

MONSTROUS MENAGERIE

THE MUBIDA HUNTER'S BANE

THIS SEEMINGLY STITCHED-TOGETHER creature's fur is mottled, patchy, and covered with large chunks of moss. Mismatched wooden antlers rest on its canine head, as if they were taken from different animals. It utters a low, guttural growl that sounds like the braying of a motley pack of beasts.

Monstrous Menagerie presents new and fantastic creatures to populate the campaign worlds of Game Masters of all levels of experience. The creatures found within these pages may be beneficent or malign, horrific or wondrous, but all are sure to astound your players.



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MUBIDA LORE

A rare monstrosity believed by hunters and woodsmen to be a herald of strife, it is said that the mubida arrive to cut off villages from the bounty of the wilds around them. Many settlements undergo years of hardship because only to find that the creature simply disappears without warning. In truth a mubida is a highly intelligent and empathic child of nature, protecting it from overharvesting and overhunting. Many non-druids do not consider their impact on the world around them—they don't consider the stability of the deer they hunt or their impact on the ecosystem, and some druidic scholars believe that the mubida is nature's response to these actions. A defense mechanism that prevents the total destabilization of the ecosystem.

There are many ways that a mubida might be brought into existence. The most common theory is that the monstrosities are constructed with primal magic by nature itself, and the common thread between sightings is that they always appear in areas where life is being harvested and hunted at a rate that exceeds nature's ability to replenish. Sages have concluded that these creatures do not "arrive" at a location but are instead born, fully grown in unstable areas.

Another popular theory is that this patchwork creature is, not unlike the owlbear, the result of too much magical experimentation on a mundane creature. Unlike the owlbear and chimera, scholars postulate that the responsible spellcaster was not a wizard but a druid. Many historians believe that this druid was a wandering shepherd that repeatedly altered their trusted sheepdog with magic in the belief that improving the canine would better protect the

flock. Eventually one too many spells were cast on the animal and the very foundation of its body and mind altered—it no longer viewed the small group of sheep as its charge but rather saw all creatures endangered by the mortal races as its flock. Those who subscribe to this speculation presume that all mubida share a single common ancestor as its offspring spread throughout the known world.

Finally, the third most prevalent idea regarding the genesis of the mubida flies in the face of the other, more widely accepted theories: they are not monstrosities at all. Created from magic but not true primal energies, instead they are thought to perhaps be undead animated from large volumes of beast corpses that are the byproduct of overhunting. They do not come to protect the land, only to serve as nature's vengeance against greedy mortal races. This school of thought is popular with scholars that find no correlation between a mubida's presence and the stabilization of a region's fauna, positing that any dangerous creature in a region will stem the tide of overharvesting due to its very presence. Detractors cite the fact that a mubida has never been seen harming an animal in the wild yet the skeptical don't accept that lack of evidence is proof within itself.

MUBIDA ECOLOGY

What fascinates zoologists and ecologists is the ecology of the mubida. Its dietary needs are completely unknown. Those who claim to have slain one have stated conflicting accounts that detail the creature's intestinal tract was stuffed to the brim with foliage, bones, completely empty, or missing altogether. This misinformation makes it all but impossible to accurately gauge the mubida's diet and the existence of predatory behavior towards the mundane animals that exist in its domain. A popular assumption is that the unique moss that grows in patches on the unique creature's hide allows it to find nourishment through photosynthesis (though this has yet to be proven).

It is important to note that the mubida has been observed living in perfect harmony with normally

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aggressive wildlife. One woodsman reported seeing a mother black bear and her cubs approach a resting mubida only to have the creature gently play with the newborn bears before allowing the family to depart. Beastmasters that have survived conflict with the mubida also report that even their most trusted and well trained animal companions would frequently refuse to attack the creature and it wouldn't do harm to the lesser beast in turn.

Plot Hooks

The following ideas can help you introduce the mubida into your game.

Aberrant Behavior. A mubida wiped out an entire caravan of merchants and travelers heading to a major city. This behavior is irregular for these incredibly rare creatures, drawing the interest of a group of monster hunters. They've placed a bounty on any information relating to the mubida. In truth its actions were not its own—a wicked and militant druid circle discovered a way to dominate the mind of the deadly monstrosity and the caravan assault is just the first step in their long term plan to eradicate the encroaching threat of civilization in the area.

King's Wood. The forest of a local noble is a common hunting ground for nobility. However despite infrequent hunting trips, something has brought a mubida into the forest. As it turns out poachers from several small villages and hamlets in the area frequently use the game found within the wood to feed their families and friends.

