

THE RATTER RACE

A Playable Race of Impatient, Loveable Vermin



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ON THE COVER

Oom Sludgeport is a ratter who learned the basics of spellcraft by watching a wizard from the city above teach her apprentice, peering through a window in the wizard's tower by using his claws to cling to the mortar between the bricks. Here, we see Oom practicing the *mage hand* spell in his infestation's home in the sewers beneath Waterdeep, utilizing the food he gathered on his most recent surface run while the members of his infestation look on hungrily. He bears the scars of other such times he's delayed the delivery to his voracious family, but his mind alights with the possibilities of how his newfound skills can solve the infestation's long-term food needs.

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RATTER

"DON'T GO IN THE BLOODY SEWERS, BOY! THOSE STINKIN' ratters are hungry, and right vicious! They nearly took me gods-cursed arm! And I only have the one left! ...On secon' thought, go right ahead, maybe then you'll stop terrorizin' me lawn..."

— Old Man Jenkins, the accidental discoverer and namer of the ratters, to a neighborhood ruffian, just outside the entrance to the sewers of Waterdeep

SEWER VERMIN

Ratters are a small, rodent-like people that live in groups called infestations, often inhabiting the sewers beneath heavily populated cities. They have large, rounded ears, beady eyes that range from light brown to deep black, and pointed snouts ending in inquisitive pink noses and elongated foreteeth. Their fur comes in a variety of understated colors such as grey, black, brown, white, or any combination thereof. This fur is long and fluffy when clean, but will often appear matted, unkempt, or even spiky due to a lack of grooming habits and a tendency to live in filth.

The bushiness of their fur belies the lithe bodies underneath. Ratters are deceptively slim and highly flexible, with loose joints that allow them to squeeze into seemingly impossible gaps. They also have broad, pointed claws on the tips of their fingers and toes, which are ideal for climbing or burrowing in soft earth. Lightweight, flexible, and capable of slipping or scraping through tight spaces, ratters have little trouble infiltrating food stores and getting into other places they aren't wanted.

LIVE FAST, DIE YOUNG

As intelligent creatures, ratters are acutely aware of just how short their twenty-year lifespans are as compared to those of other humanoids. Ratters despise wasting time. They speak quickly, think quickly, and take action quickly, without dwelling on the consequences or any other "wasteful" thoughts. They take offense, often violently, to any action or custom they deem to be a waste of their time, such as smalltalk, waiting in lines, or dealing with bureaucracy; ratters will usually put their quick minds to work finding a creative way around such pointless obstructions.

Most organized societies consider ratters to be loathsome pests and will go to great lengths to keep an infestation out of their sewers. For their part, ratters harbor a much more powerful dislike, and sometimes even hatred, of these longer-lived races; they're viciously jealous of creatures with greater lifespans, especially elves. Compared to other races that seem to have all the time in the world, ratters find it incredibly unfair to have been given so little time.

A ratter's short life also sparks within them a fundamental desire to continue to have an impact after they're gone, to leave a legacy behind. While many ratters believe their legacies are completed simply by surviving to continue their lines, others are dissatisfied at the idea of using their limited time only for the purpose of procreation. These ratters yearn to accomplish greater feats, and some, seeking something new they can contribute to their infestations, turn their minds to gaining and utilizing knowledge. Painfully aware of how limited their time is, these scholarly ratters blaze through texts and

tomes, desperate to discover some lost lore such as the secret to attaining immortality, or to find an adventure that will be sung of in taverns across the world - anything that will keep their memory alive throughout the eons.

FAMILY MATTERS

Ratters understand just how little time they have with their family members, so they cherish these bonds deeply while they can. Mother ratters tend to give birth to several litters per year, each litter containing six to ten pups, causing ratter infestations to expand rapidly. Quick to form attachments, ratters tend to consider the rats, mice, and other rodents of the sewers to be family, too, often treating them as siblings or beloved pets. Whether this behavior is due to similarity of appearance or of circumstance is unknown, but the attachments formed are fierce, and ratters even develop ways to communicate with their smaller, subterranean fellows.

Unfortunately, the ratters' high birth rates, huge families, and fast metabolisms can quickly combine to cause food shortages within an infestation, eventually forcing the family to the point of desperation. Ratters' terrible hunger, when left unsatisfied for extended periods, begins to drive them mad, until they must either leave the infestation on a blind and perilous search for food, or begin feeding upon each other. Most ratters that survive to reach adulthood bear numerous scars, afflictions, and diseases due to the feeding frenzies they've battled through down in the sewers. Even this violent cycle of starvation and madness cannot break a loyal ratter's family bonds, however. After a frenzy has abated, the remaining members of the infestation quickly make up, their devotion running deep enough to survive the carnage.

RATTER ADVENTURERS

Most often, a ratter becomes an adventurer after their hunger drives them from their infestation, and once their faculties return, they find themselves completely lost in a place they don't recognize. Occasionally, a ratter infestation will be discovered and routed by the authorities of the city that lies atop the infestation's sewer dens, causing much of the family to become separated or slain. And once in a great while, a ratter may be so grievously wounded during a feeding frenzy that their familial bonds snap, causing them to leave the infestation of their own accord.

Ratters hunger for a social group nearly as much as they do for food, and they find it hard to resist the urge to find a replacement for the family they lost. Most often, this is achieved by stumbling onto an adventuring group. Thanks to their capacity for deep familial bonds and their extreme impatience, ratters tend to make themselves into fiercely loyal, if often troublesome, members of these parties.

Though their instincts and physical attributes naturally lead many ratters to become rogues, the more scholarly ratters who pursue knowledge tend to follow the path of wizardry. However, it isn't uncommon to find ratter fighters traveling with adventuring groups, their bellicose inclinations and violent experiences having inspired them to master weaponry.

