Wraith Wright's

Animal Handlers' Manual

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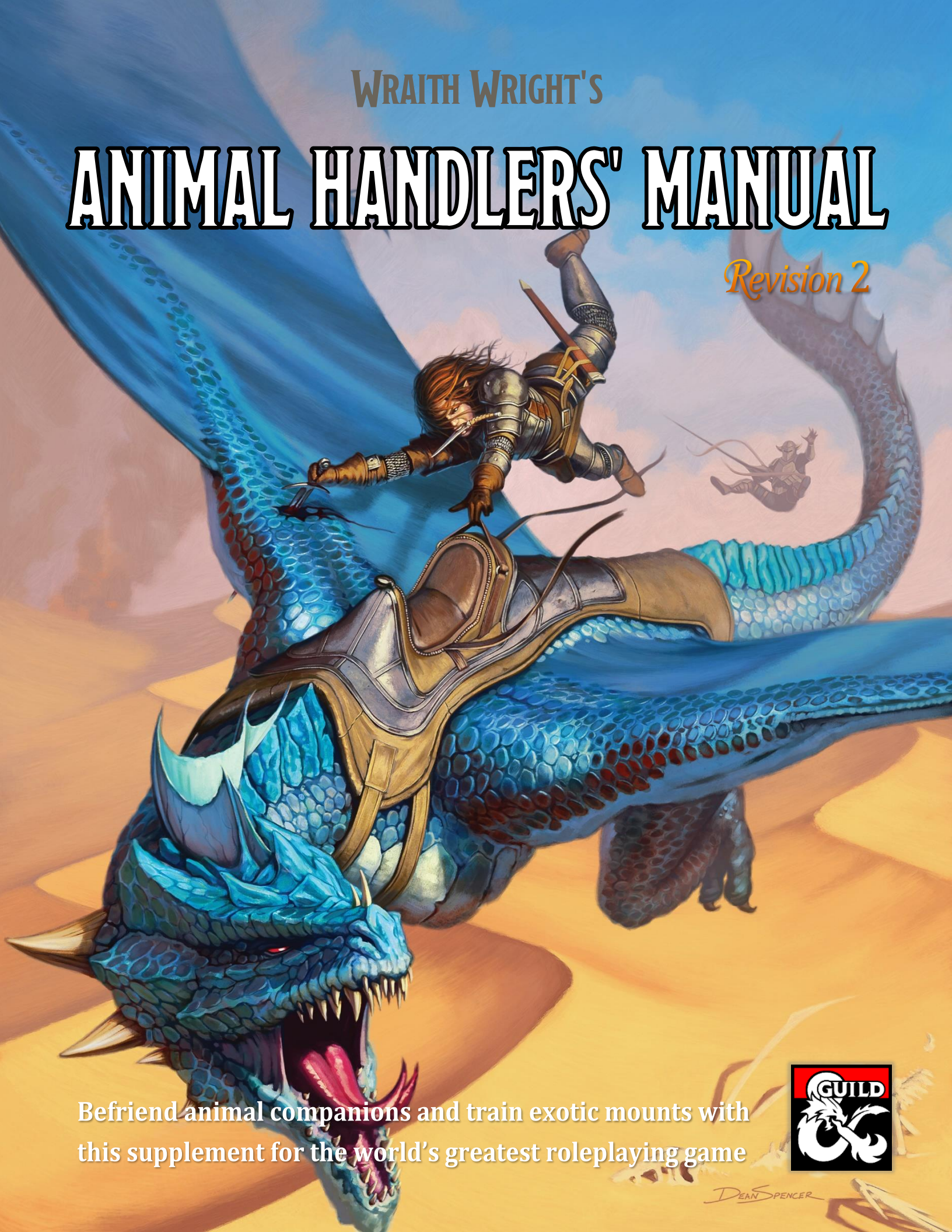

Befriend animal companions and train exotic mounts with this supplement for the world's greatest roleplaying game

GUILD

Dean Spencer

Wraith Wright's

Animal Handlers' Manual

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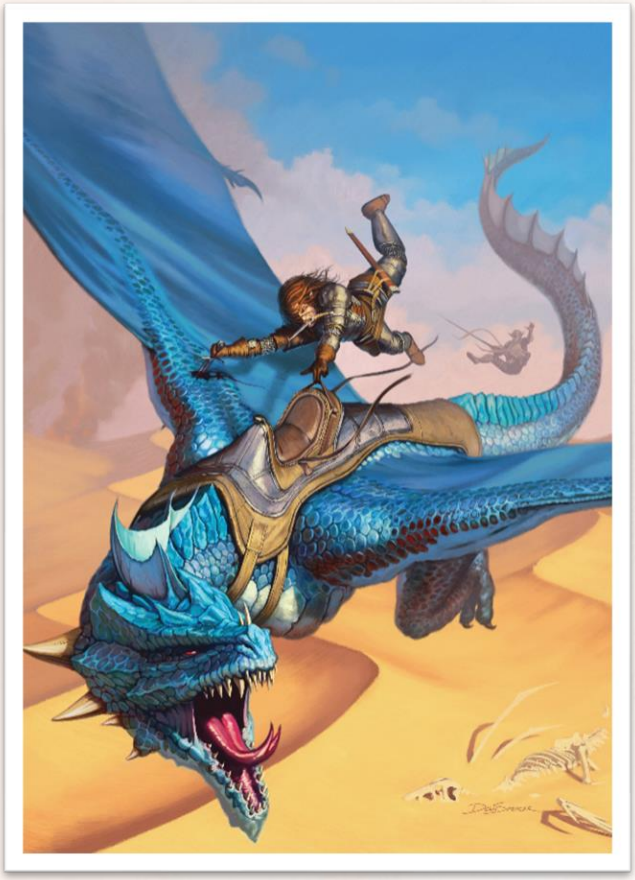

ON THE COVER
Art by Dean Spencer

In a high-altitude battle, an elf warrior makes a daring leap to unseat her opponent. Only then does she discover that his mount, a cobalt wyvern, is trained to fend off unfamiliar riders.

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Contents

Preface 5

Introduction 6

Using This Book 6
- Who Benefits from Animals? 6

Chapter Summaries 8
- Part 1: Player Tools 8
- Part 2: Dungeon Master Tools 8

Part 1: Player Tools

Chapter 1: Animal Companions 10

Animal (Sidekick Class) 10
- Making Animal Sidekicks 10
- Class Details 10
- Loveable Lump 12
- Heavy Bulwark 13
- Raptor 15
- Slinker or Loper 16
- Trusted Mount 17

Animal Tricks 19
- Eliciting Behavior 20
- Trick Descriptions 22

Animal Templates 28
- Trained Templates 28
- Natural Templates 29
- Supernatural Templates 31

Personalizing Animals 33
- Characteristics 33
- Variant: Loyalty Rating 34

Chapter 2: Handling Animals 38

Animal Handling Skill 38
- Named Functions 38

Mounted Combat Rules 39
- Qualified Mount (1) 39
- Getting On and Off (2) 41
- Falling and Falling From (3-4) 41
- Controlled and Independent (5-7) . 43
- Opportunity Attacks (8) 45

Synergizing Character Options 45
- Class Synergy 46
- Other Effects 50

Chapter 3: Player Options 56

Rogue Class 56
- Beast Whisperer (Subclass) 56

Warlock Class 58
- Pact Boon: Pact of the Chain 58
- Eldritch Invocations 58

Other Options 58
- New Feats 58
- New Spells 59

Magic Items 61
- Animals Using Magic Items 61
- Converting Old Magic Items 62
- New Magic Items 63
- New Supernatural Gifts 67

Chapter 4: Animal Markets 69

Equipment 69

Animals 74
- Buying and Selling 74
- Untrained Creatures 75
- Mounts 75

Monsters 77
- Monster Tables 77

Part 2: Dungeon Master Tools

Appendix A: Managing Animals 82

Defining Animals 82
- Intelligence Rating 82
- Animal Intellect 83
- Domesticity (Tameness) 84

Acquiring Animals 85
- Which Animals Fit? 85
- Methods of Acquisition 88

Keeping Animals 91
- Basic Survival 91
- Feed and Care 91
- Adverse Weather 93
- Challenging Terrain 93
- Safekeeping 95

Portraying Animals 96
- Who Controls Action? 96
- Who Controls Roleplaying? 97
- Animal Behavior 97

Appendix B: Animals in Stories 100

Placing Animals 100
- Animals as Antagonists 100
- Potential Companions 100
- Fitting In 101
- Removing Animals 102

Story Seeds 102
- Acquiring Animals 102
- Triumph and Adversity 105
- Hardcover Adventures 106

Appendix C: Sample Animals 119

Samples by Archetype 119
- Lovable Lumps 119
- Raptors 122
- Slinkers and Lopers 125
- Heavy Bulwarks 128
- Loyal Mounts 132

Preface

Players love animals.

There's something compelling about animals in games, something that intrigues players, invoking a deep and earnest investment in their companionship and wellbeing. Players are drawn to creatures who need care and who, in return, give unfailing, unconditional love.

Animal companionship is a pure, ennobling thing. Animals don't judge their keepers; instead, the friendship of animals is itself a judgment of the keeper's worthiness. It shows compatibility with the spirit of an inherently noble creature, a relationship that cannot be achieved through treachery.

In many cultures, the friendship of animals is something that comes naturally to the great and the good. The guileless candor inherent in nature, and thus in beasts, makes animals unfailing judges of virtue. Their companionship marks someone as worthy of a true and faithful friendship. The more exceptional the animal, the more exceptional its master's virtue.

This nobility features prominently in legend. In the coliseum, a lion spared the life of Androcles, a man who earlier showed kindness by removing a thorn from the beast's paw. Hercules took as a pet the three-headed hound that guarded Hades, after he proved his worthiness by wrestling the beast into submission. In other stories, a character's merit is understood without preamble; an old village hound barks at every stranger but docilely licks the hand of a true hero upon their first meeting. Good animals and adventurers fit naturally together.

In Dungeons & Dragons, animals of various sorts have always been excellent adventuring companions. Players have employed ferocious guard dogs to watch their camps at night, surefooted mules to carry their treasure out of deep dungeons, and faithful horses to bear them into battle. The use of animals as adventuring tools and allies is deeply ingrained in the game's history across its many editions.

As proof of this notion, look no further than the *Player's Handbook*. Animal companions appear repeatedly throughout. The druids in the Classes chapter include an elf with a hawk perched on one hand and a human alongside a fearsome tiger. The equipment chapter presents a full-page depiction of a party with two horses, a pony, a dog, and a raven. The Customization Options chapter opens with another full page of a green-clad animal handler, his eagle's wings spread wide. Other animals are scattered throughout the *Player's Handbook*, some alongside characters and some on their own.

Unfortunately, that book lacks systems for befriending, training, and keeping animals as companions. The third edition of Dungeons & Dragons had pages of rules detailing the benefits of animal companions for druids and rangers, mounts for paladins, and familiars for sorcerers and wizards. The skill writeup for handling animals included systems spanning more than a whole page, systems the current edition reduces to *two sentences*. Tragically, in the streamlining of rules between editions, the useful systems for animal companionship became a casualty.

I made the *Animal Handler's Manual* because I want to put that level of support back into the game. Dungeon Masters should be able reference easy, concrete systems and advice for using animals in the game. They shouldn't have to make up an array of new rules so their players can experience the wonder and joy of befriending an animal and making it an important part of the party and the story.

Randall Right
August 2020

Introduction

The Dungeons & Dragons Roleplaying Game combines both roleplaying and gaming. For the use of animals, this supplement supports both aspects in your game. In addition to concrete systems for training and controlling animals, the *Animal Handlers' Manual* includes guidance for roleplaying the personality of animals as nonplayer characters.

Using This Book

In these pages, readers will find tools for both the players and the Dungeon Master, tools to help add lovable, useful animals to the party and improve the experience of managing and playing alongside such creatures.

The options here build upon the official rules in the *Player's Handbook*, *Dungeon Master's Guide*, *Monster Manual*, *Xanathar's Guide to Everything*, and the *Essentials Kit* boxed set. They also reach back to the lessons taught by past editions, bringing forward useful systems and important lessons, evolving them to fit the fifth edition.

The *Animal Handlers' Manual* provides two important types of information for players and Dungeon Masters. Part of the book helps readers understand and make the most out of existing rules as they relate to animals. The rest of the book is new rules and options to increase the enjoyability of animal companions in the game. The differences are clearly and sharply defined; we don't want any confusion about what is new and optional versus what is standard but may be too obscure for the reader to remember.

As you absorb the tools in these pages, it is important to know that all the options are interdependent of one another. Although they work together as a cohesive whole, each system is modular, allowing the Dungeon Master to use the new rules selectively.

Who Benefits from Animals?

Animals are useful for more than the companionship they provide. Characters of every class can use animals for riding, carrying loads, noticing threats, tracking game, and, most importantly, for assisting with their class roles.

Artificer

Artificers function well without animals; their spells and features often make up for the lack of companions. However, the artificer can enhance each of its functions by teaming up with animals. Particularly, trained animals can carry and place the artificer's various inventions, allowing rapid, strategic deployment around the battlefield. Additionally, animals themselves make great targets for the artificer's bolstering magic, enhancing combat effectiveness and utility of these companions. Finally, animals can provide extra carrying capacity for toting the artificer's heavy tool sets and crafting supplies.

Barbarian, Fighter

For characters that focus primarily on weapon use, the ability to get into melee reach (or stay at missile range) is critical to using those weapons to the best degree. A war-trained mount grants exceptional mobility on open terrain, including the ability to move among or away from foes without provoking opportunity attacks.

For animals that are not being ridden, the warriors' role can benefit from creatures trained to fight synergistically. Although it takes time to command a war mastiff to attack a target, the beast makes up for it by attacking round after round. A trained hawk might harry a spellcaster that the warrior can't reach quickly enough.

Bard, Rogue

Bards, and rogues to some degree, make adept performers using music, acrobatics, and sleight of hand. Although each may have the genuine goal of providing entertainment, they are also adept at swindling audience members or otherwise relieving them of extra coins. Including animals in an act is a sure way to broaden an audience and to draw attention from a pickpocket's wandering fingers.

Bards are adept at exhorting animals to perform in exceptional ways, from picking a pocket to climbing a building to open its second-story window.

Rogues fighting alongside animals are never without allies to distract foes. They are thus able to utilize their precision strikes with more regularity.

Animals, Monsters, and Beasts

The *Animal Handlers' Manual* uses these three terms with the following specific meanings:

Animals are creatures that can be trained and handled according to the rules in this book, whether they are natural creatures found also in the real world, or magical creatures known only in fantasy worlds.

Monsters include anything that is not an animal, creatures that don't meet this definition of animals.

Beasts belong to a creature type, with specific game rules. Some beasts are animals, and some are monsters.

Cleric, Paladin

As defensive, healing characters, these class roles are enhanced by the presence of sturdy animals. These allies can join their armor-clad handlers to interpose themselves between foes and weaker party members or move to guard fallen party members long enough for the cleric or paladin to reach them.

These classes are also well suited to healing and protecting their animal companions with spells. Animals are often fragile relative to player characters, and spells like *shield of faith* and *warding bond* can greatly extend their survivability and usefulness.

In addition to the benefits described for other warriors, paladins may particularly benefit from training their spirit steeds (from the *find steed* spell) or providing their protective auras to any animal they ride or fight alongside.

Druid, Ranger

Druids and rangers both suit the role of interacting with nature, and they share an incredibly useful range of animal affecting spells to help with that task. (Clerics with the Nature Domain have similar access to animal affecting spells, sharing this role.)

A druid can particularly enhance its interaction with animals by turning into creatures of the same type. This can aid in acquisition or other interactions; a druid that takes a wolf's form and fights beside a wolf companion exploits the speed and tactics employed by wolves working in concert. At higher levels, the ability to swim or fly alongside animal companions in their shared forms brings the synergistic combination of character and animal to the sea or the skies.

Rangers can use animals in many of the ways that barbarians and fighters do, but they have additional class roles related to overland navigation, foraging for food, traveling stealthily, and spotting threats in the wild. In all these tasks, animals make great companions, enhancing the ranger's chance of success.

Monk

Monks benefit from animals in ways like the warrior classes, whose roles the class shares to some degree. Monks are particularly synergistic with fast-moving creatures that can match the monk's speed, balance, and stealth. Such animals can aid the monk in its role of a highly mobile and adaptable striker. Additionally, despite their own speed, monks usually achieve greater mobility while mounted, even if they must eschew some class features while in the saddle.

Sorcerer, Warlock, Wizard

These classes are well suited to enhancing animals with spells that strengthen or speed them along in combat.

The role of most arcane casters is artillery-like, casting spells from a distance and trying to stay back from the front lines. A horse provides excellent mobility for maintaining this distance, and war-trained animals can serve as blockers to keep foes from closing on characters of these lightly armored classes.

Wizards (and some warlocks) may also have familiars. The telepathic connection means such creatures are more adept and learning and employing many of the tricks and roles available to animal companions.

Chapter Summaries

This product includes four chapters of player tools and three chapters (appendices) of Dungeon Master tools.

Part 1: Player Tools

Each of the following chapters provides tools and advice for players to manage animals in games.

Chapter 1: Animal Companions

This chapter provides tools to give animals a more active, central role in the party. Sidekick classes add features to bolster the core functions of various animal archetypes. A comprehensive set of tricks and animal control techniques allow handlers to train and command animals to perform in various useful ways. A set of templates expand the options for animals, making them stronger and providing unique traits. Finally, this chapter includes characteristics and loyalty rules to better personalize these creatures.

Chapter 2: Handling Animals

This chapter is dedicated to the interaction of animals and handlers in the field. Instead of new system or character options, this section examines the existing animal rules, from handling to riding, suggesting cures for various ambiguities and offering optional rules that can highlight or nuance various aspects of the game.

Chapter 3: Player Options

This chapter provides new options for player characters. It includes a new Roguish Archetype, the Beast Whisperer, plus additional options to give much-needed love to the Pact of the Chain's familiar. It adds new spells for druids and rangers, and a handful of new feats. It also gives rules for animals using magic items, a list of new magic items for animals, and guidelines for converting existing items into forms animals can use.

Chapter 4: Animal Markets

This chapter addresses the costs of animals and their equipment in a broadly expanded form. In the first section, players can find combat-useful items (a range of barding and a variety of lance types), training tools (blinkers, muzzles, and cages), and general-use and management tools (riding tack, saddles, and feed varieties). The next two sections deal with the buying and selling of animals and monsters. These creatures provided as potential mounts and combat allies come with stat block summaries for easy reference.

Part 2: Dungeon Master Tools

The last three chapters are called appendices because they are for the Dungeon Master alone. They speak directly to people in that role.

Appendix A: Managing Animals

The first appendix helps Dungeon Masters moderate the uses, activities, and acquisition of animals in the campaign. It begins by helping the DM differentiate animals—those creatures subject to the handling rules—from monsters that are not subject to the Animal Handling skill. The next session covers methods and systems for players to acquire and acclimate animals for their use. The third section covers logistical problems animals cause and some of the ways to get around them. Finally, extensive advice is offered on the portrayal and control of animals in games.

Appendix B: Animals in Stories

This appendix addresses the various story impacts of animals, particularly in adding or removing them. It also addresses the power level of animals, including ways to match them to the party.

The second and larger portion of this chapter is its story hooks. There are general hooks, small creative ideas for adding animals into the campaign, particularly introducing the advantages and adversity that animals bring to the party, and otherwise giving animal companions their selected moments on center stage. There are also story hooks that catalogue the most interesting animals from each of the official hardback adventures published to date, along with general advice for handling animal companions in those adventures.

Appendix C: Sample Animals

These pages include dozens of sample animals created with the systems in this supplement and divided among five different archetypes corresponding to the five different sidekick classes in chapter 1. Each creature has its own description, history, and potential point of placement in the world, as well as a complete stat block already modified with adjustments from any special training or template the animal may have. Sidekick classes are not applied to these creatures yet; as a party-balance tool, adding sidekick levels is left to the discretion of the Dungeon Master.

Animal Companions

Chapter 1: Animal Companions

Animal companions are extraordinary creatures. They are friends and allies, named pets that are truly members of the party. For these animals, this chapter offers a sidekick class, animal templates, trainable tricks, and other features. These useful systems personalize and adapt animals to survive and thrive within the adventuring party.

These tools are not intended for every animal in the characters' orbit. Only those that form tight bonds with the party qualify as companions for the purpose of this chapter. Likewise, this chapter's offerings aren't necessary for every pet creature the characters keep; everything here is optional.

Animal (Sidekick Class)

This section describes the animal sidekick class, joining it to the expert, spellcaster, and warrior sidekick classes presented in *Dragon of Icefire Peak* and *Tasha's Cauldron of Everything*. Although animals can be shoehorned into a standard sidekick class, the spells, tools, weapons, and academic skills of those sidekicks are better suited to humanoids than to creatures of animal-level intelligence.

The "animal" sidekick class is defined by features that enhance survivability. This is a key concern given that pets tend to be weak and might die in physical conflicts of any danger level. The death of pets tends to offend player sensibilities, even those of players not specifically attached to those animals. Atop this core of survivability, role-specific features appear in this section's five subclasses giving each animal a set of useful proactive functions.

Making Animal Sidekicks

Pets can gain useful traits and features from levels in this class. However, unlike humanoids, many animals will gain useful, defining functionality from their stat blocks alone. In many instances, an animal companion doesn't need the additional power and features of a class.

Although sections in this chapter are modular, usable in isolation from one another, this supplement suggests all pets in the party get the sidekick class here. The animal sidekick has a special "level 0" that offers no linear level progression, a level the animal need not progress beyond. It can simply benefit from the survivability of Companion Life and the conceptual clarity of Defining Role.

Because animal sidekicks are built upon a different conceptual basis and power progression, they are *not* generally limited to challenge ratings of 1/2 or less. See appendix A for animal companion progression. However, some subclasses have their own limitations of this sort.

While normal sidekicks gain levels at the same rate as the rest of the party, animal sidekicks do not. Their levels and adjusted challenge ratings don't track to the party's level. Instead, an animal companion normally advances in its class according to the guidance in appendix A, meaning the creature will often have a lower sidekick level than the party's level. The animal companion probably makes up for this difference with the power innate to its stat block or by having a template.

An animal companion that gains a level of its class gains the features described in this section. It may not use the Multiclassing rules or gain the features of a different class.

Class Details

The following features apply to the animal sidekick class.

Unlike player characters, the Dungeon Master chooses the selectable aspects of animal sidekick features, even for animals wholly controlled by a single player. However, these decisions should be made in the context of the training and habits that characters try to teach or instill.

Proficiencies

Although an animal doesn't lose proficiencies it already knows, it gains no other proficiencies from the animal sidekick class except those applied by features.

Hit Dice and Hit Points

Additional hit dice from animal classes reflect the creature's size, not the heartiness of its class training. Hit dice and hit points otherwise follow the rules in the *Monster Manual*. (Round down fractional hit points when the creature has an odd number of hit dice.)

Hit Dice and Hit Points by Size

Animal Size	Hit Die Size	HP per Hit Die
Tiny	d4	2½
Small	d6	3½
Medium	d8	4½
Large	d10	5½
Huge	d12	6½
Gargantuan	d20	10½

Companion Life

Animal sidekicks gain this feature upon joining the class.

Starting at "level 0," animal companions become "special nonplayer characters"; instead of dying when they reach 0 hit points, as most monsters do, they fall unconscious.

Additionally, animal companions with this feature are unaffected by the Instant Death rule; massive damage will not automatically kill them.

Finally, when required to roll a death save, an animal companion succeeds automatically. (This does not prevent death save failures accrued without rolling.)

Defining Role

At "level 0," the animal identifies with a role that it will play within the party: Loveable Lump, Heavy Bulwark, Raptor, Slinker (or Loper), or Trusted Mount.

The flavor of a defining role helps the sidekick's portrayal to remain consistent. It grants role features at 1st, 5th, 6th, 9th, 11th, and 14th levels. It also defines the role tricks listed at 1st, 4th, 7th, 11th, and 15th levels.

Indomitable

At 2nd level, the animal companion can reroll a saving throw that it fails, but it must use the new roll. When the companion uses this feature, it can't do so again until it finishes a long rest.

The animal can use this feature twice between long rests starting at 10th level and three times between long rests at 18th level.

Second Wind

At 3rd level, the animal can use a bonus action on its turn to regain hit points equal to 1d10 + its level in this class. Once it uses this feature, the animal must complete a short or long rest before it can use Second Wind again.

After reaching 13th level, the animal can use this feature twice between rests.

Ability Score Increase

At 4th level and again at 8th, 10th, 12th 16th, and 19th level, the sidekick increases one ability score by 2, or increases two ability scores by 1. The sidekick cannot increase an ability score above 20 using this feature.

Whenever the sidekick gains this feature, adjust anything in its stat block that relies on an ability score modifier that you increase. For example, if the sidekick has an attack that uses its Strength modifier, increase the attack's modifiers to hit and damage if the Strength modifier increases.

If it's unclear whether a melee attack in the stat block uses Strength or Dexterity, the attack can use either.

Role Tricks

Each subclass has features that add specific tricks to the animal's repertoire. These feature-granted tricks are not counted against the companion's maximum number of trained tricks.

Tricks are listed by number on the class table on this page. Each subclass defines the specific tricks these represent, including any special parameters to them.

The Animal Sidekick

Level	Hit Dice	Class Features
0	+0	Companion Life, Defining Role
1	+1	Role Feature, Role Trick
2	+2	Indomitable (1 use)
3	+3	Role Feature, Second Wind (1 use)
4	+4	Ability Score Increase, Role Trick
5	+5	Role Feature, Saving Throw
6	+6	Role Feature
7	+7	Role Trick
8	+8	Ability Score Increase
9	+9	Role Feature
10	+10	Indomitable (2 uses)
11	+11	Role Feature, Role Trick
12	+12	Ability Score Increase
13	+13	Second Wind (2 uses)
14	+14	Role Feature
15	+15	Role Trick
16	+16	Ability Score Increase
17	+17	Save Mastery
18	+18	Indomitable (3 uses)
19	+19	Ability Score Increase
20	+20	Trick Mastery

If an animal gains a trick that it already knows (a likely event given the function of such animals), it instead learns another trick that it qualifies for. If the trick is Use Skill, and the skill is one the animal is already proficient in, the trick instead applies to another skill.

An animal cannot replace or forget its Role Tricks.

Save Mastery

The animal adds its proficiency bonus to all saving throws. When it is proficient with a save, it adds double the bonus.

Trick Mastery

At this level, the animal has mastered its training to such a degree that it sheds many of the limitations that apply to lesser creatures. The animal companion's number of tricks known is no longer limited by its Intelligence rating; it can learn any number of tricks given time and training.

The animal also learns to perform with uncanny intuition. It gains the benefits of exceptional communication as described in the "Animal Tricks" section. At the handler's merest word or gesture, the animal understands the command completely, losing none of the nuance of that instruction.

Defining Roles

The following pages describe the five subclasses for the animal sidekick class.

Loveable Lump

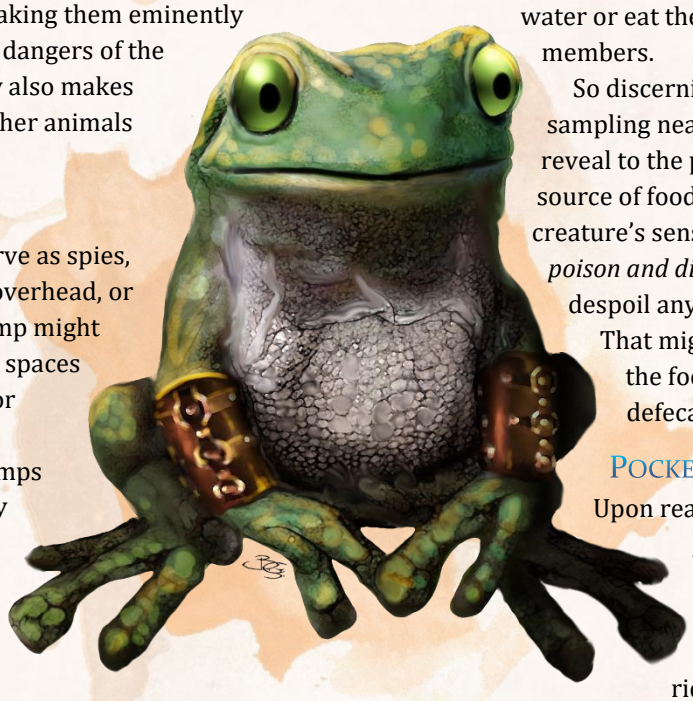
This little creature packs a big personality into a small package. This is at the core of the animal's role. A Lovable Lump often serves to extend its owner's concept, like a pirate's parrot, a necromancer's pet rat, or a mermaid's pet crab. Hidden in a pocket or riding on a hat, these creatures make adorable—and sometimes useful—companions without getting in the party's way.

Boon Companions

The primary purpose of Lovable Lumps is to provide companionship. They typically fit inside pockets, pouches, or packs carried by a handler, making them eminently portable and protected from the dangers of the environment. This concealability also makes lumps easy to take into places other animals would not be allowed.

Scouts and Spies

Being so tiny allows lumps to serve as spies, perched in a tree branch, flying overhead, or scurrying behind furniture. A lump might be trained to find things in small spaces and either return to its handler or make an alerting noise upon detecting its target. Loveable Lumps are particularly useful when they have unique movement modes or traits that enhance their senses.



Charmed Lives

Most lumps are lucky creatures, being in just the right place at just the right time to avoid serious trouble. Despite their often-curious natures, lumps usually avoid the consequences of nosing about, getting into the party supplies, searching dark holes in the ground, and investigating other people's packs. The narrow avoidance of these consequences often puts Lovable Lumps into the role of comic relief, unwittingly lightening the mood and amusing the party.

Qualifying Creatures

Creatures in this category have no common shape among them, no unifying physical features or appearance. They share only two concrete aspects; they are all size Tiny and they have base challenge ratings *below* CR 1.

Example Creatures. Badger, bat, cat, crab, crawling claw, frog, gazer, hawk, lizard, owl, rat, raven, scorpion, spider, stirge, vargouille, velociraptor, weasel

Features

Lovable lumps gain the following features at the levels indicated on the animal class table.

Role Tricks

The Loveable Lump gains the Use Skill (Perception) trick upon reaching 1st level.

It later gains Scout at 4th level, Perform at 7th level, Use Skill (Stealth) at 11th level, and Go Home at 15th level.

Connoisseur

At 1st level, a Lovable Lump does not need its own food and water if it can nibble parts of its handler's food and water or eat the provisions of other party members.

So discerning is the lump, and so devoted to sampling nearby food, that it can unwittingly reveal to the party whether a particular source of food is spoiled or poisoned. The creature's senses are as accurate as a *detect poison and disease* spell, and it will attack or despoil any food it discovers to be harmful. That might mean angrily flinging bits of the food, playing dead on top of it, or defecating on it in a dramatic fashion.

Pocket Rider

Upon reaching 3rd level, Lovable Lumps gain additional protections when they linger near their handlers. They can duck into a pocket at the first sign of danger. While riding in its handler's pocket, the creature benefits from total cover, even when part of it is sticking out.

While within 5 feet of its handler, a Lovable Lump can also dive into the safety of one of the handler's pockets or packs, doing so as a reaction to any attack or effect that would damage the creature. If the lump is no longer a viable target for the triggering effect, the effect's user must select a new target or waste the attack or spell.

A Lovable Lump that is a familiar—created by the *find familiar* spell and having the ability to disappear into a pocket dimension—can also use this reaction to dive into that dimension. The familiar must still be within five feet of its handler for this use.

Saving Throw

Upon reaching 5th level, this creature gains proficiency with Dexterity saving throws.

If the lump is already proficient with Dexterity saving throws, it gains proficiency with another saving throw.

Wake Up!

At 5th level, the lump gains the ability to intuit when its handler is in mental distress. Its concerned ministrations—the animal's chirps, tweets, barks, or squawks—can help to call back the mind of the handler.

While in contact with this animal, the handler gains advantage on any saving throw to remove an ongoing effect that imposes the charmed, frightened, or stunned condition, or the effects of the *confusion* spell. This feature does not affect the handler's initial saving throw against anything that imposes such effects.

Rapid Reaction

When the lump reaches 6th level, its vigilance affords it the ability to react rapidly to threats. The Loveable Lump can choose to roll initiative with advantage. If it does so, on its first turn in the combat, the lump cannot perform actions other than Dash, Dodge, or Disengage.

Tiny Sentinel

At 9th level, the lump's exceptional vigilance helps it keep watch. The lump's Wisdom (Perception) checks are not disadvantaged or prevented by darkness, magical darkness, or invisibility. Further, the animal automatically checks Intelligence (Investigate) to discern any illusions within 60 feet of it, even without direct interaction.

Rapid Run

At 11th level, the Loveable Lump is adept at crossing combats unscathed. When the lump takes the Dash action on its turn, it can Dodge or Disengage as a bonus action.

Legendary Luck

A 14th-level Lovable Lump can unwittingly luck its way out of most tight scenarios. Whenever the lump makes a saving throw or ability check to avoid damage or to escape a condition, or when a creature attacks the Lovable Lump, the lump can invoke this feature as a reaction.

The lump automatically passes the check or saving throw, or the attacker automatically misses even if the attack roll was a critical hit. In the case of a spell or effect that imposes half damage on a success, the lump instead takes no damage.

The Lovable Lump can use this feature once, even choosing to apply it after the roll results are determined. It regains the ability to use this after completing a long rest.

Heavy Bulwark

These hulking brutes are stalwart allies, resilient and protective in a fight, and powerful when laboring outside of battle. Although they commonly take the role of beasts of burden, these animals are much more versatile. Their reliable, stoic companionship can see their handlers through all manner of dangerous scenarios.

Dependable Friends

Heavy Bulwarks are always there when they're needed. These loyal friends work tirelessly on behalf of their handlers, never complaining, and willingly risking their own lives to defend the people they care for.

Chargers and Blockers

In combat, these animals use their considerable bulk to control the battlefield. They stand in the way of danger, often facing down foes even larger than themselves, or they charge across the combat to trample foes or drive them toward disadvantageous positions.

Beasts of Burden

Owing to their size and strength, Heavy Bulwarks are naturally suited to carrying or dragging very heavy loads. In the party, this might mean carrying freight on a pack saddle, pulling a wagon, or otherwise helping weaker party members transport their extra gear. The presence of a bulwark helps alleviate the party's state of encumbrance.

Qualifying Creatures

Most bulwarks are size Large or larger, but a handful are size Medium. Size alone is often enough to control the battlefield, blocking melee enemies from approaching vulnerable party members and providing cover against ranged attacks that target those party members. A few bulwarks would normally fit in among slinkers and lopers, but the value of their enormous size eclipses that role.

Examples. Ankylosaurus, aurochs, bulette, boar, brontosaurus, catoblepas, cave fisher, cow, deer, dimetrodon, dretch, elk, froghemoth, giant boar, giant crab, giant crayfish, giant frog, giant goat, giant toad, goat, gorgon, hadrosaurus, hulking crab, hydra, mammoth, otyugh, ox, rhinoceros, rothé, stegosaurus, stench kow, triceratops, tyrannosaurus rex

Features

Heavy Bulwarks gain the following features at the levels indicated on the animal class table.

Role Tricks

The Heavy Bulwark gains the Move trick when it reaches 1st level.

It later gains Use Skill (Athletics) at 4th level, Behave at 7th level, Defend at 11th level, and Attack at 15th level.

Reliable

At 1st level, the animal's loyalty is hard to sway. It has advantage on saving throws to resist any spell or effect that would charm it or would sway it to act against its handler.

Immovable

At 3rd level, the bulwark becomes exceptionally sure-footed. It gains advantage on any ability check or saving throw to resist being moved, grappled, or knocked prone.

Brutish Defender

Starting at 5th level, the animal learns to react violently when creatures try to attack around its bulk. If a creature attacks another creature on the opposite side of the bulwark, and the attack misses, the bulwark can use its reaction to make one attack of its own against the creature who failed the attack.

The bulwark cannot use this feature if the attacker is beyond the reach of any of the bulwark's attacks or is beyond 10 feet from the bulwark, whichever is greater.

Saving Throw

Upon reaching 5th level, this creature gains proficiency with Strength saving throws.

If the bulwark is already proficient with Strength saving throws, it gains proficiency with another saving throw.

Rolling Wall

A 6th level Heavy Bulwark can muscle its way about the battlefield. On its turn before moving or taking an action, the bulwark can choose to not provoke opportunity attacks until the start of its next turn. If it does so, the only action it can take that turn is the Attack action.

Unstoppable

At 9th level, the Heavy Bulwark is hard to stop. It is immune to the stunned condition and it gets advantage on any saving throw to resist or escape an effect that imposes the grappled or restrained condition.

If the Heavy Bulwark gets the frightened condition, that condition alone will not prevent the bulwark from willingly moving closer to the source of its fear.

Robust Defense

At 11th level, when the bulwark takes the Dodge action, it gains resistance to damage until the start of its next turn.

Legendary Charge

Starting at 14th level, when the Heavy Bulwark takes the Dash action on its turn, it can make a single shoving attack against each creature that it moves within 5 feet of in that turn. (See "Shoving a Creature" in the *Player's Handbook*.)

A creature knocked prone or shoved away with one of these attacks cannot make an opportunity attack against the Heavy Bulwark during its movement in that turn.

The Heavy Bulwark can use this feature once, regaining the ability to use it after completing a short rest.

Cover from Creatures

Creatures, both enemies and friends alike, provide cover against attacks that originate on the other side of them. The *Player's Handbook* suggests intervening creatures provide half cover but it makes no reference to the relative sizes of the creatures involved.

This supplement suggests upgrading the cover to three-quarters if the intervening creature is at least one size larger than both the attacker and the defender, and disallowing cover if the intervening creature is smaller than both the attacker and defender.

Raptor

Raptors are fast-flying predators. They make attentive allies, often using their keen senses to watch over their friends. With a Raptor in the air, the party can scout the terrain and get forewarning of trouble coming from a distance. These allies also lend their vigilance to the party's camp security and other affairs.

Long-Distance Scouts

Combining speed and high flying, Raptors can hunt or scout in a way that covers miles of territory while remaining relatively safe from ground-based threats. However, this tactic risks the animal being isolated and cut off in the air by faster-flying enemies. The stronger the Raptor, the farther it can reasonably and safely roam.

Flying Doom

The ability to fly gives Raptors unique functionality in combat. In battle, these creatures can bypass intervening foes, overfly obstacles, and cross pits and chasms without difficulty. A low ceiling is the only common terrain feature that hampers a Raptor. The ability to bypass ground-based barriers allows the animal to attack or harry an enemy spellcaster standing behind a line of shield-bearers, or to otherwise strike a the most tactically useful point on the battlefield without interference.

Aerial Assistants

Flying particularly lends itself to a variety of utilitarian applications. Window latches, chandelier tie-offs, and other highly placed objects can be manipulated for tactical advantage. A clever raptor might fly to the top of the ramparts and unhook a grappling hook after the party has used the rope to descend. It might also carry a vital healing potion to an injured ally, traversing great distances at a rapid speed.

Qualifying Creatures

A Raptor must have a flying speed. This subclass includes arial predators of most kinds, though some tiny fliers might instead be Lovable Lumps.

Examples. Blood hawk, chimera, cockatrice, darkmantle, eagle, flying snake, giant bat, giant vulture, giant wasp, griffon, hippogriff, pteranodon, quetzalcoatlus, stirge, vulture, wyvern

Features

Raptors gain the following features at the levels indicated on the animal class table.

Role Tricks

The Raptor gains the Scout trick at 1st level.

It later gains Use Skill (Perception) at 4th level, Hunt at 7th level, Attack at 11th level, and Harry at 15th level.

Overflight

At 1st level, the Raptor cannot be surprised while in flight. Additionally, while the animal is flying, creatures on the ground don't get advantage on ranged attacks against the Raptor merely because the animal doesn't see them.

Rapid Return

A 3rd level Raptor is adept at scouting far ahead of the party. It learns to fly evasively and return quickly at the first sign of a threat.

When the Raptor takes the Dash action on its turn, it can Dodge or Dash again as a bonus action.

Evasive Flight

At 5th level, when subject to an area effect allowing a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, the Raptor instead takes no damage on a successful saving throw, and only half damage if it fails.

Saving Throw

Upon reaching 5th level, this creature gains proficiency with Wisdom saving throws. If the Raptor is already proficient with Wisdom saving throws, it gains proficiency with another saving throw.

Extra Attack

After reaching 6th level, the Raptor can attack twice, instead of once, when it takes the Attack action on its turn. If the animal has the Multiattack action, it cannot use both Extra Attack and Multiattack on its turn; it can only use one or the other.

Articulate Talons

A 9th-level Raptor can manipulate objects with a precision that matches human hands. Given the right instruction, it can untie knots, administer potions, and perform any similarly dexterous acts that don't require proficiency to perform.

Piercing Attack

At 11th level, when the Raptor attacks with its innate natural weaponry, its attacks score critical hits on rolls of 18–20.

Legendary Dive

Starting at 14th level, when the raptor descends a number of feet *greater than half* of its normal flying speed before using the Attack action, it gets advantage on attack rolls for the rest of the turn.

For example, a hawk with a 60-foot flying speed must descend *more than* 30 feet to claim this advantage.

Slinker or Loper

These agile creatures make powerful allies, tracking prey and savaging their foes in battle. Slinkers and Lopers easily switch between lighthearted play and intense hunting. Indeed, their play often mimics their hunting behaviors. Animals of this subclass can become very loyal friends if given enough time to form strong bonds.

Loners or Packmates

Slinkers and Lopers represent two distinct archetypes. Despite sharing many quirks, these animals have a single, primary factor that differentiates them; Slinkers are solitary while Lopers prefer to move in packs. The difference affects hunting methods and social behaviors.

Slinkers are well represented by great cats. They are solitary hunters that hide and ambush prey. They are social loners too, staying with a single mate or litter, or following a single handler.

Lopers tend to be pack creatures, like many canines. They prefer to hunt together, flanking and surrounding prey, driving them into the open and dragging them down. Lopers' social behaviors are also pack oriented; a loper may adopt a whole party as its pack.

Fast Fighters

Slinkers and Lopers are fast-moving creatures. They prefer to maneuver into advantageous or flanking positions before pouncing on their slower prey. Although they are often the first party members to reach combat, they tend to retreat after making a powerful initial strike, hoping to circle behind an enemy.

Stealthy Hunters

Slinkers and Lopers prefer to remain unseen before attacking, running down their prey or pouncing on it in a burst of furious activity. Their lithe bodies make them adept at moving quietly through the underbrush and lurking unseen, waiting for just the right moment, then striking from an unexpected direction or elevation.

Qualifying Creatures

Creatures qualify for this subclass if they are natural hunters, able to move stealthily and attack with deadly ferocity. Slinkers and Lopers are size Large, Medium, or Small. Big cats, ferocious canines, and even quick-footed dinosaurs fit well into this archetype.

Examples. Allosaurus, ambush drake, ankheg, basilisk, black bear, brown bear, carrion crawler, cave bear, constrictor snake, crag cat, crocodile, death dog, deinonychus, dire wolf, displacer beast, giant badger, giant centipede, giant constrictor snake, giant crocodile, giant hyena, giant lizard, giant poisonous snake, giant rat, giant scorpion, giant spider, giant subterranean lizard, giant weasel, giant wolf spider, girallon, grick, guard drake, hell hound, hezrou, hook horror, hyena, jackal, lion, mastiff, owlbear, panther, phase spider, polar bear, poisonous snake, purple wormling, rust monster, saber-toothed tiger, shadow mastiff, steeder, tiger, wolf, yeth hound, young remorhaz

Features

Slinkers and Lopers gain the following features at the levels indicated on the animal class table.

Role Tricks

The Slinker or Loper gains the Attack trick at 1st level.

It later gains Hunt at 4th level, Move at 7th level, Behave at 11th level, and Harry at 15th level.

Jump Back

At 1st level, Slinkers and Lopers learn to better utilize hit-and-run tactics, leaping in for a powerful attack and jumping back before the enemy can respond.

When the Slinker or Loper attacks with the Attack or Multiattack action on its own turn, any attacked creatures' opportunity attacks against the animal have disadvantage for the rest of that turn.

Stealthy Hunter

A 3rd-level Slinker or Loper becomes adept at observing and anticipating its target's field of vision. The animal exploits this by avoiding the places its prey tends to look, staying behind the target or staying above or below its line of sight, and remaining still until the target looks away.

With this feature, the animal can select one target. If the Slinker or Loper is hidden from that target, it remains hidden despite moving out of cover. The animal's hidden state relative to its chosen target lasts for the rest of the turn or until the animal takes an action. Other effects or interactions may reveal the animal to its target in this time, but the mere lack of intervening cover will not.

Saving Throw

Upon reaching 5th level, this creature gains proficiency with Dexterity saving throws.

If the Slinker or Loper is already proficient with Dexterity saving throws, it gains proficiency with another saving throw.

Gut Cut

At 5th level, Slinkers and Lopers learn to better disable fleeing foes by inflicting a single, decisive injury. Crushing hamstrings or clavicles can disable targets, as can tearing the gut in a way that disgorges the target's intestines.

When this animal uses the Attack action on its turn, it can attempt a Gut Cut. If the creature can normally attack more than once, it is limited to just one of its normal attacks, modified by this feature.

If a target is damaged by a Gut Cut attack, and it has fewer than half its normal hit points when the attack is resolved, it is also hobbled, a state that halves the creature's speed. A creature loses the hobbled state when it receives at least 1 point of healing.

Extra Attack

After reaching 6th level, the Slinker or Loper can attack twice, instead of once, when it takes the Attack action on its turn.

If the animal has the Multiattack action, it cannot use both Extra Attack and Multiattack on its turn; it can only use one or the other.

Hunting Speed

Upon reaching 9th level, the slinker or loper can utilize bursts of speed to run down prey in intermittent sprints.

Whenever the animal did not do so on its previous turn, it can Dash as a bonus action.

Additionally, the creature can use stealth while traveling, even when moving at a Normal or Fast pace. (See "Activity while Traveling" in the *Player's Handbook*.)

Battle Readiness

After reaching 11th level, Slinkers and Lopers have advantage on initiative rolls.

Legendary Attack

At 14th level, the Slinker or Loper can attack three times, instead of once, when it takes the Attack action on its turn. This feature replaces Extra Attack.

If the animal has the Multiattack action, it cannot use both Legendary Attack and Multiattack on its turn; it can only use one or the other.

Trusted Mount

Many adventurers employ a string of nameless mounts and pack animals over the course of their careers. Rarely do these become pets, particularly because such large creatures might get left behind as adventurers explore small interior areas, cross the sea on ships, and talk their way through the Duke's court. However, there is no reason a diligent handler can't keep Trusted Mounts as pets and allies; these difficulties often make good fodder for stories.

Trusting Friends

Most mounts are accustomed to taking guidance from their handlers, remaining calm and following commands regardless of nearby danger. They are also the most likely of all animals to rely on their handlers for food, directly or by using designated times and areas for grazing. Even independent mounts tend to develop a dependence on their riders. Most characters find this bond of trust to be inspirational and a source of emotional strength.

Hearty Transportation

Animals in this subclass are practiced at hauling burdens across great distances, carrying (or pulling a conveyance containing) party members, their luggage, or both. Trusted Mounts facilitate and quicken travelling scenarios. This is particularly true when the adventurers want to transport a great deal of gear or treasure.

Combat Mobility

In battle, mounts provide speed and power, allowing riders to close long distances and run down weaker foes. The shared turns of a controlled mount and its rider allow useful combinations of actions and movement, and the mount's superior size and strength lets it shove aside smaller creatures with relative ease.

Qualifying Creatures

Creatures in this category must match the requirements for riding laid out in the "Mounted Combat" section of the *Player's Handbook*. Most mounts are quadrupedal, allowing humanoid creatures to ride on their horizontal backs. Additionally, a creature's size matters relevant to its handler's size; a rider can only ride a mount at least one size larger than it. An animal must also have the rider-trained template to qualify. (See Templates, below.)

Many animals listed as Heavy Bulwarks, Slinkers, or Lopers make excellent mounts, able to take this class instead. Even some creatures that might otherwise be Raptors can be ridden; the animal's subclass comes down to the primary use to which its handler puts it.

Examples. Aurochs, axe beak, camel, draft horse, elephant, fragile horse, giant lizard, giant strider, griffon, hippogriff, riding horse, steeder (female), warhorse, warhorse skeleton, yeth hound

Examples (Small Rider Only). Basilisk, death dog, guard drake, hell hound, mastiff, mule, pony, shadow mastiff, steeder (male)

Features

Trusted mounts gain the following features at the levels indicated on the animal class table.

Role Tricks

The Trusted Mount gains the Move trick at 1st level.

It later gains Behave at 4th level, Discriminate at 7th level, Go Home at 11th level, and Perform at 15th level.

Secure in the Saddle

At 1st level, Trusted Mounts learn to better protect their fallen riders. If its rider falls unconscious, the mount will move away from danger in a gentle, steady manner that keeps the unconscious rider from falling out of the saddle. In any turn that the Trusted Mount does not take an action, a rider that is (or becomes) unconscious stays in the saddle with no chance to fall.

Additionally, the animal knows instinctively where to go to get help for the rider, usually moving toward a party member who can provide healing or returning home to its stables if no friendly creatures are in the area.

Longsuffering

By the time it reaches 3rd level, a Trusted Mount is a patient creature, at least when working with its handler. It tolerates all manner of burdens and endures extended periods of work, often outlasting its rider.

The animal has advantage on Constitution saving throws imposed by forced marches. (See "Travel Pace" in chapter 2 of the *Player's Handbook*.) Additionally, the animal reduces its exhaustion by 2 levels instead of 1 when it finishes a long rest, so long as it has also ingested some food and drink.

Conditioning

At 5th-level, a trusted mount becomes conditioned to carrying greater loads. Such creatures must often run under the weight of heavy barding, along with the weight of a heavily armed and armored rider.

When determining its carrying capacity and the weight it can push, drag, or lift, the trusted mount is conditioned to count as one size larger.

Saving Throw

Upon reaching 5th level, the Trusted Mount gains proficiency with Constitution saving throws.

If it is already proficient with Constitution saving throws, it gains proficiency with another saving throw.

Nimble Carry

At 6th level, the mount's movement does not provoke opportunity attacks from any creature the mount or its rider has already attacked during the current turn. The Trusted Mount cannot use this benefit while it is not carrying a rider.

Inexorable

A trusted mount that reaches 9th level is hard to stop on the battlefield, brushing aside grasping foes, crashing through thick foliage, and flowing over rough ground.

The mount no longer spends extra movement to cross difficult terrain. It further gains advantage on checks and saving throws to avoid being slowed or restrained by area-affecting spells and effects that appear in the environment like the *entangle* or *web* spells, or to break free of them.

Against creatures that try to restrain the Trusted Mount or stand in its way, the mount's size is counted as one larger for determining who can grapple it. Its size is also counted as one larger when using or resisting shoving attacks. (See "Grappling" and "Shoving a Creature" in chapter 9 of the *Player's Handbook*.)

This size increase likewise applies when the mount employs the "Overrun" and "Shove Aside" rules from chapter 9 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* if your campaign uses those optional rules.

Protected Carry

Upon reaching 11th level, the Trusted Mount learns to better protect whatever it carries. When the mount takes the Dodge action, its current rider gains the benefits too.

Until the start of the mount's next turn, any attack roll made against its rider has disadvantage if the mount can see the attacker, and the rider makes Dexterity saving throws with advantage. The rider loses this benefit if it dismounts or becomes incapacitated, or if the mount somehow loses the benefit of the Dodge action.

Legendary Stability

At 14th level, the Trusted Mount remains on its feet despite powerful external forces that would topple it. When a spell or effect would trip or knock prone the mount, or move it against its will, the animal has advantage on any check or saving throw to resist.

If an effect successfully knocks prone the mount, it automatically recovers from the prone condition at the start of its turn without using any of its movement. Likewise, if an effect successfully moves the mount against its will, it can reduce its moved distance by up to 10 feet.

Animal Tricks

Animals can learn tricks that allow them to perform specific, specialized functions, discussed here. This section also covers some untrained behaviors.

Animal Training (Downtime Activity)

A character can spend time between adventures training an animal to perform tricks. Animal and handler must work together closely and without serous distractions, sometimes using special tools, assistants, or environments.

To start this downtime activity, a character must be proficient with the Animal Handling skill. Additionally, the creature taught must qualify as an "animal." (The DM must determine it is a trainable specimen using the guidelines of appendix A.)

Each trick requires 5 downtime days of training. An animal can remember no more than 2 tricks per point of its Intelligence rating; if it learns an additional trick beyond this capacity, the handler decides which older trick to replace. (If the war-trained template gives an animal more tricks than it can learn, it can have those tricks but can learn no others, save those provided by class features.) Tricks granted by animal class features or templates cannot be replaced with training.

A handler can use this downtime to train the same trick to multiple animals at once. The maximum number of animals that can benefit from a handler's expended downtime days is equal to the handler's Wisdom modifier (minimum of 1).

Some animals lack the temperament or the physical features needed for some generic actions or tricks. At the DM's discretion, an animal won't be able to learn a trick related to some actions. Alternately, the DM may rule that a trick's result is more limited than normal when performed by a creature with inherent physical or temperamental limitations.

Eliciting Behavior

Eliciting tricks and generic actions from an animal is a process with several limitations.

Only a handler can elicit behavior from an animal. A handler is defined as a creature with whom the animal has an established working relationship; the handler has either trained the animal or the animal has a loyalty score relating to that person. Alternately, the DM can rule that a working relationship exists from some other source. At the Dungeon Master's discretion, a friendly domestic animal may consider any non-hostile creature to be a handler.

Handler's Action

Sometimes a handler must use its action to elicit behavior from an animal, and sometimes it need not.

If more than one of these action-requiring factors apply to a single attempt to elicit an action or trick from an animal, these combine into a single action. For example, as one action, a handler can push an untrained animal to perform a trick that also requires designating a target.

Brief Command. A handler can issue one command on its turn using the "brief utterance and gestures" allowed to it. (See "Other Activities on Your Turn" in chapter 9 of the *Player's Handbook*.) This does not require an action.

Additional Command. Issuing a second command in the same turn requires the handler's action, dedicating this time to additional verbal and visual signals beyond brief utterances and gestures.

If a handler has multiple trained animals nearby, a single command is enough to elicit the trained behavior from any of them the handler desires to affect.

Designating a Target. When the handler designates a target for any trick, like a specific creature to attack or a location to move to, doing so requires the handler's action as part of the command. An animal commanded to perform a trick without a designated target chooses its own target, one the Dungeon Master designates.