Low Reserves. The frontier village of Hallowthorp barely survived the winter. The game in the nearby forest was hunted into oblivion and it will be a long string of weeks before the first harvest of spring arrives. Villagers are on edge and warn travelers against heading into the woods alone. Hidden in plain sight beneath the boughs of the wood's trees rests a neatly arranged collection of logs bound together with thick rope and staked into the earth, a large boulder resting on top. A mubida visited the region surrounding Hallowthorp the previous spring and rather than heeding the advice of the local druid, the hunters of the village



created an intricate trap to seal the creature within. Anyone listening through the felled logs hears the deep, guttural breathing of the mubida trapped in the pit beneath it.

Tactics

Mubida are solitary creatures that rarely interact with one another. In combat they are usually accompanied by beasts commonly found in the area and even dire animals seem to respect their presence, actively protecting the creatures.

The mubida is a highly mobile threat that makes great use of its ability to hinder opportunity attacks to set up powerful gore attacks. It prefers to target isolated foes but is equally at home rushing clustered groups of humanoids into one another to hinder their ability to appropriately respond to the threat it poses.

A mubida is incredibly intelligent and even capable of speech. It does its best not to make this information known and instead uses the communication of a well-organized party against them. It actively creates unique counter-strategies, putting pressure on spellcasters and other soft targets while actively ignoring more heavily armored targets until they are all that remain or the threat they pose becomes too much to ignore.

SAMPLE ENCOUNTER (CR 14–15)

The mubida is a dangerous threat even for experienced adventurers. The following encounter works well for 9th level PCs and can easily serve as the final combat of an adventure, but is designed for a freshly rested party. For more fatigued adventurers, remove the giant boar and 2 **wolves** or 1 **winter wolf**.

The encounter's area is wide and features a great deal of cover thanks to large trees, overgrown brush, and natural slopes. The mubida uses this terrain to lure lone adventurers out into the open before darting back into hiding.

It is accompanied by creatures from the forest that are far more aggressive than many of them would normally be: 2 **giant elk**, 1 **giant boar**, 1 **winter wolf**, and 4 **wolves**. These animals do their best to isolate targets for the mubida by knocking victims

prone while others attempt to drag prone targets away through the brush.

Thanks to the mubida's ability to telepathically communicate with animals, the normally bestial creatures with which it associates are capable of much more effective tactical positioning than a party might expect. The beasts do not group together unless they absolutely must so as to avoid area of effect attacks (like the *fireball* spell), moving in to the fight from multiple directions. Wolves engage with front rank combatants to harry their advance while the mubida and boar focus on attacking more vulnerable opponents.

The animals under the mubida's manipulation prioritize their own survival and retreat when the mubida feels the situation has turned against them—it prioritizes the survival of the forest over its own well-being.



THE MUBIDA

Presented below is the stat block for the mubida as well as the regional effects that occur in the proximity of its lair.

Mubida

Large monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 189 (18d10+90)

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	15 (+2)	21 (+5)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	7 (–2)

Skills Athletics +8, Perception +9, Stealth +6, Survival +7

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, stunned

Senses darkvision 240 ft., passive Perception 19

Languages Druidic, Common

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Animal Ken. The mubida can telepathically communicate simple messages to beasts within 100 feet.

Bounding Escape. Any creature that makes an opportunity attack against the mubida has disadvantage on the attack roll.

Charge. If the mubida moves at least 10 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.

Guard Dog. Creatures have disadvantage on attack rolls against a beast ally of the mubida while the mubida is within 10 feet of the beast.

Shepherd's Isolation. If the mubida hits with its first attack on its turn, the target takes an extra 22 (4d10) damage (of the same type as the attack) if the target has no allies within 5 feet.

Skulk. The mubida can use the Hide action as a bonus action.

Vengeful Stalker. The mubida automatically succeeds on Wisdom (Survival) checks made to track a creature it has dealt at least 20 damage to in the past 24 hours.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The mubida makes a bite, claw, and gore attack.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d10+4) piercing damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d12+4) slashing damage.

Gore. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d10+4) bludgeoning damage.

Regional Effects

A region containing a mubida's lair thrives—animals are more durable, require less to eat, reproduce healthy offspring more frequently. The senses of non-beasts dull and the very landscape seems to work against them. No death goes unnoticed within the mubida's domain.

- All wild creatures of the beast type within 10 miles of the mubida's lair increase their AC by 2 and gain 5 temporary hit points at the end of each long rest.
- The mubida becomes instantly aware of any Tiny or larger creature that dies within 10 miles of its lair.

It knows the exact location the creature died and if the death was the result of a sapient creature's actions.

- Wisdom (Survival) checks are made with disadvantage by all creatures other than beasts within 10 miles of the mubida's lair.
- Mundane foliage becomes difficult terrain at inconvenient times for creatures other than beasts within 1 mile of the mubida's lair. 🗺️