



## PANSERBJØRN

"When bears act like people, perhaps they can be tricked. When bears act like bears, perhaps they can't."

Philip Pullman, Northern Lights

Historically solitary and primitive in nature, panserbjørn have, under recent leadership, begun forming increasingly larger communities. This burgeoning civilisation has begun adopting social norms and morals much closer to those found within 'civilised' cultures. Indeed, magical universities now include panserbjørn amongst their alumni, and remote mountain-top temples highly prize these bear-people as monks and clerics. Even the more solitary panserbjørn are sought after as guides for trading caravans or adventurers delving into the tundra.

### FLUFFY AND FIERCE

As quarry, panserbjørn are prized for their thick, water-proof, insulating fur. However, as predators, they are unmatched amongst the hunter-folk of the northern wastes. It is not unusual, during the deep polar winters, to hear tell of skaeling clansmen disappearing, the only trace of their fate a deep, clawed footprint in the snow.

Panserbjørn place great store beside honourable conduct. Disagreements between the bear-folk are often decided in single combat, a trait inherited from their days of innate territorial conflict. However, unlike their bestial cousins, the polar bears, panserbjørn duels are never to the death. To kill another panserbjørn is to invite exile. In fact, many exiled panserbjørn work skaeling forges in exchange for liquor to numb the pain of their loneliness.

### AWAKENING

Legend says that panserbjørn were awakened from a race of opposable-thumbed polar bears by the giant ordning. Initially kept as companions by frost giants, interest in this malleable, yet ferocious, beast was quickly piqued in the other giant races. Stone giants taught them the

way of carving and spirituality, so that they might sculpt homes within the ice mountains and connect with the divine. Fire giants taught them the art of the forge and fostered within them a sense of reverence for the sky-iron armour they now wore.

Cloud giants saw them only as play things, tricking them with liquor and false words into fighting for the giants' entertainment. The bear-folk broke with the giants after the panserbjørn king was so tricked into slaying another of his kin, leading to his exile. However, a storm giantess name Aixocolotl, angry at her kin, took pity on them. She blessed them with speech and the ability to sense deception, such that they might not be tricked again.

### WORKERS OF METAL

Meteoric sky-iron, found in the ice mountains, forms the principle material with which panserbjørn hone their craft. From weaning, panserbjørn are taught how to fold and forge this unique metal into plates of bespoke, articulated armour. Once they reach maturity, they set about painstakingly crafting their final suit of armour, a process that can often take a lifetime to perfect.

### PANSERBJØRN TRAITS

Your panserbjørn character has certain characteristics in common with all other panserbjørn.

**Ability Score Increase.** Your Constitution and Strength scores increase by 1.

**Age.** Panserbjørn mature at the same rate humans do, and are expected to become independent in their mid-teens. They can live to 80 years.

**Alignment.** Panserbjørn, by nature, care mostly about their own survival, and tend towards neutral alignments. Wild panserbjørn gravitate towards chaos and value their freedom above all else. Cultured panserbjørn, conversely, lean towards lawful habits, seeking to become a member of wider civilised society.

**Size.** Panserbjørn are over 7 feet tall, when erect, and average in excess of 300 pounds. Your size is Medium.

**Speed** Your base walking speed is 30 feet.

**Ursine Claws.** Your claws are as long as a child's hand, and a natural weapon you can use to make unarmed attacks. If you hit with them you deal slashing damage equal to  $1d6 +$  your Strength modifier, instead of the bludgeoning damage for an unarmed strike. In addition, if you are not wearing footwear, you can move across non-magical difficult terrain made of ice and snow without expending additional movement.

**Olfactory Hunter.** You have advantage on Wisdom (perception) checks that rely on smell.

**Forgers of Sky-iron.** You have proficiency with smith's tools and craft a bespoke suit of armour, as important to you as your own soul. This magical armour can be enchanted and is not destroyed by disenchantment. Whenever an increase to your proficiency bonus would lead to an increase in your AC, you must purchase sky-iron with a gold cost of  $100 \times$  your character level and spend 8 hours at a forge in order to gain this benefit. You tailor this metal to the armour style with which you are proficient:

Armour Proficiency	Base AC Calculation
None	$11 +$ Dex
Light	$13 +$ Dex
Medium	$13 +$ Dex (max. 2) + half your proficiency bonus*
Heavy	$16 +$ half your proficiency bonus*

\*Round this value down.

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

**Languages.** You can speak read and write Common and Giant.

**Subrace.** Two subraces of panserbjørn are found in the world: nomadic wild panserbjørn and civilised cultured panserbjørn. Choose one of these subraces.

## CULTURED PANSERBJØRN

As a cultured panserbjørn, you seek to integrate yourself into civilised society through study and communication. As a rarity anywhere but in the tundra, common folk have heard only tales of the ferocious and primitive beasts of the ice. Challenging this misconception is a constant task.

**Ability Score Increase.** Your Charisma score increases by 1.

**Studious.** You are proficient in one of the following skills of your choice: Arcana, History, Investigation, Medicine, or Nature.

**Linguistic Assimilation.** You can speak, read, and write one additional language of your choice. Additionally, you can cast the *comprehend languages* spell once with this trait, requiring no material or somatic components, and you regain the ability to cast it this way when you finish a long rest.

## WILD PANSERBJØRN

As a wild panserbjørn, you are acclimated to life in the tundra, and are often suspicious of conurbations, only visiting them when needs must. Historically more numerous, wild panserbjørn have seen a steady decline in the number of young panserbjørn adhering to the old ways. It is said you cannot trick a wild panserbjørn.

**Ability Score Increase.** Your Wisdom score increases by 1.

**Iceborn Predator.** You are adapted to travel in sub-zero conditions. You are resistant to cold damage and have advantage on Dexterity (stealth) checks in snowy/icy terrain.

**Eye for Deception.** You have proficiency in the Insight skill.