Untrained Functions. A handler can attempt to elicit untrained behavior from an animal, either a generic action (Attack, Dash, Disengage, Dodge, or Help), one of the unique actions listed in the animal's stat block, or a trick to which the animal is not trained. In these cases, the handler's action is required; pushing an animal to perform these behaviors requires time to cajole and encourage the animal, and to explain or mimic the desired function.

Multiattack is an exception. It is not one of the generic actions a handler can elicit, nor can an animal use it when acting under a handler's orders. For game-balancing reasons, animals only use their multiattack action when acting independently, outside the presence of a handler.

Communication

To perform as its handler desires, an animal must be able to receive communication from its handler in some form, be it hearing or seeing the handler, or receiving its telepathy. Beyond this bare requirement, the limits of communication add some additional complications.

Targeting Range. To designate a target for a trick, the animal and handler must be within 30 feet of each other and within 30 feet of the target. This is a practical limitation of an animal's ability to understand and track the handler's pointing gestures to find the right target.

If a handler issues a targeted command with telepathy or using a language the animal understands, there is no range limitation because the handler can describe the target with specificity.

Exceptional Communication. When an animal understands a handler's language or can receive the handler's telepathic commands, gestures are not required, even when designating a single target from among many possible targets. Words alone, whether spoken or telepathic, can describe the target without pointing to it.

Exceptional communication does not increase the number of commands a handler can issue each turn, but it does allow commands to be delivered with some subtlety. In the case of a shared language, an eavesdropper might only understand the order by knowing the same language. With telepathy, commands probably aren't detected, much less given a chance to be understood by others.

Additionally, actions, tricks, and targets can be described with exceptional specificity; an animal that receives orders through a mode of exceptional communication is far more likely to manage tasks of great complexity and nuance than other animals could.

Some magic effects, like the *conjure animals* spell and the *figurine of wondrous power* magic item, grant that the produced animal will follow the magic-user's commands. Because the descriptions of such effects imply no difficulty or nuance in the creatures' understanding of those orders, assume that the summoner's commands are issued with the benefit of exceptional communication.

Ability Checks

An ability check is sometimes needed for an animal to perform a directed behavior, the handler's check to elicit the behavior, the animal's check to perform it, or both.

For the animal, generic actions or tricks require whatever rolls are inherent to those activities. Attack rolls, Strength checks, and Dexterity checks are the most common. The Dungeon Master may also require Wisdom checks to find things or Intelligence checks to avoid being fooled by distractions or similar-looking targets.

For the handler, there are four instances a Wisdom (Animal Handling) check is required. These are:

1. When the trick's description calls for a check
2. When the circumstances are risky
3. When the animal is injured
4. When the activity or behavior is untrained or is counter to the animal's instincts

(Any magic effect that implies a handler's total control over an animal, or the animal's automatic obedience, still requires no check under these circumstances.)

Trick Descriptions. If an animal is trained with a trick, the handler normally requires no ability checks to provoke those functions on command. However, some tricks may require a check as listed in their descriptions.

The Dungeon Master may also rule that a particular application of a trick is so complex as to require a check. An untrained animal should not be allowed to attempt such a complex variation, or the handler's check has disadvantage, whichever the DM prefers in that situation.

Risky Circumstances. A "risky" maneuver is a task dangerous to the animal, or one where something important is at risk if the animal fails to behave as the handler desires. The handler's check in this case is to convince the animal to ignore the danger or to get it to perform exactly as needed to avoid trouble.

If the desired activity itself is what's hard, that would normally affect the animal's own ability check to get the task done. However, dangerous or difficult circumstances can affect both the animal's ability to perform *and* its willingness to make the attempt.

In extreme circumstances, the DM may determine that the animal knows its own limitations, or the danger is too great; the animal simply won't attempt the task, regardless of handling rolls.

Animal Injury. Injury and pain trigger an animal's deep-seated instincts for self-preservation. This is a powerful distraction. Most animals flee under such circumstances unless motivated by other factors like starvation or the preservation of their young.

Normally, a check is required at the start of each of the handler's turns to calm the handler's nearby injured animals, whose instincts are to flee or hide. This is not a command; it doesn't count against the limit of commands a handler may issue in a turn.

This check is not required for an animal trained with the Concentrate trick. Similarly, at the Dungeon Master's discretion, a very loyal animal needs no check to remain calm when injured, particularly if defending its handler.

Lack of Training. At the Dungeon Master's discretion, an animal can be "pushed" into a generic action or a trick to which it isn't trained, or to resist an instinctual behavior to which it is inclined.

This pushing sometimes means getting a mount to remain in battle, despite it lacking the war-trained template. In this case, the check is performed at the start of each of the rider's turns. Success prevents the mount from fleeing because of its injuries or proximity to battle, at least until the start of the rider's next turn.

Exceptions

Some trained functions or magic effects allow a handler to elicit behavior in ways that don't implicate these rules.

Animal Class Features. A handler never needs to use an action to elicit a feature of an animal's sidekick class. (This does not apply to the tricks granted by features.)

Animal Spirits. The animal-shaped spirits summoned by spells like *find familiar* and *find steed* and share a telepathic "bond" with the spellcaster, something greater than mere telepathic communication. This bond lets animal and handler share their intentions. The spellcaster needn't use actions or checks to command the spell-made creature, whether eliciting a trained or untrained behavior, designating a target, etc. The animal spirit simply acts as the spellcaster wills it to. Such animals can still learn tricks but generally only benefit from those that train the animal to particular proficiencies.

Beast Masters. The Beast Master's magically bonded animal can learn and use tricks and benefit from other

rules in this supplement. Several of the subclass's features imply special advantages that synergize well with these rules.

The Ranger's Companion feature allows the ranger to control that animal's movement without using an action, even when designating a target area to move to. It also allows the ranger to command generic actions (Attack, Dash, Disengage, Dodge, or Help) without a check and regardless of injury, distraction, or other complications. Because the feature's description assigns no nuance to the animal's understanding of these commands, assume there is an exceptional degree of communication inherent to this magical bond.

Gaining Extra Attack triggers an additional benefit for the Ranger's Companion feature; the Beast Master can make an attack on the same turn that it uses an action to command the animal to take the Attack action.

The Exceptional Training feature lets the ranger use a bonus action (instead of an action) to elicit the Dash, Disengage, Dodge, or Help generic actions, so long as the animal doesn't attack that turn.

Finally, the Bestial Fury feature gives the Beast Master's companion a limited exception to the rule preventing allied animals from using their Multiattack special action.

Controlled Mounts. A controlled mount (usually a creature with the rider-trained template) does not use these rules when the rider commands the animal to use its movement and its limited action options.

Without rider training, an animal is an unwilling mount and cannot be ridden.

Figurines of Wondrous Power. Like the example of Drizzt Do'Urden's pet Guenhwyvar in R.A. Salvatore's famous D&D novels, the living animals such objects turn into can be trained and handled according to the rules in this supplement.

The creature who activates this magic item is the animal's handler for the activation's duration. The animal obeys its handler's spoken commands as a feature of the magic, meaning the handler never needs to attempt a check to command the creature or worry about loyalty.

Training a figurine animal using these downtime rules is difficult, depending on the duration and interval of the item's animal form. At the Dungeon Master's discretion, the item can be activated more frequently for the purpose of training the creature in downtime.

Other Effects. Some additional spells and effects describe their own animal-controlling efforts, which override these rules. For example, the *conjure animals* spell describes a means of controlling its creations, a verbal command without action.

Trick Descriptions

Each trick's description is provided below, arranged alphabetically.

New tricks can be designed with the Dungeon Master's assistance.

Assault

The animal becomes aggressive and attacks with single-minded fury. It targets the closest unfamiliar creature unless the handler designates a specific target.

Once ordered, a predatory or trained animal will use the Attack action to make one attack against its target on each of its turns. It will also use other combat-related actions and special traits whenever it deems these effective. The animal continues to attack until it is gravely injured or until the target is incapacitated.

A trained animal can automatically desist. At the handler's command, it will stop attacking, attack a different target, or begin another trick or behavior. The handler of an untrained animal must convince it to desist with a successful Wisdom (Animal Handling) check.

Aggressive or predatory animals can be convinced to attack without training. However, to use one of the following permutations, the animal needs training in the Attack trick, or the handler an animal must use some mode of exceptional communication.

Disarm. If your game uses the optional Disarm rule in chapter 9 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, the trained animal will use its attack to disarm the target of something it is holding. If the target holds more than one object, the animal will select one at random each time. When the target creature is no longer holding items, the animal stops its attacks until commanded to some other behavior.

Grapple. The trained animal will attempt to grapple an indicated target using the "Grappling" rules in chapter 2 of the *Player's Handbook*. Once a grapple is established, the animal will use the Dodge action, shaking or unbalancing the target or otherwise positioning itself to avoid retaliatory attacks. If the grapple is broken, the animal will attempt to grapple again.

Mark. If your game uses the optional Mark rule in chapter 9 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, the trained animal marks its indicated target with each of its attacks. (An animal will not use mark if it selects its own target.)

Shove. The trained animal will attempt to shove its target using the "Shoving a Creature" rules in chapter 2 of the *Player's Handbook*. It will continue trying to shove the creature down each chance it gets, but it will not attack while the creature remains prone.

Alternately, the handler can instruct the trained animal to shove its target away from the animal, away from the

handler, or toward a target location. The animal will continue trying to shove the creature with each of its attacks until reaching an area where the target cannot be shoved farther or reaching the targeted area. The animal stops its attacks at that point.

Behave

This trick trains an animal to overcome its natural behaviors or inclinations. A docile animal will be steady in combat or other alarming circumstances. An aggressive or dangerous creature will avoid attacking nearby creatures, even when startled or approached by its natural prey.

This behavior does not require a command to elicit. The mere presence of the handler reminds the creature to behave as desired. If the animal is not trained to this trick, the handler must make a Wisdom (Animal Handling) check at the start of each of its turns to keep its handled animals from acting according to their nature. (An animal with the war-trained template needs no handling checks to for it to remain calm and behave in battle.)

An animal trained with this trick will still act aggressively when prompted by its handler.

An animal trained with this trick can additionally benefit from the following specialized uses.

Calm Fear. This calming function may overcome a trained animal's magically induced fear. The handler must use an action and make a Wisdom (Animal Handling) check against the DC normally allowed for the effect or spell that applied the frightened condition. If the animal is trained with this trick, the handler has advantage on this check. If successful, the condition remains, but the animal will not flee, whether compelled to by an additional function of the magic or because the animal's instinctive response would be to flee.

Yield. The trained animal is cooperative when the handler harvests animal byproducts from it. For example, the animal will remain docile while milked by its udders, shorn of its wool, or drained of its venom.

Without this trick, only domestic animals accustomed to yielding their byproducts will allow it without being restrained.

For harvesting venom, training in this trick means the has no chance to accidentally suffer the effects of the animal's venom. (See the "Crafting and Harvesting Poison" rules in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, or "Adventuring Gear" in the *Comprehensive Equipment Manual*.)

Comprehend

This trick trains a smart animal to recognize enough of a particular language to follow commands with ease and specificity. A stag trained to the Comprehend (Elvish) trick, for example, benefits from exceptional communication when commanded in the Elvish language.

If this creature can speak or otherwise produce sufficiently nuanced sounds, it can speak in the same language, conveying basic concepts. The exact limit of what can be conveyed with this limited degree of proficiency is left to the Dungeon Master.

An animal needs an Intelligence rating of 5 or higher to learn this trick. Animals without this training cannot attempt to duplicate this function.

Concentrate

Knowing this trick provides the trained animal with advantage on any ability check or saving throw it makes to avoid mundane distractions that might independently dissuade it from performing a task.

Ignore Injury. An animal's injuries can sometimes impose disadvantage on a handler's Wisdom (Animal Handling) checks or require such checks when no check is normally needed. An animal trained with this trick is treated as uninjured for such purposes. It continues to perform normally to the best of its physical ability.

Defend

The animal defends its handler when a perceived threat attacks or approaches aggressively, using its full range of combat actions and special traits in this defense.

Untrained to this trick, an aggressive, predatory, or particularly loyal animal will perform this behavior automatically. Preventing this requires the Behave trick or requires the handler to make a Wisdom (Animal Handling) check, sometimes repeating this check each turn.

Without a command to attack a designated target, the animal focuses on whichever creature most recently attacked its handler, sometimes switching the subject of its ire several times in a round.

If an animal is trained to this trick, a handler can command it to perform these permutations.

Guard. The handler incites territorial behavior in the trained animal while commanding it to guard an enclosed area. The time it takes to command this trick is the time it takes to familiarize the animal with every corner of the location. The animal thereafter patrols the area and attacks any intruders that are not familiar to it.

Protect. The handler can command the animal to defend a target creature, applying defense behavior as though the new creature was its handler.

Activation. Indicating a target creature or thing requires the handler's action. In the case of guarding an area,

Discriminate

The animal resists the commands of other handlers. It will not perform for anyone except the handler that taught it this trick. Neither will an animal with the rider-trained template be a "willing" mount for any other handler.

If any handler attempts to get the animal to perform a trick or generic action, the animal will resist, even to the point of becoming hostile under some circumstances.

An animal trained to this trick will not normally learn tricks from any other handler. A new handler must first acclimate the animal as though it was wild, a process that removes this trick from the animal's repertoire.

Go Home

The animal knows how to return home, either returning to where it lives or returning to where it received training in this trick, whichever place is closest.

An animal trained to this trick performs it if commanded to do so, or if it is simply left long enough without active handling or the presence of a conscious handler.

Untrained, very few animals are suited to this trick; horses, hounds, and homing pigeons may perform this trick, but not as reliably and with less ability and may not understand how to overcome some challenges related to the task.

Invoking this trick requires the handler's action. The trick isn't often invoked, requiring particular emphasis to get the animal to leave its handler and travel on its own.

Harry

This highly specialized behavior interferes with the target's actions on the battlefield. When commanded to harry, the animal aggressively follows its target but does not attack. It instead tries to keep the target's attention, being loud and threatening, often feinting attacks. The goal is to prevent the target from moving closer to or farther from the handler.

The animal moves adjacent to the target. It attempts to position itself between the target and the animal's handler. Alternately, if the optional flanking rules are used, the animal can be ordered to stand next to the target on the opposite side as the handler, providing the handler with the benefits of flanking.

The animal usually takes the Dodge action but is ready to employ opportunity attacks. If the target completely ignores the harrying animal, and the harrying animal is unwounded, the Dungeon Master may decide that the animal uses the Attack action from time to time (instead of the Dodge action), hoping to get the target's attention.

Once ordered, the animal will use continues until it is gravely injured, the target is incapacitated, or it receives a conflicting order from its handler.

This complex trick mixes a variety of actions and movement, and it requires some judgment on the animal's part. This multifaceted function is not available to untrained animals.

Hunt

At the handler's direction, the animal will use its exceptional senses and physical abilities to follow or acquire its prey.

Untrained, an animal will only hunt for prey to feed itself. Hunting is too complex to otherwise command.

The following versions of this behavior require the animal to be trained with this trick.

Fetch. The trained animal brings a nearby item to its handler, one that it can pick up or drag. If instructed to fetch without an indicated target, the animal brings something like what it was recently told to fetch, or the animal brings something else it finds interesting.

A few animals can perform this behavior without special training, given the right objects to fetch, particularly canines. Most animals are completely unable to grasp the notion of bringing something to a handler.

Forage. The trained animal can use its hunting skills to gather and bring back food, generally small game, without eating it before returning. The animal can perform the foraging, as described under "Activity While Traveling" in chapter 8 of the *Player's Handbook*.

Search. In this version of the trick, the animal searches an area for a specific thing like truffles or a lost key. When issuing the command, the handler must also identify the thing sought, usually displaying an example of it to the animal. The DM determines whether a given display is specific enough. The handler must remain present to keep the animal in the desired search area.

Exceptional communication allows the handler to simply describe what is sought and the area to be searched.

Upon finding what is sought, the animal alerts, using vocalization and body alignment to show the location.

Move

The animal employs its movement at the handler's command, following or returning to the handler, staying in place, or going to a target location the handler indicates.

The handler can command the animal to "heel," coming to the handler and staying in close proximity. This does not count as designating a target since the animal easily recognizes its handler.

The handler can instead order the animal to "stay," staying in place until it receives a conflicting order, gets distracted by something, or simply forgets what it was told to do. Ordering an animal to stay in its current location does not count as designating a target. Alternately, the handler can designate a target location, ordering the animal to move there before it begins staying.

If the animal is commanded to approach or move through a dangerous area, like a burning building, the handler must succeed on a Wisdom (Animal Handling) check unless the animal knows the Behave trick. This check is needed each round to keep the animal on task. It is rolled with disadvantage if the animal suffers an injury from being in the dangerous area.

Animals trained with this trick can move as ordered with the following permutations.

Follow. The animal performs as though ordered to heel, except that it goes to and follows another creature, one that the handler indicates as a target.

Stay Longer. The handler can command a trained animal to stay in a designated spot for an extended period. This allows the handler to go places the animal would not be safe or welcome to follow, like a dangerous dungeon or a busy city. While waiting longer, the animal will not be lured away by minor distractions, nor will it forget the order to stay. The animal stays in place until attacked or it faces a significant distraction like extreme hunger.

An animal proficient in Survival can forage for food without forgetting this command, returning to its hiding spot when fed.

An animal proficient with the Stealth skill will try to hide as it waits, given suitable terrain. If an unfamiliar creature approaches, the animal may try to sneak away, but will later return to that area to resume hiding.

Work. The trained animal pulls or pushes a load to which it is attached. This can be a drawn vehicle, the capstan for a mill or coil pump, a farming plow, a tree that's fallen across the road, or a similar burden.

Without this trick, an animal is not inclined to utilize its full dragging potential by straining against a heavy load or a wagon. Some creatures can be pushed to this behavior, but they require the handler's constant attention and contact (perhaps through tools like reigns).

Perform

The animal performs a variety of complex stunts from an ever-evolving repertoire that the handler manages.

Untrained, an animal will only perform a single action for each command; knowing this trick lets the animal perform entire routines with a single command.

Most of these performances are useful for little more than entertainment. However, an animal can be made to "alert," issuing its natural sounds like a wolf's howl or a lion's roar, which might also serve to signal distant allies.

Scout

An animal will not perform this specialized set of behaviors without training in this trick.

Seek. When commanded, a trained the animal travels in the indicated direction, attempting to pass unnoticed. When it detects a creature, something other than a beast of Medium or smaller size, it returns to its handler and performs an alert, making a noise to indicate it has found an interesting creature. The handler can roughly determine the distance to the scouted creature based on the scouting animal's speed and the time it was gone.

If the scouting animal does not find any qualifying creatures within about 10 minutes, it returns and does not perform the alert.

During its scouting, the animal uses its best judgment and natural capabilities to remain unnoticed. A rat hides under furniture, a wolf slinks through the underbrush, and an eagle flies high overhead. Most animals' perceptive abilities allow them to notice creatures at considerable distances, reducing the chance of the scouting animal being spotted in return.

Stalk. The trained animal follows a designated target at a distance, trying to remain unnoticed. If the target goes somewhere the animal cannot, like an enclosed building, or it stays in place for a long time, like making camp for the night, the animal will return to its handler and can lead the handler to where the animal last observed the target.

Innocuous, high-flying, and Stealth-proficient animals make excellent stalkers.

Track. The trained animal follows a scent or trail of another sort. When commanding an animal to track, the handler must indicate the target tracks to follow or must present an example of the scent to follow (like showing a

previously-worn piece of clothing belonging to a person to be tracked).

The animal attempts to track down the target using its exceptional or supernatural senses, usually smell. Upon finding one such thing, the animal alerts, using vocalization and body alignment to show the subject's location.

If the animal tracks down a hostile creature, combat may ensue naturally, depending on the nature of the two creatures. An animal without this trick can be pushed to track, but it will not automatically desist from any resulting hostilities; the handler must physically restrain the animal or issue another untrained command.

Special Action

A handler can command an animal to perform one of its inherent actions, bonus actions, reactions, or a special trait that it activates in combination with an action or attack. (This does not apply to a normal attack, something invoked by the Attack action or Assault trick.)

When commanded, the animal makes use of the function in the way (and against the target) the handler indicates. If the use is particularly complex, an untrained creature may not be able to perform it as commanded.

If an animal learns this trick, it does so in relation to just one of the functions listed above. Additionally, in the presence of its handler, a trained animal won't normally use the paired action, bonus action, reaction, or special trait, saving it until the handler commands its use.

For example, a giant octopus has an action called "Ink Cloud." A handler might be able to get the animal to activate this action on command. However, if the octopus learns the Special Action (Ink Cloud) trick; the octopus will reliably release its cloud when the handler commands it to, and it will avoid using the cloud around the handler unless so commanded.

If an animal is trained with this trick and the paired effect has any duration the animal must maintain, the handler can likewise command the animal to stop using it.

Controlled Mount. A rider-trained creature with this trick can use the related effect while serving as a controlled mount, doing so at its rider's command. Controlled mounts are normally limited to the Dash, Disengage, or Dodge actions, but this animal can also use the paired effect if the handler commands it. For example, a controlled warhorse mount can use Special Action (Trampling Charge) when ridden, combining it with its hooves natural attack.

A creature with multiple inherent actions or applicable special traits can learn this trick multiple times, each time relevant to a different action or trait.

Spell Action. This trick can train an animal to use the effect of a spell placed upon it instead of one of its own inherent capabilities.

Commanding this trick informs the animal that the spell is now affecting it, prodding it to use the benefits of the spell in whatever way suits it. For example, a raven trained with the Special Action (*invisibility*) trick will know, when commanded, that it is under the effect of the spell and can move about without being seen.

If the handler wants the creature to use an ongoing effect in a particular way, the handler must use an action for the command, even if not designating a target. For example, if a cow trained with the Special Action (*dragon's breath*) trick is affected by that spell, the handler can use its action to command the cow to breathe its fire upon a particular target or area, or just to breathe indiscriminately, lighting up the night sky.

If the handler fails to signal when the spell ends (perhaps the handler becomes unconscious or unexpectedly loses concentration), the animal may waste some effort trying to use the magic even after it has ended.

Trained Resilience

The animal learns to resist effects of different kinds. It gains proficiency with saving throws specific to one ability.

An animal can learn multiple instances of this trick, each time gaining proficiency with a different saving throw.

Use Item

The animal learns to use or activate a specific item in a specific way, sometimes applying it to an indicated target. When commanded to this trick, the animal uses the item the handler indicates as its target, uses the item it is carrying, or goes to the nearby item it is accustomed to activating (if the animal knows where it is).

This training applies only to a single item used in a single way, though the animal can use different items that are materially the same. The Dungeon Master regulates the exact use contemplated by this trick, the exactness of the item to be used, and the effects of the use. An animal trained to carry a pouch to a designated area and upend it there could be spreading caltrops or ball bearings to make the area less passable, silver coins to distract a crowd of villagers, or any other effect the "upending pouch" trick might cover. In this case, the DM might decide that a purse or other small bag qualifies as a "pouch"; the item used doesn't need to be a perfect match.

The item must be one that the trained animal can reasonably manipulate given its physical features. Beyond this, the Dungeon Master must regulate this trick by comparing the item's complexity against the animal's Intelligence rating.

For example, an ape has both the manual dexterity and the intellect required to use a tinderbox to light torches, kindling piles, or other targets indicated by the handler. Similarly, a bear might learn to pull open a hunting trap with its paws, thus resetting the trap, but it probably lacks the physical ability to tie the trap's lead chain to something or stake it into the ground.

In game terms, this trick allows an animal to interact with an object in a way that constitutes the Use an Object action (or the Help action if assisting another user of the item). Alternately, it teaches the animal to use an item if the effect is passive or ongoing in a way that wouldn't normally require a single action.

An animal can learn multiple instances of this trick, each time gaining a trick related to a new item or a new function of an item.

Untrained, an animal cannot use an item other than to wear or carry it. If the item is magic, it likewise gains no benefits beyond the worn or used effect.

Use Magic Item. If the item the animal is trained to use is a magic item, this trick requires the animal that be physically able to activate it. For example, a chimpanzee can push a button on the item and a parrot can speak a command word it has been conditioned say. (See chapter 3 for a discussion of which magic items animals can activate and how.)

Once the item is activated, the animal also understands how to aim it or make use of its resulting effect. For example, an animal trained in the Use Item (*ring of water walking*) trick will activate the item when commanded to use this trick, and will understand that it can then run on water; something it wouldn't normally attempt to do.

Use Skill

The animal gains proficiency with one of these skills: Acrobatics, Athletics, Insight, Intimidation, Perception, Performance, Sleight of Hand, Stealth, or Survival. The animal naturally uses the benefits of this skill in any scenario it would apply in.

Animals are limited to the functions of skills they can realistically utilize according to their innate senses, their degree of intellect, and their physical capabilities.

An animal can learn multiple instances of this trick, each time gaining proficiency with a different skill from the list.

Wear Armor

The animal is conditioned to wear armor. It gains proficiency with all types of barding that are designed to fit an animal of its type and size.

Without this trick, an animal wearing barding has the penalties of wearing armor without proficiency. It has disadvantage on Dexterity- and Strength-related ability checks, saving throws, and attack rolls, and it can't cast spells (presuming it could cast spells to begin with).

Animal Templates

Templates modify creatures' stat blocks to represent their special training, natural abilities, or supernatural origin.

Each template affects the creature's adjusted challenge rating as indicated.

Trained Templates

These templates represent the culmination of specialized training methods. Each template discusses its potential "trainability" in the context of the Animal Training downtime rules.

Rider-Trained

Template Rating: +0 CR

This template can be trained to an animal with physical features suitable for riding. Most Large and Medium mounts are quadrupeds with horizontal backs suitable for saddling and riding by humanoids.

Rider-trained creatures serve as mounts and pack animals, bearing saddles and riders without complaint. Because their handlers usually ride, putting them outside the animal's line of sight, rider-trained creatures learn to receive commands through touch.

In combat, touch-based control means the rider of a controlled mount can command it to move about as indicated and to take the Dash, Dodge, or Disengage action, all without counting against the maximum number of commands a handler can issue in the turn. For additional guidance on riding mounts in combat, see chapter 2.

Untrained creatures cannot be controlled as mounts, even with Wisdom (Animal Handling) checks; they will buck, roll, or otherwise try to dislodge a rider unless controlled by magic.

For example, horses are trained to jump obstacles at the rider's direction but getting one to jump a large barrier or gap is difficult, requiring a check.

Adjustments. A rider-trained animal knows the Wear Armor Trick, which cannot be replaced by training.

Trainability. An animal can be trained to this template by a handler proficient in the Animal Handling Skill. This requires a number of downtime days equal to one-fifth of the animal's base value, minimum of 1.

The creatures on the Mounts table in chapter 4 of this book already have this template; to purchase one without rider training, halve its listed gp cost. Likewise, to buy a rider-trained creature *not* on the Mounts table, double its gp cost. (See chapter 4 for tables with base animal costs.)

War-Trained

Template Rating: +1 CR

A creature with this template has endured training from a young age, giving it the temperament and training to fight on the battlefield. While other creatures may learn tricks to fight on command, the war-trained animal is in every way suited to this task, ready to strike on command and undaunted by the smell of blood and the clash of arms.

War-trained creatures are not inclined to flee combat. They will stay calm under these conditions without the requisite handling checks that other creatures need.

If a war-trained animal's handler falls in battle, the creature will linger nearby and defend the handler until it is calmed with a Wisdom (Animal Handling) check.

If a war-trained animal also has the rider-trained template, it is more affective when ridden in combat. Unlike other controlled mounts, it can take the Attack action on its turn, though it cannot make more than a single attack as part of this action.

Adjustments. War-trained creatures gain 1 Hit Die, a bonus of +2 to Strength and Dexterity, a bonus of +1 to Constitution and Wisdom, and the two special traits described here:

> ***Slam.*** If this creature moves at least 20 feet toward a target and then hits it with one of its natural attacks on the same turn, the target must succeed on a Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. The DC is 10 + the creature's Strength modifier. If the target is knocked prone, the creature can repeat the same natural attack against that target as a bonus action. This trait does not work on targets that are the creature's Size or larger.

Tricks Known. The animal knows the Assault, Concentrate, Defend, Special Action (Slam), and Wear Armor tricks. These tricks cannot be replaced with training.

Trainability. Training this template requires extensive conditioning as the creature grows, a timespan probably beyond the scope of a regular campaign. Training must begin when the animal is a juvenile and the benefits do not appear until the animal reaches adulthood.

The actual training time for this template is a number of days equal to *double* the animal's base gp value, to a minimum of 10 days.

For example, an elephant's base untrained value is 100 gp. A war elephant therefore requires 200 downtime days to train and condition, a process ideally begun just before the animal finishes growing into an adult. (Another 20 days would be required to teach the war elephant to carry a rider and accept commands through touch, combining war-trained with the rider-trained template.)

Warhorses. A warhorse cannot benefit from adding the war-trained (or rider-trained) role because its stat block already reflects the benefits, illustrating the difference between a "riding horse" and a "warhorse." (The ubiquity of equine training methods slightly diminishes the overall cost of this animal and its combined roles.)

Add tricks and functions of the war-trained and rider-trained templates to the warhorse stat block to bring it in line with the new rules of this supplement. These benefits are already implied in the animal's description. (Note that the warhorse's Trampling Charge special trait is simply Slam by another name.)

Natural Templates

These templates represent naturally occurring effects.

Dire Animal

Template Rating: +2 CR

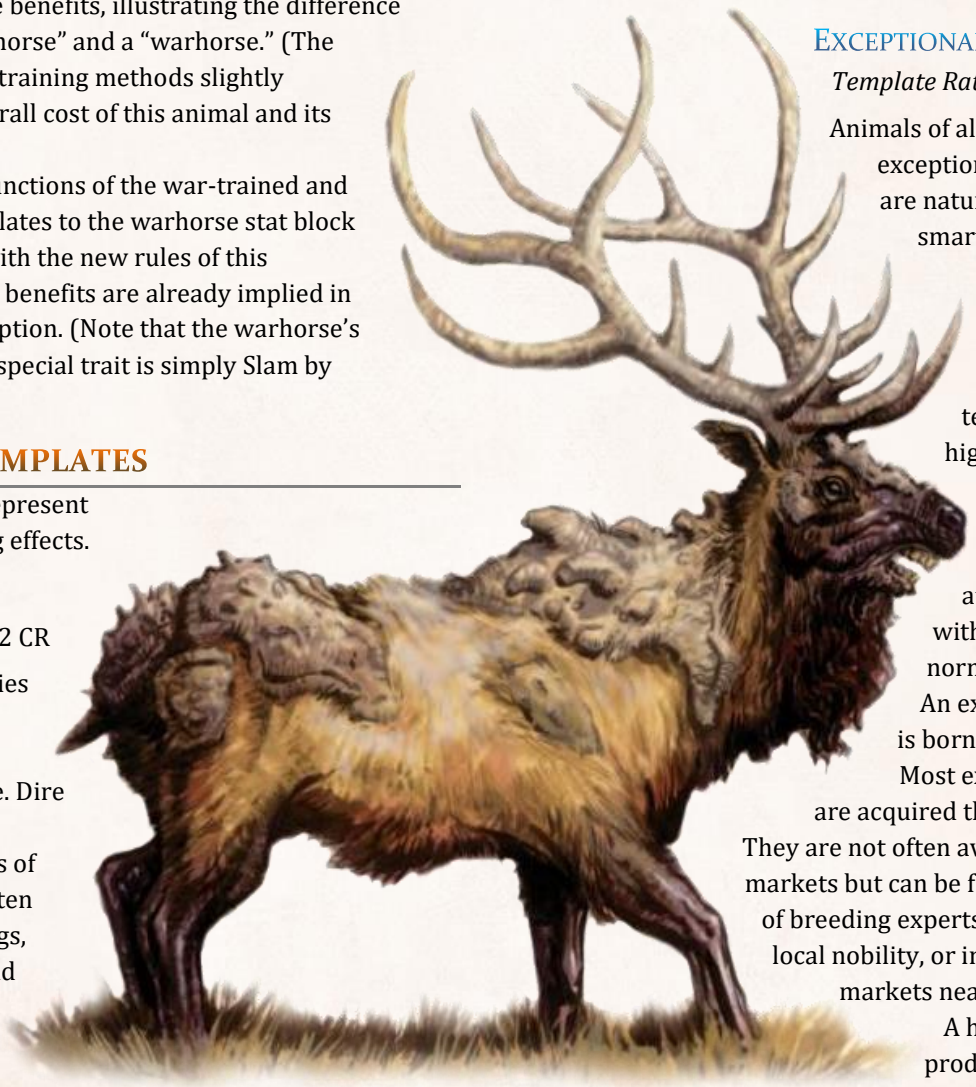
This template applies only to predatory animals with the beast creature type. Dire animals are large, aggressive versions of natural animals, often with elongated fangs, toughened hide, and boney spurs along the spine and shoulders. Dire animals are found in the same habitats as their normal versions, but typically reside much farther from civilization.

Where official sources provide stat blocks for dire animals, such as the dire wolf, use those. Otherwise, make the following changes to a normal version of the animal.

Adjustments. Dire animals are one size category larger than normal versions, which correspondingly increases the size of their hit dice. When a Tiny animal is converted to a Small dire animal, its normal d4 hit die size becomes d6. Likewise, a d6 becomes d8 (Medium), d8 becomes d10 (Large), d10 becomes d12 (Huge), and d12 becomes d20 (Gargantuan).

Dire animals also gain 3 additional hit dice, a +4 bonus to Strength, and a +2 bonus to Constitution. If the creature's AC is derived from natural armor, increase that value by 1. If not, it can now use natural armor for an AC value of 11 + its Dexterity modifier.

Additionally, the size of all damage dice for the animal's natural attacks increase by one size (see the die size progression above).



Exceptional Specimen

Template Rating: +0 CR

Animals of all types may be exceptional specimens. These are naturally heartier, smarter, and abler versions of their types, making them better suited to an adventuring life. This template reflects the high genetic potential of animals, referring to creatures with remarkable attributes that are still within the range of normal for their species. An exceptional specimen is born with this template. Most exceptional specimens are acquired through purchase. They are not often available in common markets but can be found in the kennels of breeding experts, the stables of the local nobility, or in other specialized markets near large cities. A handler may also produce exceptional

specimens by breeding stock. A character proficient with the Animal Handling skill can acquire an exceptional offspring by carefully selecting and breeding two generations of normal animals. Alternately, only a single generation is required if both parents are themselves exceptional specimens.

Exceptional creatures can also be encountered in the wild, but this is rare. Without purposeful breeding, chance mating among animals creates offspring suited to their environments, but rarely exceptional in the way that player characters find interesting.

Adjustments. Exceptional specimens gain a +1 bonus to Intelligence (to a maximum of 4 Intelligence), and a +2 bonus to each of Charisma and Wisdom. Exceptional specimens also gain a +2 bonus to their maximum hit points for each hit die.

Fragile Specimen

Template Rating: -1 CR

A fragile specimen is one in poor condition, either old, permanently injured, or otherwise undesirable. In many cases, the animal worked all its best days and was retired because its ailing body could no longer meet peak performance standards. Many fragile specimens are prone to sleeping for long periods.

Adjustments. Fragile specimens apply a -2 penalty to the Strength, Dexterity, and Charisma scores of their base creature stat blocks, and a -1 penalty to their Constitution and Charisma scores. The speeds of their movement types are reduced by 10 each, to minimum speeds of 10, and they gain the unreliable and unstable special traits:

Unreliable. Apply disadvantage to any Wisdom (Animal Handling) check to push the animal into tricks or difficult maneuvers, or to control it in battle in the case of a mount.

Unstable. This animal gains 1 exhaustion level for each hour of a forced march; this is additional to any exhaustion from failing the related Constitution check.

Because this template typically applies in the case of advanced age, it is a hard one to remove. Rare magic (the kind that player characters normally don't wield) or deific blessing can extend the life of an animal, reversing the aging, soul-draining curse, or permanent injury that caused this template.

Juvenile Specimen

Template Rating: -1 CR

Older than an infant of its species, the juvenile specimen is in the growth stage prior to adulthood. Alternately, it is a "miniature" or "teacup" breed that will never grow larger.

Adjustments. Juvenile specimens are one size category smaller than normal versions, which correspondingly decreases the size of their hit dice. When a Gargantuan creature is converted to a Huge juvenile, its normal d20 hit die size becomes d12. Likewise, a d12 becomes d10 (Large), d10 becomes d8 (Medium), d8 becomes d6 (Small), and d6 becomes d4 (Tiny).

Juveniles also lose half of their hit dice, rounding up the remainder. They have a -4 penalty to Strength, and a -2 penalty to Constitution and Wisdom. They also have a -1 penalty to Intelligence. The size of all damage dice for the animal's natural attacks decreases by one size (see the hit dice sizes above for die progression).

The Dungeon Master determines the time it takes for this creature to mature, losing this template.

Reluctant Creature

Template Rating: +0 CR

This animal is naturally disinclined to work with others. Despite training, the reluctant creature resists its conditioning and avoids cooperating with a handler. Such animals will often comply when nothing is at stake but will ignore handling in battle or in other stressful situations. An animal with this template is not very useful or easy to bring along on adventures.

There is no formula to remove the template; it often comes down to the creature's very personal idiosyncrasies. Sometimes, a previously cooperative creature gains this template after experiencing strife; perhaps the animal believes the handler stole its cubs or (if the optional loyalty rules are used) the animal's loyalty drops to 0.

The DM can also use this template can also enforce the challenge rating requirements discussed in appendix A; if the characters manage to acquire an animal that the DM did not intend for them to get, one whose CR violates those guidelines, this template may apply until the characters reach a sufficient level to gain the animal's respect.

Adjustments. A creature with this template has the reluctant special trait.

> ***Reluctant.*** Although it can be trained, this animal will not willingly use its tricks or traits in stressful or risky scenarios like combat. Additionally, any Wisdom (Animal Handling) checks to affect the creature are made with disadvantage.

Supernatural Templates

These templates express an animal's otherworldly origin or an exceptionally potent magic affecting the creature.

Awakened Creature

Template Rating: +0 CR

Animals with this template have been the subjects of an *awaken* spell or have been granted true sentience through some other magic effect. Awakened creatures often appear as solitary animals, neither fitting among humanoids, nor their kind. They sometimes try to fit in with adventuring parties, mixing the companionship of animals with the wit and insight of fully intelligent beings.

Only creatures with Intelligence scores below 4 (and plants) can be awakened. Subjects with this template must also be smaller than Gargantuan size.

Adjustments. The creature's Intelligence rating is 10 and it knows and can speak a single language as a byproduct of the magic that awakened it. If this template is derived from the *awaken* spell, the creature is charmed by the caster until 30 days after the casting.

Awakened plants use the awakened shrub or awakened tree stat block. Alternately, they may use a different creature stat block, with its type altered to "plant," representing a plant grown and shaped to approximate that creature in a topiary form.

Fey Creature

Template Rating: +1 CR

A fey creature comes from the Feywild or is touched by the magic of the fey. It may appear exactly as any other of its kind, or it may be larger, more colorful, or otherwise more illustrious. An owl from the Feywild, for example, may have vermillion eyes and shiny feathers in the colors of a peacock's plumage.

Adjustments. Fey creatures gain a +2 bonus to Wisdom and Charisma. It is immune to the charmed condition and it can understand the Sylvan language, though it cannot speak it unless its physical features allow for speech.

A fey creature also has some form of passive or defensive benefit like camouflage (+10 bonus to Dexterity (Stealth) checks), wings (fly speed equal to its normal speed), or some other benefit the Dungeon Master designs. Inspiration for these effects can be found on the Monster Feature table under "Creating a Monster Stat Block" in chapter 9 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Legendary Creature

Template Rating: +2 CR

A legendary creature is one with traits far exceeding those of normal animals. A legendary creature may appear exactly as any other of its kind, or it may be larger, more colorful, or otherwise more illustrious.

Adjustments. Legendary creatures gain 5 additional hit dice, a +4 bonus to Strength and Constitution, and a +2 bonus to Armor Class. They also gain a +3 bonus to Intelligence, to a maximum rating of 6.

True to its title, a legendary creature gains the Legendary Resistance (2/Day) special trait; if it fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Each legendary creature also either increases its size by one category (including an accompanying shift in hit die size), or it has a single type of damage resistance, or it has an innate power. An innate power is a charm that renews its limited usage every 10 days, a blessing, or an epic boon. The creature's physical appearance somehow changes to reflect this legendary power, sometimes subtly, sometimes dramatically.

Shadow Creature

Template Rating: +1 CR

The shadow creature template comes from the shadow dragon, a templated creature in the *Monster Manual*. The provisions here are informed by the difference between this templated creature and the base dragon's stat block.

Shadow creatures are born in the Shadowfell or spend years there. Their bodies are infused with the energies of that plane, darkening to take on a charcoal hue. These animals find sunlight abhorrent.

Adjustments. A creature with this template has resistance to necrotic damage. Its proficiency bonus for Stealth is doubled and it can attempt to hide as a bonus action while in areas of dim light or darkness.

Shadow creatures gain darkvision with a range 120 ft., allowing them to better operate in darkness. While in sunlight, they have disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Planar Creature

Template Rating: +1 CR

Planar creatures are normal animals that come from an outer plane of existence. Their physical features often reflect their plane of origin; any close inspection of the creature will reveal its otherworldly nature.

For example, a stag from the Plane of Fire may have smoky breath and dark red fur. A hound from Elysium may have angelic feathered wings.

Creatures of this type are highly varied in their capabilities. They have such benefits as the Dungeon Master determines, using the guidelines below.

Adjustments. By default, a planar creature gains 2 additional hit dice. It has resistance to damage of one type normally associated with its home plane and one of its innate melee attacks inflicts one die of additional damage of the same type. The size of the damage die is the same as the creature's hit die size. For example, a horse from the Plane of Air has resistance to lightning damage and inflicts 1d10 additional lightning damage with a successful attack of its hooves.

A planar creature may replace its damage bonus with an aggressive charm like *natural weapon enhancement* (+1 magical bonus to attack and damage rolls) or some other offensive trait.

Undead Creature

Template Rating: +1 CR

A creature with the undead creature template is a corporeal, unliving version of itself, like a zombie. The physical appearance of a creature with this template changes to reflect its undead nature; its skin becomes sallow, its fur patchy, or its scales appear cracked and brittle. The undead animal companion takes on a faint odor of decay or formaldehyde.

Adjustments. A creature with this template changes its type to undead and it gains darkvision to 60 feet, if it didn't already have darkvision. The affected animal no longer requires air, food, drink, or sleep, and it no longer ages. It further gains immunity to poison damage and the poisoned condition.

The undead creature also gains either a 1-die bonus of necrotic damage to one of its natural attacks (the size of the die is the size of the creature's hit dice), or it gains the Undead Fortitude special trait described below.

> ***Undead Fortitude.*** If damage reduces the creature to 0 hit points, it makes a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless damage from the attack is radiant or the attack is a critical hit. On a success, the creature drops to 1 hit point instead.

Personalizing Animals

Animals are much more than their stat blocks, class levels, and templates. Like player characters, each animal is unique. Players may particularly appreciate the nuances that separate animals from one another. The following options for characteristics and loyalty scores help animals achieve these differences.

Characteristics

Characteristics are simple, short statements that summarize a creature's personality, behavior, and other colorful aspects that might be informative as to its actions, demeanor, and appearance.

Animals only get characteristics if they are important or interesting enough to capture the players' concern and be treated as pets or party members. The more animals the party keeps, the fewer characteristics each creature should have; portraying multiple animals requires too much of the DM's time to parse so many characteristics.

Animal's Physical Oddity (Basic)

d8	Physical Oddity
1	***Missing Toe.*** The creature is missing one of the digits on one of its limbs.
2	***Scar.*** The animal bears the mark of a terrible wound or of an abusive prior owner.
3	***Lean.*** This creature has noticeably longer limbs and a leaner frame than others of its kind.
4	***Squat.*** The animal has a broad, bulky frame and lower profile than others of its kind.
5	***Colorful.*** This creature has a bit of plumage, tuft of fur, or cluster of scales that is bright and incongruous with its normal coloration.
6	***Bright Eyes.*** The animal has eyes that are brightly colored, differently colored, or otherwise unique to such creatures.
7	***Marked.*** This animal has a prominent birthmark, an odd (but remarkable) pattern of fur, or has coloration different from others.
8	***Missing Eye.*** The creature has a missing eye, or one eye is less functional, deformed or ruined by scarring or cataracts.
9	***Extra Feature.*** The animal has a natural feature that doesn't belong to creatures of that type, like fangs on a horse, antlers on a fox, or hooves on a hound.
10	***Misshapen.*** Part of the creature's body is shaped oddly, perhaps resembling another creature, like a cat with humanoid ears on the sides of its head.

Animal's Behavioral Oddity (Basic)

d8	Behavioral Oddity
1	***Gluttonous.*** The animal can't be left alone near sources of food, lest it consume so much as to become lethargic from consumption. It will even eat food that is very unhealthy for it.
2	***Stubborn.*** The animal doesn't like to be told what to do and occasionally resists instruction. It often expects to be given treats or praise when it behaves as ordered.
3	***Aggressive.*** The animal doesn't get along well with others, particularly other animals. It barks at strangers or nips at unwary persons nearby.
4	***Single-Minded.*** The animal tends to focus on one thing to the exclusion of all else. Its attention is often hard to regain or switch to another focus.
5	***Lazy.*** When not stressed, particularly after having eaten, the animal wants to sleep. Absent some danger, the creature is hard to wake or move.
6	***Distracted.*** The animal can't stay on task for very long; it's easily distracted by interesting things nearby. The animal still works well under constant supervision.
7	***Boundaryless.*** The animal likes to be in other creatures' spaces, leaning against them, getting underfoot, or otherwise being in firm contact.
8	***Skittish.*** The animal fears things it shouldn't, either something particular like water, or the animal assumes threats to be greater than they are.

Animal's Personality Traits (Basic)

d8	Personality Trait
1	I am indomitable, unchained.
2	I fight for my allies, regardless of the threat.
3	Whenever I come to a new place, I must investigate every corner of it.
4	I am casually aloof, uninterested in socializing… until I demand attention.
5	I am ever vigilant as a gift to my allies.
6	I make my animal noises when my handlers are talking, as if to participate in conversation.
7	I like to pretend I'm less intelligent so I can gain an advantage.
8	I will work for my friends, tirelessly, far beyond the point of exhaustion.
9	I love affection and accept petting from anyone!
10	I like to toy with my food and I often leave a trail of it through the camp.

Animal's Ideal (Advanced)

d8	Ideal
1	***Curiosity.*** I value knowledge, no matter how simple or complex, and seek after it incessantly. (Neutral)
2	***Friendship.*** I hold true my bonds of friendship, not merely for duty or honor. (Good)
3	***Loyalty.*** I am loyal and obedient; the strength of my bond strengthens my master's protection of me. (Lawful)
4	***Greed.*** I want wealth and luxury above all else. My allies help me acquire it. (Evil)
5	***Freedom.*** I will not be yoked; I must run as free and as far as I want. (Chaotic)
6	***Beauty.*** I delight in aesthetics: music, glorious, and the wonder of natural vistas. (Neutral)
7	***Community.*** We are stronger together, united in community. (Lawful)
8	***Might.*** I hunger for greater strength, to protect my allies and dominate my enemies. (Chaotic)
9	***Cruelty.*** I am kind to my allies, but I delight in torturing and toying with my enemies. (Evil)
10	***Heroism.*** I exist to right wrongs, stop the spread of evil, protect the weak, and ease suffering. (Good)

Animal's Bond (Advanced)

d8	Bond
1	I seek to protect and preserve others of my kind.
2	I would lay down my life for the people I travel with.
3	I cannot forget the cruelty visited upon me; revenge is what drives me.
4	I escaped from captors that were intent on selling me. Now I have found a good home.
5	I'm on the run from other creatures of my kind. I betrayed one of my pack; they know my smell as belonging to a traitor.
6	I will never forget how I was defeated in battle by a rival of my own kind.
7	I will always remember my first handler.
8	Nothing is more important than seeing that my allies are fed and safely sheltered.

The DM can select characteristics from these tables or determine them with die rolls. The entries on these tables are examples; the Dungeon Master should feel free to make up new characteristics or use those listed with the sample animals in appendix C.

Basic and Advanced Characteristics

Basic characteristics tend to be appropriate to animals of all kinds regardless of their Intelligence ratings. Basic characteristics include *personality traits*, *behavioral oddities*, and *physical oddities*.

Advanced characteristics are reserved for creatures with Intelligence ratings of 5 and above. These are *bonds* and *ideals*, which require a degree of sentience and self-awareness not present in most animals.

Variant: Loyalty Rating

The loyalty mechanics in this chapter are adapted to suit animals. These rules can help determine how far an animal will go to protect its handler or, in some cases, the other members of the party. An animal that is abused or ignored is likely to fail to perform when called upon and might even run away from the handler. Conversely, an animal that is treated well is far more likely to lay down its life for a handler than an intelligent humanoid ally would be.

This optional rule comes from the "NPC Party Members" section of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, altered to reflect systems appropriate to animal companions. Any creature with an Intelligence rating of 7 or higher instead uses the normal loyalty mechanics in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Whether or not your game uses the standard loyalty rules in the DMG, the DM may choose to include this animal-specific variation or ignore it and represent loyalty with roleplaying rather than numbers.

Loyalty Score

An animal's loyalty is represented by a numeric score that the Dungeon Master tracks secretly. It falls within a range of 0 to 20, with 0 being a total lack of loyalty and 20 representing peak devotion.

An animal has a maximum loyalty rating equal to its handler's Wisdom score. Because this score is relative to a handler, each animal can have multiple loyalty scores for the Dungeon Master to track.

A domestic animal's starting loyalty score when acquired is equal to half its maximum rating. A purchased domestic animal takes about seven days to come into this loyalty score as it gets accustomed to a new owner. A wild or feral animal has a loyalty score of 0 until acclimated, at which point its loyalty shifts to half its maximum rating.

In rare circumstances, an animal may have a loyalty score to the party or a group of handlers. This is more likely when the animal has pack instincts and sees party members as belonging to the handler's pack. It also occurs when a creature has received training from multiple handlers together. The Dungeon Master must be prepared to arbitrate any complications related to an animal having

group loyalty scores, particularly if the animal must choose a preference when commanded to perform oppositional tasks by different masters.

Gaining Loyalty

Unlike intelligent characters, an animal's loyalty score is not improved by specific incidents of assistance. Instead, an animal's loyalty score to its handler increases through lengthy bonding activities.

A "loyalty gaining event" increases the animal's loyalty rating by 1d4. Although an animal can have separate loyalty ratings to different individuals, no individual loyalty score can ever rise above its maximum. If the handler's Wisdom score is ever permanently reduced, an animal's loyalty score will drop accordingly if it would otherwise exceed that new maximum.

The two common methods of gaining an animal's loyalty include companionship and training.

Companionship. Animals very willingly become loyal to the handlers who coexist with them, requiring no special outlays of effort to achieve. They form instinctive social bonds and quickly come to consider even humanoids to be part of their packs or families. Roll to increase an animal's loyalty once for each 30-day period of shared proximity with the handler, until the animal reaches its maximum rating with that handler.

Training. A handler who trains an animal in a trick or role has time to play with an animal and interact continuously, triggering a loyalty-gaining roll. Even if the creature has reached its maximum number of tricks, 5 downtime days spent devoted to socializing with the animal in relative isolation also constitutes a loyalty gaining event.

Losing Loyalty

Animals lose loyalty in three ways, isolation, fearful encounters, and dramatic injury. A "loyalty losing event" reduces the animal's loyalty rating by 1d4. An animal never rolls for loyalty loss more than once per day, regardless of the number of events that compel such rolls.

Isolation. If an animal is ever left alone or with caretakers for an extended period, it may lose loyalty to its handler, replacing it with instinctive self-sufficiency or loyalty to another handler. This is particularly true of animals with short memories.

For every full 30 days of separation, roll for a reduction of the animal's loyalty. Even a few hours of companionship between adventures is enough to restart the clock on this 30-day period.

Fear. Frightening circumstances can reduce an animal's loyalty, bringing to the fore its feralizing instincts for self-preservation. For example, forcing an animal to run through a burning building is likely to impact the animal's loyalty, particularly if there is prolonged exposure to a significant danger.

Fortunately for their handlers, many animals will be completely oblivious to danger. For example, a horse ridden on a narrow mountain ledge knows only that getting close to the edge may precipitate a dangerous fall; it doesn't know the roadway could also crumble away and that merely being on that ledge is dangerous. Moreover, unless the horse gets a good look over the side, it may not even understand that the drop could be a deadly one.

Most animals can be calmed in naturally frightening circumstances. A successful Wisdom (Animal Handling) check calms a domestic animal or trained mount, preventing it from suffering fear to a degree that would impact loyalty. Some animals can be easily blinkered or hooded to obscure the danger, like horses and hawks, giving advantage on this check.

At the Dungeon Master's discretion, this same check can calm an animal that suffers the frightened condition from magic. A result that equals or exceeds the saving throw for the effect that applied the condition won't remove it but attending to the animal this way will prevent a roll for reduced loyalty.

Magical Loyalty

If your campaign uses these optional Loyalty rules for animals, an animal with the charmed condition gains a temporary loyalty score of 10 if it otherwise has no loyalty score relative to the spellcaster or if it has a lower loyalty score.

Injury. If a handler inflicts damage or severe pain on an animal, the handler will usually lose loyalty. Unfortunately, some animals are not smart enough to attribute the injury to the handler, depending on the circumstances.

Additionally, if an animal is brought to 0 hit points, its proximity to death will trigger its self-preservation instincts causing a loyalty loss.

Effects of Loyalty

A creature reduced to 0 loyalty will try to run away from the handler at its first opportunity, returning to a previous owner or trying to live wild. Animals will be completely uncooperative and Wisdom (Animal Handling) checks to affect the creature automatically fail. This state may also be reflected by adding the *reluctant creature* template found later in this chapter. If the handler insists on significant interactions, the animal with 0 loyalty may react violently, barking, biting, or kicking. A predator is more likely to be aggressive in this violence, attacking a former handler when it simply passes by.

To keep the animal, the handler must confine it somehow. Increasing the animal's loyalty is simply a matter of keeping the animal, feeding it, and providing it with proximate companionship until enough time passes for the animal's natural inclinations toward social bonding to take over. In game terms, this means re-acclimating the animal, a process that takes more time given the creature's state of captivity. Once re-acclimated, the animal returns to 1 loyalty and can be interacted with as normal. At the DM's discretion, spells can help handler and animal interact during this time, easing this period of tension.

