation magic recruit a disproportionate number of their neophytes from hippogriff riders, who gain an affinity for such magic through the quasi-magical bond with their mounts.



Kobolds

The extinction of dragons creates a trophic cascade—an ecological chain reaction—affecting a swathe of monstrous creatures, most prominently kobolds.

Habitat & Ecology. On its own, the average kobold is more comical than threatening—but a kobold is never alone. Kobold societies emerge when a family group attaches itself to the lair of a dragon, building out elaborate tunnel networks called warrens. These warrens are a marvel of elementary engineering, containing mushroom farms for food, hidden living spaces for hatchlings, and escape tunnels all protected by an endless supply of lethal and ingenious traps. Kobolds breed prodigiously and always attack intruders with a strong numerical advantage. As such, delving into a kobold warren is a war of attrition against waves of crafty, hidden, and ruthless foes.

Dragons and kobolds have a symbiotic relationship in fact and folklore. Kobold warrens embrace their draconic overlords as divine beings from which they are directly descended. When a kobold is born that manifests signs of draconic ancestry, such as a breath weapon or wings, they are promoted to the highest status among their kin. Many potential predators are deterred by the presence of a dragon, giving kobolds the time to establish themselves or rebuild after an attack.

Use and Trade. Kobold warrens are chiefly useful to their draconic overlords. For their part, dragons receive an outer sphere of defenses against would-be thieves and a veritable army of loyal minions to help expand their horde and raise their wyrmlings.

Threats. In the absence of dragons, kobolds must attach themselves to other infamous monstrosities like liches, purple worms, aboleths, or storm giants. These relationships are never as mutually beneficial as those kobolds form with dragons, and kobold populations in the vicinity of these creatures may soon become unrecognizable in their habits, culture, or even physiology. Sadly, the alternative, establishing an independent warren, is rarely ever successful for long. Without the threat of a much more powerful overlord, such warrens are soon stamped out by larger or more technologically advanced foes.



Conservation Actions. Because they live in mutualistic symbiosis with dragons, kobolds are the most direct example of how conserving an apex species directly affects other species in the ecological web. The best way to preserve kobold warrens, and the wealth of ingenuity they offer, is to avoid delving into kobold warrens and the draconic lairs beyond. Coexisting with dragons and preserving their wider habitats is the surest way to protect kobold populations.

Lycanthropes

Rather than a single species or even genus, lycanthropy is a curse, an infection that transforms humanoids into half-beast monstrosities.

Habitat & Ecology. Werewolves, wererats, and other lycanthropes survive by exploiting two separate habitats—humanoid society and the habitat of their beast form. A werewolf, for example, will always have shelter and food in a cold winter, and can also rely on the benefits of trade, medicine, education, and art. However, this relationship is fraught; if a werewolf's curse comes to light, they are certain to be exiled from their village (or their wolf pack).

Werewolves, wererats, and other lycanthropes reproduce by passing on their curse through a bite. Some people seek out the curse willingly, but many others are infected following a near-death attack by a lycanthrope.

Use and Trade. Hunter-gatherer societies have historically embraced a small number of lycanthropes among their populations. Perhaps most importantly, a lycanthrope can hunt otherwise un-huntable game, such as bears, buffalo, and elk. This is a critical advantage, especially in the winter. Additionally, a canonized lycanthrope warrior offers intimidation against larger, warlike groups.

Similarly, in modern societies, lycanthropes can protect against other supernatural threats. A small number of lycanthropes inoculates a population against incursions of vampires, doppelgangers, and fiends from the Lower Planes. A werewolf living in a small settlement will instinctively hunt mind-controlled creatures and extraplanar outsiders that infiltrate the population in order to protect its status as local apex predator. Unfortunately, these killings often seem indiscriminate to external observers, endangering the lycanthrope in turn.

Threats. Lycanthropes are chiefly threatened by conflict with other humanoids. Certain phases of the moon drive lycanthropes into a frenzy, demanding steadfast discipline and conviction to suppress. Ultimately, this cycle of transformations sometimes wins out, leading to a rampaging were-creature on the streets, and a concerted monster hunt thereafter.

A werecreature "reproduces" by passing its curse to another host. However, not every bite victim is a suitable host for the curse of lycanthropy. Wererat lycanthropy, for example, can infect halfings and gnomes, but confers a fever that usually kills larger hosts.

Conservation Actions. The underlying fear of lycanthropy is predicated on the idea that wild things are always evil and civilized things are universally good. However, the relative threats and boons lycanthropes provide to society are more nuanced, and should be discussed with relatively fewer torches and pitchforks. Learning how to live in cooperation with the wolf in our midst—or bear, tiger, or rat—is one of the key hurdles for modern societies.

Manticore

Scorpion-tailed, lion-bodied, dragon-winged, and human-faced, manticores are monstrosities whose uncanny horror is matched only by their voracious cruelty.

Habitat & Ecology. Manticores are literally man-eating monsters: they feed primarily on humans, eschewing elves, dwarves and other humanoids. When hunting, manticores fire their venomous tail spikes from the air before descending to maul and savage their prey. Though they usually follow predictable migration routes through marshes, mountains, and deserts, manticores retreat to caves to breed and raise young. No details of this process have been accurately collected.

Use and Trade. Manticores are most commonly recruited as mercenaries or hired guards. Adult manticores possess intelligence comparable to the middle stages of human development, with self-knowledge, language, and the ability to solve concrete problems, but not hypothetical thinking or empathy. They frequently negotiate alliances with war bands, wealthy liches, or giant chieftains—anyone that can provide them easy and direct access to human prey.

Manticore teeth grow in rows and are constantly replaced throughout their lifetime. Their tail spines grow even faster, replenishing themselves roughly every 24 hours. These natural materials can be fashioned into deadly and venomous weapons, or an antivenom useful for treating manticore victims.

Threats. Many other monstrosities share the manticore's ecological niche, including chimeras, perytons, wyverns, and dragons. Though manticores will fight bitterly with most of these competitors, they instinctively recognize and fear dragons, and will abandon a hunting territory if a dragon settles nearby. Conflict with humans is unavoidable for manticores that stick to their traditional diet.

Conservation Actions. The central question of manticore preservation is whether their taste for human flesh is innate or learned. The arduous course of research needed to determine this and induce a change to alternative protein has never been undertaken.

Mimic

"Dungeon" colloquially refers to any abandoned, subterranean structure, incarcerative or otherwise. Magic pools in these places like groundwater, creating a unique ecosystem home to some of the most bizarre creatures on the Material Plane. The perfect expression of this quasi-built environment is the mimic.

Habitat & Ecology. Mimics can instantly change their color, texture, and shape to match any mundane object with the same volume as themselves. They use this ability to disguise themselves as furnishings in their hunting grounds, such as treasure chests, chairs, paintings, or even entire rooms. A mimic retains its new form without any additional expenditure of energy; in this way, a mimic can wait for months between kills. They are the perfect ambush predators, only manifesting their characteristic eyes, teeth, and pseudopods in the moments before snapping up unsuspecting prey. Despite sensationalized stories of an all-adventurer diet, mimics mainly subsist on other dungeon delvers, including goblins, kobolds, giant rats, lizardfolk, and rust monsters. A clean kill for a mimic leaves nothing but shoes where the prey once stood. However, if its target survives the initial ambush, the mimic's adhesive, acidic flesh prevents escape.

Mimics reproduce asexually, and new mimics disguise themselves as objects as soon as they are created.

Use and Trade. Those seeking to protect vaults, catacombs, and dungeons frequently turn to mimics as a low-cost security measure, but the risks are abundant. Without constant supervision or arcane detection, it can become impossible to know which treasure chest contains the guarded item and which is a mimic. In one memorable instance, it took just three months for a single mimic to depopulate an entire castle. The site was abandoned entirely when the doors and windows began to sprout eyes; no one knows for sure whether the structure itself was systematically replaced by a colossal mimic.

Threats. Outright paranoia follows in the wake of mimic attacks, leaving adventurers unwilling to enter any built structure. In extreme cases, survivors spend their lives in isolated hermitages, mistrusting even backpacks and water skins. It's no wonder that mimics are usually killed on sight—many a table and chair bears the mark of a sword strike "just to be sure."