RATTER NAMES

Ratters are often named in the Ratter language, which is comprised of clicks, chitters, squeaks, and emphatic full-body movements that indicate tone. Since most creatures find it difficult to recreate the language precisely, and ratters are generally too impatient to teach them, a ratter is often forced to adopt a name that can be more easily pronounced by their companions. Most ratters, snickering to themselves over their own creativity, will use an onomatopoeia or verb from the Common language, but with a letter missing. Ratters place no stock in surnames, but when forced to present one, they will often make it an homage to - or parody of - the city of their birth.

Ratter Names: Bit, Burro, Clim, Cratch, Creech, Hitter, Ibble, Iss, Munc, Queak, Runch, Stel, Swip, Tab

Ratter Surnames: Alwayssummer, Baldursdoor, Brassburgh, Darkmade, Deepwater, Helmholder, Homeunder, Lentilkeep, Neverday, Shallowpuddle, Thampvolo, Zarunyan

RATTER TRAITS

Your ratter character has the following common traits all ratters share.

Ability Score Increase. Your Dexterity, Constitution, and Intelligence scores each increase by 1.

Age. Ratters reach adulthood after only 2 to 3 years, and don't generally live much longer than 20 years, their extreme metabolic rate aging them much more quickly than most other humanoids.

Alignment. Due to their impatient personalities and the fact that their monstrously fast metabolisms make them almost constantly hungry, ratters have little to no regard for societal conventions, niceties, or anything else they deem to be a waste of their short time to live. They usually take what they want without asking, especially when what they want is food, and they often resort to violence if something or someone is preventing them from grabbing it. Most ratters tend to be chaotic, if not also evil.

Size. Ratters range from 2 to 3 feet tall, and weigh an average of about 30 pounds. Your size is Small.

Speed. You have a base walking speed of 25 feet.

Darkvision. You can see in dim light within 30 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

Bite. Your sharp, pronounced foreteeth are a natural weapon, which you can use to make unarmed strikes. If you hit with them, you deal piercing damage equal to 1d4 + your Strength modifier, instead of the bludgeoning damage normal for an unarmed strike.

Impatient Mind. When you resolve the Research downtime activity, described in Chapter 2 of *Xanathar's Guide to Everything*, you roll the Intelligence check for the Research Outcomes table twice, gaining the results of both rolls.

Loquela Rattus. You have the ability to communicate in a limited manner with rats and similar rodents. Such creatures can understand the meaning of your words, though you have no special ability to understand them in return. You have advantage on all Charisma checks you make to influence them.

Rodent Nimbleness. You can move through the space of any creature that is of a size larger than yours. Additionally, you are considered one size smaller for the purpose of squeezing into narrow holes and passages.

Vermin Infiltration. Due to your light weight, quick mind, and specialized claws, you can get inside almost any place you choose. You have a climbing speed of 25 feet, and a burrowing speed of 5 feet. You can only use this burrowing speed to tunnel through soft dirt or mud, and the tunnel quickly collapses after you pass through.

Languages. You can speak, read, and write Common and Ratter.

OPTIONAL FEATS

If your DM allows feats from Chapter 6 of the *Player's Handbook*, your ratter character has access to the following feats:

PIED PIPER

Prerequisite: Ratter

Through the mastery of an instrument, you have attained greater influence over the denizens of the sewers. You gain the following benefits:

- You gain proficiency with a musical instrument of your choice. Whenever you make an ability check with the chosen instrument, you add double your proficiency bonus to the check.
- Once, you can cast the *conjure animals* spell, using the chosen instrument as your spellcasting focus for the spell. When you cast the spell using this ability, you can summon only **giant rats** or **rats** with the spell, the summoned creatures are beasts, not fey, and the duration is 10 minutes without requiring concentration. You regain the ability to cast the spell this way when you finish a long rest. Once you reach 8th level, you regain the ability to cast the spell this way when you finish a short or long rest.

PLAGUE RAT

Prerequisite: Ratter

You become the carrier of an infectious disease, which you can transmit with your bite. Choose one of the diseases below. You are immune to the chosen disease, and when you hit a creature with your bite attack, you can attempt to infect the target with that disease. The creature must succeed on a Constitution saving throw with a DC equal to 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Constitution modifier or contract the disease and immediately become subject to its effects. At the end of each of its turns, the creature can repeat the saving throw, recovering from the disease on a successful save. Undead and constructs are unaffected by this ability.

Once you attempt to infect a creature with a disease, you can't attempt to infect a creature with that disease again until you finish a long rest. A creature that succeeds on its saving throw against a disease becomes immune to that disease for 1 week.

You can select this feat multiple times. Each time you do so, you must choose a different disease.

Blinding Sickness. Pain grips the infected creature's mind, and its eyes turn milky-white. The creature has disadvantage on Wisdom checks and Wisdom saving throws and is blinded.

Filth Fever. A raging fever sweeps through the creature's body. The creature has disadvantage on Strength checks, Strength saving throws, and attack rolls that use Strength.

Flesh Rot. The creature's flesh decays. The creature has disadvantage on Charisma checks and vulnerability to all damage.

Mindfire. The creature's mind becomes feverish. The creature has disadvantage on Intelligence checks and Intelligence saving throws and behaves as if under the control of the *confusion* spell during combat.

Seizure. The creature is overcome with shaking. The creature has disadvantage on Dexterity checks, Dexterity saving throws, and attack rolls that use Dexterity.

Slimy Doom. The creature begins to bleed uncontrollably. The creature has disadvantage on Constitution checks and on Constitution saving throws it makes against effects other than attempting to recover from this disease. In addition, whenever the creature takes damage, it is stunned until the end of its next turn.