An animal with a loyalty score of 10 or higher completely trusts its handler and needs little urging to perform even in dangerous circumstances. The animal will not typically perform suicidal acts, but it trusts the handler's commands if the danger is uncertain. Any Wisdom (Animal Handling) check to calm such a loyal animal or to coax it into dangerous circumstances is rolled with advantage. For example, a horse with 10 loyalty might run down a sheer mountainside or into a burning forest at its rider's command.

Additionally, at 10 or higher loyalty, an animal performs normal tasks with greater eagerness for its handler. This enhances the creature's attention span when ordered to perform a trick over a long period. This can manifest in simple things like sitting in place for longer after given a command to stay or hunting down a fleeing foe for longer before losing interest and returning to the party. The Dungeon Master will decide the exact effect and duration of this enhanced attention span on a case-by-case basis.

An animal with 10 loyalty may also fight to the death to defend its handler, even if not trained to do so with a trick. This usually applies to predator-type creatures like canines, not skittish creatures like horses or deer.

Handling Animals
Dean Spencer

Chapter 2: Handling Animals

Making animals party members necessitates an understanding of how the rules apply to their use. This chapter addresses the fifth edition rules for controlling animals in combat, particularly untangling the thorny topic mounted combat. The chapter concludes with an overview of the various character options that synergize strongly with the use of animals in the campaign.

Animal Handling Skill

This section discusses the basics of handling animals with Wisdom checks; how players get benefits from their animals' training or from their own training with animals. This section covers *named functions*, the four things that the Animal Handling skill says it does, and *new functions*, added rules for pushing animals to perform various actions, whether or not they are trained in the new tricks or roles described in the following section.

Named Functions

For the functions of the Animal Handling skill listed in the *Player's Handbook*, quoted in the sidebar on this page, a check is required unless the DM thinks the task is so easy as to function automatically.

In each of the uses discussed here, the DC for ability checks, and the circumstances of advantage and disadvantage, are left wholly to the Dungeon Master. When in doubt, DC 10 is probably appropriate for targeting trained, tamed, or domestic animals, while DC 15 works on wild or feral animals.

The named functions of Animal Handling are:

1. Intuit intentions of an animal
2. Prevent spooking of a mount
3. Calm a domestic animal
4. Control your mount in a risky maneuver

Narrowly, the skill describes four affectable creature ("animal," "domestic animal," "a mount," and "your mount") and four things a character can do to an animal with the skill ("intuit intentions," "prevent spooking," "calm," and "control in a risky maneuver").

Because this skill is described in only two sentences, we ought not to get hung up on the specificity of these functions. Rather, players and Dungeon Masters should consider the holistic meaning, that a user of this skill can understand and calm animals of various sorts.

> *"**Animal Handling.*** When there is any question whether you can calm down a domesticated animal, keep a mount from getting spooked, or intuit an animal's intentions, the DM might call for a Wisdom (Animal Handling) check. You also make a Wisdom (Animal Handling) check to control your mount when you attempt a risky maneuver."

Targets

The listed targets—mounts, the skill-user's own mount, animals, and domestic animals—are all categories without definition. There is no "animal" or "mount" creature type, nor is there any notation to indicate which animals are domestic. We are left with the plain language of those words, required to apply the logical versions of their everyday definitions.

For purposes of this skill, the *Animal Handlers' Manual* recommends disregarding any special implication of the word "mounts." These are animals too. It's likely that "mounts" was used because those functions are commonly needed in the context of riding, and because six uses of the word "animal" would sound repetitive within the skill's two sentences. Additionally, the distinction between "a mount" and "*your* mount" isn't likely to be intentional; assume that a handler on foot can lead another character's mount through a risky maneuver.

However, where the text differentiates "animals" from "domestic animals," logic shows us a real difference between creatures in the context of this skill. Domestic creatures are acclimated to humanoid races, and therefore easier for humanoids to pacify. Calming wild animals is

understandably harder, a function left to magic or some extraordinary abilities, not this skill.

Functions

The functions of this skill are to intuit the intentions of an animal, to calm it (or prevent it from spooking), and to control it. Again, the *Animal Handlers' Manual* recommends a broad reading of these functions.

Intuit Intentions. Narrowly defined, an animal's intention is the thing it is going to do. The character gets some insight into whether the creature is about to attack, flee, or do something else.

At the Dungeon Master's discretion, this function may also provide the (more interesting) information of *why* the creature has said intention. This information is probably foundational to learning the animal's intention; knowing that a bear intends to attack might be learned from its posture, but also from the visible evidence of its extreme hunger, fear for its nearby young, or having been driven to rage by a festering arrow wound in its back.

Calm Animal. The calming function of this skill should likewise be read broadly. Its only limitation is the application to a "domestic" creature. If there is doubt as to a creature's domesticity, the Dungeon Master must determine ad hoc which species are domestic and which individual wild animals are sufficiently tamed to count as domestic for these purposes.

Calming an animal means defeating its fight-or-flight instincts, regardless of what emotion or impetus is upsetting it. This function can include calming an angry bull whose field you are trying to cross or calming a frightened horse who doesn't want to remain near a burning building. It does not include calming a wild skunk who accidentally wandered into camp or calming an alligator who attacks out of hunger.

Control in a Risky Maneuver. By articulating this function, the rules imply that some maneuvers are riskier than others and that only the risky ones need a check. The tricks presented in chapter 1 follow this reasoning. Handled animals perform most trained behaviors automatically, only requiring a check under difficult circumstances.

Examples of controlling a creature like this include pushing a horse to jump a dangerously large barrier or gap or driving oxen to pull a wagon from the river before the contents are swept away. Both scenarios put something at risk, making the maneuver "risky." If nothing important will change with the animal's failure, the maneuver isn't risky and therefore the Dungeon Master shouldn't call for a check.

Mounted Combat Rules

This section talks about mounted combat. It analyzes the eight paragraphs of the Mounted Combat rules in the *Player's Handbook*, including clarifications and optional rules to add nuance to riding in battle. It further provides useful mounted combat examples.

Qualified Mount (1)

> "A willing creature that is at least one size larger than you and has an appropriate anatomy can serve as a mount using the following rules."

To serve as a mount, a creature has three requirements to meet. It must:

1. Be a willing creature
2. Be at least one size larger than the rider
3. Have appropriate anatomy to be ridden

Willing Creature

Most rider-trained animals that qualify as mounts are willing to be ridden. Absent some quirk of the mount's training or temperament, or some previously developed hostility toward the would-be rider, the mount is willing.

This supplement deals directly with the details of animal behavior, particularly acquiring and befriending animals that have their own feelings and personalities, so it is worth exploring the concept of willingness a bit further.

Under circumstances where a mount would-be frightened or otherwise not calm, the creature may shy away from a rider, making it difficult to mount. A Wisdom (Animal Handling) check may be all that is needed to make the mount willing.

At Intelligence 5 or higher, a mount will make its own decision as to whether it is willing to be ridden, despite training. Such creatures have their own quasi-animal goals, beliefs, and alignments, and might fight off a would-be rider who is at odds with such things.

Variant: Unwilling Mount

It's possible to climb onto an unwilling mount. A Dexterity (Acrobatics) or Strength (Athletics) check may be needed, depending on the animal's shape and its degree of stillness during the attempt. If actively resisting, the mount contests the rider with its own Dexterity (Acrobatics) check.

Once atop an unwilling creature, the would-be rider is not in control of it. The creature might decide to cooperate at that point, or it might simply do as it pleases. Un unwilling mount may try to attack or throw the rider off, or may simply lay prone, automatically dismounting the

rider. If a rider manages to stay on, time in the saddle and a successful Wisdom (Animal Handling) check might bring the animal to a willing stay.

One Size Larger

Dungeons & Dragons uses two factors when determining a creature's capacity to carry things, its size and its Strength.

According to the mounted combat rules, a suitable mount is one whose size exceeds the size of each of its riders by at least one category. Requisite Strength is not an official requirement for mounted combat, but an animal that lacks the carrying capacity for its riders and their gear isn't going to get far. An animal makes a poor mount if rendered immobile or reduced to a 5-foot speed.

A mount's size raises complications when the game uses miniatures on a grid. In these scenarios, the riders effectively occupy some or all the mount's space, despite being smaller. There are no rules for managing this complication in the game's current edition.

Variant: Mounts on Grids

A rider using half of its movement to mount a creature achieves a position where it can perch on the creature's qualifying "mount" anatomy. Thereafter, it can move around atop the mount, given enough space to do so.

The rider of a mount occupies the square at the mount's center. For a Medium mount like a mastiff, this means the creature's only square. For a Huge creature, the central square places the rider in a position that requires a missile weapon (or a weapon with the Reach property) to attack ground-based targets and vice versa.

If the mount's center is an intersection of squares, like a Large-size horse, the rider occupies one of the four squares touching upon that point. In this case, a rider can shift the square it occupies whenever it moves, using 2 feet of movement per square.

Additional riders must be able to fit on the mount's squares and sit as closely to the center as possible.

Variant: Same-Size Mounts

Some mounts can carry a rider of their own size. An adult human or a dwarf might ride a hearty mountain pony. In such cases, the mount's speed drops by 20 feet and it has disadvantage on Strength-, Dexterity-, and Constitution-based rolls, including ability checks, attack rolls, and saving throws.

Creatures with a trait that lets them carry burdens as though they were one size larger can carry a same-size rider without this penalty.

This duplicates the "heavy encumbrance" penalty from the Variant Encumbrance rule. If you use that optional rule, these penalties should not be cumulative.

Appropriate Anatomy

A potential mount must have the right physicality to bear a rider. This usually means the animal's back is horizontal during its movement, as with most quadrupeds ridden by humanoid-shaped creatures.

For a non-humanoid rider, a different shape of mount may be necessary; where the rules require "appropriate anatomy," that anatomy must be considered in the context of what suits the rider's own shape, as well as the shape of an exotic saddle or other adapting harness.

Getting On and Off (2)

> "Once during your move, you can mount a creature that is within 5 feet of you or dismount. Doing so costs an amount of movement equal to half your speed. For example, if your speed is 30 feet, you must spend 15 feet of movement to mount a horse. Therefore, you can't mount it if you don't have 15 feet of movement left or if your speed is 0."

Having found a qualifying mount, a would-be rider can get on and off with some limitation. A rider can mount:

1. If the animal is within 5 feet
2. If the rider did not already mount or dismount a creature this turn
3. If the rider does not have a speed of 0

Once During Your Move

Each character is limited to one instance of mounting or dismounting per round. The activity is performed during the rider's move, something that occurs on the rider's turn.

This restriction prevents some of the less-sensical combinations of mounting, riding, and dismounting in the same turn.

Within 5 Feet

To mount a creature, a rider must be within 5 feet of it. Adjacency is an obvious limitation, but it had to be stated.

By logical inference of this range, dismounting places the rider on the ground within 5 feet of the mount. Unless the shape of a creature reasonably prevents it, the rider should be able to choose which of those spaces within 5 feet to dismount to.

Alternately, the rider could make a standing jump, traveling a distance from the mount related to the rider's strength score. If the mount is Large size, or is flying, this probably means falling damage after the jump.

Speed of 0

The example in this paragraph adds a subtle rule you might have missed.

If your speed is 0, you can't mount or dismount. This officially makes these activities "movement"; mounting and dismounting are not miscellaneous activities that merely cost movement, like standing from a prone position. Otherwise, a rider with speed 0 could spend half movement (also 0) and either mount or dismount an animal in that turn.

Falling and Falling From (3-4)

> "If an effect moves your mount against its will while you're on it, you must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or fall off the mount, landing prone in a space within 5 feet of it. If you're knocked prone while mounted, you must make the same saving throw.
>
> "If your mount is knocked prone, you can use your reaction to dismount it as it falls and land on your feet. Otherwise, you are dismounted and fall prone in a space within 5 feet it."

A rider must succeed on a saving throw or fall from the mount when:

1. Something moves the mount against its will
2. The rider is knocked prone

If the mount is knocked prone, the rider dismounts and can automatically avoid falling prone by using a reaction.

Falling Off

Falling from a mount occurs in one of two ways. The first way is when the rider fails a Dexterity saving throw to remain mounted. This happens in a variety of circumstances. The second way is automatic, when the mount falls prone.

Note that a creature can choose to drop prone "without using any of [its] speed." (See "Movement and Position" in the *Player's Handbook*.) Since being prone causes the rider to make a Dexterity saving throw or fall off, a rider might use this to bypass the restriction on a single mounting or dismounting in a turn, as well as the movement cost to get off the mount. However, this dismounting should probably be considered a fall in the normal sense, for which the rider would suffer 1d6 bludgeoning damage and fall prone.

Although becoming prone requires the rider to make a Dexterity saving throw or fall off, nothing is said of the rider's state if the save is successful, except to avoid a fall. Assume that success allows the rider to remove the prone condition, remaining mounted in a riding posture.

Variant: Saddles Matter

This optional rule has several components.

A rider has disadvantage on the save to remain mounted if the mount isn't wearing a saddle. A rider trained in the Animal Handling skill avoids this penalty, having a better notion of bareback riding.

A military saddle grants advantage to saving throws for a rider to remain in the saddle. This is an optional rule because the military saddle described in the *Player's Handbook* gives advantage to "checks," not saves. Without this rule, military saddles have no effect.

A strap saddle allows the rider to succeed on these saves automatically, so long as the device is fully fastened. If only half the straps are tied (using half the tie-in time), the saddle instead provides advantage to these saving throws. Without any straps tied, it counts as a normal saddle.

Variant: Hanging to the Side

With this variant, a rider can be prone on a mount, either flattened down on the mount's back or hanging alongside it, clinging to the saddle. A rider might risk the saving throw to assume this position for a tactical advantage.

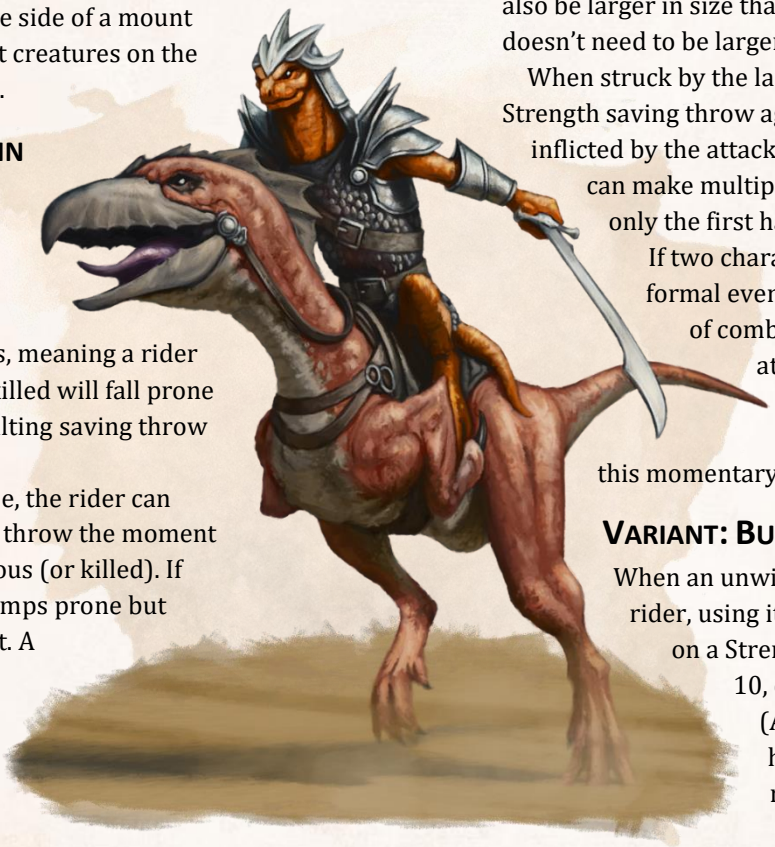
Achieving this position requires the prone condition's normal Dexterity saving throw to stay mounted. Being prone also imposes disadvantage on ranged attacks against the rider, though attackers within 5 feet of the rider can instead claim advantage. Finally, the rider's own attacks are at disadvantage in this awkward position.

A rider hanging to one side of a mount may claim cover against creatures on the other side of the mount.

Variant: Slumped in the Saddle

An unconscious creature automatically fails Strength and Dexterity saving throws, meaning a rider that is knocked out or killed will fall prone and always fail the resulting saving throw to remain in the saddle.

With this optional rule, the rider can attempt one last saving throw the moment it is rendered unconscious (or killed). If successful, the rider slumps prone but remains atop the mount. A trusty steed may thereby carry a dead or unconscious rider home, so long as no other events or conditions would unseat the rider.



Cavaliers

The core rules include a few special rules cases that can help a rider stay mounted.

Born in the Saddle. *This feature belongs to fighters with the Cavalier Martial Archetype, which appears in* Xanathar's Guide to Everything.

"You have advantage on saving throws made to avoid falling off your mount. If you fall off your mount and descend no more than 10 feet, you can land on your feet if you're not incapacitated."

Saddle of the Cavalier. *This magic item, listed in the* Dungeon Master's Guide*, is coveted by riders of all animal types. As a worn magic item, it will resize itself to fit a mount of any size.*

"While in this saddle on a mount, you can't be dismounted against your will if you're conscious, and attack rolls against the mount have disadvantage."

Variant: Lancing

A successful attack from a charging lancer has a chance to unseat a mounted target. To unseat another rider, a lance-user must ride a mount at least 20 feet toward the target, doing so on the same initiative count and immediately prior to attacking with a lance. The attacker's mount must also be larger in size than the targeted rider, though It doesn't need to be larger than the target's mount.

When struck by the lance attack, the rider must make a Strength saving throw against a DC of 10, or the damage inflicted by the attack, whichever is higher. If a lancer can make multiple attacks at this point in the turn, only the first has a chance to dismount the target.

If two characters are jousting one another in a formal event, rather than during the confusion of combat, both riders roll a single lance attack simultaneously as their mounts pass one another. It's possible that both riders fall in this momentary clash.

Variant: Bucking Broncos

When an unwilling mount attempts to buck off a rider, using its action, the rider must succeed on a Strength saving throw against a DC of 10, or the mount's passive Strength (Athletics) score, whichever is higher. If the saving throw fails, the rider falls off.

Landing

A rider that falls from a mount probably lands in a space within 5 feet of the creature, determined by the Dungeon Master. Unless another rule specifies otherwise, the rider should become prone in the fall.

The Dungeon Master may impose falling damage for falling from a particularly large mount, a creature of Huge or Gargantuan size. Alternately, or additionally, a rider may suffer 1d6 bludgeoning damage when falling from a high-speed mount, a creature that moved 60 or more feet in its previous turn. Conditions on the ground can modify this damage; perhaps rough ground adds another damage die or soft terrain provides resistance to the damage.

When a rider falls off of a flying mount, using the normal falling rules to track its descent and impact. The falling rider's only hope is to use magic or some manner of equipment to slow the fall. (See "falling sails" in the *Comprehensive Equipment Manual*.) When falling from a mount in an underwater scenario, the rider simply sinks until it can start swimming on its turn; it does not take damage if it hits bottom before that.

Variant: Snatched from the Air

At the DM's discretion, a flying mount can try to grab its falling rider before the rider passes out of range. The mount must have claws, a large maw, tentacles, or some other body part suitable to grasping and holding a rider of that size and shape. To perform this maneuver, the mount uses its reaction and attempts a Dexterity (Acrobatics) check against a DC of 15. If successful, the mount catches the rider before the rider falls past the flying mount's reach. In this case, the rider is grappled by the mount. On its turn, a caught rider can spend half its movement to climb back on top of the mount, resuming its riding state.

If the mount fails this check, the rider falls beyond reach. Falling creatures often drop too quickly for the mount to get another chance at catching the rider.

Falling Mount

A mount falling prone implicates a different set of rules. Rather than falling from the saddle, the rider has time to "dismount," either falling prone or, with a reaction, remaining on its feet in the process.

The option to use a reaction only applies when the mount goes prone; it appears in no other falling scenario in the *Player's Handbook* or in these rules.

Falling Speed

"When you fall from a great height, you instantly descend up to 500 feet. If you're still falling on your next turn, you descend up to 500 feet at the end of that turn. This process continues until the fall ends, either because you hit the ground or the fall is otherwise halted." (See "Falling" in *Xanathar's Guide to Everything*.)"

Controlled and Independent (5-7)

"While you're mounted, you have two options. You can either control the mount or allow it to act independently. Intelligent creatures, such as dragons, act independently.

"You can control a mount only if it has been trained to accept a rider. Domesticated horses, donkeys, and similar creatures are assumed to have such training. The initiative of a controlled mount changes to match yours when you mount it. It moves as you direct it, and it has only three action options: Dash, Disengage, and Dodge. A controlled mount can move and act even on the turn that you mount it.

"An independent mount retains its place in the initiative order. Bearing a rider puts no restrictions on the actions the mount can take, and it moves and acts as it wishes. It might flee from combat, rush to attack and devour a badly injured foe, or otherwise act against your wishes."

A mounted rider has two options:

1. Control the mount ***if***
    a. the mount is not intelligent, ***and***
    b. the mount is trained to accept a rider
2. "Allow" the mount to act independently

A controlled mount's initiative changes to match the riders, and it is limited to Dash, Disengage, and Dodge for its actions and it acts even on the turn you mount it.

An uncontrolled mount does as it wills; its initiative remains unchanged and the rider doesn't have control.

Qualifying for Control

These rules allow a rider to control an animal that is not intelligent and is trained to bear riders. This vague paragraph needs serious examination to run in a fair and consistent manner.

"Dragon" is only example provided of what "intelligence" means for these purposes. The dragons in the *Monster Manual* have Intelligence scores ranging from 5 to 18.

Coincidentally, this accords with the way this supplement handles Intelligence ratings. Creatures of Intelligence 5 and 6 are smart enough to start comprehending languages. They have their own agendas

and alignments, making them uncontrollable as animals. Creatures of Intelligence 7 or higher are in this "intelligent" category.

To be controlled, the mount must also have training to carry a rider. In the context of these rules, this means the rider-trained template. Alternately, the DM can designate a creature as having sufficient training without the template. Without training, an animal doesn't understand (and can't react to) the rider's subtle signals of control, even if the creature is charmed or otherwise cooperative.

At the DM's discretion, an animal that shares a "telepathic bond" with the rider can be controlled even without training. The spirits created by the *find steed* and *find greater steed* spells are an example of such mounts. These are described as particularly intelligent, but the terms of these spells ensure that the steeds are controlled. Effectively, the rider, not the intelligent animal, decides whether and when the mount is controlled.

Controlled Initiative

This is the part of the mounted combat rules that players and Dungeon Masters get so frequently hung up on. It bears paying special attention to, so buckle in!

When a rider mounts an animal that is not intelligent and is trained to bear riders, the rider has the option to take control. When this happens, the mount's initiative changes to match the rider's initiative.

Merely having the same initiative is not enough to let mount and rider act synergistically. Only groups of "identical creatures" act at the same time; the DM decides other tied initiative counts by rolling a d20 or simply deciding the tie breaker. The initiative rules don't otherwise contemplate matching initiative.

What, then, does this "matching" wording in the mounted combat rules mean? The answer is found at the end of the paragraph, which says, "A controlled mount can move and act even on the turn that you mount it." This creates a new scenario for creatures with matching initiative, one not found in the default initiative rules.

A rider mounts an animal during the rider's own turn, moving to within 5 feet of the mount and spending half movement to climb on. That turn—the rider's—is the turn in which the animal can move and act. "A controlled mount can move and act even on the turn that you mount it." Therefore, a mount moves and acts during its rider's turn.

Too many players and Dungeon Masters struggle to implement rider and mount turns as sequential turns, requiring the rider to Ready an Attack action to go off when the mount moves up to an enemy on its turn.

At the same time, mount and rider have their own separate turns in the sense that neither loses any part of their turn; both have the ability to take an action, bonus action, or reaction, and the ability to move, though a controlled mounts' actions are narrowed to three options and a rider's movement is good for little other than dismounting. Instead, the rider chooses the order these things are used in during the same turn, doing so until both creatures' turns are complete.

This reading of "overlapping" turns is supported by the lead designer's interview of February 2018, titled *Sage Advice on Mounted Combat*. In this interview, Jeremy Crawford stated that the controlled mount's turn "basically overlaps with yours." He repeated this notion several times during the interview, also saying, "It's moving on your turn. Its movement is taking place on your turn." However, see the sidebar below for another interpretation.

If a controlled mount ceases to be controlled, perhaps because the rider becomes unconscious, it does not return to its prior initiative count.

A controlled mount is limited to the Dash, Disengage, or Dodge action on its turns. However, it remains free to perform a reaction as it wills.

Variant: Timing of Control

A rider takes control of an animal as it mounts the creature. No rules are provided for maintaining this control, it is assumed to persist in perpetuity, so long as mount and rider are together and both conscious.

Evidence for Sequential Turns

Some of Jeremy Crawford's "tweets" on Twitter.com can be read as discordant with the *Player's Handbook* (and with his 2018 interview), supporting the notion of "sequential," non-overlapping turns.

On April 26, 2017, Mr. Crawford tweeted "A rider and a controlled mount have separate turns, but they have the same initiative, which means you decide which one goes first." On March 3, 2018, he further tweeted that, "A controlled mount has its own turn, but that turn takes place on the same initiative count as the rider's turn."

These words can support the guidance given here, or they can be read as contrary. This supplement does not recommend a contrary reading; the *Player's Handbook* already says the mount acts on the turn it is mounted, not just a later turn on the same initiative count. Further, none of the three versions of tied initiative in the initiative rules let the *player* choose the order of turns between a character and a mount. Best to use the advice that accords with the rules.

With this optional rule, the rider opts to maintain or release control at the start of each of its turns. If the rider is incapacitated, it cannot control the mount that turn.

If additional riders mount the animal, they are "passengers," riders without the ability to control the mount. The animal's initiative does not change to match these new riders. However, if a passenger wrests control of the mount or the controlling rider dismounts, the new controlling rider can change the mount's initiative to match its own on its following turn.

A newly controlled mount should not get another turn at its new, lower initiative count if it previously acted in that round. In a tweet of April 26, 2017, the lead designer for Dungeons & Dragons confirmed double turns was a possibility because of how the rules are written. No doubt this could enhance the usefulness of riding mounts, allowing them to be available for use when needed. However, the possibility of multiple creatures taking control of a mount in the same round makes this utterly nonsensical, not merely unreasonable.

Variant: Overrun

The optional "Overrun" rule in chapter 9 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* requires an action or bonus action to perform, something a controlled mount cannot do.

With this optional rule, a controlled mount adds "Overrun" to its list of allowed actions, letting the mount try to push past blocking creatures of its approximate size.

Remember, a creature can already move through a space occupied by a creature at least two sizes larger or smaller than it. Additionally, all occupied squares are treated as difficult terrain, regardless of how the animal moves through them.

Independent Initiative

In the case of an uncontrolled mount, initiative is unaffected. Combat unfolds without change, except that the rider is carried along when the mount moves.

Because an uncontrolled mount's initiative doesn't change, mount and rider will act at different times in the initiative order. After a mount moves up to a target, the target's initiative might allow it to move away prior to the rider getting a turn to attack. A rider will need to use the Ready action to time attacks synergistically with the mount's movement.

That timing assumes that the uncontrolled mount is acting usefully in combat. An uncooperative or unintelligent creature is more likely to move away from the battle if left uncontrolled.

Variant: Allowing Control

An intelligent, rider-trained mount can choose to act in concert with a rider, obeying its commands, thus gaining the benefits of a controlled mount.

An Intelligent mount decides its mode of control. When mounted, it chooses to be controlled or remain independent. The animal can revisit its choice at the start of each of its turns, switching to a controlled mode or vice versa.

Modes of control should not change mid-turn because that would allow the mount to gain the benefits of both modes while ignoring the drawbacks.

Opportunity Attacks (8)

> "In either case, if the mount provokes an opportunity attack while you're on it, the attacker can target you or the mount."

Whether the mount is controlled or not, when it provokes an opportunity attack, that attacker can choose to target the rider instead. The mounted combat rules carve out this exception because the rider would otherwise be immune to opportunity attacks. Normally, being moved by another creature (like a shove or carry) or by an effect (like a spell) means you do not provoke opportunity attacks.

Synergizing Character Options

When it comes to animal companions, many players fail to look past the simple wonder of having a delightful creature as a friend and cohort. However, to make animals serious members of the party, it is important to utilize them when it comes to the gaming (die-rolling) part of play.

This section discusses how, through their actions and special traits, animals synergize with player characters' roles and with their features, traits, and spells. Not all features are mentioned here; these are just the most useful or interesting. A particular focus is given to synergizing features with mounted combat.

Class Synergy

Characters of every class can benefit from an animal companion for riding, carrying loads, noticing threats, tracking game, and the like. However, some characters additionally use animals to aid with their expected class roles. Each of the following divisions provides general enhancements of the classes' roles, along with a treatment of any specific features that may synergize with animal companionship.

Artificer

The newest class in the fifth edition mixes various support roles. A glance at the artificer's spell list reveals a class dedicated to enhancing, guarding, and healing others, as well as bringing magical utility to the party.

Artificers function well without animals; their spells and features often make up for the lack of companions. However, the artificer can enhance each of its functions by teaming up with animals. Particularly, animals can be trained to carry and place the artificer's various inventions, allowing rapid, strategic deployment around the battlefield. Additionally, animals themselves make great targets for the artificer's bolstering magic, enhancing their utility and combat effectiveness. Finally, animals can provide extra carrying capacity for toting the artificer's heavy tool sets and crafting supplies.

Artificer Features. Animals can be trained to carry and activate objects affected by the Magical Tinkering, Spell-Storing Items, and Infuse Items features, enhancing their roles as messengers, mounts, and combat allies.

A suit of barding affected by the Enhanced Defense or Resistant Armor infusion provides extra protection to a mount or a combat skirmisher, better protecting animal companions in higher-level campaigns. The Repulsion Shield infusion is similarly beneficial, but the animal needs training to use it because the infusion requires activation.

Found magic items are not likely to be shaped for animals, but the artificer's crafting skills and the Replicate Magic Items infusion allows animal companions to easily benefit from a host of standard magic items in shapes that suit the animals' bodies.

Artificer (Alchemist Artificer Specialist). The Experimental Elixir feature gives fighting animals one of several useful combat bonuses. The feature's randomness can alter the way animals move and fight, forcing the handler to adapt to the animal's new capabilities on the fly.

Artificer (Artillerist Artificer Specialist). A Medium or larger creature bearing a flat howdah provides an ideal platform to support an Eldritch Cannon. The mobility of the creature particularly helps to offset the limited range of the Flamethrower and Protector versions of this feature. However, it is not recommended that you detonate your cannon while an ally is carrying it.

Barbarian, Fighter

Warriors fight, often doing so alongside animals. Animal Handling appears on the skill list for both classes. These warriors require no special efforts to gain proficiency; managing animals is part of their core range of functions. Of primary use to these warriors are animals that serve as combat mounts, independent combatants, or both.

A riding horse is nice for travel, but a warhorse won't balk at the sounds of battle. For characters that focus primarily on weapon use, the ability to get into melee reach (or stay at missile range) is critical to using those weapons. A war-trained mount grants exceptional mobility on open terrain, including the ability to move among or away from foes without provoking opportunity attacks. (See chapter 2 for details on mounted combat.)

While any character with the Mounted Combatant feat doubles down

on the benefits of riding in battle, warriors are particularly helped by the advantage to melee attack rolls. Additionally, because warriors use good armor, the ability to redirect attacks from the mount to the rider helps them maintain their mounted advantage on the field, despite being on the front lines of battle.

For animals that are not being ridden, the warriors' role can benefit from creatures trained to fight synergistically. Although it takes an action to command a war mastiff to attack a specific target, the beast makes up for the lost time by potentially inflicting some damage round after round. A trained hawk might harry a spellcaster that the warrior can't get to quickly enough. If the optional flanking or marking rules are used, fighting in tandem with a trained guard drake can open a whole world of tactical benefits.

Barbarian (Path of the Ancestral Guardian). The Ancestral Protectors and Spirit Shield features can be used to defend mounts and nearby animal combatants, mitigating their relative weakness when compared to the resilience of higher-level parties.

Barbarian (Path of the Totem Warrior). The ability to cast *beast sense*, *speak with animals*, and (eventually) *commune with nature* enhances the character's ability to find, acclimate, and train animals, as described in their spell descriptions, above.

Additionally, various totemic aspects help this barbarian move and fight in concert with animals that are faster or can fly. The elk totem can particularly double the speed of fast mounts and allow the barbarian to maneuver around mounts more efficiently on the battlefield.

Fighter. Two of the fighter's Fighting Styles synergize well with animal allies, particularly mounts.

A character with the Archery Fighting Style feature can benefit from riding. A mount can Disengage and move a great distance away without using the rider's own action. Without a mount, the archer would have to choose between a Disengage action or the Attack action (rolled with disadvantage for being next to foes).

A rider with the Protection Fighting Style feature can interpose a shield to penalize attacks against a mount or an adjacent animal combatant, making mounts more survivable and thus making mounted combat more viable.

These advantages apply equally to anyone who can acquire a fighting style, including paladins and rangers.

Fighter (Battle Master Martial Archetype). This fighter can use the Know Your Enemy feature to ascertain a creature's martial prowess when deciding whether to buy the creature in the market or try to track and acclimate it in the wild.

This archetype's maneuvers are particularly useful when mounted. The Commander's Strike maneuver can allow a warhorse to use its Trampling Charge trait (something it can't otherwise do while ridden), potentially allowing the mount to make two attacks. The Lunging Attack maneuver can exploit the power of a lance at a range of up to 15 feet. The involuntary movement inflicted by the Pushing Attack maneuver is exceptionally useful for dismounting foes. Finally, the range of a lance and the mobility of a mount allow this fighter to find the best positions to make use of the Sweeping Attack maneuver.

Fighter (Cavalier Martial Archetype). The ultimate rider, this fighter gains the Born in the Saddle feature, allowing faster mounting and dismounting, and making falls from the saddle less likely and less penalizing.

Riding a mount is an easy way to provide enemies with an additional target in the Cavalier's reach that, if attacked, can provoke the extra attack of the Unwavering Mark feature. The Warding Maneuver feature provides additional protection for the mount in such scenarios.

Fighter (Samurai Martial Archetype). When combined with the advantage provided by the Mounted Combatant feat, the Rapid Strike feature allows a mounted Samurai to double all attacks against most enemies on foot.

Bard, Rogue

Bards, and rogues to some degree, make adept performers using music, acrobatics, and sleight of hand. Although each may have the genuine goal of providing entertainment, they are also adept at swindling audience members or otherwise relieving them of extra coins. Including animals in an act is a sure way to broaden an audience and to draw attention from a pickpocket's wandering fingers.

Bards are adept at getting animals to perform on their behalf; the Bardic Inspiration feature can magically enhance a trained monkey's attempt to pick a pocket or climb up to a second-story window.

Rogues can train animals to assist with all manner of skullduggery, but their Sneak Attack feature particularly shines in this context. A rogue can train an animal companion to harass enemies by moving next to them or give the rogue advantage on attacks with the Help action; two ways to ensure that the rogue's Sneak Attack feature applies with greater reliability.

Bard. When trying to get an animal to perform in a way that requires it to make its own attack roll or ability check, the Bardic Inspiration feature provides a significant bonus to that roll. Some Bardic College features that rely on Bardic Inspiration can similarly assist an animal's rolls.

Bard (College of Glamour). It is hard to separate this character from its mount; the Mantle of Inspiration feature allows extra movement useful for approaching and mounting an animal. At the same time, a mount that

receives the boost can move to meet you, all without provoking opportunity attacks.

Cleric, Paladin

These classes have access to divine magic and are well suited to healing and protecting animal companions with spells. Animals are often fragile relative to player characters. Spells like *shield of faith* and *warding bond* can greatly extend their survivability and usefulness.

As defensive characters, these class roles are enhanced by the presence of sturdy animals that can interpose themselves between foes and weaker party members or move to guard fallen party members long enough for the cleric or paladin to reach them.

In addition to the benefits described for other warriors, paladins may particularly benefit from training their spirit steeds (from the *find steed* spell) or providing their protective auras to any animal they ride or fight alongside.

Cleric (Grave Domain). The *spare the dying* cantrip derived from the Circle of Mortality feature allows you to quickly stabilize a dying animal companion, even at range, without interrupting your normal action for the round.

The Sentinel at Death's Door feature, like many protective reactions, lets you lessen the damage a mount or animal companion would suffer when struck in battle, in this case when struck by a critical hit.

Cleric (Light Domain). The Improved Flare feature is particularly useful for warding your own mount or an animal that is fighting beside you, increasing its defensibility.

Cleric (Nature Domain). In addition to having access to a handful of druid spells that apply to animals, this class gets the Channel Divinity: Charm Animals and Plants feature. This allows you to repel hostile beasts or, upon attaining the Master of Nature feature at 17th level, charm beasts and command them.

Cleric (Order Domain). The Voice of Authority feature can allow a war-trained mount, like a warhorse, to use an action or trait like Trampling Charge. It can't normally do so while controlled, being limited in the actions it performs, a limitation this reaction overcomes.

Druid, Ranger

Druids and rangers both suit the role of interacting with nature, and they share an incredibly useful range of animal affecting spells to help with that task. (Clerics with the Nature Domain have similar access to animal affecting spells, sharing this role.)

A druid can particularly enhance its interaction with animals by turning into creatures of the same type. This can aid in acquisition or other interactions; a druid that takes a wolf's form and fights beside a wolf companion exploits the speed and tactics employed by wolves working in concert. At higher levels, the ability to swim or fly alongside animal companions in their shared forms brings the synergistic combination of character and animal to the sea or the skies.

Rangers can use animals in many of the ways that barbarians and fighters do, but they have additional class roles related to overland navigation, foraging for food, traveling stealthily, and spotting threats in the wild. In all these tasks, animals make great companions, helping the ranger with these rolls or making separate rolls to attempt these tasks alone.

Ranger (Beast Master Ranger Archetype). This supplement allows all classes to have animal companions in a way that resembles this Ranger Archetype's feature, but without overshadowing or displacing that feature. A

bonded companion benefits equally from the training rules in this book, despite having similar functionality already.

The Ranger's Companion feature allows the ranger to command a bonded animal even if it is not trained with tricks and without having to make an ability check to push the animal into such behavior. This has an advantage over trained tricks because it controls the precise action the animal takes, rather than giving it a broader (but longer lasting) combat instruction. A ranger wanting the animal to attack continuously might be better off commanding the Attack trick, saving the ranger's own action in future rounds. Because of this tradeoff, a ranger might prefer to teach a bonded animal tricks like Attack and Desist. However, an animal whose capacity for tricks is filled with non-combat functions is more broadly useful, combining both combat control from the subclass and utility functions from trained tricks.

Exceptional Training has the same benefits of the previous feature, but it allows animal actions to be commanded with the ranger's bonus action. Combined with the ranger's action to command the animal to use a trick, this feature allows exceptional control over a bonded animal's exact behavior, both short term and long term. For example, an animal commanded to change its attacked target using the Desist trick (an action) and also told to Disengage with this feature (a bonus action) will move reliably and safely from the old enemy to the new one.

An action used to command the Attack trick can be combined with the action to invoke the ranger's Bestial Fury feature. However, this feature only applies in turns when the ranger uses an action to renew it; the animal's trained, ongoing attacks after its first turn revert to the normal number of attacks if the Beast Master does not invoke this feature again.

The Share Spells feature is best exploited with defensive or enhancing magic that strengthens the animal, particularly spells that could normally benefit only the caster or spells that are cheaper or more efficient when applied to the animal and ranger at the same time. Useful examples include *absorb elements*, *longstrider*, *stoneskin*, and *guardian of nature*.

Monk

The monk's concept is one of self enhancement and of non-reliance upon the regular tools of battle. It is an independent character, whose powers do not often synergize with animals (or humanoid companions).

When it comes to mounted combat, monks lack many of the synergistic advantages of barbarians and fighters; some of the monk's features, like Step of the Wind, do not work from the saddle, and many Monastic Traditions provide features that enhance the character's modes of movement in ways that would leave a mount behind.

That said, monks do benefit from animals in the same way as the warrior classes, whose roles this class shares to some degree. They are particularly synergistic with fast-moving creatures that can match the monk's speed, balance, and stealth. Such animals can aid the monk in its role of a highly mobile and adaptable striker. Additionally, despite their speed, being mounted often provides a monk with greater mobility even if it must eschew some class features while in the saddle. Finally, the monk's focus on the Wisdom ability makes them more likely to succeed on checks to control and influence animals outside of combat.

Sorcerer, Warlock, Wizard

These classes are well suited to enhancing animals with spells that strengthen or speed them along in combat.

The role of most arcane casters is artillery-like, casting spells from a distance and trying to stay back from the front lines. A horse provides excellent mobility for maintaining this distance, and war-trained animals can serve as blockers to keep foes from closing on characters of these lightly armored classes.

Wizards (and some warlocks) may also have familiars. The telepathic connection means such creatures are more adept and learning and employing many of the tricks and roles available to animal companions.

Sorcerer (Metamagic Options). The Careful Spell Metamagic option is an important tool for a caster that uses area-affecting spells while simultaneously employing animal companions to block and harry foes.

The Twinned Spell Metamagic option allows you to provide important enhancing spells to two targets at once, something useful for a sorcerer who has multiple animal companions, or who wishes to apply a defensive spell to both an ally and that ally's mount.

Warlock (Eldritch Invocations). The Beast Speech invocation allows you to cast *speak with animals* at will, always benefiting from true communication between you and your animal companions.

The Gift of the Depth invocation allows you to use and interact with amphibious and water-breathing animals in ways that air-breathing characters cannot. Such animals are otherwise less useful as companions.

The Grasp of Hadar and Repelling Blast invocations allow you to dismount enemies by moving the mounts or their riders. Repelling Blast is more useful at higher levels; the multiple targets of *eldritch blast* can allow you to unseat multiple riders per turn.

Wizard (School of Abjuration). The Projected Ward feature allows abjurers to extend their famous protective magic over a mount or animal companion.

Wizard (School of Evocation). Since wizards cast a lot of area-affecting damage spells, like *fireball*, the Sculpt Spells feature is literally a lifesaver in some scenarios. It allows the evoker to omit an animal companion from these harmful areas.

Wizard (School of Transmutation). This wizard's Transmuter's Stone can provide one of a range of useful enhancements to an animal ally. While these benefits might be of little use to some transmuters, each is particularly effective when applied to the right animal.

Other Effects

This section discusses some of the character-specific methods for handling animals and gaining advantage from them. Whether by spellcasting, magic item use, or by the natural or learned traits and features of various races and classes, these can be unspeakably useful when it comes to training and managing animals.

Racial Traits

The following section addresses the limited selection of racial traits that affect or implicate the animal managing rules in this product.

Bugbear. While mounted, the Long-Limbed trait allows you to better exploit the power of the lance, a one-handed weapon on par with the highest damage ratings for even two-handed weapons, using it a range of up to 15 feet.

Firbolg. The Speech of Beast and Leaf feature allows beasts to benefit from sharing a true language with you, except that the communication goes only one way, from you to the animals, not vice versa.

Forest Gnome. Forest gnomes have a rapport with small creatures and often keep them as pets. Although the communication provided by the Speak with Small Beasts feature is vaguely described as encompassing only "simple" ideas, it is sufficient to support the benefits of true communication with such animals, as discussed in the previous section.

Kenku. The Mimicry trait synergizes well with the Animal Handling and Nature skills. At the Dungeon master's discretion, an ability check with one of these skills may allow you to produce a greater range of animal sounds, or to remember exactly the right animal sound that an animal of the same type will recognize the meaning of. (This is the same process by which kenku get humanoids to understand them.)

Kobold. A mounted kobold can use its Pack Tactics trait with impunity because its mount counts as an allied creature.

Lizardfolk. The Hold Breath trait gives you access to underwater environments, such that having an amphibious or water-breathing animal might be quite useful.

Triton. The Amphibious trait gives you better opportunities to use amphibious or water-breathing animals, animals that most characters have difficulty finding use for.

The Emissary of the Sea trait allows you the benefits of true language with aquatic animals, but only in one direction, from you to them.

Yuan-ti Pureblood. The Innate Spellcasting trait allows unlimited castings of *animal friendship* when targeting snakes, making this race able to easily manage and control these dangerous creatures.

Magic Items

A number of oft-forgotten magic items create or control animals, including *bags of tricks*, *feather of diatryma summoning*, *figurines of wondrous power*, *infernal tack*, *ring of animal influence*, *staff of the python*, *staff of the woodlands*, and *trident of fish command*.

The following two potions are discussed in some detail since their effects stray from the parameters of the spells they provide.

Potion of Animal Friendship. This delightful potion allows you to cast the *animal friendship* spell at will for one hour. Since the spell's duration is 24 hours, this potion can charm a veritable army of beasts, commanding their friendship for a whole day.

Although you might theoretically target up to 600 beasts while affected by the potion, you will rarely find that many animals in a place where you can approach to within 30 feet of each target, nor does the usefulness of the basic charmed condition, absent some other mechanism of control, encourage such a feat.

Potion of Mind Control (Beast). This potion allows you to cast *dominate beast* once. Unlike the normal version of the spell, the effect lasts a full hour and does not require concentration. This allows the effect to be combined usefully with another magic that requires concentration, such as the *beast senses* spell.

Spells

This section lists the common animal-affecting spells and describes how they synergize with this supplement's rules.

Animal Friendship. The 24-hour duration of this spell means that, when cast daily, a beast can be constantly

charmed, helping to cement a magical alliance. This spell keeps even wild animals constantly compliant until you can acclimate them. Normally, you would have to return repeatedly to an animal's territory to acclimate it (or take it along in a cage). This spell circumvents those necessities during the period prior to full acclimation.

The charmed condition also affects an animal's loyalty rating, assuming that optional rule is used. Even without that rule, this spell does not spoil the caster's relationship with an animal; while some spells that apply the charmed condition leave the target with knowledge of being magically manipulated, this spell does not. Moreover, creatures with Intelligence ratings low enough to be affected by the spell are not smart enough to comprehend what magic is or to associate such effects with their own shifting attitudes.

This spell affects only creatures of Intelligence 3 or lower. The higher-level alternative, *charm monster*, can affect smarter creatures. However, it has only a one-hour duration and it leaves the creature cognizant of the spell's manipulation, making it mostly unsuitable for these uses.

Animal Messenger. This spell is best when cast on an animal you supply rather than some random woodland creature. If you want to rely on this spell, you shouldn't risk being unable to find the right sort of flying creature existing naturally in your environment.

A homing pigeon is an ideal target; trained to Go Home, the bird will fly back to its roost once its message is delivered. In the case of a failed delivery, the spell will cause the animal to return to the location of the spell's casting but, since you are likely to have moved on a day or more before the bird's return, being trained to Go Home ensures that the animal does not get lost or simply wait at that location.

For other Tiny animals, this spell can be used to send the creature home or to some other safe place you designate as the spell's target location, so long as it is within 25 miles of you (or 50 miles if the creature flies). To keep the animal from returning to the caster, it must deliver a message to a creature at the target location.

For example, you must enter a dungeon that seems too dangerous for your pet raven. While it was an able companion and scout during the trip through the wilderness, the close confines and the deadly creatures you are about to face make you worry for the bird's safety. You cast this spell on your raven, instructing it to return home to its roost and speak your message to one of the other animals there.

Awaken. This spell only affects animals with Intelligence scores of 3 and lower. Smarter animals, like primates and some dinosaurs, don't qualify for a boost to human levels of intelligence.

An animal that gains sentience may acquire its own alignment, motivations, and complex personality. While it can no longer be managed with the Animal Handling skill or made to perform tricks, the awakened creature does not forget the nature of its

learned tricks, nor does it forget how its handler previously treated it, whether good or bad. If your game uses the optional loyalty rules, the animal now uses normal NPC loyalty mechanics from the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Beast Bond. This spell only affects beasts of Intelligence 3 or lower. It establishes a 10-minute telepathic link between caster and animal. The animal can benefit from the full complexity of your messages but can only send simple emotions and concepts in return. This, combined with the telepathy's limitation to line of sight, makes this spell a poor scouting tool.

The primary function of this spell is to enhance an animal when working directly with the caster. Telepathy lets you communicate silently in stealthy scenarios, directing the animal into position for a surprise attack. It also grants the animal advantage on attack rolls against creatures next to you, being particularly useful for creatures with potent attacks that might need help connecting, perhaps a poisonous bite delivered by an animal with a poor attack bonus.

Beast Sense. This spell allows you to see and hear what any willing beast does, regardless of its Intelligence rating.

The one-hour duration of this spell is useful for scouting, so long as the beast is observing that which you wish to scout. Unfortunately, another spell to direct or control the beast's movement, or to make it a willing target for *beast sense*, is nearly impossible to combine with this spell because such effects almost universally require concentration.

Therefore, this spell is best used on a creature already trained to move about at your command. Tricks such as Fetch, Go Home, Guard, Scout, Seek, Stalk, and Stay can position an animal usefully to take maximal advantage of this spell.

Commune with Nature. This spell targets an area, informing you of the prevalent animals within its 3-mile outdoor range and identifying the location of terrain features like cave structures. The combination of these two pieces of information confirms the presence of animals and gives you a good idea of where to find their homes, more so if you are aware of the animal's preferred habitat, diet, nesting patterns, and the like. At the Dungeon Master's discretion, understanding which portions of the revealed terrain are likely to house the desired animal may require an Intelligence (Nature) check.

Conjure Animals. This magic surrounds the caster with spirits indistinguishable from normal beasts. Normally considered a combat spell, the one-hour duration of this magic allows it a great deal of utility.

Although these creatures have no training, the Dungeon Master may allow them to be helpful during the acclimation process. Social animals, those with herd or pack tendencies, are not likely to flee upon contact with others of their kind. Seeing you surrounded by such animals, who clearly trust you and are comfortable in your presence, a wild animal may be more willing to allow your approach or allow you to get closer than you otherwise would.

At the Dungeon Master's discretion, being surrounded by its own type can give you advantage on ability checks to calm a creature or to stalk it in its habitat.

Create Food and Water. There are a few places in the *Player's Handbook* where systems fail to account properly for the weight of food and water required to sustain creatures based on their sizes. This spell is one example.

Although creatures need equal weights of food and water to survive, this spell provides 45 lbs. of food and only 30 lbs. of water. Without another water source, the spell will sustain *forty-five* Small or Medium characters, or *eleven* Large steeds. With no other water, these numbers drop to *thirty* Small or Medium characters sustained, or *seven* Large steeds.

Detect Poison and Disease. In close proximity, this spell lets you sense the presence and location of poisonous creatures or those that carry disease.

Although the spell's range is limited to 30 feet, many qualifying creatures, like snakes or rats, can otherwise hide in any sort of rough terrain, in rubble, in the walls of buildings, even among very sparse vegetation. The type of materials that block this spell are not the sort that such animals tend to hide behind or within.

In addition to finding the creature, the ten-minute duration of this spell allows you a lot of time to work; with the right tools, you can isolate a target by cutting off its avenues of escape, making it easier to capture.

Dominate Beast. Although it may seem like an unusual application, this spell is an exceptional aid when training creatures. It provides one minute of telepathic communication, allowing a trick's desired behavior to be explained in detail. It also allows you to manipulate the creature's movements, precisely modeling the desired action.

The combination of these two benefits helps you condition the charmed creature to perform even the most esoteric and precise tricks. At the Dungeon Master's discretion, this may allow you to teach tricks or roles to an animal that might otherwise be unable to learn them. This is particularly useful for instinct-driven creatures like arachnids, or for complex tricks.

Dominate Monster. This magic provides all the benefits of *dominate beast*, but it affects a wider range of creature types and has a longer duration.

Find Familiar. The spirit summoned by this spell takes the form of a beast and otherwise qualifies as an animal. This means it can learn tricks and roles, Intelligence permitting. However, the telepathic communication between you and the spirit, and its spell-made obedience, mean you never have to make Wisdom (Animal Handling) checks to control your familiar.

If your familiar is a creature of Intelligence 7 or higher, as allowed by some character options, ignore this bit; your familiar is too smart for tricks and roles.

A familiar is a special spirit, directly bonded with you, linked to your thoughts and perceptions. If you recast this spell so your familiar takes the form of a different beast, one with a lower Intelligence rating, the familiar does not forget any tricks or roles it gained while its capacity for such learning was higher. However, when the spirit changes form, its new body may be unsuited to physically perform some of its tricks or role functions. The best tricks to teach a familiar are those that can be used in multiple forms.

Find Steed. The spirit summoned by this spell can be trained and managed according to the rules in this supplement. The spirit has the rider-trained template by default, and its advanced Intelligence rating gives it an exceptional capacity for learning additional tricks.

Owing to your telepathic bond, and the nature of the spell itself, your spirit steed always obeys you and it can follow your orders with a precise understanding of your desires. Wisdom (Animal Handling) checks are never required to get the spirit to act as you wish.

Unlike a familiar, the spirit you summon assumes a static form, and repeated castings summon the same spirit unless you have permanently dismissed it. This means that, if you wish to change the form of your mount, the new spirit lacks any training the previous one acquired.

Find Greater Steed. Unless the creature's natural Intelligence rating is higher than 6, it can learn tricks and roles as with the *find steed* spell.

Goodberry. This spell creates 10 potent magical berries that can each feed a creature for 1 day. Any creature can be sustained on a single daily berry, regardless of the creature's size or its normal dietary requirements, making this an ideal spell when traveling. Otherwise, the weight of animal feed can be prohibitive to carry, particularly on long trips or for animals that can't graze or hunt for themselves.

Locate Animals or Plants. This spell provides an instantaneous impression of the direction and distance to a specified type of beast.

The spell's five-mile range makes it an excellent tool to start looking for a particular beast to stalk and acclimate, and you don't need to be close to begin this search. However, by the time you reach the location, the animal may have moved on. Using this spell repeatedly or at times when the beast is likely to be resting in its den gives you a better chance to find the animal's home territory. Having a map along is a great way to chart the animal's location at each casting.

This spell is limited in that it cannot locate a specific member of the species sought. For areas rife with the specified animal, the general nature of the results can make the spell less useful. Each casting might point to a different member of the species and, particularly if the animal is territorial, repeated castings may lead you toward different animal dens. This lack of specificity also means the spell has little utility in finding an exceptional specimen. Neither is it much help in tracking down the specific creature that recently attacked a villager's livestock. However, if you are looking for a specific beast that travels in a pack or herd, judicious use of this spell may bring you into

contact by leading you to other members of that same group.