Conservation Actions. The first rule of conservation is "when in doubt, count." This is nearly impossible to follow in the case of mimics. Strong divination magic is needed just to establish the population size, which is the foundation of a conservation plan. Critical details like lifespan, gestation period, and classification are even more cryptic. There is no doubt, however, that understanding the transformative power of mimics can advance transmutation magic and alchemical practice by leaps and bounds.



Owlbear

The pinnacle of nature's ursine hierarchy, the owlbear is a fearsome predator that larger monsters dread contending with.

Habitat & Ecology. Owlbears can thrive in a great variety of habitats, from mountain slopes, to rainforests, to arid scrubland. This is because, like other bears, owlbears are omnivorous, eating whatever vegetation or meat is available. However, ankhegs are a particular favorite. Owlbears use their sharp beaks and claws to crack through the shells of these 13-foot long insectoid monstrosities to reach the buttery flesh inside. On occasion, owlbears will hunt even larger game, such as bulettes and umber hulks, securing meat for their entire den.

Owlbears lay clutches of one to six eggs, each a nearly perfect sphere. Both parents raise the young, taking it in turns to brood the hatchlings and hunt. Hatchlings are fed on meat torn into small chunks until they are around four to six months old and can leave the den.

Use and Trade. Owlbears are hunted for food in some cultures, with prime cuts decorating the tables of kings and chieftains. By reports, the meat is gamey and the hunt is fraught, which serves only to increase its value as a status symbol.

Owlbears are also routinely hunted for sport by adventurers and captured for menageries and exhibition. The most recent trend to see mass adoption is the so-called "owlbear wrestling" league, which sees strongman performers battling drugged or carefully trained owlbears for entertainment.

Threats. Owlbears are subject to the same pressures as mundane beasts: food chain disruption, habitat loss, and disease. One of the most virulent of these diseases is slaying fever, a magical bloodborne illness often mistaken for vampirism. The disease impairs neural function in its victims, leading to intense delirium and violence. An owlbear in the final stages of slaying fever is a berserk beast for which a quick death is the most merciful prescription.

Owlbears are a key indicator species for theruphane pollution. Commoners often say the "stench of magic" is nitre and ammonia—the specific odor left behind after a fireball or magic missile streaks across the room. The source of this odor is theruphane, a magical byproduct produced by arcane-derived evocation and conjuration magic. Though harmless to humanoids and many creatures, theruphane collects in the bodies of large beasts and monstrosities, poisoning and killing them. Owlbear numbers have plummeted in conjunction with newly constructed wizarding towers and the subsequent proliferation of arcane apprentices.

Conservation Actions. Until a disposal method or recycled use can be found for theruphane, the most effective way to reduce theruphane pollution is to switch from evocation and conjuration to transmutation spells, or to switch from wizardly magic to clerical or druidic magic. The candle-lighting effect of the *prestidigitation* cantrip can stand in for *light*, and *heat metal* can substitute *burning hands*. These methods demand more ingenuity on the part of the spellcaster, but magic's infinite flexibility rewards that ingenuity with new and exciting spell formulae and effects.

Purple Worm

The gargantuan purple worm is a keystone species that defines subterranean ecosystems with its massive tunnels.

Habitat & Ecology. Purple worms begin life as silvery, spherical eggs suspended along tunnel walls by sticky saliva. Immediately on hatching, purple worms act as scavengers, scraping organic material into their gullets in their patient, endless progress through the earth. As they grow, the worms develop the hard, chitinous shells that allow them to tunnel through solid rock as easily as loose dirt or clay. Adult purple worms reach an average of 80 feet long and weigh 20 tons. Each purple worm is hermaphroditic, and can produce its own cluster of eggs once a year with any other member of its species.

Use and Trade. The 10-foot wide tunnels left in the wake of purple worms connect otherwise isolated caves and dungeon ecosystems, becoming thoroughfares for subterranean humanoids, such as drow and dwarves, as well as subterranean monsters, such as violet fungi, shriekers, oozes, darkmantles, ropers, and phase spiders. These wildlife corridors are critical for connecting isolated populations of monsters to one another.

Furthermore, as purple worms tunnel through earth, precious metals and gems collect in their gullets as enormous indigestible masses, causing them to be targeted by brave or foolhardy treasure hunters. This composite ore, rich with precious stones, is called "gizzardite." Though it takes a specialized jeweler or metallurgist to decouple the ore, a single deposit can fuel a kingdom's gold and silver market for years.



Threats. Oversized parasites called xorn are a major threat to purple worms. These cylindrical earth elementals have three legs, three arms, and a diamond-toothed maw at the top of their bodies. Attracted by gizzardite deposits in the purple worm, xorn seek out purple worms and are willingly consumed, acting as a virulent parasite. Once inside a host worm, the xorn devours the gizzardite deposits and then burrows into the worm's brain stem to drive it deeper into the earth, where it might consume more mineral-rich veins before the worm's untimely death. Because of how long it takes for a purple worm to mature, an outbreak of xorn from the Elemental Plane of Earth could drive purple worm populations to critically low levels in a matter of years.

Purple worms burrow through mines and stone structures as easily as they do natural stone, creating a constant conflict with humanoids protecting their homes and livelihood. Subterranean drow settlements use a combination of transmutation magic and poison-crafting to create *nemesis stones*, huge, porous rocks in which every cavity is saturated with poisons. These boulders are placed around the perimeters of small settlements, eventually exterminating local purple worm populations.

Conservation Actions. No accurate measure exists for how deep a purple worm can dig into the earth; the carrying capacity of a solid planet for these creatures is incalculable. Species management plans include imposing a minimum size on purple worm kills and keeping careful count of egg deposits in a given hectare of earth. In the ever-shifting tunnel landscape created by purple worms and other tunneling creatures, this requires constant effort.

Nemesis stones are indiscriminate poison traps that kill an average of six other creatures for each purple worm that dies. Dwarves are devising more targeted mechanical solutions, which include drilling alternate routes for purple worms and using variations of the *magic mouth* spell to broadcast ultra low frequency noises to repel nearby worms.

Rust Monster

Rust monsters are the detrivores of deceased infrastructure, consuming indigestible metals from dungeons as the sites return to the wild.

Habitat & Ecology. Squat, pony-sized insectoid creatures with long, feathery antennae and a waddling gait, rust monsters are less than intimidating at first glance. However, these creatures can turn a full suit of armor into a pile of scrap in less than a minute, leaving an unwary adventurer suddenly vulnerable to other monsters such as carrion crawlers and mimics.

However, the rust monster's oxidizing touch has no effect on precious metals like gold, platinum, and mithral. A rust monster will eat the entirety of a locked iron safe, but leave behind the pile of indigestible gold bars within. This can be thought of as a symbiotic mechanism in which dungeons both consume adventurers and attract them in the first place: dungeons infested with rust monsters will accrue value over time.

Use and Trade. As a natural oxidizing agent, rust monsters have a variety of industrial, magical, and medicinal uses. In metallurgy and magic item crafting, captive rust monsters are often used as a first step in refining adamantine and mithral ore into their pure metallic states. Handlers wear gear made without metal, and absolute care must be taken that the rust monster doesn't escape.

Powdered rust monster antenna is a critical ingredient for alchemical reagents, used to rapidly and completely oxidize solutions. The same substance is often peddled as a folk cure for "mad hatter's disease" and "saturnism," as both syndromes are caused by heavy metals leaching into the body. However, the treatment always causes dangerous anemia as the antennae first attacks iron in the blood, which means that such treatments must be performed gradually over the course of months or years, usually without positive effect.

Threats. Rust monsters are vulnerable to a disease called "tarnishing fever," caused by eating silver or electrum. The disease interferes with the rust monster's ability to magnetically detect the metals on which it feeds, usually leading to starvation and death. As rust monsters often eat the metal-rich shells of their dead predecessors, tarnishing fever can easily persist within a dungeon ecosystem until the entire population of rust monsters is eliminated.

Conservation Actions. As a creature with a direct benefit to spellcraft, magic item crafting, and industrialization, rust monsters already enjoy robust protection, but are vulnerable to overutilization. Bounty systems imposed by Adventurer's Guilds on rust monster antennae are almost always motivated by available buyers rather than rust monster populations, and can easily lead to demand that outstrips supply. New populations of rust monsters can be created by introducing breeding pairs into depleted mines and abandoned sections of dungeons, where they can eat the remaining raw ore and processed metals.