Locate Creature. Unlike the *locate animals or plants* spell, this spell can help you find a specific creature. It also has a one-hour duration, meaning your impression of the creature's direction and location are constantly updated; you don't have to make repeated castings if the animal is mobile.

However, this spell has limitations. Primarily, to find a specific creature, that creature must be "familiar" to you. You must have seen the creature before, while within 30 feet of it. This may allow you to follow up on a chance encounter with an animal, helping you track or trail the creature to its lair. If an animal you are visiting for acclimation moves its den, perhaps because of a botched stalking attempt, this spell can also help you find the same creature again.

The spell's geographic limitations are its 1,000-foot range and the fact that its sense is blocked by a body of running water at least 10 feet wide. Familiarity with the terrain (or a map) can help you plan a search pattern that avoids obstruction by rivers and canals, maximizing your chances of success.

You can also use *locate creature* to find a non-specific creature, the closest of the type you seek. In this case, you only need to have seen an example of the species (while within 30 feet of it).

Magic Mouth. This costly spell is useful for delivering commands to an animal in your absence. You create a mouth on an immobile object, and the mouth speaks with your voice and intonation whenever a predefined circumstance triggers it.

A use of this spell might be as simple as scolding a mastiff that tries to break into the pantry while you are away. An animal trained to respond to your commands might produce more complex behavior; perhaps a clever baboon might give food to other animals in the house when the mouth orders it to at set times of day. In a pinch, a *magic mouth* might keep an animal in place for a long time; it might keep ordering your pet boar to Stay whenever its attention span fails and it tries to wander from where you put it.

Phantom Steed. The quasi-real mount created with this spell behaves in all ways as a rider-trained creature. The phantom is an excellent combat mount; it does not require Wisdom (Animal Handling) checks to control in battle. Even though taking as little as 1 point of damage begins the steed's 1-minute countdown to disappearance, it cannot be killed and will continue to serve ably during those 10 rounds, a period longer than most combats will last.

Rary's Telepathic Bond. This spell establishes a telepathic link, allowing true communication between the caster and any linked animal, so long as that creature has an Intelligence rating of 3 or higher. The benefits of true communication are discussed in the prior section.

Speak with Animals. This spell allows 10 minutes of true two-way verbal communication, even with animals that otherwise lack sufficient intelligence to use or understand languages.

This spell compounds the value of an animal trained to scout or search an area. While an animal's attention is limited, using this spell can give you information about, for example, what your hawk saw while hunting. It might notice if there are bandits hiding behind those hills if you are afraid of an ambush, or which way the river lies in case you might be lost. With true communication, the animal might even convey some sense of the bandit's numbers or a vague distance to the river.

Because this spell can be cast as a ritual, it allows extensive, repeated transfers of information throughout the day, all without spending a spell slot. Other magics are more efficient in the realm of communication, but this spell is common, low-level, and usable without expending resources.

Tongues. The affected creature, even an animal of minimal Intelligence rating, understands every spoken language that it hears. However, the target creature's "speaking" is only understood if the target knows at least one language, necessitating an Intelligence rating of 5 or higher.

Small Group Initiative (Option)

A huge percentage of DMs already adopt this Small Group Initiative variant rule in one form or another. So important is it that it has its own section in this chapter. This rule greatly streamlines the use of companions in the game.

With this rule, players control the combat actions of all creatures "belonging" to their characters. This includes a familiar, any animal companions the player's character handles, the creatures the character summons with spells, and any NPCs assigned to the player. (See "Small Groups" in chapter 8 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.)

These creatures have the same initiative as the player's character. They don't roll initiative of their own, but if any would have advantage or disadvantage on initiative, apply that to the initiative roll of the player's character. (This is a variant of the "Side Initiative" rule in chapter 9 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.)

On each character's initiative, its player decides which order to take turns in for the character and its controlled creatures. The controlling player can change this order each round.

Player Options

Chapter 3: Player Options

While animals are the primary focus of this supplement, this chapter gives new options to animal-handling player characters. A new Roguish Archetype, the Beast Whisperer, uses animals to infiltrate, spy, steal, con, and otherwise perform roguish activities. New options are included for warlocks with the Pact of the Chain feature. Sets of new feats and spells give animal-related functionality to characters of different types. Finally, this chapter addresses magic items for animals and how animals can use various magic items.

Rogue Class

At 3rd level, a rogue gains the Roguish Archetype feature. The following new option is available to a rogue in addition to those offered in the *Player's Handbook* and in other official sources.

Beast Whisperer (Subclass)

You leverage your understanding of animals, both their unique behavior and capabilities. You can coax animals into pilfering small objects or opening gate latches from the inside. Perhaps you train animals to perform tricks, holding the crowd's attention while you pick some pockets. Or you work side-by-side with animals who harry troublesome foes in combat, leaving them open to your well-placed blade.

The features in this archetype refer to "animals" in the same sense as the term applies to other creatures in the campaign. These features are otherwise designed to work with (or without) the other rules from this supplement. A beast whisperer depends on acquiring animals to make use of class features, even if this means purchasing basic animals from the short list in chapter 5 of the *Player's Handbook*.

Though working with such mundane animals, using the features of this class does not count against the maximum number of commands you can issue to animals in each of your turns.

Animal Authority

When you choose this archetype at 3rd level, you gain proficiency in the Animal Handling skill. If you are already proficient with this skill, you gain another skill proficiency of your choice.

As a Beast Whisperer, your animals are trained to watch for your subtle signals, which you can issue while bystanders are none the wiser. In the case of a purposefully attentive watcher, you can issue verbal commands that cannot be identified as such if you succeed at a Charisma (Deception) check to hide them among normal speech, or make gestured commands unnoticed with a successful Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check. In both cases, the DC is the observers' passive Perception score.

Split Skirmish

When you take the Attack action on your turn, you can forgo one of your attacks and direct an animal that you have trained to make an attack on your behalf. When you do so, choose an animal you have trained that is within 30 feet of you. You must be able to see the animal, and the animal must be able to see you. The animal uses its reaction to make one of its own natural attacks. You can apply your Sneak Attack damage to one creature the animal hits with this attack, so long as you do not otherwise use your Sneak Attack feature in the same turn.

Expert Handling

Starting at 3rd level, the animals you have trained are particularly efficient when following your orders. Such animals add your proficiency bonus (in addition to their own) for ability checks made under your direct command.

Additionally, if you use your action on your turn to command the Attack generic action from an animal you have trained, it adds your proficiency bonus to its own for attack rolls on its next turn.

Animal Speaker

Starting at 9th level, you gain an exceptional insight into the thought processes of animals. This allows you to understand them intuitively.

If you spend at least 1 minute observing or interacting with an animal outside of combat, you can learn certain information about it. The DM tells you two of the following aspects of your choice:

- Whether any single ability score that you select is equal to, superior to, or inferior to your own rating
- The skills, if any, that the beast has proficiency in
- One of the beast's characteristics, selected by the DM, that you are not yet aware of
- One condition the animal is affected by, selected by the DM, that you are not yet aware of

Once you have used this feature on a wild or feral creature, you can use the Animal Handling skill to calm it as though it was a domestic creature. This does not make the creature friendly, but it may delay or suppress the creature's fight-or-flight instincts.

Loyal Friend

Beginning at 13th level, you can cause an animal companion to suffer an attack meant for you, or vice versa.

When you or an animal you have trained are the target of an attack while you are within 5 feet of each other, you can use your reaction to change the target of the attack from yourself to the animal, or from the animal to yourself. You can choose to use this feature after the attack is rolled, but before the outcome is determined.

In the case of an area-affecting spell or effect, you can instead use your reaction to give the benefit of your Evasion feature to a single animal you have trained and can see. This benefit applies to only one effect.

Vicious Tandem

At 17th level, you can better attack in tandem with one or more of your trained animals.

If you take the Attack action on your turn, and one of your trained animals is within 30 feet of you and it is not incapacitated, you can make one additional attack.

Additionally, when you use the Split Skirmish feature, both you and one of your trained animals can use your Sneak Attack feature once on your turn, so long as you apply it to different targets.

Whispering to Animals

Unlike the Beast Master, this archetype does not form a magical bond with animals. Instead, the Beast Whisperer uses exceptional training methods to give benefits to un-augmented animals. It is not limited to having a single animal companion.

For an animal to count as "trained" by the Beast Whisperer, the character must have taught it at least one trick or role. If this Roguish Archetype is used without the other new rules in this book (the tricks and roles described in chapter 2), an animal can meet the training requirement by participating in 5 days of the Beast Whisperer's downtime activity devoted to training the creature.

Warlock Class

This supplement enhances the options available to warlocks that select the chain as their Pact Boon.

Pact Boon: Pact of the Chain

When you summon a familiar that takes the form of a beast, your familiar assumes a *planar template* that corresponds to the creature type you select for the spirit: celestial, fey, or fiend. This allows you to approximate the power of a special-form familiar without being limited to the small set presented in the *Player's Handbook*.

The template does not enhance a familiar that takes a special form, an imp, pseudodragon, quasit, or sprite. These creatures already constitute enhanced versions of the *find familiar* spell.

Eldritch Invocations

Warlocks with the Pact of the Chain feature can select eldritch invocations from these new offerings. Any benefits applied to animal companions are lost immediately if the invocations are replaced.

Dark Confederate

Prerequisite: Pact of the Chain feature

You can cast the new *bridle of madness* spell at will, without expending a spell slot.

Shared Mastery

Prerequisite: Pact of the Chain feature

Select three tricks from chapter 1 when you take this eldritch invocation. Any creature you train in at least one trick or role gains these bonus tricks, additional to any it already knows. (The bonus tricks do not count against the creature's Intelligence-based capacity for learning tricks.) The animal retains these bonus tricks for as long as you know this eldritch invocation.

Other Options

This section provides new feats and spells for players to choose from.

New Feats

For campaigns that use the variant Feats rule, the following new options are available for animal handlers.

Animal Affinity

Prerequisite: Proficiency in the Animal Handling skill

Through natural inclination or learned ability, you master the various techniques needed to train, handle, and otherwise interact with animals using great efficiency. You gain the following benefits.

- Increase your Wisdom score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- Your proficiency bonus is doubled for any ability check you make that uses the Animal Handling skill.
- Your proficiency bonus is doubled for any ability check you make that uses the Nature skill to recall or ascertain information about animals, their capabilities, weaknesses, habits, and the like.
- Each day you devote to the Animal Acclimation or Animal Training downtime activity counts as two days toward the animal's development.

Battle Handler

You are an expert at managing animals in combat.

- Increase your Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- No additional check or disadvantage penalty applies to your attempts to handle an animal because of the animal's injuries. You can calm an injured animal you handle if it is within 5 feet of you without needing the normal check at the start of the turn.
- For the Assault, Harry, and Move tricks, you can designate targets up to 60 feet away, rather than 30 feet.
- If an animal you handle within 60 feet of you is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, you can use your reaction to cause the creature to take half damage if it fails the saving throw, and no damage if it succeeds.

Matching Hearts

You can form a magical bond with a willing animal using an 8-hour ritual. Once bonded, the animal has the benefits described below. If you bond with another animal, this ends any previous bond created through this feat.

- You can use a bonus action to command your bonded animal to take the same action that you take in the same round, with the same targets if targeting is needed.
- While your bonded animal can see or hear you, it can use your proficiency bonus in place of its own for any ability check to perform as you have commanded it to do.
- While the animal is within 10 feet of you, it is immune to the frightened and charmed conditions, though it can still be charmed by your own spells and effects.
- If your game uses the optional loyalty rules for animals, your bonded companion's loyalty score for you will not drop below 10, regardless of events or absence.
- If your target animal is also the subject of your Ranger's Companion feature, it may be size Large and up to CR 1.

Natural Familiar

Prerequisite: The ability to cast at least one spell

You can use a 10-minute ritual to create a magical bond with a willing Tiny animal you touch—a creature that has a challenge rating of 1 or lower that is not already a familiar—turning it into your familiar.

- Your familiar acts independently of you, but always obeys your commands. In combat, it rolls its own initiative and acts on its own turn.
- While your familiar is within 100 feet of you, you have a telepathic bond with it, able to communicate telepathically. Additionally, as an action, you can see through your familiar's eyes and hear what it hears until the start of your next turn, gaining the benefits of any special senses that the familiar has. During this time, you are deaf and blind with regard to your own senses.
- When you cast a spell with a range of touch, your familiar can deliver the spell as if it had cast the spell. Your familiar must be within 100 feet of you, and it must use its reaction to deliver the spell when you cast it. If the spell requires an attack roll, you use your attack modifier for the roll.
- If the creature's description includes a "familiar" variant rule, like the imp, quasit, or pseudodragon, your bond gains any additional effects of that variant rule.
- You can't have more than one familiar at a time. If you use this ritual or cast the *find familiar* spell while you have a familiar, the existing bond breaks and the previous creature is no longer your familiar.

New Spells

This section contains a handful of new spells. These appear on the spell lists of druids and rangers.

Bridle of Madness

1st-level enchantment

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

Select a Large or smaller beast that you can see within range. If its Intelligence is 4 or higher, the spell fails. Otherwise, the target must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw or become charmed by you. While the target is charmed in this way, vines in the shape of a bridle or similar controlling harness appear on its head, and its eyes glow a pale yellow.

The charmed beast is a willing mount for you if its size and shape qualify it to serve you as such. (See chapter 2 for an explanation of qualifying mounts.) The creature will perform as if rider-trained, even in combat. It fulfills all of a mount's expected functions but does not otherwise respond to your commands or serve in ways unrelated to being ridden.

Bond Companion

2nd-level enchantment

Casting Time: 1 hour
Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M (an agate worth at least 50 gp, which the spell consumes)
Duration: Instantaneous

After one hour of ceremonial spellcasting and meditation, you touch a willing beast of size Large or smaller, creating a lasting bond.

The beast gains the ability to understand your speech, regardless of what language you use. Additionally, while you are alive and have 1 or more unspent hit dice, the creature is immune to the instant death rule. See "Damage and Healing" in the *Player's Handbook*.

When you cast this spell, the affected beast is charmed by you for 30 days or until you and your companions do anything directly harmful to it. When the charmed condition ends, the beast creature chooses whether to remain friendly to you, based on how you treated it while it was charmed.

If you cast this spell on another target, your bond with any previous target ends.

Hold Beast

1st-level enchantment

Casting Time: 1 action
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute
Range: 60 feet
Components: V, S, M (a small iron coin wrapped in fur)

Choose a beast of size Medium or smaller that you can see within range. The target must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw or be paralyzed for the duration. At the end of each of its turns, the target can make another Wisdom saving throw. On a success, the spell ends on the target.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, you can target one additional beast of size Medium or smaller for each slot level above 1st. The beasts must be within 30 feet of each other when you target them.

Nature's Ward

1st-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M (a handful of oak bark)
Duration: 8 hours

You touch a willing beast. Until the spell ends, the target's body takes on a rough, plant-like appearance, and the target's AC can't be less than 16, regardless of barding or other protections.

Create Fodder

1st-level conjuration

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 30 feet
Components: V, S
Duration: Instantaneous

You create 48 pounds of herbaceous feed. This is suitable to meet the dietary needs of equines like horses or any creature that can otherwise survive by grazing. The created feed appears on the ground within range and dissolves if not consumed within 24 hours.

Revitalize Beast

2nd-level necromancy

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M (diamonds worth 100 gp, which the spell consumes)
Duration: Instantaneous

You return a dead beast you touch to life, provided that it has been dead no longer than 1 day. The beast returns to life with 1 hit point.

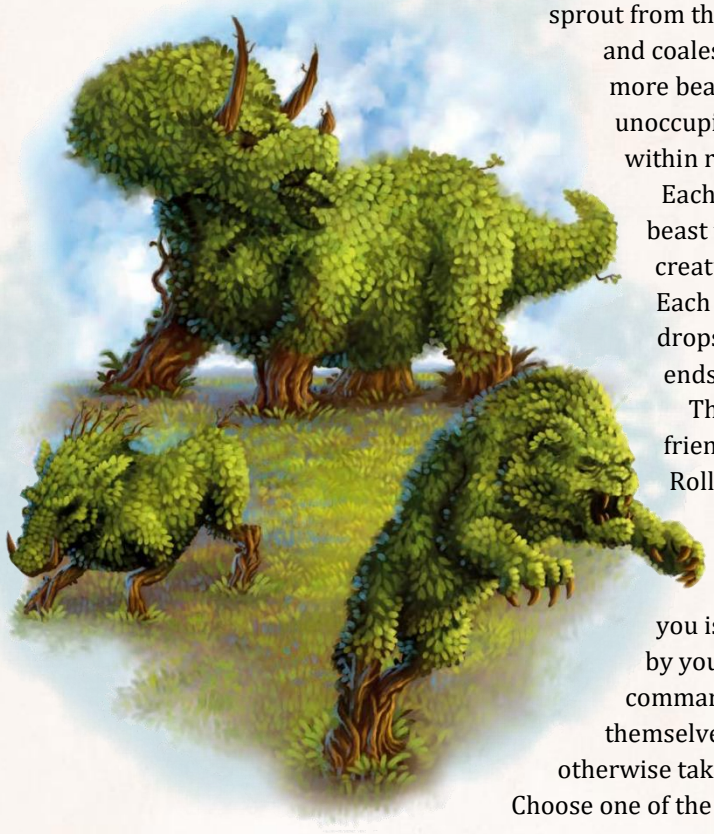
This spell also neutralizes any poison and cures nonmagical diseases that affected the beast at the time it died. This spell doesn't remove magical diseases, curses, or similar effects; if these aren't first removed prior to casting the spell, they take effect when the creature returns to life. The spell can't return an undead creature to life.

This spell closes all mortal wounds, but it doesn't restore missing body parts. If the creature is lacking body parts or organs integral for its survival—its head, for instance—the spell automatically fails.

Topiary Creatures

5th-level conjuration

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



You cause vines, weeds, and other vegetation to sprout from the ground around you, twisting and coalescing into the shape of one or more beasts. These creatures form in unoccupied spaces that you can see within range.

Each creature has the statistics of the beast that it imitates, except that its creature type is plant instead of beast. Each creature disappears when it drops to 0 hit points or when the spell ends.

The summoned creatures are friendly to you and your companions. Roll initiative for the summoned creatures as a group, which has its own turns. The creatures obey any verbal commands that you issue to them (no action required by you). If you don't issue any commands to them, they defend themselves from hostile creatures, but otherwise take no actions.

Choose one of the following options for what appears.

- One beast of challenge rating 5 or lower
- Two beasts of challenge rating 3 or lower
- Four beasts of challenge rating 2 or lower
- Eight beasts of challenge rating 1 or lower

The DM has these creatures' statistics.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using certain higher-level spell slots, you choose one of the summoning options above, and more creatures appear: twice as many with a 7th-level slot or three times as many with a 9th-level slot.

Wild Empathy

1st-level enchantment

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Self
Components: V, S
Duration: 8 hours

For the duration, you gain magical insight into the minds of animals that are within 30 feet of you. You automatically succeed at Wisdom (Animal Handling) checks to intuit an animal's intentions and you have advantage on all other ability checks making use of that skill.

Magic Items

This section addresses magic items intended for use by, or upon, animals.

Animals Using Magic Items

Magic items that are merely worn, with passive effects, are easiest for animals to use. These require no considerations beyond the animal's physical ability to wear or carry them. Other options raise additional challenges, particularly because most animals lack the intellect to purposefully attune and activate magic items.

Intelligence 5+

Animals need an Intelligence rating of 5 or higher to attune magic items without assistance, to cast spells through a magic item, or to purposefully activate any other function of a magic item.

At lower Intelligence ratings, animals simply can't comprehend the complexities (or even the basics) of magic item use, even if they have the right physical features to perform the relevant activation action.

For activating magic items, this limitation can be overcome on a case-by-case basis by teaching the animal the Activate Magic Item trick. For example, a parrot might be able to produce a sound identical to the activation word of a magic item, but it lacks the intellect to know that the sound relates to the item activating unless trained to make that association.

Purposeful Activation

In addition to having an Intelligence rating of 5 or higher, an animal needs features that allow it to match the activation method required for an item's purposeful activation.

For example, activating a scroll requires the creature to understand a written language. Activating an item that needs words or button-pushing requires the animal to be able to articulate the words or physically depress the buttons. Similarly, a mouth lets an animal consume a potion, but the creature might not be able to uncork and hold the bottle on its own.

Spells

Some magic items give the user the ability to cast spells. Because spellcasting through magic items omits spell components, animals would easily be able to make use of

them, but for the fact that most such items require attunement by members of a stated character class. When such flavors of attunement are not required, it is perfectly reasonable, for example, to see a displacer beast wielding a *wand of magic missiles* in one of its tentacles.

Attunement

An animal with an Intelligence rating of 4 or lower cannot attune a magic item on its own. Many magic items intended for animals therefore don't require attunement.

Variant: Assisted Attunement

At the Dungeon Master's discretion, animals with Intelligence ratings of 4 or lower can attune a magic item with assistance of a smarter creature who participates in the one-hour process. In truth, it is the smarter creature that is performing the work of attunement, while the animal is the passive recipient of the attunement, benefiting from that process.

Converting Old Magic Items

When contemplating animals, existing magic items come in three types: those intended for animals, those animals can use despite the creators' intentions, and those animals cannot use.

Items already made for animals include *saddle of the cavalier*, *horseshoes of a zephyr*, and *horseshoes of speed*. There are very few items made uniquely for animals, although this book adds more at the end of this chapter.

When adapting items to animals, the *Dungeon Master's Guide* suggests that shapes need only generally match the animal. For example, that a ring might be worn by placing it on a creature's tentacle.

The third category includes magic items with standard enchantments that appear in forms specifically crafted for use by animals. The magic items adapted most commonly are those that require no purposeful activation, but it is not unheard of for items that need activation or that provide spellcasting to be made for smarter animals' use.

Standard items crafted in animal-specific forms can't normally be worn by humanoids. Even though these items magically resize, they do not reshape. For example, animal boots have short feet (for hooves or paws) and require four legs to wear. See "Wearing and Wielding Items" in chapter 7 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Animal Boots

Quadrupedal animals that walk on paws, hooves, and similar appendages can be fitted with foot protection to suit difficult or dangerous terrain. These are sometimes called hoof boots or paw protectors, but they are interchangeable when created as magic items. Animal boots come in sets of four, all four of which must be worn by the beneficiary of the item's effects.

Animal boots differ from horseshoes, which can only be worn by hooved animals.

The following footwear from the *Dungeon Master's Guide* may appear as animal boots without altering their mechanics: *boots of elvenkind*, *boots of levitation*, *boots of striding and springing*, *boots of the winterlands*, *horseshoes of the zephyr*, *horseshoes of speed*, *slippers of spider climbing*, and *winged boots*.

Animal Covers

Many types of animals can wear fitted covers, like blankets, sweaters, or caparisons. These are particularly common for horses. Covers can provide warmth, depending on their construction, but are more likely to be decorative, displaying the owner's heraldry. Like barding, animal covers can magically resize themselves, but they are a bit more forgiving when it comes to covering animals of different shapes.

Most magical capes, cloaks, and robes can appear as animal covers. The following versions from the *Dungeon Master's Guide* may take animal cover forms without altering mechanics: *cloak of arachnida*, *cloak of displacement*, *cloak of elvenkind*, *cloak of invisibility*, *cloak of protection*, *mantle of spell resistance*, *robe of eyes*, *robe of scintillating colors*, and *wings of flying*.

Barding

Barding comes configured for specific non-humanoid body types. Its three categories are equine, canine, and exotic, as described in chapter 4. Although magic barding will resize itself to fit creatures of any *size*, an animal can't wear barding made for a creature with a different body *shape*. For example, exotic barding built for a Large dragon will fit a dragon of any size, but it won't fit an elephant.

Magic barding must also conform to the restrictions given in a magic item's description. For example, *plate armor of etherealness* appears only as plate armor; it therefore can't take the form of chainmail or studded leather barding, just plate barding.

The following magic armors from the *Dungeon Master's Guide* may appear as barding without altering mechanics: *adamantine armor*, *armor (+1*, *+2*, or *+3)*, *armor of invulnerability*, *armor of resistance*, *armor of vulnerability*, *dragon scale armor*, *dwarven plate*, *elven chain*, *glamoured studded leather*, *mariner's armor*, *mithral armor*, and *plate armor of etherealness*.

Demon armor and *efreeti chain* may appear as barding, but the wearer does not gain the ability to understand and

speak the item-granted languages unless its Intelligence rating is 5 or higher.

Kernels

Kernels are consumable items. Their potent magical ingredients are condensed into small lumps, most taking the size and shape of a nut.

All potions can appear in the form of kernels.

While humanoids can consume kernels, their odor and flavor are particularly pleasing to animals. A kernel can be administered to an animal within 30 feet by throwing it to the animal as an action. The animal can use its reaction to snatch the kernel out of the air with its mouth (or off the ground, in the case of slower-moving creatures) gaining the benefits of the kernel. An animal that cannot use its reaction may instead use an action to find and consume the kernel on its next turn.

Magic Trinkets

Magic trinkets are charms or icons that are worn attached to the tack or harness of an animal. These are usually made of metal, wood, or bone and can take any number of interesting shapes, typically something representative of the trinket's magic. For example, a trinket that provides the protection of the *feather fall* spell may be shaped like a bird or a feather (or it may be an actual feather).

Many amulets, brooches, rings, and other magic jewelry can be made as magic trinkets. The following versions from the *Dungeon Master's Guide* may appear as trinkets without altering mechanics: *amulet of health*, *amulet of proof against detection and location*, *brooch of shielding*, *necklace of adaptation*, *periapt of health*, *periapt of proof against poison*, *periapt of wound closure*, *ring of evasion*, *ring of feather falling*, *ring of free action*, *ring of invisibility*, *ring of jumping*, *ring of protection*, *ring of regeneration*, *ring of resistance*, *ring of swimming*, *ring of warmth*, *ring of water walking*, *scarab of protection*, and *stone of good luck*.

New Magic Items

These items are presented in alphabetical order. Each description includes the item's name, category, rarity, and magical properties. To maintain compatibility with *Xanathar's Guide to Everything* and Wraith Wright's *Comprehensive Wealth Manual*, each item also states whether it is major or minor and lists a specific gp value.

Bands of Veterinary Recuperation

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)

These sturdy cloth bands come in pairs. They resize to fit snugly around the wrist or ankle of the wearer. If two different creatures wear the bands, and at least one of the wearers is a beast, any magical healing that one wearer receives also applies to the other wearer. The bands do not function while the wearers are farther than 60 feet apart.

Value: 375 gp, *major*

Bridle of Intellect

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)

This harness will reshape itself to fit any animal with a snout or elongated head, like a dog or a horse.

An attuned wearer's Intelligence score is 6 while wearing this bridle. It has no effect if the creature's Intelligence is already 6 or higher.

Value: 375 gp, *major*

Cover of Disguise

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)

The wearer of this cover takes on a specific disguise, appearing to be a different animal of a very similar shape. The creature appears to be of the same size category, but the disguise can be 1 foot taller, shorter, wider, or thinner than the animal.

The disguise provided by a *cover of disguise* is determined when the item is created, including the exact features, coloration, and worn items or barding. (The disguise can even alter the appearance of this cover or make it seem as though the animal is wearing nothing at all.) This disguise can't be changed later; it applies consistently to each qualifying animal that wears it.

A *cover of disguise* has no effect when placed on a creature that doesn't physically resemble the item's disguise. The animal can't change its body type, so the disguise must apply a form that has the same basic arrangement of limbs. For example, a horse could be affected by a disguise that looks like a different-looking horse or a unicorn, but it could not appear to be a pegasus because the extra wings are limbs.

Value: 125 gp, *minor*

Daunting Jesses

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)

Jesses are thin leather leashes that attach to the ankle of a hunting bird, allowing the handler to better control the

creature when held or to tie the creature to a perch. This pair must be worn together to have any effect.

Any bird of prey with the beast creature type can wear the *daunting jesses*, gaining advantage on initiative rolls. Any creature that the bird attacks with its talons must make a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened until the end of its next turn. A creature that succeeds on this saving throw is unaffected by the *daunting jesses* for 24 hours.

Value: 275 gp, *minor*

Harness of Articulation

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

This harness supports two prosthetic arms with hands. It is designed to allow arm-less creatures to pick up and manipulate objects in the environment. When worn, the arms fold or flatten to the wearer's body to stay out of the way. By concentrating, the creature can use the arms and hands as a normal humanoid would, lifting, carrying, and manipulating objects. For example, a pegasus wearing this harness could pull a potion from its saddlebags, remove the cork, and hold the bottle to its mouth for drinking.

The hands of the *harness of articulation* are not particularly dexterous; they cannot shape somatic components, make unarmed attacks, wield weapons, or don a shield. Any activity that requires a Dexterity check, like trying to pick a lock with thieves' tools, applies disadvantage to the roll. If the wearer loses concentration while using this harness, the arms drop whatever they are holding and return to their folded default position.

As a worn item, this object resizes itself for creatures of any size, but it is also versatile enough to be configured to fit a variety of body types, from horses to giant snakes.

Value: 775 gp, *major*

Horseshoes of Cold Iron

Weapon (weapon-like device), rare

While these cold-forged horseshoes are affixed to the hooves of a horse or similar creature, the wearer is affected by the *protection from evil and good* spell effective only against fey creatures.

Any hoof attacks by the wearer of these horseshoes are considered to come from magic weapons. When the wearer makes a successful attack with its hooves against a fey creature, it deals an additional 1d6 necrotic damage.

Value: 750 gp, *major*

Horseshoes of Thundering

Wondrous item, rare

These heavy horseshoes emit an ominous rumbling when the wearer runs, much louder than the tramp of normal horses' hooves. Once on each of its turns, when a creature wearing all four shoes makes an attack with its hooves, each creature within 5 feet of the wearer (other than its riders) must make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw or suffer 1d8 thunder damage.

Value: 750 gp, *major*

A harness of articulation

Pendant of Shared Sight

Wondrous item, very rare

This set of two metal disks bears the image of an eye on each one. The handler's item hangs on a pendant and the matching piece is born by an animal as a trinket.

The wearer of the handler's pendant can use an action to see through the eyes of the creature bearing the trinket, so long as the bearer of the trinket has an Intelligence rating of 6 or lower. While doing so, the wearer of the pendant gains the benefit of any special senses possessed by the bearer of the trinket.

This effect relies upon the items of this set being within 100 feet of each other. The effect lasts until the start of the user's next turn. During this time, the user is blind with regard to its own sense of sight.

Value: 435 gp, *major*

Saddlebags of Provender

Wondrous item, uncommon

This item takes the form of regular saddlebags, two connected bags worn across a creature's back, typically behind a saddle, one bag hanging to either side of the creature. These bags use extradimensional spaces to carry great quantities of fodder, hay in one bag and water in the other.

When herbaceous feed is placed into the hay bag, it goes into an extradimensional space that can contain up to 500 pounds of the feed. Similarly, when water is placed into the water bag, its extradimensional space can contain up to 500 gallons. These provisions are kept fresh and unspoiled in this magical environment.

If items other than herbaceous feed or water are placed into either bag, those items are contained in the bag's regular space. However, most users of this item leave the bags empty of other equipment because accessing the feed or water requires tipping the bag to pour out its contents, which will also tip out anything carried in the bags' mundane spaces.

Saddlebags of provender weigh 30 pounds empty. The magical food in the extradimensional space adds no weight, but items in the saddlebags' regular spaces add their weights accordingly.

Placing this item inside an extradimensional space created by a *bag of holding*, *portable hole*, or similar item instantly destroys both items and opens a gate to the Astral Plane. The gate originates where the one item was placed inside the other. Any creature within 10 feet of the gate is sucked through it to a random location on the Astral Plane. The gate then closes. The gate is one-way and can't be reopened.

Value: 180 gp, *minor*

Tome of Animal Enhancement

Wondrous item, very rare

This book contains magic to enhance an animal. If you spend 48 hours over a period of 5 days reading this tome to another creature, the target creature's Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores increase by 2 each, to maximum ratings of 6. The manual then loses its magic but regains it in a century.

Value: 24,000 gp, *major*

Trinket of Amphibiousness

Wondrous item, uncommon

While wearing this coral trinket, an air-breathing creature with the beast type can breathe water while submerged in it, even partially. If the creature is water-breathing, it can instead breathe air while it is emerged from the water.

Value: 325 gp, *minor*

Trinket of Serenity

Wondrous item, common

A beast that wears this sandalwood trinket gains benefits in relation to other animals. Regardless of species, no other beasts consider the wearer to be their natural prey, nor do they consider the wearer to be a predator unless it acts in a hostile manner.

For example, a mule tied up to wait alone in the woods won't be attacked by cougars, and a wolf passing quietly among livestock won't spook them.

Value: 220 gp, *minor*

Trinket of Life Warding

Wondrous item, very rare (requires attunement by a creature with an Intelligence rating of 6 or lower)

This item appears to be a tiny pearl enmeshed in a golden net. The first time the wearer would drop to 0 hit points from taking damage, it instead drops to 1 hit point, and this item becomes unattuned. If the item is still attuned when the target is subjected to an effect that would kill it instantaneously without dealing damage, that effect is instead negated against the target, and the item becomes unattuned.

Value: 3,750 gp, *major*

Trinket of Night

Wondrous item, uncommon

While wearing this onyx trinket, the creature has darkvision to a range of 60 feet. If the creature already has darkvision, this trinket increases the range by 60 feet.

Value: 220 gp, *minor*

Trinket of Harnessing

Wondrous item, uncommon

This trinket takes the form of an iron coin. If worn by a spirit that was summoned with the *find familiar*, *find steed*, or *find greater steed* spell, the creature retains its worn equipment when it disappears, whether it disappeared because it was dismissed or because it was reduced to 0 hit points. When the creature is summoned again, it returns with the equipment it disappeared with.

This affects tack and harness, saddle, barding, magic items, and any other of the creature's worn gear. It does not otherwise affect carried items, nor will it affect a worn magic item that gives access to an extradimensional space, like a *bag of holding*. Although a worn pack saddle or saddlebags are affected, any luggage or burdens within (or attached to) such containers are not. If the spirit creature is ever permanently dismissed, it leaves behind its worn equipment, including this token.

Value: 150 gp, *minor*

Wind Barding

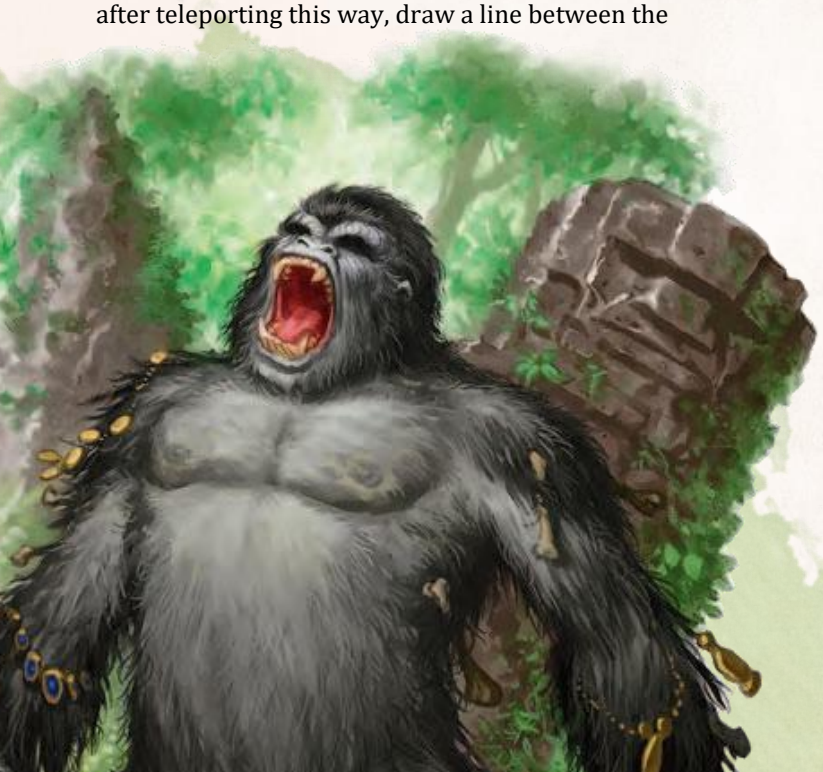
Armor (light or medium barding), rare (requires attunement)

As a bonus action, an animal wearing this barding can teleport, along with any riders and gear it is carrying, to an unoccupied space it can see within 30 feet. Immediately after teleporting this way, draw a line between the creature's old location and new location. A momentary gust of strong wind travels down this line extending ten feet to either side of it. The wind disperses gas or vapor, and it extinguishes candles, torches, and other unprotected flames in the area.

If this teleportation feature is used within 1 hour of a previous use, roll a d20. On a 6–20, the item functions as normal. On a 2–5, the item fails to activate, and the bonus action is wasted. On a 1, the creature arrives at a different unoccupied space within range, one selected randomly or by the Dungeon Master.

If this barding's wearer does not have an Intelligence rating of 5 or higher, the item can be activated by a handler who helped the animal attune the item, while the handler is in contact with the animal or riding it. In this case, it is the handler who must use a bonus action.

Value: 2,450 gp, *major*



Wings of Glory

Armor (chain mail equine barding), rare

This glamorous chain mail horse armor appears to be made of links of silver and gold. When activated, spectral wings appear from the wearer's shoulders, giving it the look of a pegasus.

Regardless of Intelligence rating, any wearer proficient with this armor may activate it with a reaction (and will instinctively do so as quickly as practicable in combat).

While the wings are out, any creature who targets the barding's wearer with an attack or a harmful spell must first make a Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the creature must choose a new target or lose the attack or spell. This effect doesn't protect the wearer from area effects, such as the explosion of a *fireball*, nor does the animal's rider gain these benefits.

The effect lasts for one minute, or until the wearer makes an attack, casts a spell that affects an enemy, or deals damage to another creature. If the wings disappear because of the wearer's actions, the item cannot be activated again for one hour.

Value: 2,000 gp, *major*

Yoke of Laboring

Wondrous Item, uncommon

This sturdy double harness has a versatile design that fits nearly any pair of Large quadrupedal animals.

When worn by two such creatures, this 50-lb. object becomes weightless and it doubles the combined weight the two animals can pull or drag. When pulling a wagon, plow, sled, or similar burden, the animals do not need to spend extra movement to traverse difficult terrain.

Value: 125 gp, *minor*

New Supernatural Gifts

These powers are rewards from beings of great force or great magical power. They can be acquired by characters and by animal companions alike.

An animal that has a blessing should have an increased market value, but the exact change in value is hard to quantify. Charms do not tend to make an animal more valuable since they last only until used; proving that an animal can use a charm tends to waste the charm's only use. The additional value is left to the imagination of the Dungeon Master.

Supernatural gifts are further described in chapter 7 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, under "Other Rewards."

Blessings

Normal blessings are rewards for performing great works on behalf of a deity, or they are granted to assist in the performance of great works.

When animals receive blessings, they are more likely to be agents of a deity, blessed to increase the animal's chance of success for a particular mission. For example, a paladin that swears to a holy quest may find an animal with a blessing, a creature sent by a god to help the paladin complete that quest.

The following examples expand the selection provided in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Blessing of Adaption. This blessing grants you the ability to breathe water and provides a swimming speed equal to your normal speed.

Blessing of Agility. Your Dexterity score increases by 2, up to a maximum of 22.

Blessing of Arachnida. You have a climbing speed equal to your walking speed. You can move up, down, and across vertical surfaces and upside down along ceilings, while leaving your hands free.

Blessing of Courage. You are immune to the frightened condition.

Blessing of Cunning. Your Intelligence score increases by 2, up to a maximum of 22.

Blessing of Personality. Your Charisma score increases by 2, up to a maximum of 22.

Blessing of Power. Your Strength score increases by 2, up to a maximum of 22.

Blessing of Resistance. You have resistance to a single type of damage from the following list: acid, cold, fire, lightning, necrotic, poison, radiant, or thunder. You can benefit from multiple instances of this blessing, so long as each applies to a different damage type.

Blessing of Telepathy. This blessing grants you the benefits of a *helm of telepathy*.

Blessing of the Planar. You are immune to the negative plane-specific effects that natives of the Material Plane suffer when visiting other planes.

Charms

Charms are single-use or limited-use supernatural gifts. They come from a variety of sources. Animals most often acquire charms by visiting magical locations. For example, certain holy shrines, enchanted glades, or planer nexuses naturally invest charms in the animals who spend a day or more there. Finding one of these places of power, one close enough to be revisited with some frequency, can itself be considered a treasure like a significant magic item.

Charm of Animal Allies. This charm allows the holder to gain the benefits of a *potion of animal friendship* as an action. Once the holder does so, the charm vanishes.

Charm of Comprehension. This charm allows the holder to cast the *comprehend languages* spell as an action. No components are required. Once used three times, the charm leaves the holder.

Charm of Elemental Warding. This charm allows the holder to cast the *absorb elements* spell (1st-level version) as a reaction. No components are required. Once used three times, the charm leaves the holder.

Charm of Enhanced Health. This charm allows the holder to cast the *false life* spell (1st-level version) at will, as an action. No components are required. Once used for the first time, the charm leaves the holder after 1 day.

Charm of Fast Fleeing. This charm allows the holder to cast the *expeditious retreat* spell as a bonus action. No components are required. Once used three times, the charm leaves the holder.

Charm of False Flames. This allows the holder to cast the *faerie fire* spell as an action. No components are required. After five uses, the charm leaves the holder.

Charm of Invulnerability. This charm allows the holder to gain the benefits of a *potion of invulnerability* as an action. Once the holder does so, the charm vanishes.

Charm of Seeing. This grants the holder the benefits of a *robe of eyes*. Once activated as an action, the benefits lasts 5 days, after which the charm leaves the holder.

Charm of Telekinesis. This charm has 10 charges. The holder can use an action and expend 1 charge to cast *telekinesis*. This spell can only target objects not being worn or carried. No components are required. Once all its charges have been expended, the charm leaves the holder.

Charm of Warding Force. This allows the holder to cast the *shield* spell as a reaction. No components are required. Once used three times, the charm leaves the holder.

Animal Markets

Chapter 4: Animal Markets

Animals are things of value. Although their greatest worth is rooted in companionship, animals are still quantifiable in terms of the wealth and time needed to buy, train, and keep them.

This chapter includes equipment for girding and using animals during adventures, and market prices for animals as trade goods, mounts, and monsters.

Equipment

The animal-specific adventuring gear and weapons in this chapter greatly expand upon the options found in the *Player's Handbook*. This gear is particularly useful for campaigns that focus on travel or for military campaigns wherein the players fill cavalry roles or similarly work with beasts of war. This gear is repeated as an excerpt from Wraith Wright's *Comprehensive Equipment Manual*.

Descriptions

Descriptions for animal-specific gear are provided here, listed alphabetically.

Barding (all). *Barding is armor designed to protect mounts or other animals. It typically covers the head, neck, and body, leaving the legs relatively free of impediment (and free of protection).*

Any armor shown on the Armor table in chapter 5 of the *Player's Handbook* can be purchased as, or crafted as, animal barding. (See also "Armor" in the *Comprehensive Equipment Manual*.) The costs and weights are shown as multiples of the equivalent armor when made for humanoids. For example, "x2" cost doubles what the armor would normally cost.

Canine barding typically fits all canines of the same size and equine barding typically fits all equines of the same size. Horses and dogs are ubiquitous mounts for Medium and Small creatures, such that their armor is more command and cheapter to buy than it is for any other creatures. But exotic barding is more specialized, made for animals of a specific species as well as a specific size.

For example, despite both being Large size, an allosaurus' exotic barding will not fit a rhinoceros.

Bit and Bridle. *Most mounts require some sort of head harness, something attached to a lead that is held by the rider or nearby handler. In the case of traditionally trained mounts, a bit and bridle allow the rider to direct the animal and keep it restrained. For optimal control, animals of various kinds require different sizes, shapes, and secondary functions built into these devices. For short-necked creatures, like dogs, this means a collar.*

Canine bridles typically fit canines of any species, and equine bridles typically fit equines of any species, but exotic bridles are made for animals of a specific species as well as a specific size. For example, despite being the same size, a Large dragon's exotic bridle cannot be transferred to a giant seahorse.

Blinkers. *Standard blinkers are made for equine creatures: horses, ponies, donkeys, and mules. They are usually attached to the animal's bridle and cover most (or all) of each eye with a cup-shaped device. Blinkers can control an animal's field of vision, restricting the animal to seeing only what is in front of it.*

This item prevents distractions and, at the DM's discretion, can prevent the animal's handler from having to make Wisdom (Animal Handling) checks under some circumstances. A creature wearing blinkers has disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on vision. A creature wearing blinkers that fully cover its eyes instead has the blinded condition.

Blinkers, Exotic. *Exotic blinkers are made for a specific type of creature. Some animals have multiple sets of eyes or otherwise require unusually constructed blinkers. Some exotic blinkers have additional functionality. For example, exotic blinkers might fully cover a creature's eyes until the rider pulls a special cord to reveal them. This facilitates using the animal's gaze as a weapon, as with the basilisk's petrification or the catoblepas' death ray.*

A creature wearing blinkers has disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on vision. A creature wearing blinkers that fully cover its eyes instead has the blinded condition.

Adventuring Gear (Tack and Harness)

Item	Cost	Weight
Barding		
Canine (Large)	x3	x2
Canine (Medium)	x2	x1
Equine (Large)	x4	x2
Equine (Medium)	x3	x1
Exotic (Gargantuan)	x10	x8
Exotic (Huge)	x7	x4
Exotic (Large)	x5	x2
Exotic (Medium)	x4	x1
Exotic (Small)	x3	x1/2
Exotic (Tiny)	x2	x1/4
Bit and bridle		
Canine (Large)	3 gp	1 lb.
Canine (Medium)	2 gp	1/2 lb.
Equine (Large)	2 gp	1 lb.
Equine (Medium)	2 gp	1/2 lb.
Exotic (Gargantuan)	18 gp	8 lb.
Exotic (Huge)	10 gp	4 lb.
Exotic (Large)	6 gp	2 lb.
Exotic (Medium)	5 gp	1 lb.
Blinkers	1 gp	1 lb.
Blinkers, exotic	4 gp	1½ lb.
Body harness		
Gargantuan	80 gp	55 lb.
Huge	30 gp	35 lb.
Large	15 gp	17 lb.
Medium	8 gp	8 lb.
Small	3 gp	3 lb.
Tiny	1 gp	1 lb.
Cage		
Gargantuan	950 gp	3,800 lb.
Huge	300 gp	675 lb.
Large	120 gp	300 lb.
Medium	40 gp	75 lb.
Small	15 gp	60 lb.
Tiny	5 gp	25 lb.
Falconry kit	3 gp	2 lb.
Feed		
Grain (oats)	1 sp	4 lb.
Herbaceous (hay)	2 cp	4 lb.
Meat (scraps)	1 sp	1 lb.
Hobble	2 gp	2 lb.
Hobble, exotic	5 gp	4 lb.

Item	Cost	Weight
Howdah		
Exotic (Gargantuan)	190 gp	455 lb.
Exotic (Huge)	65 gp	235 lb.
Exotic (Large)	35 gp	125 lb.
Muzzle		
Gargantuan or Huge	8 gp	4 lb.
Large or Medium	2 gp	1 lb.
Small or Tiny	1 gp	1/2 lb.
Saddlebags	4 gp	8 lb.
Saddle, canine (Large or Medium)		
Military	12 gp	25 lb.
Pack	3 gp	10 lb.
Riding	6 gp	20 lb.
Saddle, equine (Large or Medium)		
Military	20 gp	30 lb.
Pack	5 gp	15 lb.
Riding	10 gp	25 lb.
Saddle, exotic (Gargantuan)		
Military	225 gp	70 lb.
Pack	60 gp	55 lb.
Riding	120 gp	65 lb.
Strap	210 gp	70 lb.
Saddle, exotic (Huge)		
Military	105 gp	50 lb.
Pack	30 gp	35 lb.
Riding	60 gp	45 lb.
Strap	120 gp	50 lb.
Saddle, exotic (Large)		
Military	52 gp	40 lb.
Pack	15 gp	25 lb.
Riding	30 gp	35 lb.
Strap	60 gp	40 lb.
Saddle, exotic (Medium)		
Military	26 gp	30 lb.
Pack	8 gp	15 lb.
Riding	15 gp	25 lb.
Strap	30 gp	30 lb.
Saddle, exotic (Small)		
Military	13 gp	20 lb.
Pack	4 gp	5 lb.
Riding	8 gp	15 lb.
Strap	15 gp	20 lb.

Drawn Vehicles

Item	Cost	Weight	Item	Cost	Weight
Carriage (1-4 pullers)	100 gp	400 lb.	Sled (1-2 pullers)	15 gp	180 lb.
Carriage, grand (4-8 pullers)	400 gp	1,300 lb.	Sled, dog (1-16 pullers)	20 gp	300 lb.
Cart (1 puller)	15 gp	200 lb.	Sleigh (2-8 pullers)	30 gp	400 lb.
Cart, dog (1 puller)	9 gp	80 lb.	Trap (1 puller)	55 gp	180 lb.
Chariot, heavy (2-6 pullers)	350 gp	380 lb.	Wagon, covered (2-6 pullers)	60 gp	800 lb.
Chariot, light (1-4 pullers)	250 gp	250 lb.	Wagon, flatbed (2-6 pullers)	35 gp	600 lb.

Body Harness (any). *These sets of secure straps serve multiple functions. Typically, they allow an animal to draw vehicles such as carts or wagons, attaching the worn harness to one or two of the vehicle's forward-pointing shafts. The straps are placed in such a way as to distribute the force evenly across the most accommodating surface of the animal's body. A body harness can also be re-configured to help lift or carry an animal. In this case, straps are shifted to more supportive positions on the animal's body, suitable to raising or lowering it, perhaps via block and tackle. Travelers navigating rough terrain may find such tools necessary to bring their mounts across steep hills, cliffs, or similar obstacles.*

Cage (any). *A cage is large enough for an animal of the listed size to stand within it, turn around fully, and lie down. (A winged creature does not have space to fully spread its wings.) A cage's size rating must fit a contained creature's size exactly; too small a cage prevents the creature from fitting into it while too large a cage might allow the creature to escape through the spacing in the bars.*

Cages are made of iron, with Armor Class 19. These resilient objects usually have hit points and damage thresholds as follows: Tiny (5/1), Small (10/2), Medium (18/4), Large (27/6), Huge (39/8), and Gargantuan (54/12). Because they are constructed to resist intentional breakage by their contained creatures, cages are typically immune to damage from natural attacks. Additional information on the health of objects can be found in the "Objects" section of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Carriage. *An animal-drawn, wheeled conveyance designed for passenger use rather than utility. A carriage, or "coach," is typically drawn by two or four horses, but can be pulled by a single beast. A driver usually sits on a front-mounted exterior bench. A carriage comfortably seats four passengers.*

Carriage, Grand. *A larger version of a carriage, the grand carriage is built with expensive materials and crafted to show wealth and status. This vehicle is typically drawn by four, six, or eight horses. A driver rides on a front-mounted bench and a set of handholds and footholds allow a pair of attendants or soldiers to ride on the back. A grand carriage comfortably seats six passengers.*

Drawn Vehicles

If you have proficiency with "vehicle (land)," you can add your proficiency bonus to any check you make to control drawn vehicles in difficult circumstances. You also add your proficiency bonus to the Armor Class and saving throws of a vehicle you operate.

The normal operation of vehicles requires no ability checks, but difficult maneuvers do. Use vehicle (land) proficiency to navigate rough terrain (DC 10), assess a vehicle's condition (DC 15), or perform a difficult maneuver making a tight turn at high speed (DC 20).

Pullers (Horsepower). On the Drawn Vehicles table, after each vehicle's name is a parenthetical range for the minimum and maximum number of animals that can be harnessed to the vehicle. Drawn vehicles move at the speed of their slowest pulling animal.

Animals pulling a drawn vehicle can move weight based on their combined carrying capacities. So long as the vehicle's wheels, skis, or skids are functional and used on appropriate terrain, multiply these combined scores by 5 when calculating normal carrying capacity and "push, drag, or lift" capacity.

Beasts of Burden. Horses are the most common beasts of burden for vehicles, particularly draft horses. (Small-size races prefer mastiffs to draw vehicles.) These creatures are described in the *Player's Handbook* and the *Monster Manual*.

Aside from these animals, yaks, water buffalo, and similar cattle are often used as vehicle-pulling beasts of burden, particularly in rural areas. These use the cow (ox) stat block from *Volo's Guide to Monsters*.

Martial Melee Weapons

Item	Cost	Damage	Weight	Properties
Lance				
Combat	10 gp	1d12 piercing	6 lb.	Reach, special
Combat, light	8 gp	1d10 piercing	4 lb.	Reach, special
Great	35 gp	2d8 piercing	15 lb.	Reach, special, two-handed
Jousting	10 gp	1d8 bludgeoning	6 lb.	Reach, special
Jousting, light	8 gp	1d6 bludgeoning	4 lb.	Reach, special

Cart. *A small, animal-drawn conveyance with two or four wheels, designed to carry cargo rather than passengers.*

Cart, Dog. *A smaller version of the cart, typically with only two wheels. Dog carts are designed to be pulled by a dog or other beast smaller than a horse.*

Chariot, Heavy. *A heavy conveyance drawn by two or four animals, usually horses. Up to three riders stand on a rolling platform, it's short front and side walls sheltering them from the waist down.*

Chariot, Light. *This light conveyance can be drawn by as few as one animal, usually a horse. A single rider stands on the rolling platform, sheltered from the waist down by the chariot's front and side walls.*

Falconry Kit. *This kit comes in a satchel that contains all the tack needed to manage birds of prey. It includes a thick glove for the animal to perch on, a hood that blindfolds the creature, a 50-foot lightweight cord leash, and additional equipment needed to care for, train, and hunt with animals of this sort.*

Feed (any). *The type of food needed for different animals varies significantly. Omnivores can typically eat any kind of feed, as well as rations. Herbivores, particularly equines, can survive on grass, hay, and other herbaceous plants. High-value feed, like oats, is simply a luxury and is unhealthy for such animals to eat all the time. Dogs and other carnivores require meat for most of their diet. As feed, this typically takes the form of dried meat scraps or meat ground up with absorbent grains. Meat feed lasts for about seven days before it becomes spoiled and worthless.*

Most creatures can forage or hunt for themselves, given enough time and left to their own devices. Feed is only needed when animals are kept caged or stabled, worked or ridden longer than eight hours in a day, or otherwise prevented from finding their own food for significant portions of the day. Tiny creatures need only 1/4 pound of food per day for sustenance. Small and Medium creatures need 1 pound. Large creatures need 4 pounds, Huge creatures need 16 pounds, and Gargantuan creatures need 64 pounds of food per day. The DM is the final arbiter of each animal's needs for quantity and type of food.