Dungeon expeditions often focus on metals with a higher ratio of value to weight like gold and platinum, leaving electrum and silver behind as a potential vector for tarnishing fever. Expeditions to remove these low-value coins are the front line of defense against the spread of the disease.

Treant

Like any living thing, forests contain a latent spark of magic. When a forest grows old and dense enough, this magic can awaken one of the trees into a treant, a living manifestation of the forest's will.

Habitat & Ecology. Any fully-grown tree in a forest can become a treant, regardless of species. Once a treant awakens, its trunk splits into legs and it begins to wander the forest as a shepherd of its trees. Within its given domain, a treant heals blight, manages undergrowth, tends paths, and serves other magical creatures like dryads, fairies, and unicorns. Late in their lives, treants become more lethargic and contemplative, eventually taking root and becoming regular, albeit immense, trees once more.

Use and Trade. Treant wood makes an unparalleled building material, especially for magic items. The most powerful wands and staves are constructed from magical treant wood. Items such as magical clubs, bows, and crossbows similarly benefit from this construction material, and rarely even require a master craftsperson. A single treant can furnish hundreds of magical arrows or crossbow bolts, and as such, their wood is always in high demand.

Threats. The life of a treant is inextricable from the life of its forest. Therefore, mundane forces such as deforestation, wildfires, and tree diseases threaten the health of treants, as does the destruction of magic focal points such as Fey Bridges. The extinction of treants would likely cause a trophic cascade of extinctions among other sylvan creatures in their groves. Dryads, fey spirits bound to individual trees, are the first to feel this effect.

Conservation Actions. Preserving treants chiefly means preserving their forests for future generations. This entails targeting each of the key factors driving deforestation: principally, logging, clearcutting for livestock, and the uncontrolled urban growth. The challenge of combating deforestation might seem insurmountable, but replanting forests once they have been destroyed is no supplement. Replanting following the destruction of a treant's domain doesn't restore the original ecosystem or the deep wells of magic that have amassed there over the centuries, so it is critical to prevent logging and burning of forests in the first place.

Furthermore, unrestrained fire magic and careless campfires pose a considerable risk to forests of all sizes. The resulting wildfires can ravage both mundane forests and groves overseen by treants and dryads.

Treants themselves are often willing partners in conservation ventures, though their timeless pace and inscrutable priorities make them difficult partners for collaboration. Those with enough patience and grace to cooperate with these grand creatures find the benefits outweigh the costs a hundred fold. No forest is as magnificent as one overseen by a treant, and no orchard is as fruitful.

Appendices

No bestiary (or academic tome) is complete without a lengthy series of appendices, and the *Book of Extinction* is no exception. The following pages contain invaluable, gigantic tables that grant you the ability to sort through the book's monstrous contents with ease, plan adventures, and gain even greater insight into the scientific world surrounding this book's extinct subjects.

Appendix A: Monsters by CR

Appendix A contains the first and most critical table for the *Book of Extinction*: Monsters by CR. This chapter arranged every creature in this book—from real extinct animals to reimagined tree-dragons—on a single table, organized by challenge rating (CR). It also lists the typical environments for a given monster, its type, and the page on which it can be found in the book. Finally, it provides a d100 table for each CR of monsters, allowing you to rapidly spin up a level-appropriate challenge for your players.

Appendix B: Adventure Hooks

No collection of monsters is complete without daring quests and perilous adventures in which they take center stage. *Appendix B* offers fifty adventure hooks, standalone premises for thrilling quests, arranged in a d100 table. You can drag-and-drop these hooks into your game as one-shot adventures or as starting points for extended campaigns. Let them inspire you and give you new ways to use these monsters in your next game, but feel free to modify or expand upon them as you see fit.

Appendix C: Extinction Timeline

This appendix details every animal discussed in the book chronologically by the date at which they were last sighted, and lists the dates on which they were officially declared extinct. A quick perusal will confirm that there are often decades between the last confirmed sighting of an animal and the date at which an official body declares that it is extinct. Indeed, extinctions are often silent. It is only when you consider them together that they become deafening.

Appendix D: Collective Nouns

Appendix D is just for fun. This one-page appendix contains a list of collective nouns—words like a "flock" of birds or a "colony" of ants that describe a large collection of such an animal. Some collective nouns have embedded themselves in English as a matter of common language, whereas others (such as a "clowder" of cats) are obscure or archaic. This appendix imagines a huge list of collective nouns for your favorite monsters. Feel free to sprinkle them into your campaign for a measure of verisimilitude, or just read them for fun!

Appendix E: Glossary

Finally, *Appendix E* contains a glossary of the scientific terms used throughout this book and in much of this book's academic sources. These ecological and biological concepts may be unfamiliar even to adult readers, so this collection of brief definitions should provide ample context and minimize confusion.



Appendix A: Monsters by CR

The following table lists every creature in this book by challenge rating (CR), allows you to randomly generate encounters, and details where each monster can be found in the book.

How to Use This Table

Each monster is listed with an icon that details its origin:

= Real animal, a beast like the Steller's sea cow that actually existed in history and can now be represented in your game.

= Megafauna, "giant" or "dire" animals from Earth's last Ice Age

= Monster, a creature reimagined for the *Book of Extinction*, inspired by now-extinct animals or classic RPG monsters

The **Environment** column lists one biome in which the creature is typically found (though they may be present in other environments as well).

The **Type** column lists the creature type for each creature. Real animals are always Beasts.

To generate a random encounter, first choose the CR for the given encounter. Then, roll a d100 on the subtable for that CR to choose a creature at random. Reroll if the creature's environment doesn't suit the adventure at hand.

Icon	Monster	Environment	Type	Page	d100
CR 0					
	Bluebuck	Grassland	Beast	48	01–06
	Carolina Parakeet	Swamp	Beast	59	07–12
	Cloudrunner	Forest	Beast	95	13–18
	Dodo	Coastal	Beast	62	19–24
	Duck	Swamp	Beast	125	25–30
	Fringe-Limbed Tree Frog	Forest	Beast	132	31–35
	Gastric Brooding Frog	Mountain	Beast	70	36–41
	Golden Toad	Mountain	Beast	73	41–47
	Guam Flying Fox	Forest	Beast	77	48–53
	Honeyeater	Forest	Beast	82	54–59
	Jamaican Poorwill	Forest	Beast	109	60–65
	Melomys	Coastal	Beast	50	66–70
	New Zealand Laughing Owl	Forest	Beast	118	71–76
	Passenger Pigeon	Forest	Beast	123	77–82
	Pyrenean Ibex	Mountain	Beast	127	83–88
	River Otter	Underwater	Beast	111	89–94
	Stephen's Island Wren	Grassland	Beast	144	95–00
CR 1/8					**d100**
	Barbados Racer	Grassland	Beast	47	01–10
	Burrowing Boa	Hill	Beast	135	11–20
	Canopic Hive	Desert	Undead	212	21–30
	Caribbean Monk Seal	Underwater	Beast	55	21–40

	Heath Hen	Grassland	Beast	93	41–50
	Rainbow Snake	Underwater	Beast	139	51–60
	River Dolphin	Underwater	Beast	160	61–70
	Sea Mink	Coastal	Beast	137	71–80
	Thylacine	Forest	Beast	153	81–90
	Warrah	Coastal	Beast	157	91–00
CR 1/4					**d100**
	Flying Fox	Forest	Monstrosity	77	00–14
	Giant Cursorial Owl	Forest	Beast	171	28–36
	Great Auk	Arctic	Beast	75	15–28
	Ivory-Billed Woodpecker	Swamp	Beast	107	46–54
	Japanese Wolf	Mountain	Beast	113	44–57
	Long Llama	Grassland	Beast	178	55–63
	Merdrow	Underwater	Humanoid	205	58–71
	Quagga	Grassland	Beast	130	76–00
	Raftling Buccaneer	Coastal	Humanoid	51	72–85
	Tarpan	Grassland	Beast	147	86–00
CR 1/2					**d100**
	Blue Shepherd Sprite	Coastal	Fey	105	01–20
	Eucladoceros	Hill	Beast	66	21–40
	Giant Beaver	Swamp	Beast	169	41–60
	Hartebeest	Grassland	Beast	52	60–80
	Rhinoceros	Grassland	Beast	120	81–00
CR 1					**d100**
	Atlas Bear	Mountain	Beast	40	01–06
	Atlas Lion	Mountain	Beast	40	07–12
	Blink Snake	Grassland	Monstrosity	47	12–18
	Cherry Dragon Seedling	Forest	Dragon	189	19–25
	Cloudrunner Adept	Forest	Humanoid	96	26–31
	Dire Wolf	Grassland	Beast	167	32–37
	Dwarf Hippopotamus	Grassland	Beast	116	38–43
	Froglet of Holding	Jungle	Monstrosity	71	44–50
	Giant Diving Beetle	Underwater	Beast	98	51–56
	Giant Hyena	Grassland	Beast	172	57–62
	Giant Short-Faced Kangaroo	Grassland	Beast	174	63–68
	Laughing Owl	Forest	Monstrosity	119	69–75
	Lupinclad	Mountain	Construct	115	76–81
	Shrimp Fairy	Underwater	Fey	69	82–87
	Terror Bird	Grassland	Beast	182	88–93
	Whomper	Grassland	Monstrosity	94	94–00

CR 2				d100
Aurochs	Forest	Beast	44	01–07
Cave Bear	Mountain	Beast	166	08–14
Dolphette	Underwater	Monstrosity	199	15–21
Gelatinous Sphere	Urban	Ooze	203	22–28
Ghost Tiger	Forest	Monstrosity	154	29–35
Giant Cheetah	Grassland	Beast	170	36–42
Giant Tortoise	Grassland	Beast	149	43–50
Giant Wombat	Grassland	Beast	175	51–57
Gigantopithecus	Jungle	Beast	175	58–64
Haast's Eagle	Forest	Beast	78	65–71
Pine Dragon Seedling	Forest	Dragon	195	72–78
Raftling Captain	Coastal	Humanoid	51	79–85
Saber-Toothed Tiger	Jungle	Beast	181	86–92
Vampire Fox	Forest	Undead	159	93–00
CR 3				**d100**
American Lion	Mountain	Beast	165	01–08
Baiji	Coastal	Celestial	162	09–16
Bamboo Dragon Seedling	Forest	Dragon	186	17–24
Briar Bull	Forest	Monstrosity	45	25–33
Copycat	Urban	Monstrosity	202	34–41
Elephant Bird	Forest	Beast	64	42–49
Garefowl	Arctic	Monstrosity	76	50–58
Marsupial Lion	Forest	Beast	178	59–67
Midas Toad	Mountain	Elemental	74	68–75
Monk Seal	Underwater	Monstrosity	56	76–83
Rimecharger	Arctic	Monstrosity	148	84–91
Wonambi	Grassland	Beast	182	92–00
CR 4				**d100**
Dödó	Coastal	Fey	63	01–07
Giant Ground Sloth	Forest	Beast	172	08–14
Giant Short-Faced Bear	Grassland	Beast	167	15–20
Hell Cow	Forest	Fiend	46	21–27
Joy Dragon	Urban	Dragon	84	28–34
Listener	Swamp	Fiend	117	35–40
Megaloceros	Swamp	Beast	180	41–47
Oak Dragon Seedling	Forest	Dragon	192	48–54
Okuri-Ōkami	Mountain	Celestial	114	55–60
Pit Bear	Mountain	Monstrosity	42	61–67

	Pit Lion	Mountain	Monstrosity	43	68–74
	Prism Moth	Coastal	Celestial	100	75–80
	Scourge Worm	Forest	Fiend	100	81–87
	Spikehead	Urban	Construct	136	88–94
	Steller's Sea Cow	Arctic	Beast	141	95–00
CR 5					**d100**
	Ashen Hulk	Mountain	Monstrosity	103	01–11
	Elasmotherium	Grassland	Beast	168	12–22
	Frog of Holding	Jungle	Monstrosity	72	23–33
	Great Grey Owlbear	Forest	Monstrosity	204	34–44
	Kawauso	Underwater	Fey	112	45–55
	Lyrehorn	Forest	Fey	54	56–66
	Nightjar	Forest	Monstrosity	110	67–77
	Revenant Tiger	Forest	Monstrosity	155	78–88
	Tigerhorse	Grassland	Monstrosity	131	89–00
CR 6					**d100**
	Cherry Dragon Sapling	Forest	Dragon	189	01–12
	Despair Dragon	Urban	Dragon	86	13–25
	Giant Monitor Lizard	Desert	Beast	173	26–37
	Inevitable Snail	Urban	Monstrosity	156	38–50
	Ivory Rhinoceri	Grassland	Construct	121	51–62
	Mastodon	Arctic	Beast	179	63–75
	Merdrider	Underwater	Monstrosity	206	76–87
	Zephyrog	Mountain	Monstrosity	134	88–00
CR 7					**d100**
	Cactent	Desert	Plant	201	01–12
	Dire Werewolf	Forest	Monstrosity	209	13–25
	Duskhorn	Forest	Monstrosity	49	26–37
	Key-Foot Glyptodont	Jungle	Beast	176	38–50
	Megalodon	Underwater	Beast	180	51–62
	Mornhart	Hill	Celestial	67	63–75
	Pine Dragon Sapling	Forest	Dragon	195	76–87
	Questing Bird	Swamp	Celestial	108	88–00
CR 8					**d100**
	Bamboo Dragon Sapling	Forest	Dragon	186	00–20
	Pink-Headed Hydra	Swamp	Monstrosity	126	21–40
	Rose Court Wrens	Jungle	Humanoid	146	41–60
	Silken Mummy	Desert	Undead	214	61–80
	Skin Taker	Coastal	Undead	138	81–00

CR 9					d100
	Cave Werebear	Mountain	Monstrosity	208	00–14
	Fear Dragon	Urban	Dragon	87	15–28
	Feathered Tide	Forest	Beast	124	29–43
	Morningstar-Tailed Glyptodont	Jungle	Beast	177	44–57
	Oak Dragon Sapling	Forest	Dragon	192	58–71
	Orcette	Desert	Monstrosity	200	72–85
	Saber-Toothed Weretiger	Jungle	Monstrosity	210	86–00
CR 10					**d100**
	Hakawai	Forest	Monstrosity	79	—
CR 11					**d100**
	Nightfire Wyrm	Swamp	Dragon	140	01–33
	Weremammoth	Arctic	Monstrosity	211	33–66
	Wrath Dragon	Urban	Dragon	89	67–00
CR 12					**d100**
	Plague of Locusts	Grassland	Beast	101	01–50
	Voroupatra	Grassland	Monstrosity	65	51–00
CR 13					**d100**
	Caprageist	Mountain	Undead	129	01–50
	Pride Dragon	Urban	Dragon	90	51–00
CR 14					**d100**
	Adult Cherry Dragon	Forest	Dragon	190	01–50
	Íppodiac	Arctic	Celestial	143	51–00
CR 15					**d100**
	Adult Pine Dragon	Forest	Dragon	196	—
CR 16					**d100**
	Adult Bamboo Dragon	Forest	Dragon	187	01–25
	Astral Giant	Arctic	Giant	198	26–50
	Incas	Arctic	Fey	61	51–75
	Silken Pharaoh	Desert	Undead	214	76–00
CR 17					**d100**
	Adult Oak Dragon	Forest	Dragon	193	—
CR 19					**d100**
	Ancient Cherry Dragon	Forest	Dragon	190	01–50
	Lonesome George	Grassland	Celestial	152	51–00
CR 20					**d100**
	Ancient Pine Dragon	Forest	Dragon	196	—
CR 21					**d100**
	Ancient Bamboo Dragon	Forest	Dragon	187	—
CR 22					**d100**
	Ancient Oak Dragon	Forest	Dragon	193	—

Appendix B: Adventure Hooks

This appendix contains dozens of plot hooks to intrigue your players, inspire your campaign, and get your adventures off on the right foot. Many of these questions can be used as launching points for one-off adventures or extended campaigns, depending on how far they are developed from their initial premise.