Hobble. *A hobble is a set of manacles for an animal, particularly suited for equines like horses. Equines will typically graze in a small area while hobbled and can be left alone for hours. Other animals, like dogs, are less docile and will chew through the restraint; such creatures are instead leashed when left unattended. Some hobbles are built weakly so a truly panicked creature can break free, running away at full speed if attacked by a predator or otherwise seriously threatened. Hobbles are also used as training tools for animals that will serve as mounts and laborers.*

Applying or removing a hobble takes an action. It reduces the animal's speed to 5 and discourages travel.

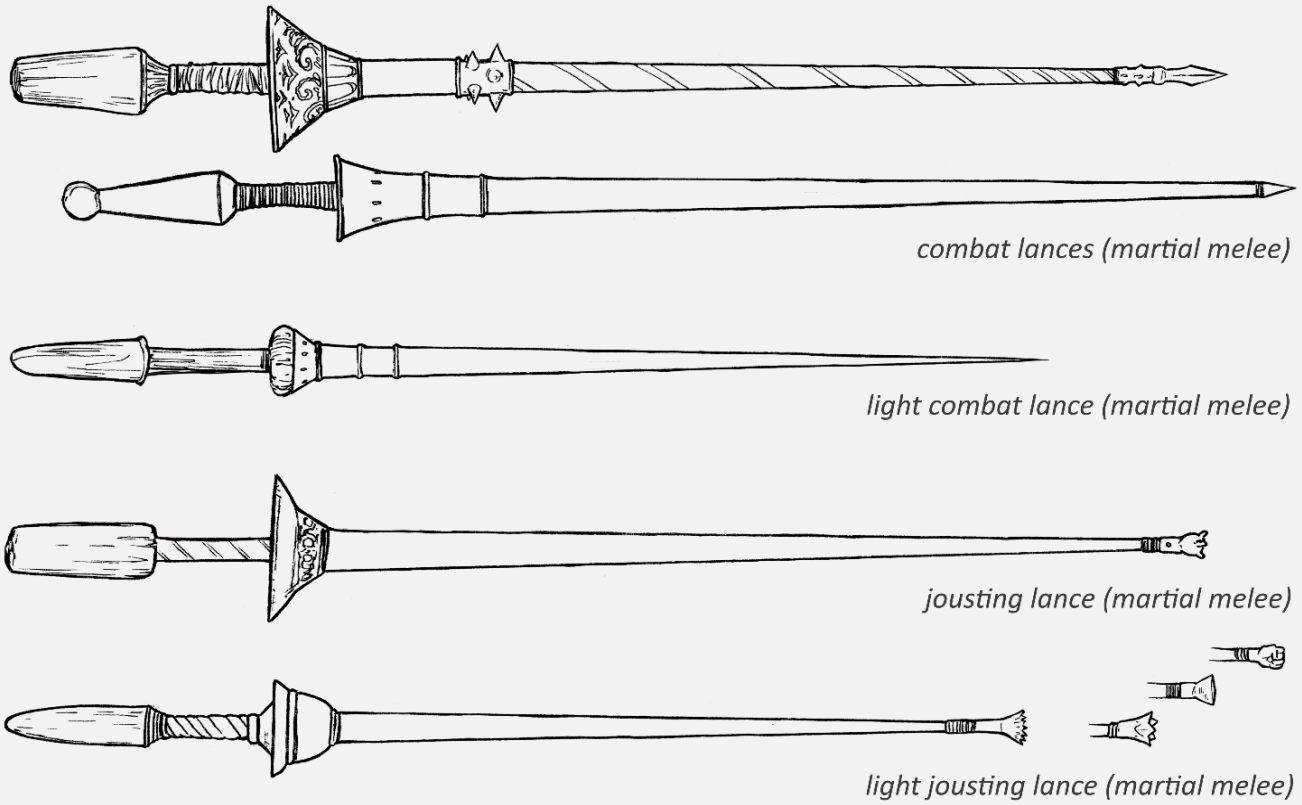
Hobble, Exotic. *This complex hobble can be used on docile animals of any size, creatures with multiple legs, or creatures with alternative movement modes like flight. It otherwise operates as a normal hobble.*

Howdah (any). *A howdah is a partially enclosed platform mounted on an animal. It surrounds one or more riders, offering protection from attackers or from the elements. Most howdahs include a roof.*

One Medium- or Small-sized rider can fit in the howdah of a Large creature. Most Large creatures are not quite big enough for a howdah, but camels are a notable exception. Four Medium- or Small-sized riders can fit in the howdah of a Huge creature. Sixteen Medium- or Small-sized riders can fit in the howdah of a Gargantuan creature. Riders in howdahs have half cover from the attacks of creatures on the ground if those creatures are smaller than the mount.

Lance (any). *A long-hafted weapon with a sharp point, ideal for wielding from the back of a charging mount. A lance is long enough to brace under the arm of the wielding hand, allowing it to be used one-handed if a mount provides the strikes' forward momentum.*

Lance, Combat (any). You have disadvantage when you use a combat lance to attack a target within 5 feet of you.



Also, a combat lance requires two hands to wield when you aren't mounted.

Lance, Great. *A great lance is an extra-long, sharpened pole, supported by a swiveling pintle mount.*

This weapon is too large to use unless affixed to an exotic saddle or howdah on a Huge-size (or larger) creature. This weapon has a 15-foot reach. You have disadvantage when you use a great lance to attack a target within 10 feet of you.

Lance, Jousting (any). You have disadvantage when you use a jousting lance to attack a target within 5 feet of you.

Variant: Lances and Mount Sizes

The standard lance sizes are meant for use with Large mounts like horses or camels. Light lances exist for use with Medium mounts instead.

With this optional rule, a combat lance or a jousting lance used one-handed from the back of a Medium size creature applies disadvantage to the weapon's attack rolls. This penalty does not apply if the lancer is wielding a *light* combat lance or *light* jousting lance.

Also, a jousting lance requires two hands to wield when you aren't mounted.

A jousting lance has a blunt end made for practicing against armored riders. A creature wearing heavy armor has resistance to damage inflicted by a jousting lance.

Muzzle (any). *Muzzles are each made for animals of a specific type and size. A muzzle prevents the wearer from biting or eating. It also makes dangerous-looking animals appear to be safer, meaning bystanders are often less intimidated and more accepting of their presence.*

A muzzle takes one action to apply or remove. At the DM's discretion, use of a muzzle can prevent the handler from having to make Wisdom (Animal Handling) checks under some circumstances.

Saddlebags. *This device consists of two large satchels with a wide connecting strap. They are meant to straddle a Medium or Large mount and hang to either side, just behind a saddle.*

Saddle, Canine (any). *Saddles for dogs are lightweight and built to accommodate the greater range of motion that dogs have over equine mounts.*

These are also suitable for wolves of Large or Medium size, and similar creatures. A military version gives the

Variant: Military Saddles

A military saddle grants advantage on a rider's ability checks *and* saving throws to remain in the saddle.

The military saddle in the Player's Handbook *gives "advantage on any check you make to remain mounted." However, the "Mounted Combat" rules use saving throws, not checks, to govern every attempt to remaining mounted. Without a change, military saddles wouldn't provide their intended benefits.*

rider advantage on any check or saving throw to remain mounted. A pack version does not accommodate a rider; it simply provides a frame to which baggage can be tied.

Saddle, Equine (any). *An equine saddle fits horses and ponies as well as donkeys and mules. It also fits similar equine creatures such as unicorns.*

Equine saddles are not suited for equines with additional limbs or wings like a pegasus. (Such a creature requires an exotic saddle instead.) A military version gives the rider advantage on any check or saving throw to remain mounted. A pack version has no accommodation for a rider; it simply provides a frame to which baggage can be tied.

Saddle, Exotic (any). *Creatures not in the shape of equines (horses, mules, etc.) or canines (dogs, wolves, etc.), require exotic saddles to use as mounts or beasts of burden.*

Exotic saddles are each made for animals of a specific type and size. For example, despite both being Large, a wyvern's riding saddle cannot be used on an owlbear. A military version of an exotic saddle gives the rider advantage on any check or saving throw to remain mounted when the animal is not climbing, flying, or moving underwater. A pack version of an exotic saddle has no accommodation for a rider; it simply provides a frame to which baggage can be tied.

Sled. *A flat, narrow conveyance with a smooth bottom or borne on a pair of smooth runners. Sleds are designed to be drug across low-friction surfaces like snow. Sleds typically have no side or top and are used to carry cargo.*

Sled, Dog. *This lightweight sled is designed for a pilot and no more than a single passenger. Its long, slender frame is typically drawn by a dozen sled dogs. Dog sleds often have a single lead dog ahead of a series of paired sled dogs.*

Medium-size quadrupeds ("dogs") can reliably drag a sled over snow and ice for 1 hour for each dog pulling in the harness, to a maximum of 8 hours. Each additional hour of dragging prior to completing a long rest is considered a "forced march." (See Travel Pace in chapter 8 of the *Player's Handbook*.)

Sleigh. *A sleigh is a sled, designed to carry passengers like a carriage. It usually has pronounced runners.*

Trap. *A trap is a two-wheeled passenger cart designed to carry one or two passengers. A trap's large wheels, light construction, and high position make it ideal for speed.*

Wagon, Covered. *This four-wheeled wagon has walls and a roof. It is sometimes furnished with amenities making it suitable for use as a small residence.*

Wagon, Flatbed. *A flatbed wagon is an open-topped, four-wheeled vehicle typically drawn by two or four animals. It has an excellent cargo capacity and is employed in several utility roles. Some flatbed wagons are built with a framework of posts or bars over which canvas can be stretched to cover and enclose the wagon's bed.*

Animals

The full stat blocks of monsters here can be found in the *Monster Manual*, unless otherwise noted on the tables. Sources for these table notations include *Volo's Guide to Monsters* [VGM], *Storm King's Thunder* [SKT], and *Mordenkainen's Tome of Foes* [MTF].

Buying and Selling

The tables in this chapter present suggested prices for animals. These may vary based on regional rarity and culture. Except for the creatures on the Mounts table, these prices are for animals and monsters that have no training or special templates.

Like used equipment, the value of animals (including each trained trick and role) is halved when a player character sells it under normal circumstances. If an animal's training isn't useful considering the animal's physical and temperamental limitations, that training adds no value when calculating a sale price.

If your campaign uses a treasure distribution rate that is not based on random outcomes of the treasure tables in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, the DM will need to adjust these prices accordingly. For advice on managing wealth, check out Wraith Wright's *Expanded Wealth Manual*.

Tricks and Templates

A trained animal's total cost reflects value added by its training and supernatural abilities.

Each useful **trick** the creature knows adds a 25 gp cost to its purchase price.

The **dire animal** template adds an additional cost equal to 15 times the base cost (minimum of 75 gp added).

The **exceptional specimen** template adds an additional cost equal to 5 times the creature's base cost (minimum of 25 gp added).

The **fragile specimen** template adds a *cost reduction* equal to half the creature's base value. Fragile riding horses do not use this modification.

The **fey creature**, **planar creature**, **shadow creature**, or **undead creature** template adds an additional cost of 10 times the creature's base cost (minimum 50 gp added).

The **juvenile specimen** and **reluctant creature** templates do not increase the animal's cost; the creature's potential is obvious, and its limitations are temporary.

The **legendary creature** template adds an additional cost equal to 20 times the creature's base cost (minimum of 100 gp added).

The **rider-trained** template adds an additional cost to the creature's purchase price, a number of gold pieces equal to its base cost (minimum 5 gp added). Prices on the Mounts already include this increase.

The **war-trained** template adds an additional cost to the purchase price, a number of gold pieces equal to 10 times its base cost (minimum 50 gp added). The warhorse is a product of this template but has its own set cost.

Untrained Creatures

The beasts on the Untrained Creatures table serve as trade goods but can also be pets or animals for training. They include mostly mundane creatures.

Although these animals currently lack any roles or tricks, they are old enough to begin training in such things.

Animals named "untrained" on the table also appear in their rider-trained forms on the Mounts table, where they are priced to reflect this additional value.

Mounts

This table provides animals commonly rated as mundane mounts. Non-mount animals, and untrained versions of normal mounts, are categorized as trade goods and are listed on the Untrained Creatures table.

All creatures on the Mounts table are rider-trained. The value of this training is already figured into the prices listed on the table. When looking for the base price of these animals, refer instead to the Untrained Creatures table.

Untrained Creatures

Value	Goods
1 cp	Frog, rat, or spider
2 cp	Cat, chicken, or rabbit (hare)
5 cp	Lizard, quipper, or turtle
1 sp	Bat, crab, or octopus
5 sp	Raven or scorpion
1 gp	Goat, owl, songbird, or weasel
2 gp	Hyena, jackal, poisonous snake, or sheep
3 gp	Baboon, common dog, fox, giant crab, giant rat, pig, or deer
4 gp	Badger, giant fire beetle, giant sea horse, untrained donkey, or untrained mule
5 gp	Ape, boar, giant frog, small parrot, vulture, or walrus
10 gp	Constrictor snake, cow, elk, giant centipede, giant weasel, giant wolf spider, or untrained dolphin
12 gp	Crocodile, eagle
12 ½ gp	Untrained mastiff
15 gp	Giant badger, giant bat, giant spider, giant walrus, hawk, ox, untrained mountain goat, untrained pony, or yak
20 gp	Black bear, giant goat, or giant wasp
25 gp	Giant poisonous snake, untrained axe beak, untrained camel, untrained draft horse, untrained steeder (male), or wolf
35 gp	Blood hawk, brown bear, large parrot, or untrained steeder (female)
37 ½ gp	Untrained riding horse
50 gp	Almiraj, giant hyena, giant toad, panther, seal, or untrained aurochs
75 gp	Dire wolf, giant eagle, giant octopus, giant owl, giant vulture, lion, reef shark, or tiger
100 gp	Giant constrictor snake, flying monkey, giant elk, untrained elephant, or untrained giant lizard ("hold breath" for +100 gp, "spider climb" for +200 gp)
125 gp	Untrained flying snake
150 gp	Untrained giant seahorse
350 gp	Giant boar, hunter shark, polar bear, or saber-toothed tiger
450 gp	Giant scorpion, killer whale, or rhinoceros
700 gp	Giant ape, giant crocodile, giant shark, or mammoth
900 gp	Hulking crab or sperm whale

Mounts

Creature	Cost	Intelligence	Alignment	CR	Saddle	Speed	Carrying Capacity
Aurochs [VGM]	100 gp	2	Unaligned	2	Large exotic	50 ft.	600 lb.
Axe beak	50 gp	2	Unaligned	1/4	Large exotic	50 ft.	420 lb.
Camel	50 gp	2	Unaligned	1/8	Large exotic	50 ft.	480 lb.
Donkey or mule	8 gp	2	Unaligned	1/8	Equine	40 ft.	420 lb.
Elephant	200 gp	3	Unaligned	4	Huge exotic	40 ft.	1,320 lb.
Giant seahorse	300 gp	2	Unaligned	1/2	Large exotic	40 ft. (40 ft.)	360 lb.
Horse			Unaligned				
Draft	50 gp	2	Unaligned	1/4	Equine	40 ft.	540 lb.
Riding	75 gp	2	Unaligned	1/4	Equine	60 ft.	480 lb.
Fragile [new]	15 gp	2	Unaligned	1/8	Equine	40 ft.	420 lb.
Warhorse	400 gp	2	Unaligned	1/2	Equine	60 ft.	540 lb.
Giant lizard	200 gp	2	Unaligned	1/4	Large exotic	30 ft.	450 lb.
+ hold breath	+100 gp	—	Unaligned	—	—	—	—
+ spider climb	+200 gp	—	Unaligned	—	—	—	—
Mastiff	25 gp	3	Unaligned	1/8	Canine	40 ft.	195 lb.
Mountain goat [RFM]	30 gp	2	Unaligned	1/8	Medium exotic	40 ft. (30 ft.)	210 lb.
Pony	30 gp	2	Unaligned	1/8	Equine	40 ft.	225 lb.
Steeder, female [OotA, MTF]	80 gp	2	Unaligned	1	Large exotic	30 ft.	450 lb.
Steeder, male [OotA, MTF]	50 gp	2	Unaligned	1/4	Medium exotic	30 ft.	225 lb.

Fragile Horse

Large beast, unaligned

Armor Class 9
Hit Points 11 (2d10)
Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	8 (–1)	11 (+0)	2 (–4)	10 (–0)	5 (–3)

Senses passive Perception 10
Challenge 1/8 (25 xp)

Unreliable. Apply disadvantage to any Wisdom (Animal Handling) checks made to control this mount in battle or to get it to perform tricks or difficult maneuvers.

Unstable. This animal gains 1 exhaustion level for each hour of a forced march; this is additional to any exhaustion from failing the Constitution check.

Actions

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

The Dungeon Master might increase the price of any creature on this table, depending on its rarity in the region. For a "standard" campaign, this probably includes any creatures rated for exotic saddles.

Descriptions

The fragile horse and the warhorse are two examples of animals modified from their base form, the riding horse. Both variants serve important roles and have prominent places on the Mounts table.

Fragile Horse. Fragile horses are mounts of inferior quality. Often, they are older, somewhat swaybacked creatures. While normally undesirable, starting characters in need of mounts might find nothing else affordable.

A fragile horse has a delicate constitution, as indicated in the stat block. It has the fragile specimen template; the stat line above includes these adjustments. (Other effects of the template are found in chapter 1). A fragile horse may have the war-trained template for an additional 15 gp.

Warhorse. The warhorse is the only animal on the Mounts table that comes with the "war-trained" template at its listed cost. The benefits of this template are included in the warhorse's stat block.

The warhorse's special slam action has its own name, "trampling charge"; the trick for its war-trained template is instead called Special Action (Trampling Charge).

Monsters (Instinct-Level Intelligence)

Creature	Cost	Int.	Alignment	CR	Saddle	Speed	Carrying Capacity
Ankheg	1,750 gp	1	Unaligned	2	Large exotic	30 ft. (30 ft.)	510 lb.
Carrion crawler	2,750 gp	1	Unaligned	2	Large exotic	30 ft. (30 ft.)	420 lb.
Flail snail	8,000 gp	3	Unaligned	3	Large exotic	10 ft.	510 lb.
Fungi							
Gas spore	750 gp	1	Unaligned	1/2	n/a	0 ft. (10 ft.)	150 lb.
Shrieker	40 gp	1	Unaligned	0	n/a	0 ft.	15 lb.
Violet fungus	375 gp	1	Unaligned	1/4	n/a	5 ft.	45 lb.
Gibbering mouther	1,500 gp	3	Neutral	2	n/a	10 ft. (10 ft.)	150 lb.
Neothelid	9,000 gp	3	Chaotic evil	13	Gargantuan exotic	30 ft.	3,240 lb.
Oozes							
Black pudding	2,750 gp	1	Unaligned	4	n/a	20 ft. (20 ft.)	480 lb.
Gelatinous cube	1,750 gp	1	Unaligned	2	n/a	15 ft.	420 lb.
Gray ooze	750 gp	1	Unaligned	1/2	n/a	10 ft. (10 ft.)	180 lb.
Ochre jelly	1,500 gp	2	Unaligned	2	n/a	10 ft. (10 ft.)	450 lb.
Piercer	750 gp	1	Unaligned	1/2	n/a	5 ft. (5 ft.)	150 lb.
Purple worm	20,000 gp	1	Unaligned	15	Gargantuan exotic	50 ft. (30 ft.)	3,360 lb.
Purple wormling	1,925 gp	1	Unaligned	2	Large exotic	20 ft.	480 lb.

Monsters

The animals in the previous section are the of species common to find in a market. Those creatures are either domesticated or are used as mounts, food, or trade goods in various cultures; depending on location, their presence won't seem out of place or raise any concerns.

In contrast, the creatures in this next section are "monsters." They are not domestic, nor are they common. They are typically the enemies of the player characters, and of society at large, and are rarely marketed.

Monster Tables

The monsters listed on these tables are divided into six categories, based primarily upon Intelligence. Each table's listed prices reflect the creature's rarity and perceived dangerousness. Creatures that can generate monster byproducts, like poison, have significantly higher values.

Instinct-Level Intelligence

Instinct-level creatures are normally those with Intelligence ratings of 1. However, some creatures qualify as instinct-level because of their wholly-alien thought processes, despite Intelligence ratings as high as 3.

Animal-Level Intelligence

These creatures have Intelligence ratings between 2 and 4. But for their rarity or dangerousness, the creatures in this category would likely serve as mounts and domestic beasts in civilized lands.

Cunning-Level Intelligence

Cunning-level creatures are fully self-aware, with Intelligence ratings of 5 or 6. These creatures typically have alignments and understand languages. Some have unique languages of their own.

Cunning-level creatures make excellent animal companions, but their relationships with humanoids are closer to alliances than service roles. These monsters' allegiances aren't likely to be commanded by characters whose goals and philosophies are oppositional.

Monsters (Animal-Level Intelligence)

Creature	Cost	Int.	Alignment	CR	Saddle	Speed	Carrying Capacity
Basilisk	2,500 gp	2	Unaligned	3	Medium exotic	20 ft.	240 lb.
Bulette	3,500 gp	2	Unaligned	5	Large exotic	40 ft. (40 ft.)	570 lb.
Catoblepas	6,000 gp	3	Unaligned	5	Large exotic	30 ft.	570 lb.
Chimera	6,500 gp	3	Unaligned	6	Large exotic	30 ft. (60 ft.)	570 lb.
Cockatrice	1,250 gp	2	Unaligned	1/2	n/a	20 ft. (40 ft.)	90 lb.
Crag cat	1,000 gp	4	Unaligned	1	Large exotic	40 ft.	480 lb.
Darkmantle	1,000 gp	2	Unaligned	1/2	n/a	10 ft. (30 ft.)	240 lb.
Death dog	1,000 gp	3	Unaligned	1	Canine	40 ft.	225 lb.
Dinosaur							
Allosaurus	500 gp	2	Unaligned	2	Large exotic	60 ft.	570 lb.
Ankylosaurus	500 gp	2	Unaligned	3	Huge exotic	30 ft.	1,140 lb.
Brontosaurus	1,000 gp	2	Unaligned	5	Gargantuan exotic	30 ft.	2,520 lb.
Deinonychus	500 gp	4	Unaligned	1	Medium exotic	40 ft.	225 lb.
Dimetrodon	175 gp	2	Unaligned	1/4	Medium exotic	30 ft. (20 ft.)	210 lb.
Hadrosaurus	200 gp	2	Unaligned	1/4	Large exotic	40 ft.	450 lb.
Plesiosaurus	850 gp	2	Unaligned	2	Large exotic	20 ft. (40 ft.)	540 lb.
Pteranodon	250 gp	2	Unaligned	1/4	Medium exotic	10 ft. (60 ft.)	180 lb.
Quetzalcoatlus	700 gp	2	Unaligned	2	Huge exotic	10 ft. (80 ft.)	900 lb.
Stegosaurus	850 gp	2	Unaligned	4	Huge exotic	40 ft.	1,200 lb.
Triceratops	1,000 gp	2	Unaligned	5	Huge exotic	50 ft.	1,320 lb.
Tyrannosaurus rex	2,000 gp	2	Unaligned	8	Huge exotic	50 ft.	1,500 lb.
Velociraptor	250 gp	4	Unaligned	1/4	n/a	30 ft.	45 lb.
Froghemoth	6,000 gp	2	Unaligned	10	n/a	30 ft. (30 ft.)	1,380 lb.
Giant strider	1,000 gp	4	Neutral evil	1	Large exotic	50 ft.	540 lb.
Guard drake	1,500 gp	4	Unaligned	2	Medium exotic	30 ft.	240 lb.
Gorgon	3,500 gp	2	Unaligned	5	Large exotic	40 ft.	600 lb.
Grick	1,500 gp	3	Unaligned	2	n/a	30 ft. (30 ft.)	210 lb.
Griffon	2,750 gp	2	Unaligned	2	Large exotic	30 ft. (80 ft.)	540 lb.
Hippogriff	2,250 gp	2	Unaligned	1	Large exotic	40 ft. (60 ft.)	510 lb.
Hydra	5,000 gp	2	Unaligned	8	n/a	30 ft. (30 ft.)	1,200 lb.
Owlbear	2,000 gp	3	Unaligned	3	Large exotic	40 ft.	600 lb.
Rhinoceros	2,450 gp	2	Unaligned	2	Large exotic	40 ft.	630 lb.
Roc	10,000 gp	3	Unaligned	11	Gargantuan exotic	20 ft. (120 ft.)	3,360 lb.
Rust monster	750 gp	2	Unaligned	1/2	Medium exotic	40 ft.	195 lb.
Stench kow	750 gp	2	Unaligned	1/4	Large exotic	30 ft.	540 lb.
Stirge	1,000 gp	2	Unaligned	3	n/a	10 ft. (40 ft.)	30 lb.
Trapper	1,000 gp	2	Unaligned	3	n/a	10 ft. (10 ft.)	510 lb.
Wolf	50 gp	3	Unaligned	1/4	Canine	40 ft.	180 lb.

Monsters (Cunning-Level Intelligence)

Creature	Cost	Int.	Alignment	CR	Saddle	Speed	Carrying Capacity
Displacer beast	2,000 gp	6	Lawful evil	3	Large exotic	40 ft.	540 lb.
Dolphin VGM	200 gp	6	Unaligned	1/8	Medium exotic	(60 ft.)	210 lb.
Girallon	2,500 gp	5	Unaligned	4	n/a	40 ft. (40 ft.)	540 lb.
Hell hound	2,000 gp	6	Lawful evil	3	Canine	50 ft.	255 lb.
Mimic	1,500 gp	5	Neutral	2	n/a	15 ft.	255 lb.
Otyugh	3,000 gp	6	Neutral	5	n/a	30 ft.	480 lb.
Shadow mastiff	1,500 gp	5	Neutral evil	2	Canine	40 ft.	240 lb.
Wyvern	8,000 gp	5	Unaligned	6	Large exotic	20 ft. (80 ft.)	570 lb.
Yeth hound	2,500 gp	5	Neutral evil	4	Canine	40 ft. (40 ft.)	540 lb.

Monsters (Sentient-Level Intelligence)

Creature	Cost	Int.	Alignment	CR	Saddle	Speed	Carrying Capacity
Behir	8,000 gp	7	Neutral evil	11	Huge exotic	50 ft. (40 ft.)	1,380 lb.
Blink dog	750 gp	10	Lawful good	1/4	Canine	40 ft.	180 lb.
Barghest	2,500 gp	13	Neutral evil	4	Canine	60 ft. / 30 ft.	570 lb.
Leucrotta	2,000 gp	9	Chaotic evil	3	Canine	50 ft.	540 lb.
Manticore	2,500 gp	7	Lawful evil	3	Large exotic	30 ft. (50 ft.)	510 lb.
Nightmare	2,500 gp	10	Neutral evil	3	Large exotic	60 ft. (90 ft.)	540 lb.
Pegasus	2,000 gp	10	Chaotic good	2	Large exotic	60 ft. (90 ft.)	540 lb.
Unicorn	4,000 gp	11	Lawful good	5	Equine	50 ft.	540 lb.
Winter wolf	2,000 gp	7	Neutral evil	3	Canine	60 ft.	540 lb.
Worg	500 gp	7	Neutral evil	1/2	Canine	50 ft.	480 lb.

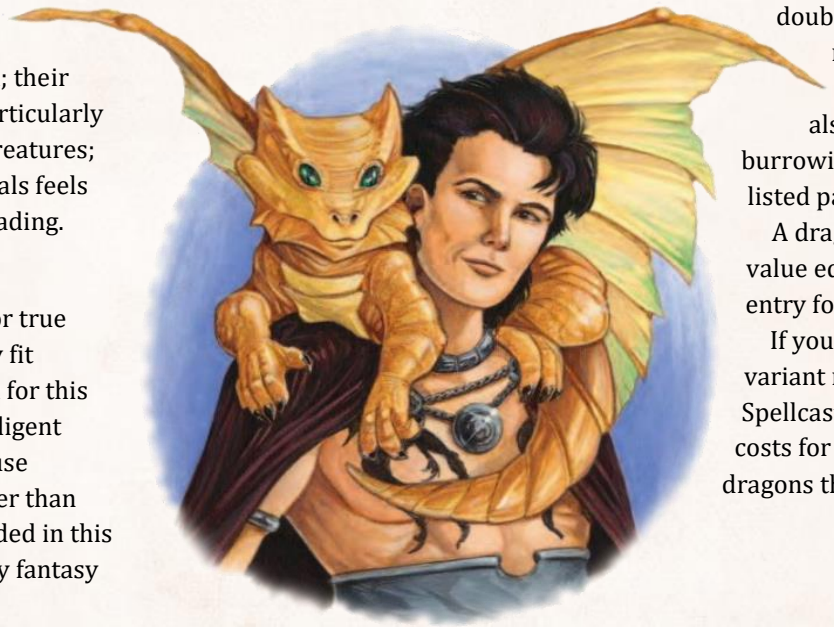
Sentient-Level Intelligence

Sentient-level creatures have Intelligence ratings of 7 or higher. They are as smart as other sentient creatures, no matter what their shapes.

Creature's in this category are rarely marketed; their ability to master language particularly sets them apart as sentient creatures; buying and selling such animals feels dangerously close to slave-trading.

Dragons

The sixth monster group is for true dragons. Dragons don't really fit among the monsters selected for this section; these powerful, intelligent creatures are more likely to use humanoids as their pets rather than vice versa. Dragons are included in this chapter only because so many fantasy stories are based upon finding and allying with young dragons or using dragons as mounts.



Note that all dragons have a flying speed, one not listed on the dragon table below, that is double the rate of their normal speed. Based on type, dragons may also have climbing, burrowing, or swimming speeds listed parenthetically.

A dragon's egg has a market value equal to the wyrmling entry for its type.

If your campaign uses the variant rule Dragons as Innate Spellcasters, double the listed costs for adult and ancient dragons that have spellcasting.

Monsters (Dragons)

Creature	Cost	Int.	Alignment	CR	Saddle	Move/Fly & (Other Speed)	Carrying Capacity
Black, ancient	155,000 gp	16	Chaotic evil	21	Gargantuan exotic	40 ft. (40 ft.)	3,240 lb.
Black, adult	60,000 gp	14	Chaotic evil	14	Huge exotic	40 ft. (40 ft.)	1,380 lb.
Black, young	19,000 gp	12	Chaotic evil	7	Large exotic	40 ft. (40 ft.)	570 lb.
Black, wyrmling	6,000 gp	10	Chaotic evil	2	Medium exotic	30 ft. (30 ft.)	225 lb.
Blue, ancient	230,000 gp	18	Lawful evil	24	Gargantuan exotic	40 ft. (40 ft.)	3,480 lb.
Blue, adult	70,000 gp	16	Lawful evil	16	Huge exotic	40 ft. (30 ft.)	1,740 lb.
Blue, young	25,000 gp	14	Lawful evil	9	Large exotic	40 ft. (20 ft.)	630 lb.
Blue, wyrmling	8,000 gp	12	Lawful evil	3	Medium exotic	30 ft. (15 ft.)	255 lb.
Brass, ancient	130,000 gp	16	Chaotic good	20	Gargantuan exotic	40 ft. (40 ft.)	3,240 lb.
Brass, adult	55,000 gp	14	Chaotic good	13	Huge exotic	40 ft. (30 ft.)	1,380 lb.
Brass, young	16,000 gp	12	Chaotic good	6	Large exotic	40 ft. (20 ft.)	570 lb.
Brass, wyrmling	4,000 gp	10	Chaotic good	1	Medium exotic	30 ft. (15 ft.)	225 lb.
Bronze, ancient	180,000 gp	18	Lawful good	22	Gargantuan exotic	40 ft. (40 ft.)	3,480 lb.
Bronze, adult	55,000 gp	16	Lawful good	13	Huge exotic	40 ft. (40 ft.)	1,500 lb.
Bronze, young	22,000 gp	14	Lawful good	8	Large exotic	40 ft. (40 ft.)	630 lb.
Bronze, wyrmling	6,000 gp	12	Lawful good	2	Medium exotic	30 ft. (30 ft.)	255 lb.
Copper, ancient	155,000 gp	20	Chaotic good	21	Gargantuan exotic	40 ft. (40 ft.)	3,240 lb.
Copper, adult	60,000 gp	18	Chaotic good	14	Huge exotic	40 ft. (40 ft.)	1,380 lb.
Copper, young	19,000 gp	16	Chaotic good	7	Large exotic	40 ft. (40 ft.)	570 lb.
Copper, wyrmling	4,000 gp	14	Chaotic good	1	Medium exotic	30 ft. (30 ft.)	225 lb.
Green, ancient	180,000 gp	20	Lawful evil	22	Gargantuan exotic	40 ft. (40 ft.)	3,240 lb.
Green, adult	65,000 gp	18	Lawful evil	15	Huge exotic	40 ft. (40 ft.)	1,380 lb.
Green, young	22,000 gp	16	Lawful evil	8	Large exotic	40 ft. (40 ft.)	570 lb.
Green, wyrmling	6,000 gp	14	Lawful evil	2	Medium exotic	30 ft. (30 ft.)	225 lb.
Gold, ancient	230,000 gp	18	Lawful good	24	Gargantuan exotic	40 ft. (40 ft.)	3,600 lb.
Gold, adult	75,000 gp	16	Lawful good	17	Huge exotic	40 ft. (40 ft.)	1,620 lb.
Gold, young	28,000 gp	16	Lawful good	10	Large exotic	40 ft. (40 ft.)	690 lb.
Gold, wyrmling	8,000 gp	14	Lawful good	3	Medium exotic	30 ft. (30 ft.)	275 lb.
Red, ancient	230,000 gp	18	Chaotic evil	24	Gargantuan exotic	40 ft. (40 ft.)	3,600 lb.
Red, adult	75,000 gp	16	Chaotic evil	17	Huge exotic	40 ft. (40 ft.)	1,620 lb.
Red, young	28,000 gp	14	Chaotic evil	10	Large exotic	40 ft. (40 ft.)	690 lb.
Red, wyrmling	10,000 gp	12	Chaotic evil	4	Medium exotic	30 ft. (30 ft.)	275 lb.
Silver, ancient	205,000 gp	18	Lawful good	23	Gargantuan exotic	40 ft.	3,600 lb.
Silver, adult	70,000 gp	16	Lawful good	16	Huge exotic	40 ft.	1,620 lb.
Silver, young	25,000 gp	14	Lawful good	9	Large exotic	40 ft.	690 lb.
Silver, wyrmling	6,000 gp	12	Lawful good	2	Medium exotic	30 ft.	275 lb.
White, ancient	130,000 gp	10	Chaotic evil	20	Gargantuan exotic	40 ft. (40/40 ft.)	3,120 lb.
White, adult	55,000 gp	8	Chaotic evil	13	Huge exotic	40 ft. (30/40 ft.)	1,320 lb.
White, young	16,000 gp	6	Chaotic evil	6	Large exotic	40 ft. (20/40 ft.)	540 lb.
White, wyrmling	6,000 gp	5	Chaotic evil	2	Medium exotic	30 ft. (15/30 ft.)	210 lb.

Managing Animals

Appendix A: Managing Animals

Animals in the party create unique challenges for the Dungeon Master. First, the DM has the responsibility of defining which creatures are animals, and thus be acquired as companions; players often want to befriend even the deadliest monsters, insisting they're merely misunderstood. The DM must also determine whether the animal is too powerful or too weak for the party, or its presence will raise the party's size beyond manageability. If all the stars are aligned—the animal is companionable and the right fit for the party—the DM then has to walk the players through the logistics of acquiring the creature and adapting it to life in the party. Finally, as play progresses, it falls to the Dungeon Master to portray the animal's personality and behavior.

Defining Animals

This supplement divides creatures into two classifications, "animals" and "monsters."

Animals are the creatures that can be trained and managed using the rules of this supplement. They are not limited to the animals also found in the real world, nor are they defined by a creature type or a collection of types. Instead, animals are defined by three factors.

1. **Intelligence Rating:** Animals have Intelligence ratings of 6 or lower. However, not every creature so rated is an animal; humans, for example, can have Intelligence ratings this low without being animals.
2. **Animal Intellect:** Animals also have "animal intellect," a limited self-awareness combined with instinctual, animalistic behaviors. This way of thinking is common to beasts, but members of other creature types may also possess animal instinct.
3. **Domesticity (Tameness):** Before an animal can be trained, it must accept the presence of its handler. Domestic creatures are bred for these relationships over many generations, but circumstances can leave some specimens feral. Likewise, a wild creature must first be tamed for this factor to apply.

In each of these factors, the Dungeon Master must moderate whether and how a particular creature fits in. Many specific creatures or cases have not been illustrated in this supplement, and sometimes similar creatures have variances in different game settings. Additionally, some animals are unique among their species, acting as animals when the rest of their kind cannot, or vice versa. Sometimes a monster *can* be trained as an animal, and sometimes an animal is too monstrous to be trained.

Intelligence Rating

To be an animal, the creature must have an Intelligence rating of 6 or lower. Each qualifying Intelligence rating (or range) is described here.

Intelligence 1 (Instinctive Animals)

Creatures of this Intelligence rating are animals, though they barely qualify. Their animal intellects are purely instinctual; such creatures can barely process inputs beyond threats, prey recognition, and mating displays.

Intelligence 2-3 (Normal Animals)

Most animals have Intelligence ratings in this range. They can recognize bits of language they are trained to listen for, particularly their own names. Most traditional training techniques and equipment exist for these animals.

Intelligence 4 (Exceptional Animals)

Creatures at this rating are exceptionally canny, more likely to recognize threats and react to them of their own volition. This Intelligence rating places creatures above the reach of some spells designed to affect animals, some of which might be beneficial.

Intelligence 5-6 (Cunning Animals)

Creatures with these Intelligence scores are as smart as most children, and a few adults as well. They can learn languages, even if they lack the physical capability to speak. They can also, to a limited degree, observe and understand the feelings of creatures around them and may have alignments of their own.

Intelligence 7+ (Sentient Creatures)

At this rating and above, creatures are beyond the limitations of animalistic thinking, no matter their instincts or mental processes. The Animal Handling skill has no effect upon such creatures, even those that resemble real-world animals.

At the Dungeon Master's discretion, such creatures *can* learn tricks and roles. For example, a unicorn (Intelligence 11) might learn tricks to coordinate its actions with its handler's, practicing the maneuvers and the quick commands to elicit them. Becoming rider-trained lets the unicorn act as a controlled mount, focusing on the rider's commands instead of acting independently in battle.

Animal Intellect

In the narrow range of Intelligence where truly smart beasts overlap with truly simpleminded humanoids, ratings of 3 to 6, the difference between the two is the difference between sentience and "animal intellect."

For example, primates and dolphins are smart enough to learn language, but they are still characterized by the instincts and impulses of animals. They can be conditioned to perform various functions and can be reliably controlled by skilled handlers. A creature with sentience, even a very stupid one, is not subject to the same methods of training and control.

For creatures with Intelligence ratings of 6 and below, the Dungeon Master decides which creatures have animal intellects and which have sentience. For guidance, the DM may refer to a creature's description, in the *Monster Manual* or other source material, or may refer to the creature type descriptions below.

Aberration, Elemental

Most creatures of these types have alien mentalities and are not normally suitable for handling as animals. The low-intelligence versions have neither sentience nor animal intellect. At best, most aberrations and elementals can serve as untrained guardians through natural ferocity alone, so long as they can be safely contained in whatever area needs guarding.

Beast

Most beasts have animal intellect and fall within the range of trainable creatures. Some are domestic, while others are wild. Most are easily trained.

However, most insectoid vermin are an exception. They are, essentially, untrainable creatures, driven only by base instincts. This designation applies to insects as well as scorpions, spiders, wasps, and similar creatures, and their giant and swarm versions. Only those insect-like vermin with Intelligence scores of 2 or higher count as animals.

While animal in appearance, giant apes, giant eagles, giant elk, and giant owls are fully intelligent, self-aware creatures capable of mastering languages and forming complex relationships. They are far too intelligent to be manipulated with the Animal Handling skill.

Celestial, Fey, Fiend

Of these creature types, barely any qualify as animals. The abyssal chicken, yeth hound, and hell hound are a few examples with animal intellect. Creatures from the feywild or from the various heavenly or hellish planes may also qualify if they resemble beasts, despite having the celestial, fey, or fiend creature type. Additionally, spell-made spirits with these types have their own rules.

Construct, Ooze, Plant

When these creatures have some sort of intelligence, it is not the sort complex enough or sufficiently beastlike to

The Chris Perkins Seal of Approval

Should monsters be allowed as animal companions?

In *Out of the Abyss*, story creator Chris Perkins seeds a trio of basilisk eggs the players might find and raise, with a table of stat-block alterations to represent three stages of the creatures' maturation. Imagine these eight-legged lizard babies trailing behind the players and petrifying random villagers. *Those little scamps!*

If this doesn't convince you that Chris Perkins, senior story designer for Dungeons & Dragons and legendary Dungeon Master to the Stars, wants you to stock your party with an array of toothy critters, look no further than his streamed D&D game *Dice, Camera, Action!* In episode 32, DM Perkins placed an owlbear and paved the way for the party to acquire it by describing the creature as non-hostile, even inquisitive, all before the party could roll initiative. Simply feeding the creature waffles was enough to make Hootie McHootface into the newest party member! That owlbear, along with its offspring Waffles, became iconic mascots of the Waffle Crew adventuring party.

respond to training and control as animals. Even non-sentient versions lack animal thought processes.

Dragon

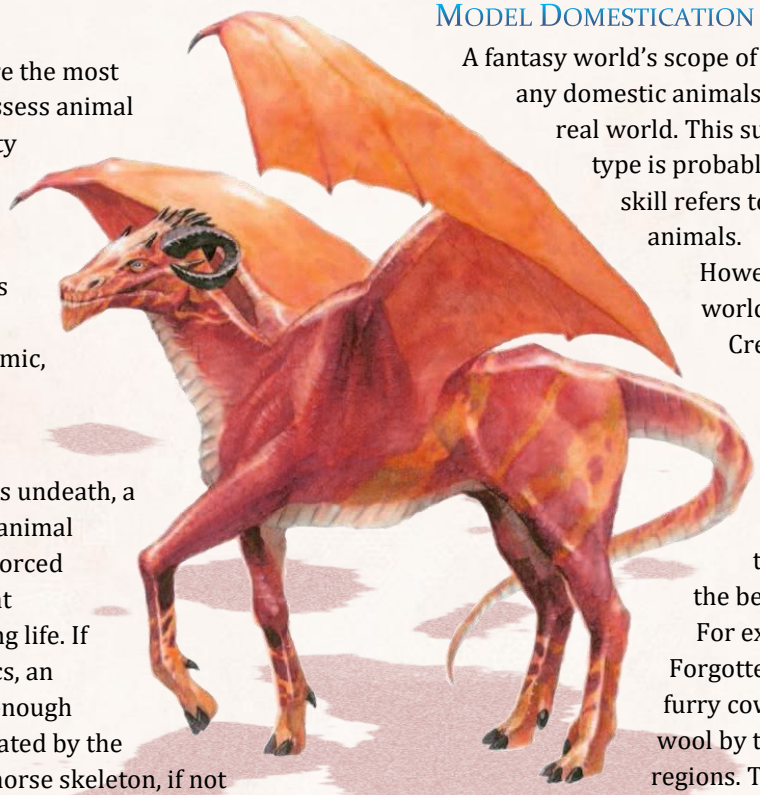
Guard drakes, unsurprisingly, make adept guardians. Wyverns can serve as mounts and guards as well. However, true dragons, even those with low Intelligence scores, have sentient mental processes and cannot be manipulated with Animal Handling.

Giant, Humanoid

Giants and humanoids, even with low Intelligence scores, have sentience. They have thought processes that defy management with the Animal Handling skill.

Monstrosity

After beasts, monstrosities are the most likely of creature types to possess animal intellect. Common monstrosity mounts include the death dog, displacer beast, griffon, hippogriff, and shadow mastiff. Monstrosities that are easily trained to guardian roles include the mimic, owlbear, and rust monster.



Undead

Depending on the nature of its undeath, a creature that previously had animal intellect does not become divorced from the instincts and thought processes that guided it during life. If not controlled by other magics, an undead animal might retain enough primal instinct to be manipulated by the Animal Handling skill. A warhorse skeleton, if not controlled by magic, is a prime example of something that can be handled as an animal. However, it might be as hesitant to tolerate a living rider as the living are to tolerate it for a mount.

Domesticity (Tameness)

Domesticity is an official designation, one with game mechanics attached, but it lacks definition. The Animal Handling skill in the *Player's Handbook* applies special rules to affecting what it calls "domestic" creatures, but it supplies no explanation for the term.

The designation is also important because non-domestic creatures (even tamed ones) may be troublesome in urban environments or formal settings. Here, each culture's expectations matter; riding lizards are ubiquitous to the humanoid races of the Underdark, but totally foreign and even frightening to most folk of the surface realms. The more suited a creature is for preying upon domestic livestock (or intelligent humanoids), the more likely it is to cause trouble and commotion in a city.

To add variety to a creature's concept, the Dungeon Master can decide that an otherwise domestic creature has gone feral, making it a non-domestic creature for all purposes. Likewise, an individual wild creature could be tamed, raised among humanoids, giving it the nature of a domestic animal.

The next two subsections may be of interest to Dungeon Masters for the animal-related portions of worldbuilding.

Model Domestication

A fantasy world's scope of domestication begins with any domestic animals that are also present in the real world. This subset of the beast creature type is probably what the Animal Handling skill refers to when it talks about domestic animals.

However, domestication in fantasy worlds is a fuzzier concept. Creatures that are almost identical to real-world animals, but with a minor variation or an additional magical feature, are probably domestic. This is true even of animals that lack the beast creature type.

For example, the rothé of the Forgotten Realms resembles a small, furry cow that is herded for food and wool by the denizens of various regions. That some rothés can cast the *dancing lights* spell innately has no effect on their status as domestic creatures.

New Domestic Creatures

The Dungeon Master may decide that additional creatures should be layered on top of normal options.

In the real world, all animals were wild at some point in history. As humans evolved, they domesticated various animals over the course of many generations, adapting them for food, labor, and companionship. In fantasy worlds, more creatures are likely to have been domesticated or have spawned related domestic species. This is because fantasy worlds have a much greater variety of creatures, and because fantasy races have different needs for domestic creatures based on their own inherent

abilities, cultures, and magic. These two factors must be considered equally when creating new domestic species or domesticating existing ones.

Races and cultures are more likely to domesticate creatures when they have specific needs that docile animals can meet. For example, even simple magic (low-level spells) can replicate the labor, guarding, and hunting assistance that some animals provided to early humans in the real world. Without such requirements, a race or society would not domesticate animals which cannot meet other needs.

Only races with long-established, multi-generational societies can domesticate animals. This process is not the same as taming. An individual animal can be tamed, but its offspring will not be tame by nature. In contrast, domestication produces a genetic state, the result of generations of cohabitation and acclimation. A domestic species is morphologically altered from its wild ancestors, with innate behavioral differences.

Creatures are more susceptible to domestication if they can breed in captivity without elaborate courtship rituals, grow quickly to maturity relative to the race that domesticates them, graze or scavenge food scraps in urban environments, learn complex skills and conditioned behaviors, and interact peaceably with humanoids and other domestic animals. Suitable creatures aren't too easily spooked, aren't overly aggressive, and don't expect guidance from their handlers in the form of social hierarchies or dominance displays.

Acquiring Animals

Now having a better definition of animals, this section contemplates the various methods player characters may use to acquire them. The common methods are buying animals, encountering them in the wild, or raising juveniles derived from animal husbandry.

Which Animals Fit?

Before considering acquisition scenarios, we must first touch upon the topic of whether the DM should allow an animal to be acquired.

The Right Players

The party should not acquire animals if the players don't want to deal with them. That seems like a given, but if the DM enjoys animals and the players do not, it can be easy to find the campaign bogged down with animal companions that the players don't use or interact with.

In contrast, DMs often face the scenario where the players want to make pets of the ravenous wolves that have come to ravage their camp at night. Wild creatures, who the DM considers to be monsters, might now become companions accidentally, without giving the DM time to consider whether those creatures are a good fit.

In these scenarios, it is important to know the players, to understand their degrees of empathy for pets and their capacity to perceive monsters through the lens of their own desires for companionship.

Some players want to make pets of everything, some players just want to use animals for their utilitarian value, and some players simply don't want to deal with managing animals at all. These player proclivities are not a strict continuum; often players want pets for fun but don't want to handle the logistics of keeping them safe or managing their die-rolls in combat.

The Right Party

When a game of Dungeons & Dragons has too many players at the table, it suffers from several complications. Combats drag out, no one gets enough time on center stage, and everyone wants to go in a different direction. Even with the right number of players, extra characters in the party (like NPC animals) can create problems in a similar vein.

The enjoyment players get from adopting more and more animal friends must be balanced against the extra work and time needed for DMs to cope with those animals and their activities, and against the play time that players must give up allowing those NPCs to take the stage. These two factors usually manifest in two areas of play, combat scenarios and utility-type challenges.

The following topics address how animals fit into the party based on their specific roles there.

Combat Animals. This category does not include creatures whose best contribution is an occasional Help action; it only contemplates creatures that are significant combatants. Animals designed to contribute during combat must be handled with care. When an animal has a turn in combat, that NPC takes up time that actual players could be using to play their characters.

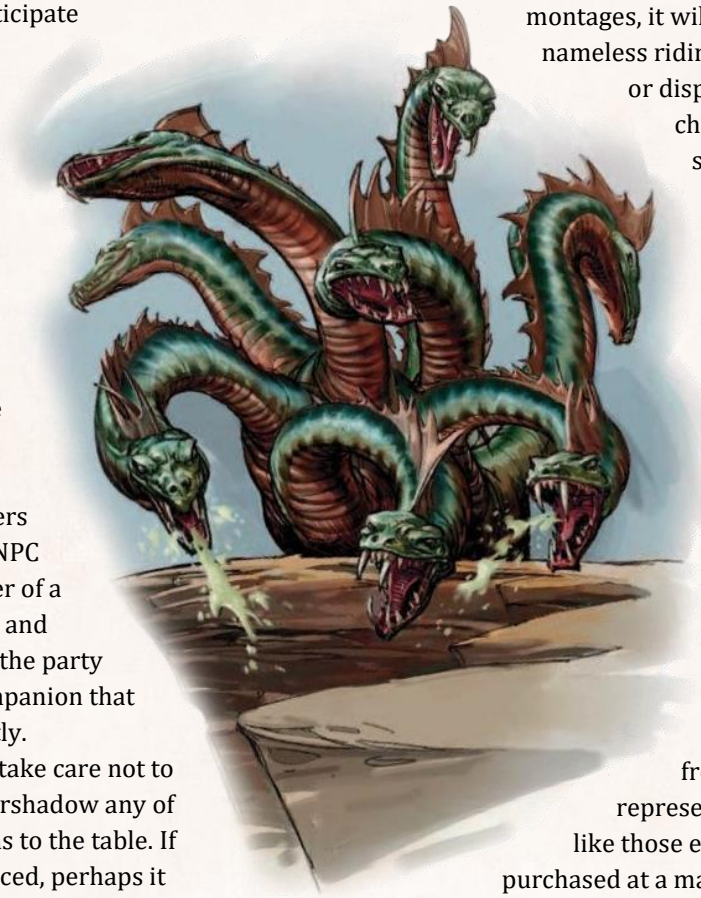
The Dungeon Master should not provide opportunities to acquire combat companions if the new party size would be too much to handle. This is a personal and variable limitation; different DMs have different capacities to handle different numbers of characters at the table. An experienced DM might be able to handle combat animals equal to half the number of player characters. Exceeding that number is not recommended.

Additionally, avoid multiple combat animals "belonging" to a single player. Even if the DM is in full control of the animal NPCs in combat, the time they take up collectively belongs to the handler's character; players are likely to

perceive any delays as the fault of the character that owns multiple combat animals.

Utility Animals. Animals have the potential to crowd player characters in their lanes. Players experience Dungeons & Dragons as a cooperative game with varied roles, where every character contributes something, often something quite unique. You will rarely see a party that includes two rogues proficient with precisely the same set of skills. Players often want to coordinate with one another during character creation with the goal of not all playing the same type of character.

This gravitation toward differing functionality is a natural one. Diversity is strength. Once players become attached to their roles, they anticipate their characters contributing meaningfully when those scenarios arise; they expect to be the one the party turns to for certain ability checks, and they expect those checks to matter.



When an animal companion can outshine a character in its own lane, the player's enjoyment of the game is diminished. Instead of the player getting center stage for those moments, the other players at the table turn to the animal NPC for help. For example, the player of a ranger whose focus is tracking, and wayfinding will not appreciate the party wizard adopting an animal companion that hunts and tracks more efficiently.

The Dungeon Master should take care not to introduce animals that will overshadow any of the party's unique contributions to the table. If such a creature is to be introduced, perhaps it can have some quirk or deficiency that keeps it from that role. For example, a hound trained in hunting and tracking might be unsuited to aid in foraging because it always eats the prey or runs off and buries it.

The best version of utilitarian creature acting in a player character's lane is the animal that can't perform the role independently. Rather than feeling displaced, a player will usually enjoy an animal that only assists in that role, providing advantage on the player's die rolls or enhancing the character's range of functionality in that role. The wizard's new pet hound might not have the right temperament for foraging independently, but when it works alongside the party's ranger, it grants that character a benefit on foraging rolls.

Animal Companion CR Maximums

Maximum Adjusted CR	Handler's Defining Factors
CR 1 or 1/2 handler's level, whichever is higher	Handler's only animal companion
CR 1 or 1/4 handler's level, whichever is higher	Handler keeps multiple (non-background) animals

Background Animals. If an animal is one that stays in the background, like a lovable lump that exists only to flavor the character whose pocket it rides in, or a trusted steed that merely carries a character through travel montages, it will always find room in the party. A nameless riding horse won't take up play time or displace player agency, and a character's pet mouse taking the stage is no different than the character itself taking the stage.

Character Options. The Dungeon Master should always facilitate the inclusion of animals that are "paid for" as character options, regardless of party size or other characters assumed roles in the party. Such animals are produced or bound as the function of class features, feats, spells, and similar effects. As a matter of fairness and game balance, any losses necessary to make the party manageable again must come from the animals that do not represent features on a character sheet, like those encountered incidentally or simply purchased at a market.