d100	Adventure Hook
01–02	In the 10,000 Acre Woods, the party finds a fearsome array of awakened animals: a **cave bear** named **Whinnie**, a **saber-toothed tiger** named **Tigger**, and a **giant cursorial owl**.
03–04	Kidnapped and tossed into an arena, the party must ally with or defeat the reigning gladiatorial champions: a **pit bear** named **Brutus** and a **pit lion** named **Felix Maximus**.
05–06	A megalomaniac **treant** named **Rootstride** has begun breeding **briar bulls** with the intent of overrunning territory that once belonged to its forest, destroying the cities and villages that stand in its way.
07–08	The city is gripped with fear as a string of townsfolk are inexplicably strangled on the streets and in their homes. As rumors of an assassin named "The Garrotte" circulate the city, will the characters discover that a **blink snake** is really to blame? Is it trained or attacking randomly?
09–10	A permanent eclipse presides over a small valley as a **duskhorn** and a **mornhart** enact a months-long, bitter battle to the death.
11–12	A merchant fleet of **rakshasa** has been terrorized by a pirate crew of **raftlings**, led by the fearsome **Captain Longtail** upon the dread ship the *Clawtide*.
13–14	By a chance meeting with a traveling minstrel, the party is commissioned to retrieve the entrails of a **hill giant** to construct a unique type of harp strings. Little do they know that, after their mission is complete, the **lyrehorn** minstrel intends to collect their entrails as well!
15–16	A vile army of **merdrow** led by a **merdrider** have mounted an assault on an oceanside monastery—their first step in laying siege to the surface world. The **monk seals** within need the party's help to repel the invaders!
17–18	On a short jaunt into the Feywild, the characters find themselves embroiled in a **dödó's** political campaign for the position of "Lord High Emperor of All Fey Foreign and Domestic." Though this position doesn't exist, winning the dödó's election is the only means by which the party can escape the Feywild.
19–20	As a means of underhanded revenge, a noble gifts the party an **voroupatra**, a monstrous bird that is difficult to kill and near impossible to care for. Perhaps they can somewhat train it, if it doesn't kill them first.
21–22	A small child notices something bizarre: a small puddle behind the local stable appears to be only a few inches deep, but in fact plunges dozens of feet into an unseen lake bridging the Material Plane and the Feywild. The colony of **shrimp fairies** within believe mortals exploring their pond to be intruders, and use their bubbly magic to capture anyone who falls in!
23–24	A **frog of holding** in a wealthy merchant's menagerie has swallowed a *bag of holding* and begun to belch temporary dimensional rifts to the Astral Plane. You've been hired to dive into the frog and retrieve the bag.
25–26	A **garefowl's** ice hulk, a conglomeration of fishing and merchant vessels frozen together in an iceberg, drifts southward. Countless riches await within, but lookouts have already spotted a pack of **winter wolves** dwelling atop and within the iceberg, ready to devour those who intrude on their icy domain.
27–28	When the party encounters a **midas toad**, one of them is transmuted into a solid gold statue! Strapped for cash, the party must search for a *greater restoration* spell and figure out which body part to file down for the funds.
29–30	A fortuneteller's *augury* attracts the ire of a **hakawai**, a gigantic, invisible bird presaging doom. The bird hunts unwary travelers, striking with the force of a thunderclap, as it awaits someone who speaks Auran or Celestial to receive its divine proclamation from the gods of the four winds.

31–32	Someone in the party is being hunted by an **inevitable snail**! Who sent this languid but implacable assassin? How can the character avoid the snail's deadly touch?
33–34	A **despair dragon** enlists the party to find a specific endling—the last **paleosapien**—and be present at its death to record its final words. However, the clock is ticking: a fever ravages the venerable humanoid, and threatens to claim them at any hour!
35–36	The criminal underworld of a titanic city is upturned as a rival Thieves' Guild sparks a violent turf war. Their new guildmaster, a **wrath dragon** named **Strychnine**, will stop at nothing to seize control over the city's criminal factions.
37–38	A riddle contest between a **joy dragon** and a **sphinx** has ground to a halt, with each party perfectly recalling thousands of the other's riddles. They require a new riddle to break the stalemate, one that neither monster (or the GM) can solve!
39–40	Nightmares-made-real spill out into the countryside, reflecting every terrible dream that has plagued the residents of a nearby village. The source is the forest lair of a **fear dragon** named **Vantablack**; however, the living nightmares are not its own. A breach into the Far Realm has suffused the forest with pseudoelements, giving physical form to every terrible thought that drifts from the dragon's hoard of nightmares.
41–42	Colonies **whompers** gather annually in grasslands to perform their thunderous mating displays. This year, however, the colonies have drifted together in the thousands and are migrating toward a major city. Their collective calls could raze entire city blocks! Can the characters perform the birds' elaborate dance to direct the colony away from the city?
43–44	Bounties posted by the Merchant's Guild will pay handsomely for the "fog beast" plaguing the forest road and routinely attacking their caravans. Little does the Guild know that the beast is actually a band of **cloudrunner adept** mousefolk, using *fog cloud* and ambush tactics to raid shipments. However, their attacks seem targeted. What does the mousefolk want from the Merchant's Guild, and why are they raiding caravans?
45–46	The party slides without warning from a harvest festival into an ostentatious pageant for **giant diving beetles** in the Feywild. If they can bet on the winning beetle (or manipulate their favorite into winning), the party might return to the Material Plane substantially wealthier; otherwise, they might be adrift in the Realm of Faerie.
47–48	A wealthy merchant hires the party to escort a sealed crate from a seedy market to their wealthy estate. Though the party was instructed not to look inside, it contains a strange, extraplanar cocoon which could equally belong to the terrible **scourge worm** or a magnificent **prism moth**.
49–50	After a colony of **ashen hulks** have taken refuge in a dormant volcano's lava tubes, the mountain has begun to stir: belching smoke and threatening a nearby village. What else has awakened in the heart of the volcano due to the tunneling?
51–52	A **plague of locusts** descends on a frontier town, covering miles of territory and consuming everything in sight. Why have they come here, and who conjured the immense swarm? A **blue shepherd sprite** might be able to act as translator and bring the plague to an end, if the party can earn its trust.
53–54	One of the party's acquaintances, a sorcerer-zoologist named **Ferruginous Hock**, transmits a *sending* spell: they have been trapped within a **nightjar's** extradimensional bite, spared a swift death only by a reflexive *resilient sphere* spell. Can the party bypass the sorcerer's magical traps, infiltrate the magical menagerie, and rescue Hock?
55–56	After months of escalation, the prank-war between a **kawauso** and a **satyr** descends to outright assassination attempts, complete with punchline. The party is enlisted to rig up an elaborate poison-cake trap to slay the kawauso, who is today disguised as a cake vendor. Or perhaps they can negotiate a peaceful end to the feud?
57–58	An **okuri-ōkami** known to locals as **Brother Night** has been spotted wandering far from its mountain shrine, attacking lone people at night. What has enraged the wolf spirit and caused it to abandon its home?
59–60	The **lupinclad** factory has simultaneously poisoned the city's rivers with industrial byproducts and ravaged its forests with legions of toxic, mechanical wolves. Led by an elderly **treant** named **Thistlehood**, a force of rangers and druids intend to infiltrate and destroy the factory, and call for the party's assistance.

61–62	A series of quasits persistently attempts to steal a magic weapon from a character. Interrogating one of the would-be thieves reveals the item is fallaciously rumored by a **listener** to be the only weapon capable of killing an archdevil. Can you slay the listener before the rumor attracts the attention of larger demons?
63–64	**Owlbert Einstein**, the **laughing owl** mascot for a bardic college, has stopped laughing altogether. No amount of pratt falls or punchlines can evoke so much as a chuckle. Can the party discover the source of its melancholy?
65–66	After adopting a stray **flying fox**, the party realizes that their new familiar is a **vampire beast**! However, it's exceptionally adorable. Can they find a cure for its animal vampirism or a way to quell its bloodthirst?
67–68	In the backroom of a mysterious curio shop, one of the characters purchase a finely-crafted pair of ivory animal figurines for 5 silver pieces. Little do they know that these are actually legendary *figurines of wondrous power*, a pair of **ivory rhinoceri** with a vendetta against a big-game hunter named **Ivana Zarkoff**.
69–70	A mad inventor has constructed a terrible weather machine capable of whipping up tornadoes in mere moments, and threatens to hold a city ransom. At the heart of the machine, a captured **feathered tide** creates its high-powered vortices. Can the party liberate the captured monster, or will they destroy the machine and its power source altogether?
71–72	A flood of suspiciously cheap, bright pink *feather tokens* has taken over the shelves of magic item shops, and indeed, even found space on general store shelves. Can the party track down and release the **pink-headed hydra** that is being factory-farmed for its feathers at Pheather Phall Industries?
73–74	A mountain village has been invaded by the Cult of the Twice-Dead, a cabal of acolytes dedicated to the time-warping immortality of the **caprageist**. Within the village, time loops over and over again, as the villagers are captured by the cultists and the caprageist arrives to rip a hole through time itself. Can the party infiltrate the village and stop the cult? How many tries will it take?
75–76	The party is approached by a trio of knightly birds, the **Rose Court Wrens**, who are on a quest to hunt down the **rakshasa Tibbles** and her twin **tigerhorse** bodyguards. The fiendish rakshasa illusionist intends to tempt the characters to her side with a hefty payment, in order to put an end to the Wrens, once and for all. Which side shall the characters join: the cats or the birds?
77–78	A human boy named **Kellam** has lept on the back of an unsuspecting **zephyrog** and flown off into the sunset! While his parents are worried sick, he has been on a whirlwind of inexplicable adventures with his new friend "**Phroggy**." Can the characters "rescue" the boy from his "perilous kidnapping"?
79–80	The fourth stage of an elaborate nine-part heist to raid the heavily fortified, dwarven Frostpeak Clan Vault calls for a **spikehead** to burrow a hole deep into the clan's mountain. The band of thieves enlists the party to steal the rare construct from a notorious golem collector, offering them a cut of the plunder in exchange.
81–82	One-by-one, members of the Trapper's Guild have gone missing, and rumor has it that a **skin taker** is to blame. Little does the party know that the guild's refuse pile has become a hotbed of necromancy, spawning dozens of **animal skeletons** and **ghouls** among the mountain of animal carcasses and bones.
83–84	A tribe of **goblins** has been raiding villages near a swamp, curiously pillaging sources of light such as torches, lamps, and candles. Unbeknownst to the villagers, the goblins have joined the ranks of a **nightfire wyrm** named **Duskbreak** who seeks to wrest control of the swamp away from **Nyxolith**, an **adult black dragon** that has reigned there for centuries.
85–86	An unnatural appearance of an aurora borealis triggers a destructive battle between an **ippodiac** and an **astral giant** at the edge of a wintery city. What caused the uncanny aurora and what drove the astral monsters to battle? And can anyone save the city from their collateral damage?
87–88	With a course spanning every continent on every plane of existence, the Zhentucky Derby races swift and deadly monsters for a fabulous cash prize. Will the characters choose to ride a **rimecharger**, **nightmare**, or some other kind of elemental steed? And what sort of saddle will they use to survive the race?

89–90	An ancient, legendary hero named **Nerezza** has risen to life as an invulnerable, undead paladin and gathered an army of undead to conquer the land. Legend holds that the hero has a fatal weakness, an Achilles' heel, the specifics of which have been lost to time. Perhaps the venerable mountain-turtle **Lonesome George** remembers the hero's weakness. Or perhaps the party can seek out the nigh-undiscoverable **questing bird** for the answer.
91–92	A **dire werewolf** named **Garmr Bloodfang** has assembled a pack of **dire wolves** and lesser **werewolves** to terrorize the countryside by night.
93–94	A **revenant tiger** stalks a fletcher's apprentice named **Ospher Brooks** across the land, appearing every night and attempting to rend the man asunder. What did he do to earn the revenant tiger's wrath? And whose dreams did the tiger consume to provoke this hunt?
95–96	The party is hired to escort a barge laden with secretive cargo down the Riverrook, but are driven ashore by an uncanny, almost supernatural storm. Can the party survive the thunderstorms and waves on their journey down the winding river, or will they discover the **baiji** of the Riverrook and uncover why it opposes this shipment in particular?
97–98	After a catastrophic insurrection, a **pride dragon** steals the name of a character as collateral until the party can assassinate the new king and usher the dragon's favored heir to the throne. However, a **bamboo dragon** endorses the new king, sparking the War of Feathers and Leaves.
99–00	In a near future in which owlbears have been driven nearly extinct, the party is contracted to travel north and capture the last living owlbear, a **great gray owlbear**, and return it to an alchemist in an attempt to secure the species's future. However, an opposing company of adventurers are hot on the party's heels, seeking to slay the last owlbear and mount its head on their wall.



Appendix C: Extinction Timeline

The species discussed in this book are listed here by common and Latin name in the order of their extinction.

The ***Last Recorded*** column shows the date or year of the species's last confirmed sighting. Later sightings may change this date if taken as authoritative.

The ***Declared Extinct*** column reflects the species's conservation status, usually determined by the IUCN. A species's extinction is more difficult to confirm than its existence, and often has legal, economic, and ecological repercussions. Therefore, the IUCN typically waits until around 50 years from the last sighting to declare a species extinct.

A taxon (species or subspecies) is considered Critically Endangered when facing an extremely high risk of extinction in the wild.

The conservation status "Data Deficient" is assigned when there is inadequate information to make a direct or indirect assessment of a taxon's risk of extinction.

Megafauna featured in this book went extinct in the Pleistocene epoch or before, pre-dating recorded history. Therefore, this book makes no attempt to precisely date their extinctions.

Common Name	Latin Name	Last Recorded	Declared Extinct
Northern White Rhinoceros	*Ceratotherium simum cottoni*	—	Critically Endangered
Rabbs' Fringe-Limbed Tree Frog	*Ecnomiohyla rabborum*	Sep. 28, 2016	Sep. 28, 2016
Pinta Island Giant Tortoise	*Chelonoidis abingdonii*	2012	June 24, 2012
Bramble Cay Melomys	*Melomys rubicola*	2009	2016
Yangtze River Dolphin	*Lipotes vexillifer*	July 14, 2002	Critically Endangered
Pyrenean Ibex	*Capra pyrenaica pyrenaica*	2000, 2003	2000, 2003
Golden Toad	*Incilis periglenes*	1989	1994
Kauai 'o'o	*Moho braccatus*	1987	2000
Gastric Brooding Frog	*Rheobatrachus vitellinus*	1985	2002
Japanese River Otter	*Lutra nippon*	1979	2012
Round Island Burrowing Boa	*Bolyeria multocarinata*	1975	1994
Guam Flying Fox	*Pteropus tokudae*	1974	1988
Ivory-Billed Woodpecker	*Campephilus principalis*	1967	Critically Endangered
Saint Helena Earwig	*Labidura herculeana*	1967	2014
South Island Snipe	*Coenocorypha iredalei*	1964	2014
Barbados Racer	*Erythrolamprus perfuscus*	1963	2015
Florida Fairy Shrimp	*Dexteria floridana*	1956	Critically Endangered
Ilin Island Cloudrunner	*Crateromys paulus*	1953	Data Deficient
Carribean Monk Seal Nasal Mite	*Halarachne americana*	ca. 1952	Undeclared‡
Caribbean Monk Seal	*Monachus tropicalis*	1952	1986
South Florida Rainbow Snake	*Farancia erytrogramma seminola*	1952	2011
Atlas Lion	*Panthera leo leo*	1942	Critically Endangered
Xerces Blue	*Glaucopsyche xerces*	1941	1986
Pink-Headed Duck	*Rhodonessa caryophyllacea*	1936	Critically Endangered