For example, if the party is crowded with animals, and the Beast Master loses a Ranger's Companion animal, the Dungeon Master should not forbid the addition of a replacement, regardless of the party's size. To do so would be to erase part of the ranger's character sheet (the Ranger Companion feature).

The Right Power

This topic concedes that many play groups desire the ability to structure and measure the power level of beneficial additions to the party. It is for the same groups that meticulously track the rarity of magic items to make

Challenge Ratings Below 1

When adjusting a creature's challenge rating to account for class levels, templates, or other modifiers, changes that affect CRs below 1 need special treatment.

When an adjustment would reduce a creature's rating below CR 1, each point reduction below 1 brings the creature to CR 1/2, then CR 1/4, then CR 1/8, then CR 0. Further points of reduction are ignored.

When adjusting upward from a CR below 1, use the same progression in reverse.

sure the party doesn't get them before reaching the suggested levels in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

The challenge rating (CR) system is used here to prevent animal companions from being too potent or too weak in combat relative to the rest of the adventuring party. If animals are too potent, they eclipse the player characters, who are supposed to be the heroes of the story. If too weak, the players spend too much time protecting, healing, and recalling their animal friends from death.

Although combat is not the only sort of challenge an animal can help the party overcome, combat offence and defense are the only aspects of an animal that CR measures, and the primary consideration for the topic of balancing power. The *Animal Handlers' Manual* therefore uses CR as the indicator of an animal companion's power, but CR alone is sometimes insufficient to the task.

Adjusted CR. When a creature gains animal sidekick levels and templates (see chapter 1), its power level may effectively alter the CR in its stat block. Under normal circumstances the DM would break out the tables in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* to determine the creature's new CR based on a multitude of factors.

Instead, the *Animal Handlers' Manual* uses "adjusted CR," the sum of the creature's stat block CR, animal class level, and template adjustments. This prevents the DM from having to do a lot of math to change a creature's challenge rating. The adjusted CR replaces the creature's regular CR for every purpose, except where indicated otherwise.

Note that animal classes start at "level 0," thus providing flavor and a bit of survivability to animal companions without adjusting their CR. Similarly, some templates have neutral or negative CR adjustments. It is possible to have an animal companion with an adjusted CR that is equal to or lower than its stat block CR.

A creature's challenge rating normally sets its proficiency bonus. However, when using these rules, instead compare the creature's *adjusted challenge rating*, a number that combines base CR, template adjustments, and *half* the creature's sidekick level. The following table shows an animal sidekick's resulting proficiency bonus.

Proficiency Bonus by Challenge Rating

Challenge Rating	Proficiency Bonus	Challenge Rating	Proficiency Bonus
0-4	+2	17-20	+6
5-9	+3	21-24	+7
10-12	+4	25-28	+8
13-16	+5	29-30	+9

Maximum CR. For these purposes, each animal in the party "belongs" to a single handler, the player character that trained it, controls it, or spends the most time with it. The handler can acquire and manage animals with individual challenge ratings up to CR 1, or up to half that handler's character level, whichever is higher.

A character that manages multiple companions should not gain any animals above CR 1 or above one-quarter of the handler's character level, whichever is higher.

If a handler somehow acquires an animal exceeding these limitations, the animal gains the *reluctant creature* template until the handler gains enough levels to qualify. In this way, the DM can keep an animal from changing the party's power level when simply removing the animal is not a viable option.

Adding Power. Because handlers can manage stronger animals as they gain character levels, they may wish to acquire new, stronger creatures with some frequency. To prevent the party from getting too large, new animals should replace existing ones, or existing animals should advance their adjusted challenge ratings by one of the various methods in this supplement.

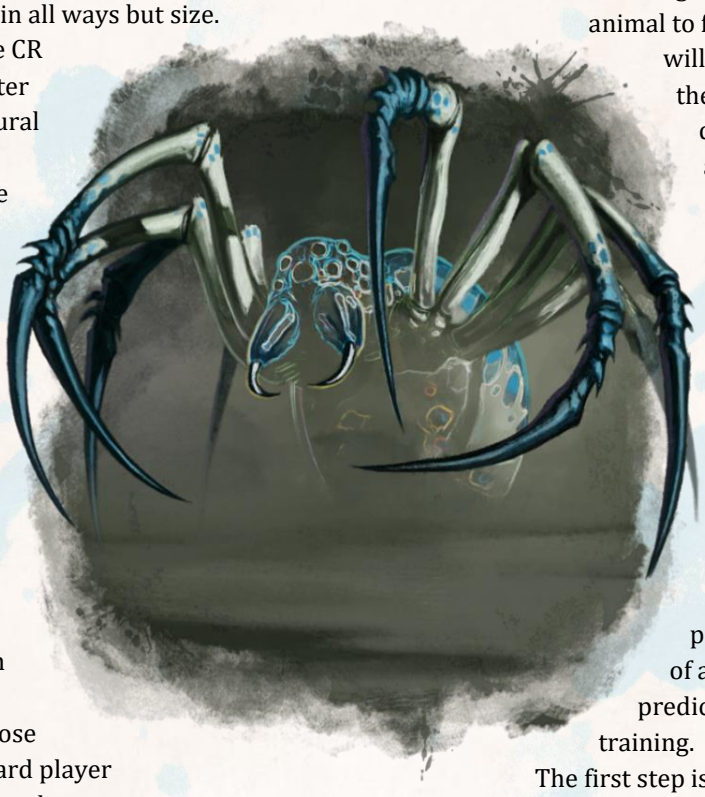
Replacing old animals with stronger options logically tracks with the party's advancement. As the characters gain levels, they venture farther from civilization where the threats are more potent, but so too are the prospective animal companions who dwell in those regions. As a matter of market realities, characters can also afford more costly and potent creatures as they gain levels, simply buying stronger animal companions to train.

If the players are attached to existing animals or if replacing them would be disruptive, modifying current animal companions is a better option. Adding animal sidekick levels is easy, but not always right for an animal's concept. Sometimes, adding or removing templates is a better option. Perhaps the party's wolf is secretly a dire wolf, and no one knew it was a juvenile until it grew beyond the size of a normal adult. In this way, an animal might appear in three separate stages of growth, beginning

with the *juvenile creature* template, then growing into its normal stat block, then adding a *dire animal* template.

Beyond growth, other templates might be added by exposing the creature to magical or extraplanar forces. An animal that receives a deity's blessing might gain the *planar creature* template. An animal exposed to the magical maelstrom caused by the destruction of an artifact or the death of a deity might mutate or gain magical features, making it into a *legendary creature*.

Forces like these might instead alter animals in ways other than changing templates. An animal might become a different creature with a new stat block after undergoing a transformative phenomenon. A giant spider might become a phase spider, emerging from some sort of magical fallout, enhanced intellectually as well as physically. A black bear might be permanently enlarged, becoming a brown bear, keeping its former appearance in all ways but size.



Although they do not provide CR adjustments, the Dungeon Master can also give animals supernatural gifts through exposure to such potent forces or areas, or by the methods that any other NPC or player character might gain them. These can keep animals relevant at times when their CRs are falling behind. Standard supernatural gifts are provided in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, in the "Other Rewards" section of chapter 7. Some new blessings and charms are described in chapter 3 of this book. For even more potent increases, the DM can assign boons to animals, those bonus powers intended to reward player characters for exceeding 20th level.

Finally, the Dungeon Master can also design any number of other enhancements for animals using campaign-specific ideas, or simply adjust numbers upward from time to time using the challenge rating rules in the "Creating a Monster" section of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Methods of Acquisition

Adding an animal to the party first requires finding that animal, whether by happenstance or purposeful seeking.

Encountering

For wild or feral creatures found in the wilderness, the type of animal and the conditions of the encounter determine if there is a chance to acquire it.

Random Contact. Most wild animals will flee from adventurers upon initial contact. In fact, most have already sensed the approach of adventurers and have fled before being detected. Even dangerous predatory animals have reason to fear humanoids and avoid them.

Only creatures of at least Large size are unlikely to fear normal-sized adventurers, depending on their temperaments. An elk will still prefer to flee, but a brown bear may be curious and investigate Medium-sized creatures to see if they have something (or *are* something) worth eating.

In some cases, fearing adventurers does not compel an animal to flee from them. Some creatures will fight to defend their dens or their young. Predators that are driven by long-term hunger may also attack.

Whatever the circumstances or motivations by which contact with an animal occurs, chance encounters are not good ways to acquire wild animals. An adventurer seeking a particular animal is not likely to come upon it by chance, and most encounters that do not result in the animal's immediate flight are likely to result in hostility.

Stalking. Stalking is the process of tracking a chosen type of animal in its environment, as a predicate for acclimation and eventual training.

The first step is selecting the right animal. A player will propose the animal being sought and the Dungeon Master will determine if the animal can be stalked in that area; some creatures will not be found in some environments, regardless of circumstances or rolls.

If the animal sought is one that can be found in nearby environs, the stalker may spend 1 hour attempting to find the right animal's tracks and locate its territory. This requires a Wisdom (Survival) check with a DC that reflects the difficulty of the terrain and the scarcity of the animal. Rangers have advantage on this check and gain additional information through their Natural Explorer feature, provided they are operating in the correct environment.

This check can be repeated. However, an animal may become aware of the stalker's presence after a failed check. Particularly at Intelligence ratings of 4 or higher, an animal may be wise enough to simply relocate its territory at that point. When the stalker finally finds an animal's den, it might therefore be abandoned.

A stalker can employ stealth to avoid an animal's flight, increasing stalking time to 2 hours per check. The animal's passive Perception score is the DC for the stalker's Dexterity (Stealth) check. Success means the animal is unaware of the stalker, even if the separate stalking ability check is failed. In the appropriate natural environment, rangers can use their Natural Explorer feature to move stealthily at normal speed, employing this method with only 1 hour per check.

Once an animal has been successfully stalked, the stalker can begin the process of acclimation.

Acclimation. This is the process of taming a wild or feral creature, making it accustomed to the handler's presence and interactions. Acclimation (taming) is a prerequisite to such an animal. It is a downtime activity, usually combined with the process of stalking, but occasionally performed with an animal already in captivity.

Animal Acclimating (Downtime)

You can spend time between adventures visiting a wild animal's territory to acclimate it to you. Full acclimation makes the animal comfortable in your presence and allows you to train it. If circumstances are right, the animal may willingly leave its territory to follow you on adventures.

You must be proficient with the Animal Handling skill for this activity. Locating this territory can be the result of stalking the animal, finding it with magic, or coming across it in a chance encounter.

Normal acclimation depends on the animal's adaptability and how deep in the wilderness it lives. Most animals require 20 downtime days to acclimate. Some can require twice as long. The amount of time needed will usually be obvious to a character proficient with the Animal Handling skill.

A wild animal can also become acclimated if held in captivity, which saves time if the character can't often return to the animal's home. However, the required acclimation time is doubled because it is hard to build trust when a creature is missing the freedom and safety of its home environment.

Domestic animals, previously tamed animals, and infant animals don't need acclimation, nor do the companions provided to a character by class features or spells.

Acclimation is typically accomplished in stages. First, the stalker repeatedly leaves food at a nearby area until the stalker's presence and scent are no longer frightening or offensive to the animal. In lieu of food, a character might offer items from the Monsters' Desires tables specific to the acclimated creature's type. (See "Parleying with Monsters" in *Tasha's Cauldron of Everything*.) The animal thus comes to trust and rely upon the stalker as a source of food and even companionship. Multiple creatures can become acclimated at once if they already have social connections amongst themselves, like a pack of wolves or a flock of wild geese.

In game terms, acclimating is a downtime activity that requires proximity to an animal's home territory or a method to restrain it in captivity. Acclimation can be performed intermittently, perhaps interrupted by absences for adventures, but each day devoted to the activity must be performed at the appropriate location or upon a captive animal.

Buying

While the notion of finding an orphaned beast and raising it to loyal companionship is a pleasant one, the fact is that most adventurers simply can't spare the time to look for and train creatures during their adventures. However, what most adventurers *can* spare is a bit of gold. Many useful animals are purchased at markets, at farms, or at other locations where they are bred and trained as marketable goods.

Animal Availability. The Untrained Beasts table and the Mounts table in chapter 4 show the costs of domesticated animals. These creatures are widely available in many regions. Their listed prices assume these creatures are also suitable for training to various tricks and roles.

Other creature types almost never appear in markets of any kind and must usually be encountered in the wild. These are not domestic animals; even when a market is willing to trade such creatures, buying and selling them is a logistical nightmare.

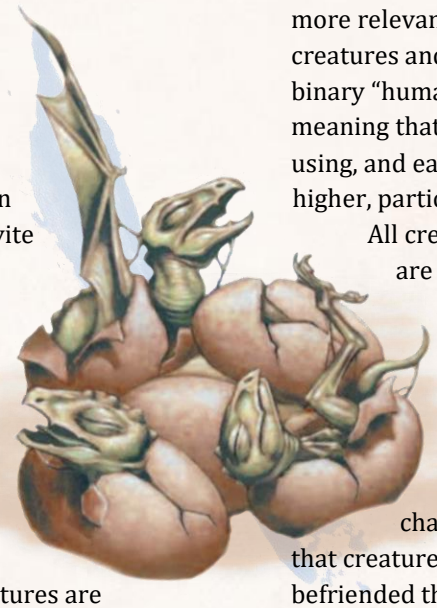
Monster Logistics. Generally, monsters need large storage space, eat huge quantities of (often expensive) food, are dangerous to interact with, and can be difficult and time-consuming to train. Finding a buyer or seller for a monster often means finding a place, person, or facility uniquely situated to address one or more of these problems.

Buying and selling a specific type of monster often requires finding the best intersection of factors that

address each of the creature's logistical hurdles. Every other sale or purchase is essentially down to luck, like finding the creature for sale somewhere as a one-off.

For example, a non-player character able to magically control and train animals may keep a stock of monsters to sell. If a monster exclusively eats a particular plant or small creature, a market may spring up near an oasis where that plant or small creature is plentiful.

The biggest interest in monsters typically comes from the wealthy, who see them as curios, status symbols, and guardians. Finding this interest is also a matter of luck. If offered, a wealthy noble might purchase a young crag cat, or that noble might be willing to sell a crag cat or trade it for another exotic creature. But this does not mean the party will find a line of nobles willing to buy their captured crag cats or sell a pet crag cat to them. Such opportunities are few and far between.



Monster Legalities. In worlds where fantasy monsters are rare, selling them can raise incidental problems or otherwise invite trouble. A peasant trying to sell a dragon turtle egg off the back of a wagon is likely to attract the attention of the authorities. Worse, it might attract the attention of someone powerful, someone who wants that rare thing for personal reasons or who simply thinks that dangerous creatures should not be trafficked in.

Conversely, in worlds where magic creatures are common, monster markets are more feasible. These will be highly regulated, with statutes or royal decrees covering important topics from safe handling, to insurance policies, to import duties and taxation.

Finally, a truly dangerous monster is likely to cause destruction or death when placed into contact with the rest of society. For these events, the owner may have to answer with fines, payoffs, or remuneration. Some cases, particularly when children are injured, are crimes that cannot be answered with mere gold.

Sentient Creatures. A creature's suitability for sale is often down to its degree of sentience. Even goodly societies probably have no qualms about fencing-in simple beasts and using them for labor or as food sources. These animals are commonly domesticated and often available at market. Whole industries may even exist devoted to the breeding, raising, training, and selling of such animals. However, smart creatures, particularly those that can talk or are otherwise revered in society, make people less comfortable about the idea of marketing them.

Every society designates some animals as sacred or "noble," making them inedible based only on cultural relevance rather than dietary factors. Such animals are romanticized or are playful beasts like the horse and the dog. Additionally, some cultures hold some (or all) animal life sacrosanct, and will not keep, train, or consume such animals. This concern varies by culture; the DM decides which creatures are unavailable at markets for these reasons.

Owning creatures of higher intelligence and self-awareness is a more dubious prospect. Creatures that can express complex emotions and demonstrate deduction start to resemble the creatures that humanoids think of as "people" rather than animals. This distinction is much more relevant in fantasy worlds where the variety of creatures and of sentient races is so diverse; there is no binary "human or nonhuman" distinction to fall back upon, meaning that most societies are likely to avoid keeping, using, and eating animals with Intelligence ratings of 5 or higher, particularly those that can learn languages.

All creatures with Intelligence ratings of 7 or above are truly sentient and self-aware. Only evil societies buy and sell such creatures, a process akin to slavery. Although some such creatures cohabitate with humanoid races, often on equal or near-equal social footing (as demonstrated by goblins and their worg allies), this is not commonplace. A character who rides a unicorn probably raised that creature from a young age; the human either befriended the unicorn and works with it as an ally, or it has subjugated the unicorn's will through magic or nefarious conditioning. The worst of these "alliances" invoke every negative aspect of the abusive and controlling relationships sometimes seen among humans in the real world. Helping a sentient creature leave such a relationship might lead to a true friendship.

When it comes to dragons, all these factors are magnified; dragons are smarter than most humanoid races, more powerful when fully grown, and more naturally magical. But for their habits of solitude, it might be they who raise and train humans to perform tasks for them, rather than the other way around. Still, the fantasy tropes about dragon riders and the popular Dragonlance setting make dragons the subject of commerce in some campaigns.

Husbandry

These unusual factors rarely play into an acquisition scenario, but they are worth mentioning in this supplement.

Raising Animals. Whether bought or encountered, creatures taken in young, helpless states, such as the newborn cubs of a wolf or the eggs of an eagle, can be raised and trained to companionship more easily than animals that are accustomed to living in the wild.

A wild animal raised in captivity does not require acclimation, it must simply be kept in domestic circumstances until it is old enough to be trained. This period varies between animals and is wholly up to the Dungeon Master. Most adventurers don't have those months to spare, but some scenarios, particularly in long campaigns, could allow for the raising of young animals.

For example, it takes about 100 days for new-laid owl eggs to gestate and hatch, and for the young to become capable of flight (and thus training). At the other end of the spectrum, some sharks take a century to reach maturity. Because it is a fantasy world, the Dungeon Master may have to determine growth rates appropriate to creatures not found in the real world.

Breeding Animals. Like raising animals, breeding them in captivity is a lengthy process, probably beyond the scope of most campaigns. It is, however, one of the few ways to increase the likelihood of acquiring exceptional specimens of those animals.

Keeping Animals

This section addresses the logistics of bringing animals on adventures, how they can best be adapted to an adventuring lifestyle.

Basic Survival

If players have invested time and effort to acquire animals, the Dungeon Master should be mindful to give those creatures all the survivable benefits allowed by the rules. A DM who does otherwise fails to create the game experience the players are seeking. Providing appropriate survival benefits contemplates three factors.

First, the DM should treat animals as "special nonplayer characters," allowing them to fall unconscious at 0 hit points instead of dying. Animal companions will reach 0 hit points with some regularity and player characters should be offered the opportunity to try to save them through rounds of death saving throws. See the Monsters and Death sidebar on this page.

Unfortunately, many animal companions are Tiny beasts, having only a few hit points. These animals aren't likely to fall to 0 hit points without also suffering enough damage to invoke the "Instant Death" rule on page 198 of the *Player's Handbook*. Therefore, allowing animals death saving throws at 0 hit points isn't always effective; sometimes additional steps are necessary.

Monsters and Death

"Most DMs have a monster die the instant it drops to 0 hit points, rather than having it fall unconscious and make death saving throws. Mighty villains and **special nonplayer characters** are common exceptions; the DM might have them fall unconscious and follow the same rules [for death saving throws] as player characters." (Player's Handbook, page 198. Emphasis added.)

The second factor to keeping animal companions alive applies to the targeting choices made by antagonists in battle. Animals should only be targeted rationally by rational foes, and instinctively by instinct-driven foes. Both things amount to prioritizing animals below more obvious threats, like the player characters, unless happenstance removes such alternatives. Animals should only be targeted by antagonists when they take significant roles in combat, or when no other viable targets present themselves.

Sometimes innocuousness is no protection for animals. When an animal plays a significant role in combat, particularly when it inflicts a grievous injury or an annoying condition, it should not be ignored simply to spare the players' feelings. Likewise, a creature may fall within a spell's area of effect, even if it is not being targeted. In such cases, an animal's injury or death should not be avoided by constraining an antagonist's targeting decisions.

Along the same lines, avoid targeting animals as proxies for the player characters to forecast the danger of a trap or signal an encounter's lethality. Don't treat animals as "coalmine canaries" to elicit an emotional reaction with their deaths or injury, or to create tension in the story. These efforts are often transparent and will produce undesirable reactions from the players.

The third factor for survivability addresses animal advancement. As the characters gain levels, the Dungeon Master should provide timely opportunities to replace party animals with stronger versions or enhance those animals to keep up with the challenges they face. This is discussed more in a previous section.

Feed and Care

Animals need sustenance and care. The larger the animals, the greater the cost and weight of these supplies.

Sustenance Needs

Tiny creatures need only 1/4 pound of food per day. Small and Medium creatures need 1 pound. Large creatures need 4 pounds, Huge creatures need 16 pounds, and Gargantuan

creatures need 64 pounds of food per day. A creature also needs water, a number of gallons equal to its daily required pounds of food.

The type of food different animals need varies significantly. Omnivores can typically eat any kind of feed, as well as rations.

Herbivores like equines can survive on grass, hay, and other herbaceous plants. Properly dried and stored, such feed can remain viable for years. (High-value feed, like oats, is simply a luxury and is unhealthy for such animals to eat all the time.)

Carnivores require meat for most of their diets. As feed, this typically takes the form of dried meat scraps or meat ground up with absorbent grains. Meat feed lasts for about ten days before becoming spoiled and worthless. (Most carnivores can eat meat that is far more spoiled than a human's stomach could tolerate.) On longer trips, these animals will need to hunt, or they will need their handlers to forage game for them.

The Dungeon Master is the final arbiter of each animal's exact needs, both for quantity and type of food. Creatures who fail to get needed sustenance suffer levels of exhaustion as described in the *Player's Handbook*, in the section titled "The Environment."

Training Needs

Part of an animal's care includes exercising its useful tricks and roles to keep the animal in practice. Along with that, animals need new training to realize their full potential. Although practice is glossed over in these rules, training new tricks and roles uses the downtime rules in a way that is analogous to the creation of equipment.

In campaigns where downtime opportunities rarely occur, the fast pace of play can leave animals without vital training. For these games, the Dungeon Master can invoke the optional Uptime Activity rules provided in the Variant: Uptime Activity sidebar. This option is taken from Wraith Wright's *Expanded Wealth Manual* and adapted to the downtime activities found in this book. This system allows animals to receive training while out on the trail, not just between adventures. It can also apply to the acclimation downtime activity for animals brought along in captivity.

Self-Sufficiency

Left to their own devices, most creatures can forage or hunt for themselves. Even domestic animals can adapt with enough range to roam. Feed is only needed if an animal lacks the time to find its own food.

Creatures that can graze, like horses, mules, and other equines, can consume food in a small area. They can even eat periodically throughout the day, given access to the right plants. However, other creatures must travel a great distance to find food. These creatures might become lost, as most have no sense of timing nor the notion to return to their handlers immediately after eating. A very smart animal might hunt and return quickly, using the foraging rules, but other animals must be trained to do so as a trick.

Variant: Uptime Activity

This variant allows players to access the normal downtime rules while adventuring. Downtime is an integral part of Dungeons & Dragons, but when stories are too fast paced, players might have no access to these essential functions. For players wanting to use the new animal training and animal acclimating downtime activities, this variant may provide the only opportunity.

With this rule, characters make use of their free time during normal adventuring days to complete downtime activities. After traveling, adventuring, sleeping, eating, and performing other miscellaneous tasks, characters typically have about four hours left to themselves. Using this free time is therefore half as efficient per day as a devoting eight hours to downtime activity.

To complete activities this way, record *half* a day of downtime when the party takes a long rest. This is the usual point at which players record healing, mark off rations, and resolve other daily bookkeeping. If the party can't take a long rest on a specific day, it is probably because the characters are too busy, and such distractions tend to get in the way of uptime activity as well. Alternately, if long rests aren't taken because nothing is happening to deplete resources in that time, it is likely that the party has enough free time to spend true downtime days, adding accumulated time to their activities.

To perform "uptime" activities while on the road, a character must have paid any associated costs and have brought along any tools, materials, or other resources the Dungeon Master deems necessary. Particularly for a wild animal being acclimated while out on the adventuring trail, an animal might need restraints, a cage, hobble, hood, muzzle, or some similar device.

Additionally, when animals are caged or stabled, when they are worked or ridden longer than eight hours a day, or when they are otherwise prevented from finding their own daily sustenance, they must be provided with feed.

Equipment

Keeping animals safe and calm is important when adventuring. Some animals need special gear for these purposes. Hunting hawks need hoods to remain docile. Untrained creatures might need cages to restrain them.

These equipment needs vary based on the animal, its intelligence, its degree of loyalty to its handler, and its degree of training. The Dungeon Master will determine what is necessary for each animal.

Adverse Weather

Some animals are adapted to survive in a range of weather types, but others are not. While the presence of rain, cloud cover, or direct sunlight can make animals uncomfortable, they are more often sensitive to changes in temperature. Even mild temperature changes from the animal's natural environment can result in behavior changes. Exposure to stronger changes can be dangerous.

Mild Temperatures

Even mild changes in ambient weather can trigger behavioral changes in animals, particularly those with instinctive seasonal behaviors. Birds may seek to migrate and become agitated when their training prevents it. Bears may require additional food, fattening up in preparation for hibernation. Some animals try to seek out a mate.

Such changes can be alarming for a handler who does not expect them, particularly if the animal is not well understood, but most animals will eventually adapt to mild temperature changes and act normally.

Extreme Temperatures

When changes in climate are more severe, animals can suffer or die, sometimes without real warning. A bird taken into cold climates may shiver imperceptibly, eventually dying from exposure. Only a handler aware of the danger or carefully watching the animal will have any warning.

The Dungeon Master may assign a range of temperature survivability for any given creature. For example, the human range is between 0 and 100 degrees, Fahrenheit. While a human is not comfortable at either extreme, serious harm is unlikely. The same is true of an animal that stays within its assigned range of survivable temperatures.

Whenever the temperature is at or below a creature's lowest survivable temperature, the exposed creature must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw at the end of each hour or gain one level of exhaustion. Creatures with resistance or immunity to cold damage automatically succeed on the saving throw, as do creatures who are bundled against the cold or otherwise equipped with cold weather gear.

Likewise, extreme heat can be dangerous for animals. When the temperature is at or above a creature's highest survivable temperature, the exposed creature must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw at the end of each hour or gain one level of exhaustion. Creatures that have consumed double their daily water requirements have advantage on the saving throw. Creatures with resistance or immunity to fire damage automatically succeed on the saving throw.

Challenging Terrain

Taking animal companions into certain environments can be problematic. Most animals are fine in open terrain if there are no nearby threats. Outside of these circumstances, things can get complicated.

Size

Some animals are unsuitable to certain adventuring locations, particularly places with narrow, constraining terrain. The larger the creature, the less adaptable it is.

For example, an elephant or stegosaurus probably won't fit in the goblin caves. It may also have difficulty moving through thick forests unless it can find a wide enough trail. An elephant handler who encounters a ruined monastery must leave the elephant behind unless the monastery was built by giants or was otherwise constructed in a large, grand style. A Huge creature simply won't fit through narrow halls and doorways made for Medium creatures.

Large-size creatures have less difficulty indoors than do Huge creatures. An area that is comfortable for a Medium creature to move through can be navigated by a Large creature, but the squeezing rules must be used during combat in those areas. (See the "Squeezing into a Smaller Space" sidebar.)

Managing Large creatures is a common task for handlers, since most mounts are Large-size, and mounts are ubiquitous features of many adventures. A few moments taken to pull a reluctant animal down a narrow connecting hallway or to get it to duck under a low doorjamb are easy enough events to handle. However, unless most of the environment is large enough for the creature to move around in comfortably, with only a few smaller portals or passageways to squeeze through, bringing such a creature indoors is impractical.

Squeezing into a Smaller Space

"A creature can squeeze through a space that is large enough for a creature one size smaller than it. Thus, a Large creature can squeeze through a passage that's only 5 feet wide. While squeezing through a space, a creature must spend 1 extra foot for every foot it moves there, and it has disadvantage on attack rolls and Dexterity saving throws. Attack rolls against the creature have advantage while it's in the smaller space." (*Player's Handbook*, page 192)

A handler will find that Medium, Small, and Tiny animals serve best in these locations, since most adventures won't occur where the adventurers themselves (who are Medium- or Small-size) cannot go. The Medium-size mounts of Small-size adventurers have a tremendous advantage in this regard; a halfling cavalier typically has no trouble bringing her mastiff steed into the ruined temple and is thus able to make excellent use of features and equipment that benefit from being mounted.

Coaxing an animal into a squeezing scenario may require a Wisdom (Animal Handling) check if the creature is of a claustrophobic type, one accustomed to traveling on open ground or roaming the skies.

Obstacles

Like size problems, many animals are not shaped in ways that allow them to navigate humanoid habitats or other terrain that humanoids might easily pass over.

Small obstacles, like broken terrain, rubble, or stairways, can be dangerous for a horse or pony. When an equine creature tries to navigate such terrain, the Dungeon Master may call for a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw. If the save fails, the creature falls prone. An equine creature moving through the area at half speed doesn't need to make the save. Although similar looking to horses, mules are famous dungeon companions due to their Sure-Footed special trait, which provides advantage on such saving throws. Adventurers have long-admired mules for their ability to navigate humanoid stairways and ruinous rubble, carry great weights on their backs, and fit through spaces too small for horses to pass.

Higher obstacles, like large boulders, may be completely impassible to some creatures. Even without a climbing speed, humanoid bodies are well-suited to scrambling over objects that are about their own size. But trying to jump a horse from boulder to boulder is a losing proposition; the handler is likely to get hurt, and the horse is likely to break all its legs. On the other hand, a dog or axe beak is nimble enough to make such short leaps safely. The Dungeon Master determines which obstacles each type of animal can bypass based on its physicality.

In more-difficult terrain, ropes and vertical ladders are impossible for most animals to climb. Getting an animal up or down a steep cliff may require a handler to raise or lower it using a rope, block and tackle, and a harness or sling. These elaborate measures are time-consuming, not likely to be worthwhile when attempting a casual exploration of a small area. When terrain gets vertical, creatures with flying or climbing speeds are far more useful than normal animal companions or mounts.

Animals limited to swimming speeds or that breathe only water are essentially useless outside of their native environments.

Inhabited Dungeons

Taking animals into dangerously populated adventuring locations, the proverbial "dungeon," inevitably brings it into contact with enemies. Foes can also appear in random encounters or other seemingly safe spaces, making these considerations ever-present rather than location based.

The challenge for animals in these areas is survivability, a comparison of damage versus hit points. Most animals are beasts. With rare exceptions, they have few hit points, low Armor Class, and poor saving throw

modifiers, making them susceptible to harm and thus easily killed.

Regardless of how large a role they take in combat, animals can't reliably avoid damage. Even though animals are usually minor threats, ones that monsters would not prioritize as targets, they inevitably fall into moments of vulnerability or find themselves in proximity to foes that have nothing else to do than to attack what's nearby.

As animals become more active in battle, perhaps using the Help action to aid a handler's attack, they become a higher priority. Although the combat benefit this gives could be small, an opponent may notice that the animal's advantage is easy to negate with a single attack. Then there is the *fireball*; sometimes everyone just takes a dice-load of damage, animals included.

While threats are not perfectly anticipatable, players should particularly consider in advance whether it is wise to bring an animal into certain scenarios and should take steps to make the animal more resilient or extractable if combat should envelop it.

Foresight usually means leaving an animal in a safe place, as discussed in the "Safekeeping" subsection below. If the animal is to be brought along, an animal can also be prepared with tricks that allow it to avoid danger; an animal trained to Heel or Hide can be made safer in various scenarios. Magic items and spells can also provide for the animal's protection, and a handler can learn class features and feats that allow direct intercession when attacks target nearby animal companions.

Civilization

A creature is suitable for urban environments based on how it reacts to threats and stimuli found there, and how resident people and animals react to the creature.

Domestic animals, even feral ones, are not likely to draw attention at a mere glance. Humanoid races are used to working and living side-by-side with such creatures and don't consider them dangerous or out-of-the-ordinary until they start to exhibit strange behavior. However, creatures that are not normally domestic, particularly predators large enough to prey upon Small or Medium humanoids, will not find a warm welcome in an urban environment. Some places are particularly uninviting to animals, including common places like eating houses and public baths, and formal settings like the duke's court.

Additionally, even calm animals can be unsuited to the big city. Sudden, loud noises, the press of the market crowd, or the barking of local hounds may spook an animal, provoking it to flee or attack.

A dangerous animal can pass unremarked if disguised or restrained. A wolf might not arouse the city watch if leashed and muzzled, or if transported via wagon in an iron cage. Likewise, specialized equipment like blindfolds or blinkers that cover a horses' eyes can keep a skittish animal from being startled and running amok.

Safekeeping

Because some creatures aren't safe accompanying characters in some areas, alternatives may be necessary to explain where these animals go when the game doesn't suit their presence. Although the Dungeon Master can suggest or mandate certain options, every player of an animal-handling character should be ready with a suggestion when necessary.

Following are some examples of how to manage safekeeping. These are easier to work out if the player is prepared to deploy them ahead of time. This often requires being mindful of upcoming difficulties; the Dungeon Master should be ready to forecast the circumstances with enough probability for players to make good choices about what to do with their animals.

Allies

This assumes the characters cultivate relationships with people who can keep and tend the party's animals. For example, if the characters met and befriended a druid who lives in a remote hermitage, they might impose upon this druid to look after their animals while the party takes on a perilous sea voyage. Animals left with true allies are likely to be well-treated and, if the characters die and never return, the animals will have found a good home.

Headquarters

Some adventuring parties have a permanent home they are based in, like a stronghold or manor house. Large or rural homes may have facilities for animals, be they stables, paddocks, dungeons, moats, or other animal-

appropriate features. Adventurers should have hirelings who tend the home in their absence, seneschals, cooks, janitors, or other staff members who can look after animals. However, these servants share such additional duties and are probably only suited to maintaining the animals' care in the short term. Unless the characters employ a groom or another trained hireling specifically for animal care, this option is probably not good for more than a fortnight.

Kennels or Stables

This option may refer to any number of commercial facilities designed to house and care for animals. In a busy city, it is likely that stables are available near the gates or at inns where horses can be left indefinitely, so long as the facility receives pay. The more exotic the creature, the less likely that such facilities will want to take on the animal as a boarder. However, any domestic animal can usually be stabled in any reasonably-sized city.

Minder Companions

Minders are grooms or trainers that are brought along on adventures specifically to mind animals. These NPCs hang back when combat occurs, keeping the animals out of danger. Most minders are not trained for battle or are expected to stay out of it. Some minders may also be trained hirelings, brought along to further train the animals during a journey.

Minders also care for animals for short periods when the party must go somewhere without their animal allies. For example, when the players reach the ruined temple following a long overland journey, the paladin's NPC squire may linger outside to tend the horses while the party descends into the underground ruins where the passages are too narrow for horses and the rubble too dangerous.

Self-Reliance

Some animals can simply be left to their own devices. The efficacy of this method is based on the animal, the environment, and other circumstances.

Many animals can be left outside for short periods. For example, a business might have a hitching post, perhaps with a watering trough, where horses can be left for short periods. Likewise, adventurers might hobble their horses and leave them to graze nearby while they explore the abandoned castle. These short-term options are risky since the animals are left untended and vulnerable; the Dungeon Master may employ a random encounter roll to check such animals' fates when left this way.

For animals to be safely left alone for longer, they must be more mobile and self-sufficient. An unusually intelligent hawk could be loosed to hunt while its owner has an audience with the queen. A wolf companion might run wild in the nearby forest while the adventurers enter the city to sell their loot, then allow itself to be found by the handler the next day.

Portraying Animals

This section talks about how animals should behave in the game. It describes the duties and mechanisms for controlling animals, as well as giving advice as to the default behaviors of creatures. It also explores roleplaying animals as characters, utilizing their characteristics.

Who Controls Action?

As NPCs, animals fall under the Dungeon Master's control. It doesn't matter if a creature is listed as equipment on a player's character sheet, like a mount bought in a market, or is provided by an aspect of the character's class, like a creature bonded with the Ranger's Companion feature. It is ultimately up to the Dungeon Master to portray such animals in the game.

Although player characters control animals, sometimes reliably and sometimes with checks, this is a function of the character, not the player. When a player wants an animal to move or act in a particular way, the player's character gives commands to the animal, and the animal responds according to the applicable rules for its control.

Player Control

In most cases, it's more efficient for players to bypass these in-game steps and dictate their animals' activity (preferably using the Golden Time optional rule described in chapter 2 of this supplement). For example, while using a battle mat, the player of a mounted character moves her character's miniature and its mount together. No check is needed for the rider to command the controlled mount, so talking about the in-game process of handling the animal is a waste of time.

This shortcutting is usually preferred, particularly in games with multiple animals that would otherwise overburden the Dungeon Master. Placing this burden on players is efficient. However, the players and DM should keep sight of the fact that an in-game process of command-issuing occurs each time a player dictates an animal's activity. Under some circumstances, the Dungeon Master may have a duty to step in to ensure that the animal is being properly operated according to its rules and quirks.

Animal Rules

In regular play, it falls to the Dungeon Master to referee the players' use of their characters' traits and features. No less so when players control other characters, like animal companions. The DM has the duty of making sure animals' restrictions aren't being ignored and that their traits and features are being applied correctly.

Additionally, the Dungeon Master has a duty to interject hurdles where they are needed, particularly when issuing commands to an animal. In the core rules, magically supplied or bonded animals have simple, predefined methods of control that usually work automatically. However, this supplement adds rules for mundane control of animals; using these, it is more likely that an animal will fail to understand or heed commands. Sometimes, the Dungeon Master must direct the animal's behavior in a way contrary to the player's intention.

Who Controls Roleplaying?

The roleplaying of animals is something the DM shouldn't normally pass off to players. Although some players might be adept at portraying their characters' own animal companions, providing an engaging roleplaying experience for others in the game, doing so defeats the companionship purposes of having an animal. Players who collect animals want to build relationships with those creatures, and it's hard to have a relationship with yourself.

Because an animal companion is often part-and-parcel to the concept of its player character handler, and players very often have created specific personalities and quirks for those animals, playing them appropriately can be difficult. The Dungeon Master needs to remain aware of the creature's characteristics as well as its stat block to create a consistent, immersive experience for the player. Doing this with one or two animal companions in the party is usually easy, but the task gets harder as more animals are added.

In some cases, the Dungeon Master might invite a *different* player to handle the roleplaying aspects of another player's animal companion, allowing the two players to roleplay amongst themselves for such interactions. Although this alleviates the DM's role in portraying animals, this must be done with care. Other players are not as likely to remember a creature's idiosyncrasies; it's not normally the players' role to keep track of anything but their own characters.

Animal Behavior

Portraying animals properly requires some knowledge of their default behaviors. Animals have instinctive reactions to circumstances and stimuli, some of which are undesirable to their handlers. Animal training is not just about getting animals to perform activities in the moment; it also prevents some natural behaviors and makes animals companionable.

When an animal is not trained to act a particular way in a particular circumstance, it will default to the behaviors discussed below. Even when trained, the animal may resort to default behavior on occasion. If told to stay in place, the animal will only do so until it knows the handler has stopped paying attention to it or, in the handler's absence, for as long as the Dungeon Master believes the animal's attention span will allow. (Attention spans vary between species and even between individual members of the same species.)

Default behaviors are specific to the animals that perform them; the following are generalized examples. These apply to the most common animal types, particularly to horses used for riding, and to dogs and hawks used for hunting. The Dungeon Master should design behaviors specific to any of the party's more-exotic animal companions.

In each of the following circumstances, the Dungeon Master should also alter behavior to suit each animal's characteristics and may decide that trained tricks or successful Wisdom (Animal Handling) checks can control or suppress a creature's behavior.

During Leisure Time

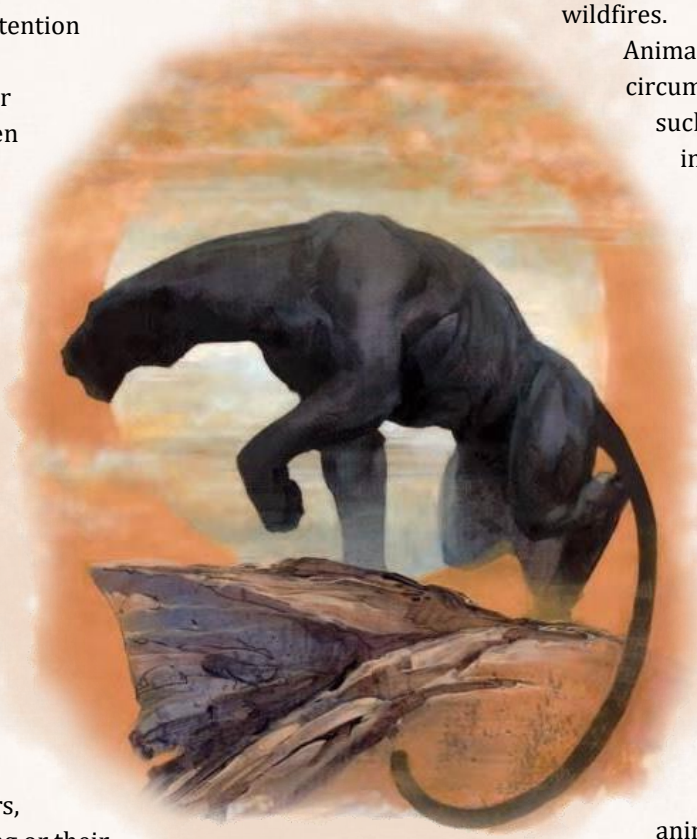
This activity is one where the animal handler is not engaged in dramatic activity. It is a time of long-term traveling or of rest, without danger and without direct instructions to guide the animal's behavior.

Most animals seek food during this time. Horses will graze, predators will hunt, and domestic animals will beg party members for scraps. When restrained, animals may still try to pursue this activity, testing their confinements unless fed. When food or hunting opportunities aren't available, or when the animal is well fed, it will become idle or will sleep.

During a travel sequence, rider-trained creatures serve as mounts and behave as mounts do. They are kept on task

by constant contact with, and occasional instruction from, their riders. If not constantly directed, a mount will follow a trusted or familiar creature in front of it. Absent such a leader, the mount will stay on the road or continue in the same direction until its attention wanders or it finds an opportunity to eat.

The guard-trained template particularly affects an animal's leisure behavior, converting the animal's behavior into a useful asset for the handler. Such a creature defaults to a mode of alertness during leisure time, being trained to watch for strangers, patrol an enclosed area, or guard a specific person when its handler cannot. This role also moderates an animal's attention span, conditioning it to stay attentive or to maintain higher degrees of alertness even when its attention fluctuates.



In Combat

The loud sounds of combat, the fast, violent motions of its participants, and the smell of blood are all alarming to animals. Natural animals therefore try to flee from combat, with rare exceptions. The exceptions are not usually the sort that adventurers care about; any threat to a party is probably sufficiently intimidating that even a hungry bear will retreat from it. However, some untrained animals, particularly predators, will fight to protect their young or their pack, or try to kill an enemy for food when truly starving. An animal may stick around if it is trained with an aggressive trick like Attack, Defend, or Harry.

A mount that is rider trained (but not war-trained) regresses to its default behavior in combat if allowed to. Each round, the rider must make a Wisdom (Animal Handling) check with a DC of 10, or a DC of 15 if the mount is injured. If the check fails, or if the animal is otherwise left to its own decisions, the mount does what its nature dictates on its turn.

If suddenly unguided, most animals flee combat. A war-trained mount might stay near a fallen rider if it is not directly threatened. An animal with a high loyalty score might try to protect a handler, even if not trained to do so. (While this is uncommon of skittish creatures like horses, predators like wolves are sufficiently aggressive to fight instinctively.) A giant lizard might snap up a fallen corpse to consume later as it flees the battle. These behaviors are all determined by the Dungeon Master.

Near Danger

This circumstance is like combat, except that what animals consider dangerous varies. For example, a hawk does not fear a fast-flowing river or a cliff's edge. A solitary creature might fear crowds or the noises of the city. Nearly every animal fears a fire larger than a campfire, particularly large wildfires.

Animals will flee from frightening circumstances unless trained not to. Most such training still requires the active input of the handler to overcome instinctive fears. Aggressive or predatory animals may attack the sources of their fear (or bystanders) instead of fleeing.

When Mounted

Most creatures that are not rider-trained will buck, roll, or otherwise attempt to dislodge a rider as default behavior. They will continue to do so as their highest priority until exhausted. A more docile animal might simply lay down or roll over to dislodge a rider. Chapter 2 provides optional rules for staying on a bucking mount and more details on how animals may try to avoid being ridden.

Highly Intelligent Animals

Creatures with Intelligence ratings of 5 and 6 blend the default behaviors of similar animals and of smarter creatures. For example, a displacer beast may act like a cat in many scenarios, but this behavior is moderated by its understanding of complex circumstances and by its personal agendas and motivations.

Creatures with Intelligence scores of 7 or higher are sentient beings that have no default behaviors. They respond to situations and stimuli in ways similar to intelligent humanoids. Managing such creatures is no different than managing humanoid NPCs.

Animals in Stories

Appendix B: Animals in Stories

In this appendix is advice on the placement of animals in the game and a large list of seeds for managing their appearances. Placement refers to the purposeful use of animals as significant props to illustrate the campaign world while avoiding the pitfalls of animals relevant to parties that try to make pets of everything.

Seeds are small story ideas related to when the party finds their animals or how they manage them. The first seeds are generic, addressing acquisition methods, caretaking, and other moments when animal companions can take center stage. The rest of the seeds are taken from official hardcover adventures; each adventure is examined for circumstances that affect animal handling and for instances of interesting animals that already appear in those books and may be acquired.

Placing Animals

The ability of player characters to acclimate and train animals means the Dungeon Master must take special care in the placement of such creatures in the game world, placing the right creatures purposefully and not placing the wrong ones accidentally.

Animals as Antagonists

Once players start to acclimate and train animals as companions, they may begin to see every creature as a potential friend. This can dramatically shift the nature of encounters that the Dungeon Master believes will entail combat, and the DM should be ready for this.

Animal-collecting behavior can take up valuable game time and shift the focus of a game away from its intended story. Trying to feed and befriend a random encounter's hungry wolves can be a slow process, particularly because it forces the Dungeon Master to portray animal intentions and personality at unexpected times. Additionally, the party may end up with unexpected NPC animals, creating logistical problems or shifting the game's focus to caring for the creatures rather than continuing the quest.

The Dungeon Master must therefore take special care when using animals as antagonists and should expect that players may see such creatures as real characters, more than mere tools used to foster a sense of danger or tension in the game. This may lead the DM to avoid sending animals against the party, perhaps rerolling the type of random encounter that comes up when the party tries to rest. Avoiding the possibility of an acquisition scenario is the easiest way to address a potential game slowdown.

When the Dungeon Master does use animals as antagonists, a quick determination should be made at the outset as to whether such creatures can be acquired by the party. If the DM determines that they cannot be acquired, a reason should be thought up and baked into the encounter. Producing a reason after the fact can come across like an excuse; a fast-talking DM's reasoning may appear illogical, a fiat designed to foil the players' agency.

For example, the wolves that attack the party's camp might be so starved as to be unmoved by mundane attempts to calm them; a successful Wisdom (Animal Handling) check will only reveal that the animals' hunger has driven them past the point of being calmed. By revealing the reason up front, the players won't be surprised by their inability to befriend these animals and won't waste too much time in the attempt.

Potential Companions

Potential companions come in two types when placed, those that the Dungeon Master *expects* the players to acquire, and those the Dungeon Master *is willing* to allow the players to acquire. The former type of creature is designed to fill a need (or desire) within the party, while the latter is probably a hostile encounter with creatures whose acquisition merely would not upset the balance of the party.

In the case of purposefully seeded opportunities to acquire a companion, the Dungeon Master may wish to lay some groundwork, particularly if the creature is one the players my perceive as an antagonist to be fought. Local villagers might pass rumors about the creature, giving the players a chance to think over the possibilities ahead of time. Or the party might observe the animal performing some behavior that suggests possible acclimation, like foraging in a useful manner or killing some dangerous creature of a type that the party has previously fought. The most compelling groundwork comes from observing the creature in the role of an animal companion; perhaps it serves the enemy knight as a mount or a guardian, or it is caged in the dungeon of her castle.

If the Dungeon Master wants the party to acquire an animal, the most compelling features to portray are the animal's intelligence and social behaviors. Players who like pets feel a stronger connection to creatures that are cute or smart; these factors form fast psychological connections in players' minds. At the same time, players who like animals as mere tools to enhance their character sheets will see intelligence and social behaviors as reflective of an animal's usefulness. Regardless of player type, these factors universally signal a potential connection.

The most effective way to portray social behaviors is to mimic those of real-world domestic pets, like dogs and cats. Most players have enough interactions with such pets as to understand their social cues. The Dungeon Master can quickly shift a potential combat into an acquisition scenario by having the animal give an "inquisitive" tilt of the head as the players approach. Tail wagging, turning in circles, rolling over, and extending a front leg are all social behaviors that players may recognize from their positive interaction with dogs. Purring, offering small animal carcasses to the party, and lying down in a patch of sunlight are behaviors that may trigger the players' memories of interacting with cats. This domestic pet behavior tells players that an animal can be acquired, particularly if it shows some degree of trust or acceptance of the party.

Social behaviors are probably not present in a hostile encounter with animals. Players that turn an animal attack into an acquisition scenario need no real prompting to collect animal companions, whether the Dungeon Master intends the acquisition or not. However, if the Dungeon Masters states that the animal is not hostile at the outset, or the animal cannot threaten the party because it is stuck in a trap or a cage, the scene is set for an acquisition.

Fitting In

This part of the concept ensures that each animal's place in the campaign is well considered.

Location and Ecology

An animal's concept is best when it matches the environment it is discovered in or used in. Animals from distant, exotic locations should be rare. Such creatures create story dissonance for a few reasons.

First, animals naturally stick to the areas where the climate suits them and where their food supply is abundant. An exotic creature would have to be purposefully transplanted; unless your game is rife with exotic animal markets, finding multiple exotic creatures for sale off the back of a trader's wagon seems unlikely.

Second, exotic creatures must contend with uncomfortable (even dangerous) differences in climate, particularly when moving from hot regions to cold ones, or vice versa. Many animals are not prepared to weather these changes in temperature and should never feel comfortable short of magical intervention.

Third, such animals may be wholly reliant upon handlers feeding them; it takes a long time to learn to hunt or forage where the local flora and fauna are wholly foreign from one's home environment.

Unless the players are willing to engage deeply with story elements about adaptation, or the campaign purposefully ignores such logistics, avoid using animals that don't fit the local ecosystem. Fortunately, most animals can be adapted conceptually. For example, a player wanting a giant lynx for a campaign set in a tropical climate might be just as happy with a similar creature, like a jungle panther. Likewise, a savannah-loving dire rhinoceros might be "reskinned" as a wooly rhinoceros for a temperate or frigid climate.

If you want an animal's concept to include a truly exotic origin, make that aspect a part of the story. One-off events like a teleportation malfunction or a liberated lab experiment lack world-building quality. Try broader, mundane systems of relocation using the real world as inspiration; perhaps a local trade network exists to satisfy local interest in that sort of exotic creature, using them for high-status pets, folk-lore remedies, or religious sacrifices.

Campaign Setting

Alongside considerations of environment, consider also where the animal fits into your campaign world. Does the world have unique creatures whose use could help to distinguish it, better immersing the players in the unique worldscape? If so, try to use those creatures as often as possible.

For example, the Eberron campaign has magebred animals, domestic creatures bred with

magical methods to produce outstanding quality and unnatural coloration. Whenever an animal in Eberron is encountered with the exceptional specimen template, make that creature an oddly-colored magebred animal if it can fit into such an origin.

Similarly, the Forgotten Realms campaign has native to it some rabbits with unicorn-like horns and some cats with wings. If a player wants a rabbit or a cat, make it an almiraj or a tressym to emphasize the unique features of this fantasy world.

Removing Animals

In addition to placing animals adeptly, the Dungeon Master should be prepared to remove them gracefully. Particularly after allowing an acquisition scenario that was not designed as an encounter of that type, there may be a need to remove animals from the party. Perhaps the creature is too potent, overshadowing one or more player characters in combat or in skill scenarios. Perhaps the animal is ill-suited to adventuring and needs too much attention and protection. Whatever the case, the Dungeon Master should be prepared with a few techniques to help troublesome animal companions make their exits.

Some story ideas for removing animals are provided in the next section as story seeds, but the Dungeon Master should probably generate a few others, perhaps some that are uniquely suited to the game world. The best exit scenarios involve two factors.

First, the players should recognize that the animal is causing a problem. In most cases, this will be apparent by the difficulties that the animal engenders in play. However, some difficulties affect only the Dungeon Master, making the work of running the game harder. When the players fail to recognize the problem, the Dungeon Master should address it directly to the players, rather than relying upon in-game events to get the point across. Until the players realize that the animal is causing a problem with running the game, they are likely to resist any exit scenario.

Second, the animal's exit should be one that is beneficial to the creature. If the animal dies, runs away, or leaves in some manner representative of adversity, the players will see this as a challenge to be overcome. They will carry the creature's body along to have it raised from death at the next town, or will track down the animal to recapture it, using magic if necessary. Instead, the animal should find a peaceful and idyllic home, perhaps a secluded glade where the animal can live in peace with plentiful food and others of its kind. Alternately, the animal can be left at the party's headquarters or with a druid ally in the woods; the animal's exit only needs to remove it from the party; it needn't be a permanent exit from the story.

Story Seeds

These small story ideas are directed at incorporating or accommodating animals in Dungeons & Dragons games.

Acquiring Animals

This section seeds ideas for the three standard methods of animal acquisition: encountering, buying, and husbandry. It also has ideas for getting rid of animals when the Dungeon Master needs them to make an exit.

Encountering

In these scenarios, the players have the least input on the type of animals they acquire.

Random Encounter. The party notices an animal of an interesting type, perhaps one that the Dungeon Master knows that a player character is looking for. The animal is too distant to perceive the party or to be immediately attacked by it; this space creates a moment of contemplation without rolling for initiative. The encountered animal's behavior is not one that suggests hostility toward the party either. Perhaps the creature is lounging, sleeping, or lapping water from a pool. The most interesting behaviors are playful and frolicking, activities that give the animal personality unrelated to its hunting or combat capabilities. To signal the creature's unique nature, give the animal unusual coloration, scars, or other marks.