Thylacine	*Thylacinus cynocephalus*	Sep. 7, 1936	1982
Hawaii 'o'o	*Moho nobilis*	1934	1988
Heath Hen	*Tympanuchus cupido cupido*	1932	2001
Levuana Moth	*Levuana iridescens*	1926	1994
Bubal Hartebeest	*Alcelaphus buselaphus buselaphus*	1923	1994
Carolina Parakeet	*Conuropsis carolinensis*	Feb. 21, 1918	Feb. 21, 1918
New Zealand Laughing Owl	*Ninox albifacies*	1914	1988
Passenger Pigeon	*Ectopistes migratorius*	Sep. 1, 1914	Sep. 1, 1914
Tarpan	*Equus ferus ferus*	1909	Undeclared‡
Japanese Wolf	*Canis lupus hodophilax*	1905	1982
Molokai 'o'o	*Moho bishopi*	1904	2000
Rocky Mountain Locust	*Melanoplus spretus*	1902	2001
Translucent Amastra Snail	*Amastra pellucida*	1895	1994
Stephen's Island Wren	*Traversia lyalli*	1894	1988
Quagga	*Equus quagga quagga*	Aug. 12, 1883	1986
Duke Water Beetle	*Megadytes ducalis*	1882	1996
Sea Mink	*Mustela macrodon*	1880	2002
Warrah	*Dusicyon australis*	1876	1986
Atlas Bear	*Ursus arctos crowtheri*	ca. 1870	2001
Jamaican Poorwill	*Siphonorhis americana*	1860	Critically Endangered (Possibly Extinct)
Kioea	*Chaetoptila angustipluma*	1859	1988
Elephant Bird	*Aepyornis maximus*	ca. 1851	Undeclared‡
Floreana Giant Tortoise	*Chelonoidis niger niger*	ca. 1850	1996
Great Auk	*Pinguinus impennis*	1844	1988
Oahu 'o'o	*Moho apicalis*	1837	1988
Bluebuck	*Hippotragus leucophaeus*	ca. 1800	1986
Rodrigues Lesser Tortoise	*Cylindraspis peltastes*	1800	1994
Saddle-Backed Rodrigues Giant Tortoise	*Cylindraspis vosmaeri*	1800	1994
Steller's Sea Cow	*Hydrodamalis gigas*	1768	1986
Seychelles Mud Turtle	*Cylindraspis indica*	1760	1994

Mauritian Domed Tortoise	*Cylindraspis inepta*	ca. 1700	1994
Mauritian High-Fronted Tortoise	*Cylindraspis triserrata*	ca. 1700	1994
Dodo	*Raphus cucullatus*	1662	1988
Aurochs	*Bos primigenius*	1627	2008
Haast's Eagle	*Harpagornis moorei*	ca. 1400	2012
Malagasy Hippopotamus	*Hippopotamus lemerlei*	ca. 1000–1500	2002
Diluvian Forest Horse	*Equus caballus sylvaticus*	Middle Ages	—
American Lion	*Panthera atrox*	Pleistocene*	—
Cave Bear	*Ursus spelaeus*	Pleistocene*	—
Dire Wolf	*Aenocyon dirus*	Pleistocene*	—
Elasmotherium	*Elasmotherium sibiricum*	Pleistocene*	—
Eucladoceros	*Eucladoceros dicranios*	Pleistocene*	—
Giant Beaver	*Casteroides ohioensis*	Pleistocene*	—
Giant Cheetah	*Acinonyx pardinensis*	Pleistocene*	—
Giant Cursorial Owl	*Ornimegalonyx oteroi*	Pleistocene*	—
Giant Ground Sloth	*Megatherium americanum*	Pleistocene*	—
Giant Hyena	*Pachycrocuta brevirostris*	Pleistocene*	—
Giant Monitor Lizard	*Megalania prisca*	Pleistocene*	—
Giant Short-Faced Bear	*Arctodus simus*	Pleistocene*	—
Giant Short-Faced Kangaroo	*Procoptodon goliah*	Pleistocene*	—
Giant Wombat	*Diprotodon optatum*	Pleistocene*	—
Gigantopithecus	*Gigantopithecus blacki*	Pleistocene*	—
Irish Elk	*Megaloceros giganteus*	Pleistocene*	—
Key-Foot Glyptodont	*Glyptodon clavipes*	Pleistocene*	—
Long Llama	*Macrauchenia patachonica*	Pleistocene*	—
Mammoth	*Mamut americanum*	Pleistocene*	—
Marsupial Lion	*Thylacoleo carnifex*	Pleistocene*	—
Morningstar-Tailed Glyptodont	*Doedicurus clavicaudatus*	Pleistocene*	—
Saber-Toothed Tiger	*Smilidon fatalis*	Pleistocene*	—
Wonambi	*Wonambi naracoortensis*	Pleistocene*	—
Megalodon	*Otodus megalodon*	Pliocene†	—
Terror Bird	*Titanis walleri*	Pliocene†	—

* ca. 2.5 million to 11,000 years ago
† ca. 5 million to 2.5 million years ago
‡ No authoritative central organization has formally declared the species extinct, despite the surety of the species' disappearance.

Appendix D: Collective Nouns

Collective nouns describe groups of the same species whose individuals are not necessarily related to each other. Although these words are supposed to reflect common usage, there seems to be no consensus as to how that usage is measured or substantiated. Your fantasy world might have different cultural antecedents than the ones reflected here, so feel free to add your own to the list!

* *Monsters added in the* Book of Extinction *appear in italics.*

A pantheon of aboleths
A choir or host of angels
A colony of ankhegs
A thwack of axe beaks
A racket of banshees
A glower of basilisks
A shock of behirs
A panopticon of beholders
A kennel of blink dogs
A frenzy of bulettes
A sagacity of centaurs
A patchwork of chimeras
A pod of chuul
A rack of cloakers
A brood of cockatrices
A beneficence of couatl
A quilt of darkmantles
A havoc of demons
A legion of devils
A supremacy of dinosaurs
A myriad of displacer beasts
A rumspringa of dodos
A pod of dolphettes
A replacement of doppelgangers
A flight or furnace of dragons
A weave of driders
A grove of dryads
A table of elementals
A cluster of ettercaps
A court of fairies
A curiosity or rainbow of faerie dragons
A clumph of flumphs
A grotesque of gargoyles
A blockage of gelatinous cubes
A firmament of genies
A haunting of ghosts
A hunger of ghouls
An ordning of giants
A cackle of gnolls
A mob of goblins
A statuary of golems
A smelting of gorgons
A tangle of gricks
An exaltation of griffons
A coven of hags
A looming of harpies
A majesty of hippogriffs
A catalog of homunculi
A knot or tangle of hydras
A flummox of intellect devourers
A herd of ippodiac
A warren of kobolds
A seduction of lamias
A conspiracy of liches
A lounge of lizardfolk
A crew of lupinclad
A mania of manticores
A vainglory of medusas
A shoal of merfolk
A furnishing of mimics
A cabal of mind flayers
A trample of minotaurs
A clockwork of modrons
A dojo of monk seals
A dynasty of mummies
A field of nightjars
A quagmire of oozes
A pod of orcettes
An outrage of owlbears
An odyssey of pegasi
A cluster of phase spiders
A delinquency of pseudodragons
A tremor of purple worms
A shimmer of remorhazes
A convocation of rocs
A rigging of ropers
A patina of rust monsters
A bacchanalia of satyrs
A rubbish of shambling mounds
A garden of slaad
A riddle of sphinxes
A shiver or rattle of skeletons
A dread of stirges
A haunting of thylacines
An orchard of treants
A loathing of trolls
A blessing or glory of unicorns
A coven of vampires
A lunacy of werewolves
A lek of whompers
A pack of winter wolves
A malice of wyverns
A slither of yuan-ti
A hoard of zombies

Appendix E: Glossary

Anthropocene. The proposed name for the current geological epoch in which humans are the most defining element of earth's ecosystem. Despite its widespread adoption in popular culture, the term has not yet been officially accepted by stratigraphers or geologists.

Antlers. Protective adaptations on an animal's skull made of bone covered in a thin layer of skin called velvet. Antlers have a "break point" near the skull and are shed every year.

Arboreal. Referring to species, usually animals, that live in trees.

Back Breeding. A program of breeding that selects for genetic characteristics similar to older species or breeds, usually in an effort to recreate a lost species. See aurochs or Bubal hartebeest.

Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis. See *chytridiomycosis*.

Brachycephalic. "Short-faced;" having shortened or condensed facial features relative to what is normal for similar creatures, as in dog breeds like pugs or boxers.

Brachiation. A mode of locomotion characterized by swinging from one arm to the other in which the weight of the creature is supported by each arm in turn, as seen in gibbons.

Canid. A name for the group of predatory mammals (family *Canidae*) commonly known as dogs.

Carrying Capacity. The level of resource use at which diverse communities of plants and animals can be sustained without degrading the environment that supports them.

Chytridiomycosis. A disease caused when a frog is infected with the fungus *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis*, or *Bd*, that interrupts the frog's ability to absorb electrolytes through their skin and causes cardiac arrest. Chytridiomycosis is primarily responsible for making amphibians the world's most endangered class of animals.

Clade. A unit of classification encompassing species with a common ancestry, usually as part of a cladistic rather than Linnaean taxonomy.

Cladogram. A diagram of branching lines showing the most recent common ancestor among a group of species.

Class. A taxonomic division subordinate to phylum and superior to order, as Mammalia.

Colormorph. A distinct and persistent variation in the color of a species often leading to a distinct common name, such as cross foxes or panthers (melanistic foxes and melanistic jaguars, respectively).

Convergent Evolution. In evolutionary biology, a case in which two species evolve similar characteristics in response to similar pressures, without being genetically related.

Critical Habitat. Specific areas essential to the conservation of an endangered species, listed alongside the species at the time it is given protection under the Endangered Species Act.

Cursorial. Characterized by running overland as a mode of locomotion. Common in pursuit predators and herd animals like wolves, cheetahs, and horses.

Dead Clade Walking. A group of species which survive at or near extinction levels with no hope of recovery. Endlings are representative of these clades.

Dentition. The arrangement of teeth characteristic of a particular species.

Ecological Niche. The particular combination of adaptations that fits each species to a particular place within a community of organisms.

Ecomorph. A set of characteristics by which creatures in the same ecological niche survive and thrive, reflecting the relationship between a creature's environment and its anatomy.

Ecosphere. The narrow film of Earth's surface, between its crust and the edge of its atmosphere, in which life can exist.

Ecosystem. A system formed by the interaction of a community of organisms with their environment.

Endangered Species. Any species which is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range.

Endemic. An organism exclusively native to a certain place like a river or island.

Endling. The last living member of a species, such as Martha the last passenger pigeon or Booming Ben the last heath hen.

Eremocene. The "age of loneliness," a term coined by sociobiologist E. O. Wilson in 2013 to describe an epoch characterized by our planet's singular focus on the human species.

Extirpated. To be removed completely. Often referring to a species no longer occurring in a geographic area in which it was once present.

Extinct. The termination of an organism or group of organisms, generally accepted to occur with the death of the organism's last living representative.

Extinction Debt. The future extinction of a species as a result of past circumstances.

Family. A taxonomic division subordinate to order and superior to genus.

Fossil. Remains of plants or animals that have completely mineralized in the earth's crust; as an adjective, may also refer to anything found underground, as in fossil fuels.

Fossorial. A life proposition or mode of locomotion in animals characterized by burrowing or living underground, as moles or ants.

Frugivore. An animal that feeds mostly on fruit, as the Guam flying fox.

Genus. (plural Genera) A taxonomic division subordinate to family and superior to species.

Gizzard. The muscular organ found in the digestive tracts of birds and other animals that grinds up food.

Gracile. Slender and without ornament in shape or construction; antonym, *robust*.

Graviportal. A life proposition or mode of locomotion in animals characterized by moving slowly overland, as tortoises or glyptodonts.

Great Chain of Being. A predominant view of the world during the Enlightenment era which held all species were part of a hierarchy of matter and life decreed by God. Such a hierarchy was thought to be resistant to extinction.

Holocene. The current geological epoch, spanning from the end of the Pleistocene (approximately 11,000 years ago) to the present.

Holotype. A single type specimen on which the description of a new species is based.

Horns. Protective adaptations on an animal's skull made of bone growths covered in keratin. Horns are not shed every year, and continue to grow throughout the animal's lifetime.

Hypercarnivore. A creature whose diet consists of at least 70 percent meat.

Ice Age. See *pleistocene*.

Island Syndrome. The evolutionary phenomenon that occurs when mainland species colonize an island, in which large animals tend to become smaller and small animals tend to become larger in response to a paucity of predators, limited resources, and a consistently mild climate. Sometimes called "Foster's rule." Species which grow larger are said to have experienced "island gigantism," and species which grow smaller have experienced "island dwarfism."

Lectotype. A type specimen designated after a species has been formally described without a designated holotype, as in the case of the Malagasy hippopotamus.

Lek. An assembly area where animals engage in courtship and mating behavior.

Locust. The migratory, swarming adult phase of grasshopper larva. The mechanism by which a population of larva becomes locust instead of grasshoppers is not completely understood.

Masting. A reproductive strategy in which species produce a large number of young in a single season in order to overwhelm predators and increase the chance of survival. Notable examples include cicadas, beech trees, and oak trees.

Megafauna. Exceptionally large animals, usually defined as those weighing over 100 pounds. Often refers to the "giant" or "dire" animals from the last Ice Age.

Midden. A pile of bones, shells, and other refuse deposited in the same place by humans or animals.

Monotypic. In taxonomy, a genus containing only species, as in the genus *Alcelaphus*.

Morphology. Referring to an animal's form or structure.

Omnivorous. Deriving sustenance from a mixed diet including both animal and vegetable food.

Order. A taxonomic division subordinate to phylum and superior to family.

Overutilization. In ecology, exploitation by humans to the point of diminishing returns (such as overfishing and overhunting).

Phylum. A taxonomic division comprising a number of classes.

Pinniped. The group of mammals that includes sea lions and seals.

Pleistocene. The most recent geological epoch characterized by glaciation, beginning about 2.5 million years ago and ending at the Holocene approximately 11,000 years ago. Sometimes called the "Ice Age."

Pleistocene Bison Belt. A tract of rich grassland stretching from what is now Alaska to Mexico during the Quarternary period which allowed megafauna like bison to thrive.

Pliocene. The geologic epoch that extends from about 5 million to 2.5 million years ago, immediately preceding the Pleistocene.

Quaternary Period. The most recent geologic period of earth's history, comprising the Holocene and Pleistocene epochs, characterized by several periods of glaciation.

Quaternary Extinction Event. The mass extinction separating the Pleistocene and Holocene epochs, characterized by the disappearance of megafauna like the American mastodon and giant wombat.

Range. Geographic area over which an organism is distributed.

Red List. The International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List of Threatened Species, also known as the IUCN Red List or Red Data Book. An authoritative source on the conservation status of creatures by species. Originally published in 1964 as a series of red-bound volumes, now a publicly-available online database at https://www.iucnredlist.org/.

Saltatorial. A life proposition or mode of locomotion in animals characterized by leaping or jumping, as seen in lemurs and kangaroos.

Scansorial. A life proposition or mode of locomotion in animals characterized by climbing, seen in as monkeys and koalas.

Sedentary. Pertaining to animals which occupy relatively small home ranges, as with gastric brooding frogs.

Species. Population(s) of related and similar organisms which are capable of interbreeding freely with one another, and cannot or normally don't interbreed with members of another species.

Specimen. In biology, a creature or part of a creature that is considered for review.

Subfossil. Remains of plants or animals without significant mineralization; as an adjective, may also refer to animals young enough to leave such remains like the moa.

Subspecies. A taxonomic rank below species used to distinguish populations that live in different areas and vary in morphology, but that can successfully interbreed.

Sympatric. Having an overlapping geographic distribution; applies to related species that coexist without interbreeding.

Tautonym. A Linnaean name in which the generic and species name are the same, such as the European badger (*Meles meles*). A triple tautonym is one in which the genus, species, and subspecies have the same name, as in the case of the European toad (*Bufo bufo bufo*) or the Western lowland gorilla (*Gorilla gorilla gorilla*).

Taxon. A taxonomic category or group, such as a phylum, order, family, genus, or species.

Territory. An area defended from intruders by an individual or group.

Trophic Cascade. An indirect environmental interaction in which the population of one species directly varies with the population of another. For example, a species may go extinct following the extinction of a prey animal in its food web.

Trophic Level. The position a species occupies in the food web of its ecosystem relative to other species, often expressed as the number of steps an animal is from the primary producers like grass and algae.

Type Species. The species which sets the classification standards used by the rest of the genus.

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