Rumors in the Night. The party hears a rumor of an impressive animal specimen up in the hills. There is a bounty on the creature, but a concerned local asks the party to try to relocate the creature instead of killing it. When they find the animal, it has already been wounded by a hunter's arrow and needs assistance. If the characters help, the animal forms a bond and stays with them.

Remaining Young. After an encounter wherein the characters slay an adult animal or mated pair of animals, the characters discover that those creatures left mewling young or untended eggs that the characters must either adopt or abandon to die.

Strange Bedfellows. While traveling, a natural disaster strikes, like a flood or fire. It forces animals to flee their wilderness homes and come into close contact with each other and with the player characters. For example, a flashflood may strand animals and the characters on a high peak, or a wildfire may force them to swim to an island in the river. While the animals are huddling in fear, as far from one another as possible, a character notices the encountered animal. Alternately, when the threat has receded, the encountered animal is found without its parents, unable to fend for itself, or an animal curiously follows the characters as they leave.

Lost and Alone. While the party is camped, the animal walks into their midst and begins to display performative tricks, begging for food. It is obviously either domestic or tamed, but it has been separated from its former handler. It may show signs of hunger or neglect. The animal might begin with a trick already trained, perhaps something it demonstrates as a surprise, doing so at just the right moment to be helpful to the party. For additional drama, the animal's original handler may come looking for it later, perhaps after the party has gained a few levels and become attached to the animal.

Experiment. The party encounters the animal caged in the lair of an evil spellcaster. Experiments were performed on the animal and it might now have magical properties. Alternately, the animal may be a particularly intelligent specimen from among a collection that were kept for sacrifices or status.

Wounded Handler. The party finds an old (or terminally injured) handler somewhere in the wild or out on the trail. Knowing she will soon die, the handler begs the characters to take care of her beloved animal companion.

Caught in a Trap. An animal is discovered with one leg in a hunting trap. The creature should be put out of its misery or rescued. If relieved of the trap, the animal might follow the party, sensing the opportunity for kinship and protection, at least while the injury heals.

Reluctant Aggressor. An antagonist attacks the party with a bevy of trained creatures. However, one of the creatures is reluctant and refuses to fight the party. This raises the antagonist's anger toward the creature, which probably makes the party sympathetic to it. After the battle, the party may find that this animal simply isn't combative by nature. More likely, as heroic animals are likely to do, it simply recognizes the goodness of the party and refuses to fight them on behalf of an abusive master.

Buying

Markets present an opportunity for players to have more control over the type of animals they acquire. Most markets, if of the appropriate size, will offer access to most of the animals in chapter 5 of the *Player's Handbook*.

Kismet. The animal is noticed in a common market, perhaps in a cage or tied to a post at a market stall. The character and this animal notice one another at the same time, their eyes locking onto one another with an instant sense of connection. The animal might be instantly acclimated to the character who purchases it.

Exotic Wares. A traveling merchant has several interesting and exotic animals on offer. The merchant claims that these creatures are magical, part of the menagerie of a distant ruler who recently sold them all in a fit of pique. Unfortunately, most of these are only normal animals, their appearances altered by such artifice as bright-colored dye in the fur. One creature, however, is truly a magical thing. Although the merchant doesn't know this, a perceptive character might spot this authentic creature among the collection of fakes. This animal is somehow magical, perhaps with the *planar creature* template or possessing of a supernatural gift.

Twins. A local noble has put out the word that she wants to sell her exotic pet. Perhaps the noble needs the money. Perhaps the animal can't be tamed, and the noble wants rid of it out of frustration. Perhaps it was a gift for the noble's child, who now shows no interest in the animal and won't take time to clean up after the creature. The noble has even provided a sketch of this animal, posted in the local market. When the party sees this, they notice that the creature is identical to a beloved animal they already have in the party, right down to that strange physical feature they thought no other member of the species would have. Perhaps the beloved party animal itself notices the posted sketch and shows inordinate interest in it.

A Circus Comes to Town. A large traveling band of entertainers comes to town. While here, they set up a stall in the local market or near their pavilions and offer to sell some offspring of their exotic trained creatures. This is an opportunity for the Dungeon Master to seed an exotic creature, one wholly outside of its natural environment, without the animal's appearance seeming incredulous.

Celebrity Estate Sale. A famous singer recently died. His many, many offspring have decided to sell his possessions and split the proceeds evenly, but they are selling everything at inflated prices to cash in on the singer's fame. Among the entertainer's possessions is a useful or interesting animal. However, other buyers are bidding on it too. This story doubles as an opportunity to drain off some of the party's excess coin.

Husbandry

Characters with enough time (or who own facilities, and who employ hirelings to run them), can acquire and keep animals for breeding or can otherwise acquire young animals and raise them to viable ages. This method represents the greatest degree of control that characters can exercise over the types of animals they acquire.

Last Will and Testament. The character has become acquainted with another animal trainer, either in the same area or raising the same type of animals. When that trainer dies mysteriously, the player character is surprised to inherit the dead handler's large breeding stock. The authorities (or disowned relatives) might investigate why

the dead animal trainer included the player character in the will.

Extra. The party's breeding efforts produce more stock than needed. A pregnant animal unexpectedly yields twins or has a litter with extra members. If the players keep the extra animals and bring them along on adventures, the Dungeon Master may decide that the extra animals can't get along with one another in proximity.

Under a Dark Star. Breeding efforts produce an animal of a different kind than its parents. The animal might be totally incongruous, like an ape born of wolves, or it might have a celestial or infernal template. Unless the party's husbandry operation occurs in absolute isolation, rumors may spring up among the locals claiming that the creature is a curse or the party may hear that all animals born that day are somehow strange or marked as evil, perhaps the result of an dark star that appeared in the night.

Mystery Eggs. The party found (or purchased) some large, mysterious eggs. They identified the eggs as viable, so decided to hatch them. Perhaps they believe the eggs belong to a griffon, giant lizard, good dragon, or other useful animal, either because they found them in such a creature's lair or because a merchant claimed the eggs to be of that type. When the eggs hatch, they turn out to be of an unexpected creature, maybe an intelligent and hostile one like an evil dragon, a thri-kreen, or a peryton. The parent of the eggs might also track down the party, adding to the fun.

Breeding Requirement. If the party tries to breed magical creatures and raise their young, those parent creatures might have special dietary needs to be fertile. For example, perhaps blink dogs don't overrun the Material Plane because they only mate after eating food unique to the Feywild. The party must track down these required foods or other materials to enhance their animals' chance of breeding true or to otherwise advance their husbandry efforts.

Losing Animals

Sometimes an animal is only a temporary member of the party. Sometimes it needs to be retired because it is too weak to continue adventuring with the player characters. Sometimes the creature is too strong, acquired in a way the Dungeon Master didn't intend.

In these cases, a standard exit, the animal's death, probably isn't practical. Magic allows the dead to be brought back to life *and the death of pets is a deeply unpleasant notion for many players*. Instead, these story elements can provide interesting ways for an animal to make its exit, one that is permanent. The best exits are those where the animal finds a happier place to be, salving the players' sense of loss.

Polymorphed. At some point, a stray *dispel magic* spell hits the animal or the animal falls to 0 hit points, at which time it reverts to its true form. Once this "frog" becomes a "prince" again, he is likely to want to return to his family and life, despite still sensing some attachment to the party. If the original creature is not a sentient humanoid, it might instead be another animal, one better suited to the party's current level or needs.

Love at First Sight. The party encounters an animal of the same type as one in the party. The two animals seem to have an instant connection, and the party's animal wants nothing more than to go to that creature and live with it as a mated pair in this idyllic setting, which is somewhere away from civilization. If the party drags its animal away, the creature might run off to seek its intended mate. The other animal refuses or evades acclimation and won't leave its home, so the only option might be to leave the party's animal behind. Only the hardest-hearted party would take extraordinary measures to bring the animal away from this peaceful retirement, perhaps giving it the *reluctant creature* template. If the party returns to visit the pair, they may have the opportunity to acquire one of the new offspring.

An Offer You Can't Refuse. A wealthy noble's child has recently lost his pet animal. By luck, one of the party's animals is a perfect duplicate in type and appearance. The noble's agent offers the party an exceptional amount of wealth in exchange for the animal, promising that the creature will receive the best care and attention an animal could want and live on the noble's grand estate.

Passing the Torch. A handler in a lower-level adventuring party needs the assistance of an animal companion of the type that needs an exit. The time might be right for the animal to find a home in a less-strenuous environment than the current party's high-level adventures provide.

Triumph and Adversity

Without some purposeful animal-including events, animals can become obscured behind their stat blocks. These scenarios emphasize both triumph and adversity, the benefits and the drawbacks that animals bring to the game.

Beneficial scenarios will give animals a chance to come out and participate as nonplayer characters outside of mere die-rolling. Their special traits or modes of movement can be advantageous, reminding some players why having the animal along is a good thing.

Drawbacks are usually mild, but they force the players to develop coping strategies for when harsher versions arise. Without these, players may fail to think ahead, might bring the wrong equipment, or might explore no alternative places for animals to go when adventures will be particularly difficult or dangerous for them to navigate.

Beneficial Roles

These story ideas address non-combat roles that animals can take. (An animal's combat uses tend to get sufficient stage time that additional story hooks aren't needed.)

Hooks and Ladders. While in a dungeon environment, the party encounters a cliff with a rope ladder rolled up and hooked to the clifftop or some other arrangement that makes the ladder unreachable from below. This is the moment for a flying companion to shine! A clever flyer could fly up and untie the twine or manipulate whatever other restraint holds the ladder in its coiled position. A flying familiar, with its telepathic connection to a smart character, can easily manage the task. Otherwise, the animal might need training in a trick like Fetch or the handler might need to make a Wisdom (Animal Handling) check to get the animal to perform this tricky task.

Cracks and Levers. In the giants' temple, the party is faced by massive stone doors with no exterior method to open them. A Tiny creature could pass through the crack between (or under) the doors and find the lever for their opening mechanism.

Tracking Prey. A scouting party has discovered the adventurers approaching the enemy fortress and engaged them in battle, but one has escaped to bring a warning. One of the party's animals is needed to quickly track down the fleeing foe before the alarm can be raised. This might necessitate a quick chase, or the patrol might have been encountered while days away from the fortification.

Camp Guardian. An animal trained for guarding, or just a particularly alert and watchful creature like a canine, keeps showing signs of having detected intruders when the party camps. When the party can't find any threats, it must decide whether to take extreme measures, perhaps with only half the adventurers sleeping at one time. Alternately, the party can ignore the animal's intermittent growls. This might be a case of the animal alerting over something that is not a threat, or something might be stalking the party at a distance beyond the party's ability to perceive it.

Feeding Animals

Animals need food and water like any other creatures. Dungeons & Dragons abstracts the feeding process; so long as a creature gets its daily prescribed weight of food and gallons of water, all is good. The following scenarios add a bit of nuance to the process, reminding players that their animals need attention from time to time.

Weed of Ill Omen. A grazing animal has consumed a plant that is toxic to it and the creature begins to show signs of illness. A character proficient with the Nature skill may recognize the weed just after the animal has consumed it, or perhaps another character may find the strange weed much later, after making an Intelligence check. If the weed type is identified, the party will need to be vigilant wherever they camp in this area to find safe grazing sites. If the weed goes unrecognized, all the grazing animals continue to gain the poisoned condition day after day, necessitating the use of party resources to cure them, or just having to deal with sick animals until the party leaves the area.

Parasites. The party's stores of animal feed turn up fouled, perhaps by mold or parasites. This won't matter if the party is in an area of plentiful grazing or hunting unless there is danger or some other reason the animals can't be allowed to wander and fend for themselves. The characters might have to turn back toward town or use spells to provide sustenance for their creatures.

Catnip. The party encounters an area rife with food that particularly interests one or more types of their animals. Perhaps there is a plant that the horses go mad for, seeking

it out, and then behaving in a highly spirited manner once stuffed with it. Perhaps fat beetles or scurrying mice are everywhere, prompting hunting creatures to keep leaping into the bushes to pursue prey. Controlling the creatures may require Wisdom (Animal Handling) checks or special equipment like blinkers (or even cages). The party might lose time recovering an animal that has gone off chasing some tempting morsel. On the bright side, the party doesn't need to use any of that animal type's feed stores while traveling in this area.

The Difficulties of Terrain

Most terrain difficulties simply cost an unprepared party some extra travel time to overcome. In the case of mounts, which save the party travel time, the difference may be so dramatic that the party loses more time than it saves.

The Cliff. An obstruction appears, one that humanoids can navigate, but that other landbound creatures cannot. The classic example is a cliff, or a steep slope covered in loose shale, one that horses can't pass by themselves. Humanoids can climb the plentiful handholds or a rope in the case of a cliff, or they can leap from boulder to boulder to avoid creating a landslide of shale. The obstacle is one that animals can be pulled up and over with ropes and harnesses, assuming the party has them. Alternately, they must find another route, perhaps losing days of travel, or use magic to levitate the creatures or reform the terrain. In extreme scenarios, the land may offer repeated instances of this obstacle.

Tree Village. Like cliffs, some (usually indoor) features are not passable by creatures that lack hands. Ropes and ladders are prime examples. Perhaps the party encounters a primitive village built high in the trees, abandoned or otherwise. The buildings are reached by rope ladders and connected by rope bridges, so the party's horses must be left on the ground. Perhaps the village was built in the boughs because some terror stalks the ground when the sun begins to set, a threat that appears when the party is physically separated from their mounts. In the latter case, the Dungeon Master should allow the party to see the threat coming and react appropriately, but perhaps they must defend the horses while at range.

The Gods' Breath. While the party is on open ground, like rolling plains, a raging windstorm blows up. It can appear without warning, or it can grow out of other storm conditions. The storm is so forceful that party members must lean into the wind to avoid falling over. Terrible gusts sweep Medium or smaller flying creatures away from the party; the higher the animal, the farther it is carried. A nature-wise character may recognize the coming threat in time to find a sheltered area or to clutch onto a flying creature. The party loses time hunkering down, waiting for the flying animal to return, or traveling the wrong direction to recover the animal.

Social Trouble

Adversity can occur as "social friction" when animals don't have a good relationship with other creatures.

Crowds are Dangerous. When characters must go into a crowded scenario, like walking a busy city street, and they decide to bring an animal along, trouble ensues. Whether wild or domestic, the proximity of so many other creatures will cause rising tension until the animal finally flees or attacks, causing property damage or injury. Perhaps the final stressor is a loud noise, like the axle of a nearby wagon breaking under its heavy load. The damage or injury may require the party to pay reparations or may invite trouble with the city watch.

Cats and Dogs. Some animals, by the differing nature of their species or their personalities, refuse to get along with one another. Some animals, particularly those with hierarchal tendencies, won't even get along with their own kind. The party must devote attention to keeping two of their animals separate while camping and traveling and may find that long-term adventuring with both animals is too difficult to do.

Animal License. While in a civilized area, even a small town, a member of the watch or other local authority demands to see the handler's license for one of the party's animals. A local ordinance requires a fee but, even if the party pays, the animal must be quarantined for a few weeks of observation to make sure it isn't diseased. (Perhaps the town's crop is under threat from some animal-borne parasite.) The party must wait around to get the animal back, bribe the right, people, or break their companion out of "animal jail."

Hardcover Adventures

This section examines the published hardcover adventures to find areas where animals can be acquired or interacted with and suggests ways to emphasize or improve the story of that interaction.

If the Dungeon Master thinks the players may be interested in one or more of these animals, rumors and clues as to their existence are easily seeded into the campaign ahead of time. Prewarned, players are more likely to consider their options when they encounter the creatures, rather than reaching for their swords.

Baldur's Gate: Descent into Avernus

Animal companions in Avernus, whether brought along or found there, make excellent foils to illustrate the general

misery of the setting. (See "Life in the Nine Hells" in the About the Adventure introduction.) Players may easily discount the various miseries their characters must deal with, particularly those that have no game effect, but miseries visited upon animal friends feel very real.

The hells also create opportunities for hellish planar creatures to appear. The abyssal chicken and the giant craps in the High Hall event are excellent examples of such animals; their flavor text particularly can inform the creation of similar creatures. Often cruel or mischievous, such animals may be ripe for redemption and acquisition.

Bone Whelks. Although their Intelligence ratings place them in the "cunning animals" category, these monstrous slugs have thought processes so alien as to give them the behavior of instinctive animals. Players wishing to acquire them may find their behaviors unsettling.

Baldur's Gate. The Garynmor Stables and Menagerie is a great example of city facilities where obtrusive animal companions may be stored safely. (See Safekeeping in appendix A.)

Curse of Strahd

In Ravenloft, the Dark Powers make tools of animals, embodying them literally or figuratively. The gothic horror milieu casts animals as mysteriously dark and foreboding, like everything else. Wolves stalk the shadowy forest, just beyond the lights of the town. Ravens perch on the hangman's tree, staring silently. Bats swarm and scream, heralding the night. Animals in this setting are meant to raise tension and foreshadow unholy events with their mere presence.

Here are some of the more interesting chances to acquire animals or use them as story tools in this adventure. These mostly occur in and around Vallaki.

Barovian Witch Allies. Barovian witches, although able to use the *find familiar* spell, sometimes choose instead to align themselves with fiendish animals found wandering in the domain, cats, snakes, and toads with a fiendish *planar creature* template. One of these magical (and probably evil) animals may seek to befriend a party member after the animal's mistress is slain. To gain membership in the party (and to adopt the party for protection), fiendish cats in particular may attempt to play upon the party's unwillingness to hurt cute animals.

Beucephalus, the Wonder Horse. Strahd von Zarovich keeps his beloved nightmare stabled in the crypts, deep inside Castle Ravenloft. If it looks like the party is at least a match for the ancient vampire, Beucephalus may opt to change his allegiance to assist the party, particularly if the party has an evil member in it and they encounter the nightmare while it is away from Strahd's influence. If this happens, it cements Strahd's hatred for the party.

Rictavio's Beast. As part of his plans for vengeance against the Vistani, Rictavio keeps a saber-toothed tiger (wearing half plate barding) in his carnival wagon. The animal is trained to be hostile to Vistani but is otherwise tame. If something happens to Rictavio, or if the animal is found or otherwise escapes, the characters may encounter this creature and must kill or capture it.

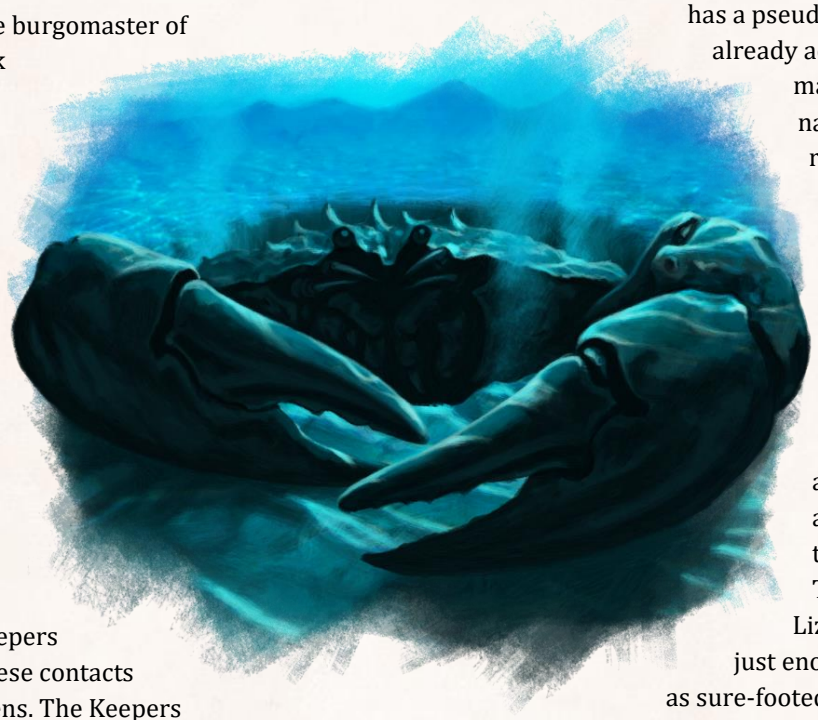
Roc of Ages. A thousand-year-old roc lives on the top of Mount Ghakis, feeding on fish from the nearby lake. It is attracted to horses and mules as potential snacks if characters bring such creatures near the stone bridge on route to or from the Amber Temple. This ancient beast is almost certainly hostile (and hungry) when encountered, but a persistent character might be able to interact with it as an animal. The roc is one of the few creatures that flies above Strahd's influence and, although its memories are those of an animal's, it remembers a time before the Dark Powers came to Barovia. Various spells might unlock the creature's ancient knowledge.

Sangzor the Goat. This beast is called Sangzor ("bloodhorn") by the local druids and berserkers. It is an intelligent and thoroughly evil giant goat. Sangzor has a supernatural gift from the Dark Powers that makes him resistant to nonmagical weapon attacks. Although Sangzor is hostile and mean-spirited, he could become a willing (though stubborn) ally to the party. No explanation is given for Sangzor's presence here, leaving the Dungeon

Master free to provide all manner of details to the goat's origin and purpose.

Unwitting Betrayal. The party's animals may provide a stark contrast to the native animals of this land. Where native beasts are implements of suspense, allied animals remain constant companions, reliable and true. However, even friendly animals can represent a risk. The unique forces in Ravenloft allow the Dungeon Master to use allied animals creatively to drive the story, to guide enemies to the party's location or to reveal information about the land to the players. Animal eyes can be secret portals for the lord of the domain to spy out of. Or perhaps the Dark Powers influence the party's animals to lead the group into dangerous areas of the land. Strahd himself might speak through an animal's mouth, challenging the party or inviting them to meet him in his castle.

Vallakovich Hounds. The burgomaster of Vallaki keeps a pair of black mastiffs. Where did these come from? Perhaps the Vallakovichs (or the town) has a large stable of hounds, carefully bred with pedigrees meticulously tracked. Exceptional specimen mastiffs might be acquired here, for a significant price, so long as the party is not hostile to the burgomaster or not causing trouble in town.



Wereraven Contacts. A party that befriends the Keepers of the Feather might use these contacts to acquire semi-tamed ravens. The Keepers probably cultivate normal ravens in and around Vallaki as cover for their own comings and goings in raven form. Some of the older of these normal ravens may know a few tricks.

Wolf Hunters. Szoldar Szoldarovich and Yevgeni Krushkin spend their days near Vallaki hunting wolves. Despite hating these beasts, Szoldar and Yevgeni might sometimes try to raise litters of wolf pups to serve as trackers and hunters alongside the two men. The party may encounter these two while they are in this process and, owing to the hunters' hunger for coin, be able to purchase some or all the juvenile wolves. Alternately, the party may find and befriend some juvenile wolves and must hide them or protect them from the wolf hunters. Keeping the animals alive may come at the cost of the villagers' goodwill.

Ghosts of Saltmarsh

This collection of adventures is one of the few times when amphibious animals might well serve the adventurers. Some purely aquatic creatures appear in these adventures but, because acquiring such creatures is not useful to surface dwellers, they are ignored in these pages.

The Sinister Secret of Saltmarsh. Animals abound in this adventure. Although presented strictly as antagonists, these encounters are great opportunities to acquire useful animal companions. The haunted house has four giant weasels in the garden, two giant poisonous snakes in the well, four giant centipedes in the kitchen, and six stirges in the attic. For more interesting options, the smuggler's ship has a pseudodragon named Bimz, one already accustomed to serving a master, and a noisy parrot named Cuppa, who may randomly spout secret codes and passphrases that local pirates and smugglers use.

Danger at Dunwater. In this scaly adventure, the Temple houses a pair of unique two-headed lizards called amphisbaenae, useful animals as guardians for their doubled set of senses. The Cave of the Giant Lizard has six giant lizards, just enough for a full party to train as sure-footed mounts for this swampy terrain. The Gate and Treasure Room houses five giant poisonous snakes, and two giant constrictor snakes live in the Lair of the Devourer. Speaking of the devourer, this legendary crocodile, Thousand Teeth, is making trouble for the lizardfolk. Capturing the animal is just as useful to the lizardfolk as killing it, presenting an opportunity to acquire a legendary animal companion.

Salvage Operation. Consistent with its infestation by cultists of Lolth, the *Emperor of the Waves* houses giant spiders, giant wolf spiders, and a phase spider named Roil. Spider-loving handlers may have a chance to acquire them magically, but the fast timing of this part of the adventure and the fate of the *Emperor* means such alliances are probably short-lived.

The Final Enemy. The only animal in this adventure that is not water-bound is Kysh's pet sea lion. Approaching the creature without the triton in tow makes the sea lion's starting attitude hostile. Even if Kysh survives, he might leave the animal with the party when he returns home, if it takes a liking to them.

Tammeraut's Fate. The hermitage in this adventure boasts a few creatures that might be acquired: five giant rats roost in the midden and three giant coral snakes can be found in the scriptorium. The location is one where the party has plenty of space to acclimate such creatures in their lairs.

Marsh Town. Around the town of Saltmarsh, the party may randomly encounter blood hawks, crocodiles, dire wolves, giant crabs, giant lizards, giant octopi, giant rats, giant toads, owlbears, pteranodons, poisonous snakes, rats, reef sharks, stirges, and wolves. The setting provides no lack of animals for starting characters to acquire. If the party is particularly suited to the companionship of one of these animal types, the DM should select that encounter instead of choosing randomly.

Sinker. This shipwreck encounter, of a small fishing boat, provides an excellent opportunity to acquire an amphibious animal companion. Giant crabs are versatile, sturdy creatures that can breathe air and water. Because it is part of a special encounter, the Dungeon Master can seed the story with rumors of this giant crab's location, perhaps even upgrading it to a legendary creature.

Hoard of the Dragon Queen

The first of this two-part epic adventure appears in this book, pitting the party against cultists bent on releasing Tiamat from her prison in the Nine Hells.

Greenest in Flames. The party has the chance to acquire pets belonging to the enemies; the kobolds and cultists attacking the town of Greenest bring along useful ambush drake companions and giant lizard mounts. Characters used to domestic beasts may find these draconian allies to be new and interesting.

Guard Drakes. At the raider camp, cultists employ guard drakes to watch their tents day and night. Likewise, the kobolds employ these creatures in their dragon hatchery. These creatures are trained to be hostile to strangers and resist any overtures of friendship. Although guard drakes are incredibly loyal by nature, this last restriction can be tossed out if the Dungeon Master wants a betters story; the party might interrogate an enemy to find the command words to bring these animals onside and allow them to infiltrate the camp. Alternately, acquiring or interacting peacefully with the creatures might require magic.

Animal Abuse. This Trade Way event encourages players to come to the aid of a set of mistreated horses among the traveling group. The ill-tempered noble who owns them also wants to acquire some of the party's mounts and will pay a high price to get them. The party may be inclined to make a profit by trading for the (now fragile) horses the noble owns and a sack of gold, but they will be subjecting their old mounts to terrible treatment.

Spider Woods. Some handlers, be they drow or just arachnophiles, enjoy giant spiders for animal companions. Those characters are in luck, since giant spiders appear in quite a few hardcover adventures. In this one, a pair of these creatures can be found in one of the smaller forests dotting the Trade Way. The area might be known as the territory of such creatures, giving interested players a direction to go for finding giant spiders to acclimate.

North of Waterdeep. This part of the journey takes the party through a swampy area north of Waterdeep and into Castle Naerytar. This region has crocodiles, giant centipedes, giant frogs, giant lizards, giant spiders, and other swampy creatures that may be randomly encountered. Seeing lizard folk make use of giant lizard mounts in this area might make the party regret using horses, which are ill suited for swamp travel.

Hunting Lodge. A pair of trolls that patrol around the lodge is accompanied by three ambush drakes, and six more of these animals can be found in the stables. Each of these creatures is trained to track prey, hunting game and intruders alike. If acquired, they may already know tricks but might have some cruel behaviors that should be trained out of them.

Skyreach Castle. This flying fortress has two rider-trained wyverns in the stable, along with riding harnesses for both. The adventure provides a delightful set of rules for trying to put the riding harnesses on these creatures and trying to secure their cooperation as mounts. The castle has nothing else in the way of interesting animals, but for a pair of guard drakes in Rezmir's chamber.

Out of the Abyss

This story starts the party in the slave pens of the drow. The adventurers collect an army of NPCs along their way back to the surface, meaning that animal companions can create an extra burden for the Dungeon Master, already having to portray so many additional personalities. But, for the players, this is an ideal story to have animal companions in; a long trek through the Underdark can otherwise feel very isolating, even alongside regular NPCs.

Animal Fodder. The Underdark has its own thriving ecology, with unique flora and fauna providing sustenance for adventurers and animals alike. Creatures normally able

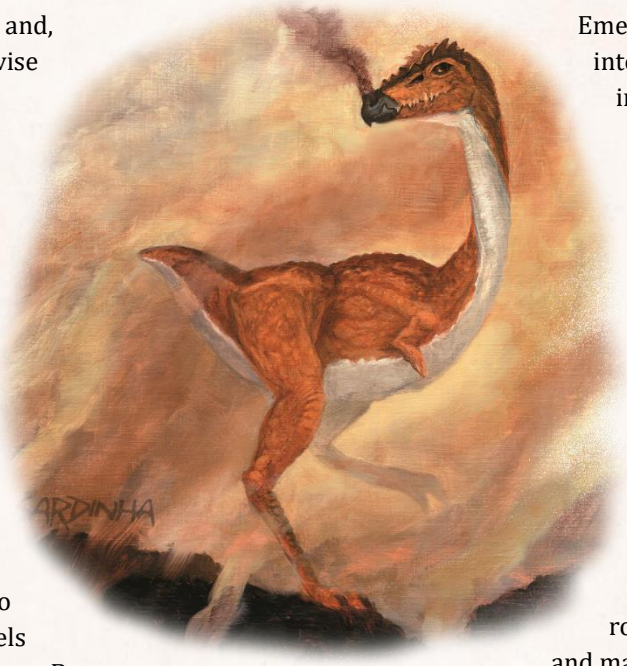
to graze or hunt for themselves can do so without trouble, so long as they are used to the Underdark. Surface creatures must be provided regular animal feed or will need help finding food in these areas.

Giant Spiders. The drow slavers in the starting area, Velkynvelve, have half a dozen giant spiders. Some quick magical control, like an *animal friendship* spell, could allow the party to take one of these creatures with them. As the party's first animal companion, a giant spider also helps to remind the players where the story began and what they are fleeing from. More giant spiders can be found randomly along the party's route, particularly in the Silken Paths and in areas frequented by drow.

Steeders. Common mounts for the duergar, steeders can be acquired in Gracklstugh. The creatures bought here are rider-trained and may know other tricks. Importantly, this settlement allows the party to buy tack, saddles, and other animal-related equipment. Acquiring mounts and beasts of burden is important in this adventure because of the amount of travel involved and, being on the run, players otherwise have no home base where they can leave extra (heavy) gear while they adventure.

More steeders can be purchased in the duergar enclave in Mantol-Derith.

The Spider King. Characters interested in an upgraded spider companion might try to acquire the legendary Spider King, a two-headed giant spider in Gracklstugh's Whorlstone Tunnels.



Cultists' Death Dog. The derro cultists in the Whorlstone Tunnels have a death dog captured in a cage. Because it comes with its own cage, this animal is easy to acclimate over time if the party can find a way to drag the cage along.

Cave Badgers. The svirfneblin of Blingdenstone raise a breed of giant badger that has tremorsense. The gnomes use these digging creatures as part of their workforce, but they might be convinced to part with one for a price, or gift one to an adventurer as a reward for some service. Even with a short range, tremorsense is an especially useful trait to bring to the party. Training the badger to Seek invisible creatures may well be worth the characters' time.

The Beasts of Entémoch's Boons. The adventure suggests that the party can acquire and raise the three basilisk eggs discovered in this cavern west of Blingdenstone, providing a chart to measure their maturation over time from infant, to young, to adult. The DM can use this chart or use the juvenile template from this supplement, whichever seems best for the game's needs. Enterprising and well-prepared adventurers may also acquire the mated pair of basilisks that guard these eggs, instead of killing them.

Giant Lizards. Characters that ally with the Emerald Enclave while in Gauntlgrym can gain the service of giant riding lizards. These creatures have the added Spider Climb special trait, making them the perfect mounts to use for exploring the Underdark. Because some characters have features, feats, or spells that synergize with mounts, the players should be made aware that mounts are possible even underground.

More trained giant lizards can be taken from the troglodytes that ride them in the Wormwrithings, or from drow forces that ride out of Menzoberranzan.

Amarith's Zoo. This dwarven member of the Emerald Enclave keeps a variety of interesting creatures in her menagerie, including a rust monster and a fire snake. Depending on alliances and the party's persuasiveness, they might be able to talk Amarith out of one or two creatures to serve as companions. The Dungeon Master can add more creatures to this area, if desired. Because it is a zoo, exotic creatures up to size Medium might be found here, even surface animals.

Princes of the Apocalypse

This adventure takes place in a familiar area of the Sword Coast, the Dessarin Valley. There are plentiful roadways and waterways in the area, and many different areas for the party to travel to between dungeon delves. Mounts will come in handy, as will flying companions who can scout the trails ahead.

Several towns provide opportunities to resupply. These will have domestic animals available to buy, as well as feed and equipment for animals. If need be, these towns can provide stabling for mounts and some other (not-too-exotic) creatures. This is an important service for an adventure filled with so many large, time-consuming dungeons with so many levels to them.

Adding to the Temple. Throughout chapter 5, portals connect the Material Plane to the various Elemental Planes. This creates a myriad of opportunities for the

Dungeon Master to add animals with various types of elemental *planar creature* templates that the party may encounter. These may appear as pets or guardians for various denizens of temple areas near said portals.

Eternal Flame Chimera Lair. Less intelligent than the hell hounds in the kennel, the chimera in area E30 may be easier to acquire as an animal companion. While it is loyal to the fire cult at large, creatures of this Intelligence rating (3) don't feel loyalty to large groups to a degree that outsiders couldn't sway them.

Eternal Flame Kennels. The kennel, area E19, holds four hell hounds. These cunning creatures are loyal to their mistress, Lyzzie, and hostile to everyone else. If the party wants to acquire these evil creatures as companions, they will need magical means, perhaps charming the animals to sway them away from their current loyalties.

Feathergale Spire. The Feathergale knights ride giant vultures and hippogriffs. If the party attacks Feathergale Spire, they will find a half dozen of these creatures occupying the stables, and more ridden by various knights. Although these rider-creatures are initially aggressive toward strangers, the party has an opportunity to calm these animals in their enclosures and use them for mounts or allies. Flying mounts are particularly useful in an adventure with so much overland travel.

Into the Wilderness. A bandit lair near Red Larch contains a stolen wagon with iron cages, their contents once destined for the home of a noble in Waterdeep. The bandits killed (and perhaps ate some of) the giant boar in the cages, but the players might be able to return the creature to life using some of the new magic in this supplement. The cage now contains a captured black bear that the characters may befriend if they handle it correctly. The wagon cage may also be useful while acclimating the bear to the party's company, or for other efforts to acquire wild animals in the region.

Knights Quest. If the party engages in the manticore hunt on behalf of Thurl Merosska, they have a chance to deal with a manticore. This intelligent, evil creature is willing to make a bargain, particularly if it is surrounded by Feathergale knights, has lost a lot of hit points, or has depleted its supply of tail spikes. The manticore wants to return to its mate in area V9 of the Sighing Valley. For even characters, this is a chance to forge an alliance with the creature, perhaps gaining its occasional assistance later.

Owlbear Greetings. If the players are fans of the streamed D&D game, *Dice, Camera, Action!* with Dungeon Master Chris Perkins, they may have been looking for a chance to acquire an owlbear buddy of their very own. This creature at the Halls of the Haunting Axe is not hungry enough to attack on sight. Clever handlers may be able to acquire it, giving the party their very own owlbear mascot like Hootie McHootface or Waffles.

Plunging Torrents. These caverns hold several interesting animals. The giant crabs in area P3 each represent a massive source of wealth if sold for food at a local market. Too heavy to carry away, these animals might be magically controlled to walk themselves out of these caverns. Likewise, the giant octopus in area P11 can be a great source of seafood to market, but it can also become an animal companion in the unlikely event that the party spends a lot of time in watery environs. The hydra in area P18 is smart enough to recognize individuals; it doesn't mind Gar Shatterkeel's presence, meaning that it can be acclimated to the presence of other individuals. Finally, three trained crocodiles guard the water portal in area P20. As already-trained creatures, they may be easier to acquire than normal crocodiles and the Dungeon Master may give them a range of useful, already-known tricks.

Sighing Valley. Giant vultures and blood hawks make their homes here. Both useful birds make strong allies for handlers seeking animal companions. The roost in area V7 is also home to a pair of mated griffons that could be acclimated with some effort, although griffons don't mix well with horses or hippogriffs. The pair also has a nest with two viable eggs.

Rime of the Frostmaiden

This adventure incorporates elements of horror, particularly from isolation and deprivation. In these icy environs, the companionship of animal become more important, sometimes lifesaving.

This adventure contains many animals, more than previous adventures, and too many to call out in every instance. Some of these have their own names, merely mentioned in passing. Likewise, attention is being paid to how animals react when player characters try to befriend them, like the dire wolf in the Cauldron Caves. Hopefully, this focus on animals and their potential companionship represents a trend that continues in future adventures.

Awakened Animals. Evil frost druids have awakened many animals the party can encounter. These druids seem to possess a surplus of 1,000 gp-agates, such that each druid can awaken animals for such pedestrian purposes as carrying messages. To reduce the druids' apparent wealth, the DM can replace some of these awakened creatures with normal animals controlled by simpler spells.

Dog Sledding. Since the publication of Jack London's *The Call of the Wild* (1903), numerous books and films have portrayed sled dogs as loyal, useful companions. These stories illustrate how entire adventures could focus on dogs and sledding.

Sled dogs are available at various places in the adventure. Training and maintaining a team can become an important aspect of the story. The DM can create rules for specific roles on the team, like lead, swing, and wheel dogs. Replacing dogs or finding unique dogs to enhance the team might constitute a form of party treasure.

This supplement expands the rules for dog sledding in chapter 4, contemplating the benefits of multiple dogs pulling a sled. Contrary to the Overland Travel and Dogsleds entries in *Rime of the Frostmaiden*, the best dog teams can exceed 10 miles per hour while pulling a rider and sled through a continuous eight-hour stretch.

Owlbear Whisperer. This "character secret" is a perfect way to introduce the rules in this supplement, adventuring alongside powerful creatures that are well-suited to the cold environment. The "secret" represents one of the few ways that a monster can be tamed like an animal.

Clever Beast. This encounter with the *awakened* plesiosaurus in Maer Dualdon serves as an excellent example of how player characters can interact with animals they discover. The plesiosaurus can easily become an important NPC in the story.

Foaming Mugs. The goblins in this encounter use a trained hawk as a scout, probably one of the types that live in arctic environments. If the goblins are slain, the hawk might follow or adopt the party out of self-interest.

The polar bears that pull the sled might have training too—it's unclear how Izobai controls them. If the DM decides the party can acquire these creatures, they might have training already. Otherwise, the DM might provide some magical (temporary?) means of keeping the bears in their sled harness and not eating the goblins.

Arveiaturace. This encounter illustrates how dragons can interact with humanoids as allies (see Monster Markets in chapter 4). The illustration of this ancient white dragon includes an example of a gargantuan exotic saddle.

Domesticated Crag Cat. Since their first appearance in *Storm King's Thunder*, crag cats have evolved from beasts into monstrosities. However, they seem to be no less trainable, as illustrated by Kaniaka's domesticated crag cat described in Skytower Shelter.

Griffon Taming. The Griffon Taming sidebar in the description of Skytower Shelter allows goliaths of the Akannathi clan to raise and train griffons using secret techniques passed down through generations. This sidebar allows even a character not trained in Animal Handling to raise and train a companion.

Giant Lizards. As coldblooded creatures, these trained mounts are nearly useless if taken outside of Sunblight. They cannot become adapted to arctic conditions.

Chimeric Creator. This arcane device represents an endless supply of loyal animal companions with mixed animal features. Chimeric features may represent cosmetic differences or they may justify one or more templates.

The Rise of Tiamat

This slim sequel to *Hoard of the Dragon Queen* has a draconic focus; the party will interact with dragons, dragon cultists, a dragon deity, and other dragon-related or Draconic-speaking creatures throughout.

Guard Drakes. Elite cultists bands operating from the Gray Peaks to the Sunset Mountains are each aided by a pack of three guard drakes. Seeking to find and sway allies, the cultists might part with one or more of the creatures as a gift. Alternately, if things turn hostile, magic might be used to prevent these loyal animals from fighting to the death, giving the party a chance to acquire some as companions. Additional guard drakes may be found in the Temple of Tiamat.

The Snow Bear. As a placed encounter while aboard the *Frostskimmer*, the crew spots a polar bear stalking a wounded hunter out on the ice. The party might be inclined to save the hunter; a keen party might be inclined to save the polar bear as well.

The Misty Forest. Seven giant spiders lair about a quarter mile from Chuth's lair, waiting to be slain or acquired by handlers interested in such creatures. Given the forest's tending by a druid caretaker, this area would be an excellent area for the Dungeon Master to seed any other animals intended for the party's use.

Nelvik the Pseudodragon. Archvillain Severin's pet pseudodragon stays out of the final fight and later attempts to befriend its master's killers. However, this animal only seeks this alliance to find an opportune moment for revenge. Only the kindest of characters have any chance to melt this evil creature's heart and avert betrayal.

Storm King's Thunder

This sprawling sandbox adventure gives characters a chance to encounter any and every creature found in the entirety of the Sword Coast; the Dungeon Master has unlimited locations and opportunities to seed useful animals for the party. The encounters called out below are limited to the more interesting or detailed animals or animal-related locations.

Flying Mounts. Given the amount of traveling in this hardcover, the adventurers are sure to need horses for their quest, and they may soon advance to griffons, hippogriffs, or other flying mounts out of necessity. Such mounts can prove difficult when trying to keep other

animal companions. An animal like a tiger isn't going to get far trying to ride a griffon alongside the party. Animal-loving parties may therefore be forced to forego flying mounts and travel by airship or teleportation.

In the fortified settlement that overlooks Silverymoon Pass, Lord Cavilos raises hippogriffs, which the knights of Hawk's Rest use as mounts to patrol the road as far out as Sundabar. Players looking for war-trained flying mounts need look no further than the stables of this settlement, although prices will reflect the number of extra hippogriffs Lord Cavilos has on hand.

For characters who prefer griffons, these can be secured in Mirabar, Waterdeep, Fireshear, and the Castle of the Cloud Giants.

Boss Hark's Cave. In the introductory portion of the adventure, designed to jump the party from 1st level up to the adventure's true starting level, the goblin boss Hark keeps a menagerie of seven beloved giant rats. These pets make ideal starters for party members seeking animal companions.

Aerie. The cloud giant who lives in the Tower of Zephyros treats the four griffons that nest at the top as cats, meaning they are predisposed toward some limited interaction with other creatures, so long as their nests aren't threatened. The party probably has time to acclimate these creatures while the flying tower takes them to their destination. Along the way cultists might attack the tower, leaving their giant vulture mounts clinging to the outside. By dressing as cultists, the party may trick these creatures into cooperation; these birds are otherwise initially hostile to non-cult members.

Black Bears. Two bears, named Darlow and Tilbee, frequent the Harvesthome Abbey in Goldenfields. They are relatively accustomed to the presence of humanoids, and they follow abbey workers around hoping to get fed. The bears are rumored to be gifts from the Earth Mother, but the abbot is worried they'll eventually hurt someone so would be perfectly happy for the adventurers to take the beasts away.

Bear Cave. This cave, in the Canyon of the Stone Giants, is home to two cave bears and their cub. (These animals use the polar bear and black bear stat blocks, respectively.) These creatures are already accustomed to humanoids; they work alongside members of the Blue Bear tribe. If the parents are killed, the cub will follow the adventurers, demanding food.

Hulking Crabs. For characters interested in hulking crabs, a new creature unique in this hardcover adventure, a couple are available in the crab pens in the Maelstrom. (Less aspiring characters may be satisfied with one of the smaller giant crabs from the guard post.) A unique version of the hulking crab, one with colored nodules and hollow flutes of beautiful living coral growing out of its shell, can be found in the great hall. This living musical instrument may be a great companion for a bard or some other musical character.

Tales from the Yawning Portal

This hardback book collects some of the most famous adventures of previous editions. Its adventures have opportunities to acquire animals of various sorts.

The Sunless Citadel. The fortress level is the right place for 1st-level adventures to acquire level-appropriate companions; the ledge, crumbled courtyard, old approach, and "mama rat" areas have giant rats and a diseased giant rat. In the great hunter's abode (part of the lodge), more giant rats are available.

Belak's giant frog, in the gulthias tree area, also makes a useful animal to acquire. It's already used to the companionship of the druid and may know a trick or two.

The Forge of Fury. For characters interested in stirges, some can be found in the grand stair area of the Mountain Door, and more can be found in the Glitterhame, in the stirge colony and high cavern area.

Two dire wolves, named Vak and Thrag, are already accustomed to handling by Ulfe the ogre, in the great Ulfe area of the Mountain Door. They may appreciate the gentler handling of player characters. The dire wolves try

to flee if Ulfe falls first, which may remind the players that these creatures needn't be fought to the death.

The chief of the troglodytes in Glitterhame keeps a giant lizard as a pet. The creature may be trained for riding, combat, or in other tricks. A larger version of this creature, a giant subterranean lizard, is held captive nearby in the scaly lair area and may be acquired too. (Be cautious here; huge-size animal companions are difficult to incorporate into parties, particularly for groups whose battles use miniatures on a grid.)

The bear pen in the orc tunnel area of the Glitterhame holds a black bear that isn't trained but has become acclimated to the troglodytes who feed it. The adventure already lists a Wisdom (Animal Handling) DC to calm the creature, basically setting up the party to take the bear along with them.

The Hidden Shrine of Tamoachan. The random encounters table for the ruins is essentially a menu of potential animal companions: baboons, bats, giant fire beetles, giant frogs, giant wolf spiders, panthers, poisonous snakes, and rats. Some of these can also be found in numbered areas.

The amphisbaena, in the chamber of the second sun area, uses the giant constrictor snake stat block as a stand-in. However, a more-recent publication, *Ghosts of Saltmarsh*, has true stats for amphisbaenae. Feel free to use whichever best suits your game.

White Plume Mountain. The terraced aquarium area has giant crayfish, giant scorpions, and sea lions, a menagerie of potential animal companions in one small, compact area. The rest of the dungeon is remarkably light on animals.

Dead in Thay. Some sectors of the Doomvault may put potential animal companions in the party's path; giant centipedes and giant spiders randomly move through the blood pens, cockatrices and a displacer beast inhabit the forests of slaughter, and several giant crabs lounge in the predator pools.

The egg chamber and hatchling pens areas of the blood pens may hold eggs and live young of an assortment of animals that may be acquired, including basilisks, carrion crawlers, and wyverns.

In the forests of slaughter, the party may find a gorgon lair and a cockatrice roost, two areas where they can acquire rare and dangerous companions. A den holds a pair of displacer beast, one of the most highly sought animals to take as companions.

The spawn pools sector has six giant crabs in the sea hag lair, useful animals to employ in this area. If the players can quickly take control of the creatures (perhaps through magic), they can exploit the giant crabs' amphibious nature to great effect in this watery zone.

Against the Giants. Many giants have pets, animals already accustomed to working with creatures of different sorts than themselves. Some advantage may apply to the characters' attempt to acquire such creatures since they are already tamed to some degree.

In the Steading of the Hill Giant Chief, two dire wolves can be found in a random encounter. Two cave bears are also present, one in the chamber of the chief's wife and another in the great hall. Giant lizards and carrion crawlers are wandering through the dungeon areas and can be found in specific areas. The lizards' lair area also holds giant crocodiles.

In the Glacial Rift of the Frost Giant Jarl, a band of yetis keeps two snow leopards as pets in the misty ice cave area. These use the stat blocks of tigers. The frost giant jarl has polar bears, a hunting pack kept in the kennel cave area.

In the Hall of the Fire Giant King, Queen Frumpy keeps giant weasels and poisonous snakes as pets and guardians in the queen's chamber. Hell hounds can be found in multiple areas; the place is overflowing with them. A chimera, loyal to the fire giants, resides in the chimera pen area. A pair of cloud giant visitors keep two guard-trained lions in their room in the guest chambers area. Finally, what igneous compound would be complete without giant fire beetles, like the twelve found in the glowing cave?

Tomb of Annihilation

Most of the source material for Dungeons & Dragons supports a Eurocentric paradigm. In contrast, this hardcover adventure gives players the chance to see a different region, one lush with unusual fauna, like jaculis, tigers, and kamadans. Unless they bring their own, the party isn't likely to encounter any horses, mules, or many of the other domestic animals common to other regions. Different animals take these roles in Chult.

This land is rife with dinosaurs, the most powerful of all beasts. They can be bought and sold in markets. They are raced for sport, driven for agriculture, and ridden in battle. Druids may be eager to encounter such creatures, adding new forms to their Wild Shape repertoires. Smaller dinosaurs can be acquired anywhere to use as beasts of burden or war mounts. The largest dinosaurs can be found deep in the jungles, terrifying locals, and preying on their smaller cousins.

Awakened Lizard. In the Tomb of the Nine Gods (area 46), players who search this hall will find a lizard affected by the *awaken* spell. This creature has an Intelligence rating of 10 and speaks Druidic. It might be able to advise the party about the temple. Although the lizard wants to be

returned to Omu, it might also be convinced to stay with the party. Since the player characters are not high enough level to cast *awaken* on their own yet, the lizard represents a unique opportunity for an intelligent animal ally. This creature has a lot of potential, but it will come across as mostly uninteresting unless the Dungeon Master provides a personality for it.

Cute Beasties. Chult is home to cute animals as well as terrifying ones. The *almiraj*, unicorn-horned bunnies, make excellent familiars. Similarly, *flying monkeys* are curious, inquisitive creatures that can learn tricks and may also appear as familiars. Finally, *zorbos*, koala-like monstrosities, make cute pets for those who can abide their dour dispositions and fondness for human flesh. Each of these creatures can be encountered in the wild or purchased from merchants in Port Nyanzaru. They present the Dungeon Master with an opportunity to contrast the dangerous nature of most of this region's animals.

Ifan's Offerings. Ifan Talro'a, a merchant in the Port Nyanzaru market, deals in beasts and beast training. He will buy almost any creature the party can haul back to Port Nyanzaru but will try to pay as little as possible for it. Ifan is more interested in selling dinosaurs and other exotic animals to the characters. Page 26 shows a table of Ifan's sale prices for many of these creatures. This adventure expects the party to make use of such animals.

Merchant Princes' Villas. Each of the merchant princes in Port Nyanzaru has a private villa in the city. Like nobility everywhere, the "princes" may be willing to purchase exotic and dangerous creatures to use as status symbols. The party may also refer to the princes' stables to find exceptional specimens of local domestic creatures.

Random Encounters. The many random encounter tables (appendix B) represent the most likely way that the party will find animals to take as companions in Chult. Remember to assign a range of activities to animals found randomly; they shouldn't all be hostile or hunting for humanoid meat! Animals should also be found sleeping, foraging, playing, mating, and hiding. These unaggressive activities may remind players that some animals can be interacted with in non-hostile ways.

Snakes Everywhere. The jungles of Chult are filled with snakes. There are many opportunities to acquire snakes of various types, particularly the useful flying serpents introduced in this adventure. However, the jungles are also filled with yuan-ti, and the players will clash with these creatures several times before the adventure's conclusion. Snake animal companions represent a significant weakness for the party since yuan-ti can charm snakes at will, using an innate spell that lasts 24 hours. In addition to snake companions proving unreliable against yuan-ti in

battle, they might also slip away at quieter times and alert their yuan-ti friends as to the party's location.

Waterdeep: Dragon Heist

The first hardback adventure to focus on urban environments, *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist* will challenge animal handlers in all the ways discussed in the "Keeping Animals" section of this supplement, in appendix A. Large animals will spend most of the adventure stabled, disguised, or stuffed into the attic of Trollskull Manor. Small and Tiny creatures are preferred in the city; animals of the Lovable Lump archetype are ideal minions to deal with public spaces and urban terrain.

Tavern Brawl. Speaking of Tiny creatures, the Troll and Friends portion of the tavern brawl scene in chapter 1 is a great opportunity to gather stirges to train. A troll attacks the Yawning Portal with a dozen stirges in tow, but nine are already stuffed with troll blood and retire back down the well to sleep off their meal, positioning them for easy acquisition later.

Corellon's Crown. The druid who runs the herbal shop in this three-story town house makes a great ally for animal handlers. She sells *potions of animal friendship*, ideal for acquiring animals with, and her shop makes a convenient place to bring animals for healing and succor.

Gralhund Villa. Before the player characters become aware of the Zhentarim connection, or even after, they might seek out this villa to board or train their horses, mastiffs, or hawks, or they might come here to buy such trained animals. Characters with the right connections or disposition may get along well with the residents here and could be offered discount prices or special purchasing opportunities. Perhaps they are offered flying snakes, the messenger animals preferred by the Zhentarim. This can make scenes in the villa more poignant if the party comes here chasing the *Stone of Golorr*. A similar commercial scenario may develop at the Cassalanter Villa or another villa completely unrelated to the story.

The Heartbreaker. Jarlaxle keeps four highly trained giant spiders in the hold of this ship. With their colorful painted exoskeletons, these creatures are trained to guard the area by pretending to be inanimate statutes or decorations. Acquiring these creatures probably requires magical compulsion due to their loyalty; Jarlaxle raised them from hatchlings. However, their tamed nature makes them easier to acclimate if the party can get them away from the drow.

A couple of animal handler hirelings in area J20 watch over a smorgasbord of potential animal companions: 2 apes, 1 rhinoceros, 1 tiger, 1 allosaurus, 2 panthers, 1 owlbear, 4 giant fire beetles, 1 hippogriff, 1 axe beak, 2 death dogs, 1 giant vulture, and 1 polar bear. Already caged, these animals are ideally positioned to be acclimated if the party can secure the ship, or the party might try to buy an animal after they appear in the Sea Maidens Faire parade.

Waterdeep: Dungeon of the Mad Mage

Animals acquired while within the dungeon are more monstrous than natural. Returning through the Yawning Portal with such creatures in tow is likely to cause an uproar at the very least, unprovoked attacks on the creatures at worst.

Although most levels have an animal or two that can be acquired by adventurers, a few of the most interesting animals and related scenes are noted here.

Descending through the Well. Characters entering Undermountain through the Yawning Portal tavern can easily bring animals of Medium size or smaller. While creatures as big as Large size could be lowered down the well by harnessing them to the rope, each in turn, such creatures cannot navigate through the crowded tavern to get to the well. For a price, the proprietor, Durnan, could be convinced to clear away the tables and make a path for a determined handler to bring a Large animal through.

Animal Sustenance. A mega dungeon is a difficult place to bring animal companions. Characters accustomed to allowing such creatures to graze or hunt for themselves will find that very few levels of the dungeon provide animals with those opportunities. Instead, animal feed must be carried to sustain the animals, adding to the weight of the party's carried gear. Carnivorous animals might be able to feed on the flesh of fallen foes, but there are few chances to find meat that is wholesome or untainted. There are some levels that constitute exceptions; the various fungi growing on level 4, for example, provide sustenance for creatures of any kind.

Spider Town. Many of the levels of Undermountain are rife with drow, and thus with spiders of various kinds. Phase spiders can be found on level 3 (area 4b). Giant spiders can be found on level 2 (area 19d), level 3 (areas 5b, 6, and 20), level 4 (area 10), level 10 (area 30a, a unique set with wings), level 12 (area 18g), and in the Tanor'thal Refuge in area 36 of Skull Port. A handler who deals in such creatures will find a significant supply here and may want to return to these levels periodically to replaced slain spider allies.

Flyndol's Giant Rats. A lazy wererat on level 1 (area 35) prefers to surrender if it looks like he cannot escape a hostile party. In parlay, he might offer the party some of his ten giant rats, who do his bidding. Flyndol insists that these creatures are clever and highly trained. Either or

both claims might be true, or they might not. If the party takes a giant rat or two and later loses them to the dangers of the dungeon, they may return here to Flyndol to acquire more.

Death Dogs. The five death dogs on level 13 (area 11a) are purported to be "domesticated." Whether this means trained and docile, or part of a truly domesticated subspecies, is up to the Dungeon Master. If the latter, these animals might be bred to produce a bloodline that is highly marketable as pets and guardians.

Hag's Crab. On level 3, the coven of sea hags in area 10c has a pet giant crab. The creature is tamed and obeys the commands of one of the hags. If the party slays the hags, the crab may follow them, hoping to get fed or adopted by a new handler.

Trash Eater. The otyugh on level 3 (area 17e) is friendly toward any goblinoids or creatures escorted by goblinoids, so long as they don't approach the creature's trash pile. Characters are not likely to be high enough level to acquire this creature as a companion. However, the otyugh may use its telepathy to arrange for the party to bring corpses from time to time in exchange for knowledge of the dungeon and its denizens. The creature is an excellent source of information and a great way to get rid of corpses and other garbage.

Wyllowwood. Level 5 of Undermountain is forested and stocked with a variety of animals, including *awakened* animals and trees. If the characters secure Wyllow's cooperation, this druid is well situated to take care of any animal companions that the characters must leave behind when they leave the dungeon or animals that are too weak to take into the deeper levels of Undermountain. (See "Safekeeping" in appendix A of this supplement.)

Wooden Donkeys. While not truly animals, the constructs on level 6 (area 8a) have statistic similar to real donkeys. The description lets these wooden creatures be ridden by Small and Medium characters alike, allowing adventurers to have mounts that are adapted to work in a dungeon environment. The wooden donkeys become inanimate when they aren't ridden, meaning they won't run off if left a short distance behind the party during exploration. They aren't versatile enough to be pure pack animals, since they must be ridden to be animate, but the Dungeon Master may alter the description so that the creatures are also animate when led by another creature.

Cave Bear Den. Two adult cave bears (as polar bears) and their two cubs (as black bears) can be found on level 7 (area 14). The cubs represent an example of using alternate stat blocks for animals at different stages of growth. If acquired and kept long enough, these creatures will eventually grow into adults, using the same stat blocks as their parents.

Giant Lizards. The lizard mounts on level 10 (areas 25a and 30a) are adapted to subterranean life and are already trained and equipped for riding. The Spider Climb special trait makes them particularly suited to the terrain of Undermountain. If their riders are slain, these animals wait around to be used by their next riders (perhaps snacking on their old riders' corpses while waiting). Additional giant lizards can be found on level 11 (area 14) and on level 12 (area 12d).

Sample Animals

Appendix C: Sample Animals

This appendix lists dozens of sample animals created with the guidelines of the previous appendix. The animals cover a range of challenge ratings and are separated by archetype (although many could qualify for multiple archetypes).

Samples by Archetype

These animals are ready to drop into a game, as they are or with modification. Each creature is assumed to be at least level 0 in its related animal class, but no class features or modifications are listed, allowing the DM to set a level that is appropriate to the party.

Where a creature's statistics would be altered by its listed training or a template, those adjustments have already been included in the stat blocks provided.

Lovable Lumps

These creatures aren't much help in battle, but they provide valuable companionship, and some have a few utilitarian functions.

Hazel (CR 0)

This owl once belonged to a famous thief, the Ferrous Fox, known for stealing jewelry out of secured manor houses within large cities. Hazel learned several important tricks while working for the Fox. Hazel is very keen-eyed and is trained to keep watch while a lock is being picked, to seek out valuables (jewelry) in a building's interior, and to fetch these for her handler.

Hazel is a mottled brown screech owl with yellow-green eyes and stocky legs. Her trilling hoot is longer and more distinctive than that of other screech owls.

The Fox released his pet animals before he retired to a wealthy community on a secluded island. Hazel may therefore be encountered in the wild. If the party is traveling, she might drop gifts of dead field mice to them night after night when they camp. Alternately, she may perch on tents or horse saddles while the party is getting ready to break camp, waiting for a scrap of food to be thrown to her.

Base Creature: Owl MM
Template: None
Tricks: Hunt, Move, Scout

Personality Trait: *I have a job to do and am impatient with those who don't keep up (and don't keep quiet).*
Behavioral Oddity: Coffin Sleeper. Hazel prefers to sleep in enclosed spaces; if she can't find a box to sleep in, she will drag someone's cloak over herself or otherwise try to shut herself within something.
Physical Oddity: Stunted. Hazel is particularly small for a screech owl of her age, with squat legs and a squashed-looking face.

Pig-Pig (CR 0)

This ball of pink pork belonged to a litter of shoats that was trained to sniff out rare plants in natural areas. He can find dozens of different types of herbs that range in use from spices to medicinal aids. (If not accompanied by a trained herbalist, he is likely to consume the plants.)

Pig-Pig looks like a normal domestic piglet, with pink skin and a curly tail. He is a tiny bit rotund for his size, making his walk something akin to a waddling hustle. When not using his prodigious sniffer, Pig-Pig is accustomed to riding about in a satchel worn over someone's shoulder. If forced to walk at other times, he makes intermittent squeals of complaint and may headbutt his handler's ankle until picked up.

Pig-Pig probably comes to the party from a merchant, one who sells trained animals on behalf of several trainers in the area. Alternately, a character who purchases herbalism supplies may receive a tip on where to buy a pig

Hazel

Tiny beast, unaligned

Armor Class 11
Hit Points 1 (1d4 - 1)
Speed 5 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
3 (-4)	13 (+1)	8 (-1)	2 (-4)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +3
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages —
Challenge 0 (10 xp)

Flyby. Hazel doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when she flies out of an enemy's reach.

Keen Hearing and Sight. Hazel has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or sight.

Actions

Talons. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 slashing damage.

Pig-Pig

Tiny beast, unaligned

Armor Class 11
Hit Points 3 (1d4 + 1)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
5 (-3)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	2 (-4)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)

Skills Perception +2, Survival +2
Senses passive Perception 12
Languages —
Challenge 0 (10 xp)

Keen Smell. Pig-pig has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Actions

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

that can aid in collecting wild herbs. Pig-Pig will be sold to the party with his own traveling satchel, which he likes to poke his head out of while riding in.

Base Creature: Unique creature (see stat bloc)
Template: None
Tricks: Hunt, Move, Perform, Use Skill (Survival)

Personality Trait: *I want constant attention from, or at least physical contact with, my handler.*
Behavioral Oddity: Showman. When left without attention for too long, Pig-Pig will perform little tricks to draw attention to himself, like rolling over.
Physical Oddity: Prehensile. Pig-Pig has an extra-long tail, which is hard to notice since it curls so tightly.

Lavender (CR 1/8)

Lavender was orphaned as a young spriteling. Soon after, all her many siblings got killed off by an area-affecting spell that young Lavender, being an exceptional specimen, was barely strong enough to endure. To survive, she followed the adventurers who were responsible and fed on their horses while they slept. She is fortunate that they never posted watches and carried no ranged weapons, so were unable to stop her feasting. She took this failure to kill her as acceptance of her presence and soon came to like helping those (and other) flightless humanoids.

Although hungry by nature, Lavender takes care not to feed on those she considers part of her flock. She is slightly larger than other stirges, with a round belly and a short

Lavender

Tiny beast, unaligned

Armor Class 14
Hit Points 7 (3d4)
Speed 10 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
4 (-3)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	3 (-4)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages —
Challenge 1/8 (25 xp)

Actions

Blood Drain. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage, and Lavender attaches to the target. While attached, the stirge doesn't attack. Instead, at the start of each of her turns, the target loses 5 (1d4 + 3) hit points due to blood loss.

Lavender can detach herself by spending 5 feet of her movement. She does so after she drains 10 hit points of blood from the target or the target dies. A creature, including the target, can use its action to detach her.

proboscis. Her thick fur has a distinctive purplish hue, from which her name is derived.

Lavender may join the party while they are in the wilderness. She joins the fight and attacks their foes, then flies off before the party can turn against her. After doing this several times, the party might get the idea that she likes them.

Base Creature: Stirge MM
Template: Exceptional specimen
Tricks: Assault, Behave, Go Home, Harry, Move, Scout

Personality Trait: *I like to be near people and add my buzzing hum to the sounds they make.*
Behavioral Oddity: Bat Sleeper. As the party travels, Lavender suspends herself upside down, like a bat, from things people are wearing or carrying.
Physical Oddity: Missing Feature. Lavender's proboscis is short and jagged, the result of an injury.

Clever (CR 1/4)

This little ball of feathers looks a bit like a wingless turkey, with sharp claws and a maw of deadly fangs. Smarter than most animals, Clever may try to assert pack dominance over the least-talkative party members, which she expresses by fanning her plumage at them and gobbling up their rations during mealtimes.

Clever's feathers are brown with gray and green tips; this plumage serves as a fine mottled camouflage. She can spread her long tail feathers over herself for extra concealment. While hunting, Clever walks on her powerful talons in a slow, smooth movement, keeping her head low and her steps quiet. When not hunting, her movement is more akin to a rabbit's, with plenty of hops and inquisitive head bobbing.

This creature is probably native to a region with dense foliage, like a jungle. Because of Clever's aggressive, predatory nature, a normal encounter with her is likely to lead to a fight. She might be encountered in distress, either fighting off enemies or stuck in a trap, either of which might endear Clever to the party if its members save her from the threat. Alternately, a merchant or animal-fighting arena might be looking to sell off this vicious creature.

Base Creature: Velociraptor [VGM]
Template: None
Tricks: Assault, Behave, Concentrate, Defend, Harry, Move, Scout, Use Skill (Stealth)

Personality Trait: *I am aggressive in the face of all threats or adversity, throwing myself at challenges without concern for personal safety.*

Behavioral Oddity: Indiscriminate Hunger. When a creature falls in battle, whether friend or foe, Clever runs up to it then looks to her handler for permission to start eating.

Physical Oddity: Long Tail. Clever's long tail feathers are double her body's length. She can spread these feathers like a peacock's plumage.

Clever

Tiny beast, unaligned

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)
Hit Points 10 (3d4 + 3)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	4 (-3)	12 (+1)	6 (-2)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +4
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages —
Challenge 1/4 (25 xp)

Pack Tactics. Clever has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of her 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 creature. *Hit:* 5 (1d6+2) piercing damage.

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

Sweetie Bear (CR 1/2)

A ferocious defender in a pint-size package, this little badger has no fear of larger creatures. It is aggressive in combat and, despite tiny jaws, can ignore serious injuries.

Sweetie Bear has black-striped markings typical of a badger, except that the portions of his fur that should be white are instead a very pale yellow.

Sweetie Bear might be acquired from a druid who trained him, but only if the party befriended the druid or otherwise seems worthy to take this creature off the druid's hands.

Base Creature: Badger [MM]
Template: Legendary creature

Sweetie Bear

Tiny beast, neutral

Armor Class 12 (natural armor)
Hit Points 33 (6d4 + 18)
Speed 50 ft., burrow 5 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)	5 (-3)	12 (+1)	5 (-3)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +4
Senses darkvision 30 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages —
Challenge 1/2 (100 xp)

Boon of Speed. Sweetie Bear can use a bonus action to take the Dash or Disengage action. Once he does this, he cannot do so again until he completes a short rest.

Keen Smell. Sweetie Bear has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Legendary Resistance (2/Day). If Sweetie Bear fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Actions

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

Tricks: Assault, Behave, Comprehend (Common), Concentrate, Defend, Harry, Hunt, Move, Scout, Use Skill (Perception)

Personality Trait: *I am incredibly aggressive toward anything that looks dangerous or that I don't understand.*

Behavioral Oddity: Herbivore. Sweetie Bear likes to eat plants, particularly berries and nuts, and if allowed to wander in the woods, his fur will be matted with berry juice when he returns.

Physical Oddity: Colorful. Sweetie Bear has pale yellow fur amidst his black stripes.

Raptors

These creatures are dangerous flyers, with traits suited for striking from the sky, often using hit-and-run tactics.

Histopher Ribbon (CR 1/8)

This clever flying snake was trained by a cabal of yuan-ti purebloods who were more interested in drinking and debauchery than any of the sinister plans held by their yuan-ti superiors. Although this group eventually came to a bad end, their pet flying snake escaped to carry on his own life.

Histopher is blue in color like a macaw, including the scales of his body as well as the feathers of his wings. He has a ridge of fluff and feathers down his spine, beginning in a high feather crest on his head.

Histopher Ribbon

Tiny beast, unaligned

Armor Class 14
Hit Points 5 (2d4)
Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
4 (-3)	18 (+4)	11 (+0)	2 (-4)	12 (+1)	5 (-3)

Senses blindsight 10 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages —
Challenge 1/8 (25 xp)

Flyby. Histopher doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when he flies out of an enemy's reach.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target, *Hit:* 1 piercing damage plus 7 (3d4) poison damage.

Histopher Ribbon may be encountered in the wild in warm climates (he is accustomed to hot jungle regions). He is probably on his way to deliver a message scroll somewhere, or he has perhaps been injured in the attempt to do so.

Base Creature: Flying Snake [MM]
Template: None
Tricks: Behave, Discriminate, Go Home, Hunt

Personality Trait: *I am deeply loyal to anyone who feeds me, or to the last person who fed me.*

Behavioral Oddity: Mellow. Histopher has become accustomed to consuming alcohol on the regular, but not to the point of drunkenness. This preference is a holdover from his time with the yuan-ti, who were notoriously resistant to intoxication.

Physical Oddity: Parrot Plumage. Histopher is brighter in coloration than other flying snakes. He takes great care to keep his plumage clean.

Nugget (CR 1)

Nugget belongs to a breed of large flying dinosaurs domesticated by dragonborn tribes for use as hunters and occasionally as mounts. She was raised and groomed to be a gift, used to cement a political alliance in a land far from her home.

Nugget

Large beast, unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 39 (6d10 + 6)
Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	2 (-4)	9 (-1)	5 (-3)

Skills Perception +1
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages —
Challenge 1 (200 xp)

Flyby. Nugget doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when she flies out of an enemy's reach.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) piercing damage

Nugget has brown scales in various shades. These match the barren, rocky terrain Nugget was raised in. She hunts with her long, sharp beak, snatching up prey and bringing it to her handler. She often delights in these successes, becoming very animated for several minutes afterward.

Nugget may be found as a pet for a dragonborn tribe. She might already have been given as a gift and is thus in the hands of a noble or one of the noble's household. As part of a random encounter, the party may discover Nugget trying to defend her terminally injured handler from whatever threat the random encounter produces.

Base Creature: Pteranodon MM
Template: Dire animal
Tricks: Defend, Harry, Hunt, Move

Personality Trait: *I am savagely aggressive, relentless and violent in pursuit of any task given to me.*
Behavioral Oddity: Hang Time. Nugget likes to stay in the sky as long as possible. She flies all day, resting on thermal updrafts while circling high overhead.
Physical Oddity: Smiler. Nugget's beak curves slightly at just the right place to make it look like she's always smiling.

Turtledove (CR 3)

This undead creature has the body of a lion and the head, wings, and forelegs of an eagle. Once the much-beloved mount of a heroic warrior, Turtledove and its rider were attacked while far from their allies. After they fell to the earth, Turtledove was unable to revive its rider, and eventually starved to death watching over her corpse. However, its sense of loyalty survived, driving Turtledove to maintain its vigil even after death. As an undead creature, Turtledove no longer requires air, food, drink, or sleep, and it no longer ages.

Turtledove's fur is thin and patchy, and its tail is entirely hairless. Turtledove's feathers are also falling out, particularly in the wings where some bones might be visible; the rest of the body is wrapped with enough old bandaging to conceal much of the decay.

Turtledove might be discovered in the deep wilderness, standing guard over the grave of its fallen master, just waiting for someone to come along and end its vigil. It prefers not to be ridden unless it establishes a strong bond with a new handler. Turtledove might instead be caged in the lair of some spellcaster, making cute animal noises from the shadows. Getting a good look at Turtledove might be a shock; best to have the animal make a good impression before its true nature is revealed.

Turtledove

Large undead, unaligned

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 39 (7d10 + 21)
Speed 30 ft., fly 80 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	2 (-4)	13 (+1)	8 (-1)

Skills Perception +5
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages —
Challenge 3 (700 xp)

Keen Sight. Turtledove has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Undead Fortitude. If damage reduces Turtledove to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, Turtledove drops to 1 hit point instead.

Actions

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) piercing damage

Base Creature: Griffon MM
Template: Undead creature, rider-trained, war-trained
Roles and Tricks: Assault, Concentrate, Defend, Special Action (Slam), Wear Armor

Personality Trait: *I am fearless and single-minded in pursuit of my mission, whatever that might be.*
Behavioral Oddity: Watchful. Turtledove is always watching, always vigilant for threats.
Physical Oddity: Whistler. Turtledove's beak is worn and decayed, with several holes in it that make a whistling sound when it dives with its beak open.

Biter (CR 5)

Biter is an unusual type of chimera, a rare mutation from within a normal bloodline of these monstrosities. She is just old enough to know she doesn't fit in with her kind and recently struck out on her own because of this. Biter's personality is both fickle, a product of her three brains, and independent, making it difficult for anyone but a dedicated handler to manage her.

Biter

Medium monstrosity, chaotic good

Armor Class 14
Hit Points 114 (6d8 + 48)
Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	11 (+0)	17 (+3)	2 (-4)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

Skills Perception +8
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 18
Languages understands Draconic but can't speak
Challenge 5 (1,800 xp)

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d4 + 4) piercing damage.

Horns. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d10 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d4 + 4) slashing damage.

Cold Breath (Recharge 5-6). The dragon head exhales an icy blast in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 22 (5d8) cold damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

This monstrous creature has the wings of a dragon, the front legs of a leopard, and the rear legs of a ram. She has three heads; a silver-scaled dragon's head, a gray-mottled snow leopard's head, and a white ram's head with thick, curved horns.

The party might free Biter from magical subjugation or imprisonment, giving the players the idea that this animal is useful and is accustomed to being controlled. If encountered in the wild, a character proficient with the Arcana skill might notice that this chimera is visually different than others of its kind, particularly in that its dragon head is metallic rather than chromatic, a clue as to its different alignment.

Base Creature: Chimera [MM]
Template: Juvenile creature
Tricks: Assault, Concentrate, Special Action (Cold Breath), Wear Armor

Personality Trait: *I am faithful to a fault; when I give my loyalty, it is for life… and beyond.*
Behavioral Oddity: Biter. This creature is often testing how strong things are… by biting them. Wagon wheels, doorknobs, tree branches, and other items occasionally suffer "testing."
Physical Oddity: Missing Feature. Biter has no tail, whether by some mutation or a simple mishap.

Spike (CR 7)

This draconic creature comes from the Shadowfell, where shadow wyverns are common. Spike snuck into the Material Plane, following some shadar-kai who were riding older shadow wyverns, and who had refused to bring Spike because he was too young.

Spike's scales are not simply black, they are the color of deepest night, magically dark, allowing him to hide perfectly in shadows.

Spike

Large dragon, unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 136 (16d10 + 48)
Speed 20 ft., fly 80 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	5 (-3)	13 (+1)	6 (-2)

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +4 (or +14)
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages Common
Challenge 7 (2,900 xp)

Shadow Meld. Spike gains a +10 bonus to Dexterity (Stealth) checks to remain unseen in darkness.

Slam. If Spike moves at least 20 feet straight toward a Medium or smaller target and then hits it with a claw attack on the same turn, the target must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or also be knocked prone. If the target is knocked prone, Spike can use a stinger attack against that target as a bonus action.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) slashing damage.

Stinger. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage plus 5 (1d10) necrotic damage. The target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 24 (7d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Spike is lonely since he lost track of the other creatures from his plane. He wants to have friends, although he will play it cool and aloof the whole time.

Base Creature: Wyvern MM
Template: Shadow creature, war-trained
Tricks: Assault, Behave, Concentrate, Defend, Comprehend (Common), Harry, Move, Scout, Use Skill (Stealth), Special Action (Slam), Wear Armor

Personality Trait: *I am cooler than others of my kind, and I'm just smart enough to be edgy about it.*
Behavioral Oddity: Sneaker. Spike likes to sneak up on enemies and allies alike and spy; you might be on watch one night and be startled to realize he's behind a tree, watching you.
Physical Oddity: Misshapen. Instead of normal fangs, Spike's maw has narrow, needle-sharp teeth, layered in redundant rows.
Bond: I am always on the lookout for my lost twin, who is simultaneously my greatest friend and my greatest rival.
Ideal: Nosiness. I like to know what everyone is doing, but I don't want my interest to be noticed.

Slinkers and Lopers

These nonflying creatures are agile hunters that rely upon speed, stealth, and occasional pack tactics.

Pinky (CR 1/8)

When he and his siblings ran afoul some adventurers in their forest home, Pinky made a run for it rather than fighting. Although an able combatant, this giant rat was smart enough to know that the odds were against them. To this day, Pinky has survived on being just a bit brighter than the creatures around him.

Pinky is a well-groomed giant rat with an extra-long pink tail. He has learned to imitate the posture and socializing of domestic animals, which has proven a valuable strategy for securing food and safety from humanoids. He likes to wear clothes, should the chance arise to do so.

Pinky could be found at the fringes of small village. The residents might have stories about Pinky, and he might have made friends with some of the residents by keeping snakes and smaller vermin away from crops. Perhaps one of the village children made a vest or collar for Pinky, which he keeps as clean as possible.

Base Creature: Giant rat MM
Template: Exceptional specimen
Tricks: Assault, Behave, Defend, Fetch, Hide, Perform, Scout, Use Item (clothes), Use Skill (Stealth)

Pinky

Small beast, unaligned

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 14 (4d6)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (-2)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)	3 (-4)	12 (+1)	6 (-2)

Skills Stealth +4
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages —
Challenge 1/8 (25 xp)

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

Pack Tactics. Pinky has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of his 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.

Personality Trait: *I am always curious to learn how others act and pick up useful skills.*
Behavioral Oddity: Copycat. Pinky likes to imitate the rote behaviors of humanoids and other animals.
Physical Oddity: Long Tail. Pinky has exceptional control of his long tail; it is almost prehensile.

Webster (CR 1)

Of all the dangerous beasts in fantasy worlds, giant spiders are among the most common. Smarter than normal vermin, these creatures can form attachments with handlers and learn to serve as pets and guardians. They are a particular favorite of the drow. In Webster's case, its training by a goblin druid enhanced the creature's combat prowess and produced a versatile hunting companion.

prey. Webster is accustomed to wearing a riding harness and saddle.

While few societies outside of the drow have a market for spiders like this, this creature, or a variant of it, can be encountered anywhere, in nearly any environment. Most official hardcover adventures list one or more encounters with giant spiders. For a handler interested in a giant spider companion, the sources are endless.

Webster's hairy body is dark brown with paler blond stripes. It has long, spiny legs, which it can use to propel itself in a jumping body slam to disorient opponents.

Webster

Large beast, unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 26 (4d10 + 4)
Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

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

Skills Stealth +7
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages —
Challenge 1 (200 xp)

Body Slam. If Webster moves at least 20 feet straight toward a Medium or smaller target and hits it with a bite attack on the same turn, it can forego inflicting its poison damage and opt for a knockdown. The target must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone in addition to the bite's damage. If the target is knocked prone, Webster can use a (normal) bite attack against that target as a bonus action.

Spider Climb. Webster can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Web Sense. While in contact with a web, Webster knows the exact location of any other creature in contact with the same web.

Web Walker. Webster ignores movement restrictions caused by webbing.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw, taking 9 (2d8) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. If the poison damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, the target is stable but poisoned for 1 hour, even after regaining hit points, and is paralyzed while poisoned in this way.

Web (Recharge 5-6). *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 30/60 ft., one creature. *Hit:* The target is restrained by webbing. As an action, the restrained target can make a DC 12 Strength check, bursting the webbing on a success. The webbing can also be attacked and destroyed (AC 10; hp 5; vulnerability to fire damage; immunity to bludgeoning, poison, and psychic damage).

Base Creature: Giant spider MM
Template: Rider-trained, war-trained
Tricks: Assault, Concentrate, Defend, Special Action (Body Slam), Wear Armor

Personality Trait: *I am always creepy, hanging about and randomly moving my mandibles.*
Behavioral Oddity: Ball Sleeper. Webster rests by bunching into a corpse-like ball, preferably in a confined space.
Physical Oddity: Scars. Webster has a series of scars on its thorax, evidence of battles against armed adventurers.

Sticks (CR 3)

The dire wolf is an iconic loper, one popular among rangers and other heroes who have strong connections with the wilderness. Wherever this particular dire wolf goes, her legend follows her. She was once known for organizing unrelated wolves and dire wolves, asserting dominance across large geographical areas and organizing multi-pack hunts that terrorized animal and humanoid alike. Now, her home encroached upon once too often by civilization, this legendary creature has given up on going deeper into the wilderness and is looking for a new way of life.

Sticks is a large, powerful dire wolf with the antlers of an elk and a ridge of bony protrusions down her spine. Her eyes are yellow, and her fur is light gray. In battle, she will briefly stand erect on her hind legs before plunging forward with a charge of her antlers.

If the party is attacked by hungry wolves in the wilderness, Sticks may show up and drive the animals away, hoping to save the lives of her fellow wolves. Sticks might also be encountered in battle with winter wolves or worgs; these cruel, wolf-like races are Sticks' bitter enemies, and she has clashed with them more than once before. In either case, the party may be impressed with the creature's help in combat. Alternately, a druid in the party or a cleric with the Nature Domain might perceive Sticks to be an embodiment of nature's divinity and seek to make an alliance on that basis.

Base Creature: Dire wolf MM
Template: Legendary creature
Tricks: Assault, Behave, Comprehend (Winter Wolf, Worg), Concentrate, Defend, Hunt, Scout, Use Skill (Athletics, Insight, Intimidation, Survival)

Personality Trait: *I am the alpha of this pack; even if I follow a handler, I do so only to learn new things and to form alliances with these two-legged hunters.*

Sticks

Large beast, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)
Hit Points 95 (10d10 + 40)
Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	15 (+2)	19 (+4)	6 (-2)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)

Skills Athletics +7, Insight +3, Perception +3, Stealth +4, Survival +3
Damage Resistances cold
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages Winter Wolf, Worg
Challenge 3 (700 xp)

Keen Hearing and Smell. Sticks has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

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

Legendary Resistance (2/Day). If Sticks fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

Actions

Bite or Antlers. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Behavioral Oddity: Wagger. Sticks shows affection by thumping creatures with her wagging tail.
Physical Oddity: Rack. Sticks got her name from her rack of antlers, a very unusual feature for her kind.
Bond: More than protection, I provide my kind with organization, showing them a better way to live.
Ideal: Society. I believe we are stronger together, standing higher on the food chain.

Princess (CR 4)

This basilisk was raised from an egg by kobold handlers who trained her to serve as a guardian for their underground stronghold. Although she is trained not to use her Petrifying Gaze without instruction to do so, Princess typically wears exotic blinkers that contain smoked glass lenses over her eyes. Princess's training also includes regurgitating her valuable stomach fluids when induced and allowing her fangs to be milked of venom.

Princess has spikes along her spine from head to tail, characteristic of all basilisks, but the spikes on her head form a vaguely circular pattern resembling a crown. Her eyes glow a brilliant green.

Basilisks are solitary creatures. Princess might therefore be encountered in the company of a kobold handler who is in the process of relocating her because she is now full-grown and is seen as a rival to her former brood mates. If encountered alone (perhaps because she ate her handler), Princess will be wearing tack and harness, along with her exotic blinkers, signs of her use as an animal companion.

Princess

Medium monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 65 (10d8 + 20)
Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	8 (-1)	15 (+2)	2 (-4)	8 (-1)	7 (-2)

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9
Damage Resistances poison
Languages —
Challenge 4 (1,100 xp)

Exotic Blinkers. While wearing this equipment, Princess cannot use her Petrifying Gaze. She also has disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight. An adjacent handler can use an action to open the blinkers, moving aside the shaded lenses, or to close the blinkers again.

Petrifying Gaze. If a creature starts its turn within 30 ft. of Princess and the two of them can see each other, the basilisk can force the creature to make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw if Princess isn't incapacitated. On a failed save, the creature magically begins to turn to stone 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 until freed by the *greater restoration* spell or other magic.

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

If Princess sees her own reflection within 30 ft. of herself in bright light, she mistakes herself for a rival and targets herself with her gaze.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) piercing damage plus 10 (3d6) poison damage.

Although the *Monster Manual* description of basilisks says they are commonly trained as guardians or companions, it is unlikely that the characters will understand the extent of Princess's training without some serious investigation or the use of magic.

Base Creature: Basilisk MM
Template: Fey creature
Tricks: Assault, Behave, Defend, Special Action (Petrifying Gaze)

Personality Trait: *I get fussy when I am not acknowledged for correctly performing tricks or if I go long enough without attention.*
Behavioral Oddity: Guardian. If the party is idle, princess seeks to explore and patrol every room of a structure or cave complex she is in, whether she is on guard or not.
Physical Oddity: Crown of Flowers. Princess's head spikes have a growth of intertwining vines that flower in different colors depending on the season.

Amanda (CR 5)

Amanda is a miniature giant crocodile, a creature stunted by the harsh, hellish bog it was spawned in. Amanda was summoned to the Material Plane in a complex ritual gone awry, after which she escaped into a local swamp area and has lived ever since, terrorizing the local crocodilian population.

Given her "miniature" status, Amanda is the same size as a normal crocodile. She otherwise resembles a crocodile except that when she opens her mouth, she releases a swirl of acrid black smoke.

Amanda might be encountered somewhere in the wild, particularly in a bog or other swampy region. She might appear to the party while serving as a messenger for some fiendish power; perhaps arriving to deliver a message to a warlock who has the Fiend as an otherworldly patron. Then she simply never leaves.

Base Creature: Giant crocodile MM
Template: Juvenile specimen (miniature), planar creature (The Nine Hells: Minauros)
Tricks: Assault, Special Action (Frightful Roar)

Personality Trait: *I am a scourge to my enemies; I never show mercy or back down.*
Behavioral Oddity: Juggernaut. Amanda will bite or shoulder aside anything that gets in her way instead of going around.
Physical Oddity: Scar. Amanda has a long, hook-shaped scar on her shoulder.

Amanda

Large beast, unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 52 (7d10 + 14)
Speed 30 ft., swim 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	9 (-1)	15 (+2)	1 (-5)	10 (+0)	7 (-2)

Skills Stealth +5
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages —
Challenge 5 (1,800 xp)

Hold Breath. Amanda can hold her breath for 30 minutes.

Regeneration. Amanda regains 5 hit points at the start of her turn. If she takes necrotic or radiant damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of her next turn. If Amanda starts her turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate, she stops regenerating until she heals at least 1 hit point. During this time, she makes death saves as normal.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 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 Amanda can't bite another target.

Frightful Roar. Each creature of Amanda's choice that is within 120 feet of her and can hear her 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 Amanda's Frightful Roar for the next 24 hours.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target not grappled by Amanda. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Heavy Bulwarks

These creatures dominate the battlefield with their placement, standing strong between their handlers and the foes. Most Heavy Bulwarks wear barding to maximize their defensive abilities or have their own natural armor.

Lollihop (CR 1/2)

Lollihop was trained by his former sea elf handlers to serve as part of a ranging force capable of exploring surface regions. As part of these duties, Lollihop was

trained to defend his allies and disarm enemies of their weapons.

This giant toad's bumpy, spotty hide is several shades of green and brown. He wears a fitted vest of barding made of a mysterious metal that resembles fish scales. This iridescent alloy seems immune to the rusting depredations of water. iridescent alloy seems immune to the rusting depredations of water.

Lollihop might be encountered in a coastal region, near a port or large river crossing, or in an underwater location. If he is on his own, that means Lollihop got separated from his ranging group or is perhaps its only surviving member. Otherwise, a group of sea elves and trained amphibious creatures might be encountered together. They could offer the party the assistance (or purchase) of this toad for some shared purpose or mission.

Lollihop

Medium beast, unaligned

Armor Class 15 (scale mail barding)
Hit Points 16 (3d10)
Speed 20 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)	1 (-5)	10 (+0)	3 (-4)

Skills Stealth +1 (disadvantage)
Senses darkvision 30 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages —
Challenge 1/2 (100 xp)

Amphibious. Lollihop can breathe air and water.

Long Tongue. Lollihop can attempt his Disarm trick while at a range of 10 ft.

Standing Leap. Lollihop's long jump is up to 20 ft. and his high jump is up to 10 ft., with or without a running start.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d8) piercing damage plus 3 (1d6) poison damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 11). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and Lollihop can't bite another target.

Swallow. Lollihop makes one bite attack against a Small or Tiny 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 toad, and it takes 7 (3d4) acid damage at the start of each of Lollihop's turns. The toad can have only one target swallowed at a time.

If Lollihop is reduced to 0 hit points, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained by him and can escape using 5 feet of movement, exiting prone.

Base Creature: Giant toad
Template: *Juvenile creature*
Tricks: Defend, Disarm, Wear Armor

Personality Trait: *My purpose is to defend others; I don't like to go anywhere by myself.*
Behavioral Oddity: Practice. Lollihop likes to practice his Disarm trick by picking up random things with his tongue and dropping them in other locations; any loose objects left around the camp are likely to end up some distance away from where they were placed.
Physical Oddity: Big Tail. Lollihop still has a long tail in this late stage of growth, transitioning from giant tadpole into giant toad.

Willful (CR 3)

This massive bull comes from the Elemental Plane of Fire. Willful answers the magical summons of a sorcerer on the Material Plane who uses a drop of royal blood to bind the creature to an embattled ruler. Willful's purpose is to wanders the ruler's lands, serving as an extension of his master's dominion and dragging terror in his wake.

Willful's fur is a deep russet color. His eyes are red and animated like flickering fire. His breath is a bellow of smoke, and when Willful gets angry, fire wreathes his massive horns.

The ritual that summons Willful to this plane might be found in an ancient manuscript. It requires the expenditure of costly material components and a drop of royal blood, although the blood of a character with the noble background may suffice. Willful has the charmed condition relevant to the person whose blood is used in the ritual. Alternately, Willful may be encountered on this plane doing the bidding of some other master; acquiring Willful this way first requires that his master be killed (or his master's charm be dispelled).

Base Creature: Aurochs [VGM]
Template: Planar creature (Plane of Fire)
Tricks: Harry, Hunt, Scout, Use Skill (Perception)

Personality Trait: *I am a nightmare, chained by hatred.*
Behavioral Oddity: Restless. Willful is constantly moving. Even while "inactive," he stalks about, circles, or paces back and forth.
Physical Oddity: Red Eyes. Willful's eyes glow red, shedding dim light in a 5-foot radius around him.

Willful

Large beast, unaligned

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)
Hit Points 57 (6d10 + 24)
Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	10 (+0)	19 (+4)	2 (-4)	12 (+1)	5 (-3)

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

Fiery Impact. If Willful 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) fire 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.

Terrifying Approach (Recharge 5-6). When Willful takes a Dash action, all creatures of his choice within 30 ft. of him at the end of his turn's final movement must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature that fails its saving throw by 5 or more is also panicked while frightened this way; a panicked creature must take the Dash action and move away from Willful by the safest available route on each of its turns, unless there is nowhere to move. If an affected creature ends its turn in a location where it doesn't have line of sight to Willful, the creature can make a Wisdom saving throw. On a successful save, the effect ends for that creature. If a creature's saving throw is successful, the creature is immune to Willful's Terrifying Approach for the next 24 hours.

Stampy (CR 4)

Like many of her kind, Stampy was raised in captivity and trained for labor in an environment where predators are common. In addition to carrying heavy loads, Stampy's training includes fending off the attacks of land-bound predators that may stalk her or her handlers.

This elephant is accustomed to bearing a howdah of riders when she isn't performing other labor. In battle, Stampy wears a protective coat of chain mail links. Her thick, gray hide is scarred from long-clawed predators, or from the spears of ivory hunters or enemy soldiers.

Stampy

Huge beast, unaligned

Armor Class 16 (chain mail barding)
Hit Points 76 (8d12 + 24)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	9 (-1)	17 (+3)	3 (-4)	11 (+0)	6 (-2)

Skills Athletics +8, Stealth -1 (disadvantage)
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages —
Challenge 4 (1,100 xp)

Actions

Gore. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 19 (3d8 + 6) piercing damage.

Stomp. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one prone creature. *Hit:* 22 (3d10 + 6) bludgeoning damage.

Stampy may be found in a limited range of warm habitats, including savannahs, forests, deserts, and marshes. She is representative of elephants that can be purchased with additional useful training. Owing to her loyalty and usefulness, she is not likely to be found wandering without minders or handlers.

Base Creature: Elephant [MM]
Template: Rider-trained
Tricks: Behave, Concentrate, Defend, Move, Use Skill (Athletics), Wear Armor

Personality Trait: *I am serene and resigned to my labor, both in mundane work and in battle.*
Behavioral Oddity: Skittish. Stampy is afraid of Tiny-sized rodents like badgers, rats, and weasels.
Physical Oddity: Scars. Stampy's hide shows the ravages of working in predator-filled environments, and of operating alongside soldiers and adventurers.

Rotfang (CR 6)

Rotfang lived a happy life in a cavernous dungeon, disposing of waste thrown into its lair. That is, until one fateful day when adventurers came. They slew the cultists who had been supplying Rotfang's food. Although the creature did not mind eating the cultists' corpses too, the creature eventually starved to death. Having been raised on a steady diet of bodies used as evil sacrifices, Rotfang eventually rose from the dead, suffused with necromantic energy.

Rotfang

Large undead, neutral

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 114 (12d10 + 48)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	11 (+0)	19 (+4)	6 (-2)	13 (+1)	6 (-2)

Saving Throws Constitution +7
Skills Athletics +6, Perception +4, Survival +4
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages Otyugh
Challenge 6 (2,300 xp)

Limited Telepathy. Rotfang can magically transmit simple messages and images to any creature within 120 ft. of it that can understand a language. This form of telepathy doesn't allow the receiving creature to telepathically respond.

Undead Fortitude. If damage reduces Rotfang to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, Rotfang drops to 1 hit point instead.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d8 + 3) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw against disease or become poisoned until the disease is cured. Every 24 hours that elapse, the target must repeat the saving throw, reducing its hit point maximum by 5 (1d10) on a failure. The disease is cured on a success. The target dies if the disease reduces its hit point maximum to 0. This reduction lasts until the disease is cured.

Tentacle. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage plus 4 (1d8) piercing damage. If the target is Medium or smaller, it is grappled (escape DC 13) and restrained until the grapple ends. Rotfang has two tentacles, each of which can grapple one target at a time.

Tentacle Slam. Rotfang slams creatures grappled by it into each other or a solid surface. Each creature must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or take 10 (2d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage and be stunned until the end of Rotfang's next turn. On a successful save, the target takes half the damage and isn't stunned.

Rotfang's rocklike skin, normally quite sturdy, is lately showing signs of chips and flaking. This three-legged chonker smells like decay; whether because of its undead nature or because it loves eating rubbish.

Rotfang might follow a dangerous party at a distance, cleaning up after the corpses they leave behind. It might be weeks before they notice its presence, at which point it can use its telepathy to present itself as friendly, expressing familiarity with individuals in the party and flattering them at their ability to leave a trail of delicious corpses.

Base Creature: Otyugh MM
Template: *Undead creature*
Tricks: Attack, Behave, Comprehend (Common, Draconic), Concentrate, Defend, Desist, Disarm, Fetch, Guard, Harry, Heel, Hide, Shove, Subdue, Use Skill (Athletics, Perception, Stealth)

Personality Trait: *I am implacable, regardless of circumstances or threats.*
Behavioral Oddity: Annoying. Rotfang watches people eat, waiting to take care of scraps and waste.
Physical Oddity: Tree-Toed. Rotfang's toe-like claws are spaced around the circumference of each of her feet, like tree roots, rather than being on the front.
Bond: I have no need to kill anything; everyone gets eaten too early in life.
Ideal: Fragrance. I love the smells of baking bread, the earth after a rainfall, or a bed of wildflowers; these scents (and garbage) are what I live for.

Pretzel (CR 7)

Pretzel was bred and trained by magical means, which was a necessity given the amount of effort needed to train all five brains.

This juvenile has an unusual pattern of subtle colors. Each of its long-necked heads has a different tinge overlaying its green scales: purple, yellow, blue, orange, and red. In the right light, this sheen is visible on Pretzel's body too, forming an unusual pattern of spots, stripes, and whorls.

Pretzel might be encountered in any location where a hydra can find enough food. It is cooperative if not currently hungry and is willing to make friends.

Base Creature: Hydra MM
Template: Juvenile creature
Tricks: Behave, Guard

Personality Trait: *I need constant reassurance to know I am doing what I am supposed to do.*
Behavioral Oddity: Symmetrical. While on guard duty, Pretzel aims its heads in different directions, necks straight, like a five-pointed compass star.
Physical Oddity: Clumsy. Pretzel's heads often get in one another's way. It can only use one at a time for any

Pretzel

Large monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 76 (8d10 + 32)
Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)	1 (-5)	8 (-1)	7 (-2)

Skills Perception +5
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages —
Challenge 7 (2,900 xp)

Hold Breath. Pretzel can hold its breath for 1 hour.

Multiple Heads. Pretzel has five heads. While it has more than one head, Pretzel has advantage on saving throws against being blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, stunned, and knocked unconscious.

Whenever Pretzel takes 25 or more damage in a single turn, one of its heads dies. If all its heads die, Pretzel's heads stop re-growing until it heals at least 1 hit point. During this time, Pretzel makes death saves as normal.

At the end of its turn, Pretzel regrows two heads for each of its heads that died since its last turn, unless it has taken fire damage since its last turn. Pretzel regains 10 hit points for each head regrown in this way.

Reactive Heads. For each head Pretzel has beyond one, it gets an extra reaction that it can use only for opportunity attacks.

Wakeful. While Pretzel sleeps, at least one of its heads is awake.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

complex task. When it tests this limitation, its necks might get tied in a knot.

Loyal Mounts

Although these creatures fit into the loyal mounts archetype, some match more than one archetype.

Sablefoot (CR 1/8)

In her youth, this aging horse won performative competitions ("dressage") where she was scored for both acrobatic movement and grooming. Now, long past her prime, this quirky mount prefers a high trot to any normal movement and performs every turn with a flourish of her tail. This dramatic movement may surprise an unaccustomed rider and it draws a lot of attention from those nearby.

When a rider dismounts from Sablefoot, she always bends her front legs and dips her head to perform a low bow toward the rider. The Dungeon Master may provide other acrobatic flourishes to Sablefoot's behavior, the remnants of performance routines learned long ago. Unfortunately, Sablefoot only does these things for herself now; getting her to perform on command is a difficult task.

Sablefoot may be placed in a campaign for low-level characters, perhaps at a discount rate at a local market. Alternately, she might be a gift from an ally who values Sablefoot based on her past fame.

Base Creature: Riding horse [MM]
Template: Rider-trained [Sablefoot gains the reluctant creature template while she is not properly groomed.]
Tricks: Go Home, Move, Perform, Use Skill (Acrobatics)

Personality Trait: *I'm always performing, wherever I go and whatever I do, it's for the crowd.*
Behavioral Oddity: Dancer. Sablefoot moves with high, dressage-like steps. It's difficult for a handler to get this horse to move normally.

Sablefoot

Large beast, unaligned

Armor Class 9
Hit Points 11 (2d10)
Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	8 (-1)	11 (+0)	2 (-4)	10 (+0)	5 (-3)

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

Unreliable. Apply disadvantage to any Wisdom (Animal Handling) checks made to control this mount in battle or to get it to perform tricks or difficult maneuvers.

Unstable. This animal gains 1 exhaustion level for each hour of a forced march; this is additional to any exhaustion from failing the Constitution check.

Actions

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

Physical Oddity: Lustrous. Sablefoot's mane and tail remain long and beautiful, despite her showing other signs of advanced age.

Haizum (CR 1)

This ageless, winged warhorse is native to Mount Celestia. It came to the Material Plane long ago at the behest of a good-aligned deity to aid adventurers in their holy quests.

Haizum is a pure white horse with large wings of white feathers. It cannot make use of equine saddles and barding; it needs exotic versions that are specifically crafted to facilitate the creature's wings.

Haizum is not a sentient creature like a true pegasus, so it doesn't judge the worthiness of a particular handler. However, as a tool of some good deity, Haizum might come into the possession of good-aligned adventurers through a series of unlikely coincidences, as though guided by fate. He might be found with his own saddle and barding.

Haizum

Large beast, unaligned

Armor Class 11
Hit Points 32 (5d10 + 5)
Speed 60 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	2 (-4)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)

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

Celestial Wings. Haizum has a fly speed equal to its normal speed.

Blessed Hooves. Haizum's hooves count as magical weapons. The creature has a +1 magical bonus to attack rolls and damage rolls with its hooves.

Trampling Charge. If Haizum moves at least 20 ft. straight toward a creature and then hits it with a hooves 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, Haizum can make another attack with its hooves against the target as a bonus action.

Actions

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

Base Creature: Warhorse MM
Template: Planar creature (Mount Celestia), rider-trained, war-trained
Tricks: Assault, Concentrate, Defend, Special Action (Trampling Charge), Wear Armor

Personality Trait: *I will work for my handler, tirelessly, to the point of exhaustion and beyond.*
Behavioral Oddity: Wrathful. Haizum acts fearless of, and behaves aggressively toward, creatures that have hurt it or its rider.
Physical Oddity: Bright Eyes. Haizum's eyes are golden orbs with no discernable pupils.

Shadow Floof (CR 3)

This displacer beast was taken from its parents as a kitten and trained to be a potent ally in combat. It can carry a rider or fight independently, stalking or flanking foes, often attacking from surprise. Shadow Floof is cunning in combat and considers battle and tactics to be games it particularly enjoys. It knows far more tricks than a mundane animal could learn and uses them to great effect. Because it was raised in isolation from others of its kind, this creature does not have a displacer beast's default alignment, but Shadow Floof's nature means it has a few cruel tendencies. The animal shows little empathy for other creatures and is likely to toy with foes, hoping they will flee so they can be chased down.

Shadow Floof is an impossibly fluffy, longhair displacer beast. It has a single white stripe down the middle of its face, a stark contrast to its midnight-black fur. When Shadow Floof sleeps, it likes to do so on top of things, often hanging partly off them as though poured onto such uneven surfaces with limbs, tentacles, and tongue lolling.

Because Shadow Floof was raised around intelligent humanoids and is accustomed to living with them, this creature is unlikely to be encountered alone in the wild; it is probably encountered in the company of humanoid allies. The animal is smart enough that it won't be sold unless it is willing to work with the purchasing character or party. Shadow Floof is more likely to join a party whose quest aligns with the displacer beast's personal goals, letting an old "owner" negotiate a "service fee" on the animal's behalf, instead of a purchase price (of which, Shadow Floof expects to get most of the proceeds).

Base Creature: Displacer beast MM
Template: Rider-trained, war-trained
Tricks: Assault, Behave, Concentrate, Defend, Discriminate, Guard, Harry, Move, Scout, Special Action (Clothesline), Use Skill (Perception), Wear Armor

Shadow Floof

Large monstrosity, lawful neutral

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 93 (11d10 + 33)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	17 (+3)	17 (+3)	6 (-2)	13 (+1)	8 (-1)

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13
Skills Perception +3
Languages —
Challenge 3 (700 xp)

Avoidance. If Shadow Floof is subjected to an effect that allows it to make saving throw to take only half damage, it instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if it fails.

Displacement. Shadow Floof projects a magical illusion that makes it appear to be standing near its actual location, causing attack rolls against it to have disadvantage. If Shadow Floof is hit by an attack, this trait is disrupted until the end of the creature's next turn. This trait is also disrupted while Shadow Floof is incapacitated or has a speed of 0.

Clothesline. If Shadow Floof moves at least 20 feet straight toward a Medium or smaller target and then hits it with a tentacle attack on the same turn, the target must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or also be knocked prone. If the target is knocked prone, Shadow Floof can use another tentacle attack against that target again as a bonus action.

Actions

Tentacle. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage plus 3 (1d6) piercing damage.

Personality Trait: *I am casually aloof, uninterested in socializing… until I demand attention.*
Behavioral Oddity: Lazy. When not stressed, particularly after Shadow Floof has eaten, it wants to sleep. Absent some danger, the displacer beast can be hard to wake or to get moving.
Physical Oddity: Marked. Shadow Floof has a prominent white blaze on its forehead. Displacer beasts normally have purely black fur.
Bond: I am a consummate competitor and devoted to the notion of testing and comparing my abilities against other, similar creatures.
Ideal: Leisure. I work hard and I expect to rest hard. Relaxing is my ideal existence, and I refuse to be roused until my requisite rest time has passed.

Wooly (CR 5)

This young mammoth died over a decade ago, in a faraway place, but his body was recently acquired by a local cult, meaning he is probably far from his native environment. Wooly was then raised from the dead as part of a mysterious experiment.

This animal is trained to be ridden with an exotic saddle. Wooly is also trained to hold a lantern with his trunk, raising it and aiming it to dispel darkness as a humanoid carrier would, particularly to illuminate his direction of travel. When combat occurs, Wooly will gently drop the lantern on his first turn.

Wooly is about the size of a horse. He looks very much like a young elephant, but has long, shaggy fur. His fur tends to get matted with dirt and twigs if he has no one to brush him. Although he has a large-handled brush of his own, which he is trained to hold with his trunk and use on himself, his back half cannot be groomed without assistance.

Wooly

Large monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)
Hit Points 63 (6d10 + 24)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+5)	9 (-1)	19 (+4)	2 (-4)	9 (-1)	6 (-2)

Senses passive Perception 9
Languages —
Challenge 5 (1,800 xp)

Trampling Charge. If Wooly 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 16 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, Wooly can make one stomp attack against it as a bonus action.

Actions

Gore. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 19 (4d6 + 5) piercing damage.

Stomp. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one prone creature. *Hit:* 23 (4d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

The party may acquire Wooly directly from secret members of the cult who are tired of having to feed him. Alternately, Wooly may have had any number of owners between the cult and the party, each quickly discovering Wooly's eating requirements the hard way and selling him. A handler who purchases Wooly will acquire his exotic combat saddle and a large brush suitable for grooming his coarse fur.

Base Creature: Mammoth MM
Template: Juvenile creature [Wooly can eventually advance CR by losing this template], rider-trained
Tricks: Concentrate, Special Action (Trampling Charge), Use Item (Lantern), Wear Armor

Personality Trait: *I am constantly aware of my surroundings; whenever I get a chance to stop somewhere, I explore every inch of the area, sniffing things out with my trunk.*
Behavioral Oddity: Generous. If anyone is around when Wooly is eating, Wooly picks up his own fodder with his trunk and tries to feed it to those people.
Physical Oddity: Misshapen. Wooly's droopy ears are noticeably larger than a normal mammoth's ears would be at this age.

Sven (CR 7)

This legendary sea lion was born on a rocky, deserted island where an ancient magical artifact was taken for destruction. The artifact left behind a magical residue, remnants of its own power and sentience. This infected Sven and warped his growth into the legendary creature he is today.

Monstrous sea lions are green and dun colored, but Sven is not. His scales are white with a pearly sheen. Additionally, everything about Sven's posture and features speaks to his nobility and wisdom. At least Sven is convinced of this, a side effect of the destroyed artifact's ego, which now influences Sven.

Sven is a social creature and may join the party when they encounter him in any aquatic or seaside adventure. Sven is smarter than his fellow monstrous sea lions, and he finds little kinship with them; he prefers the company of smarter humanoids. Sven will signal his peaceful intent by showing himself to the party from time to time, trumpeting a greeting to them, and occasionally leaving fish for them, the inverse of a normal acclimation process.

Base Creature: Sea lion TYP (This is the monstrosity sea lion from *Tales of the Yawning Portal*, not the beast sea lion from *Ghosts of Saltmarsh*)
Template: Legendary creature, rider-trained, war-trained

Sven

Large monstrosity, neutral good

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 189 (18d10 + 90)
Speed 40 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	17 (+3)	20 (+5)	6 (-2)	13 (+1)	8 (-1)

Skills Athletics +8, Perception +4, Stealth +5
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages —
Challenge 7 (2,900 xp)

Amphibious. Sven can breathe air and water.

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

Legendary Movement. Sven gains a normal speed equivalent to his swim speed.

Legendary Resistance (2/Day). If Sven fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

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

Slam. If Sven moves at least 20 feet straight toward a Medium or smaller target and then hits it with a claw attack on the same turn, the target must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or also be knocked prone. If the target is knocked prone, Sven can use a bite or claw attack against that target again as a bonus action.

Swimming Leap. With a 10-foot swimming start, Sven can long jump out of or across the water up to 25 feet.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d8 + 6) piercing damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d8 + 6) piercing damage

Tricks: Assault, Behave, Concentrate, Defend, Discriminate, Harry, Move, Scout, Special Action (Slam, Swimming Leap), Use Skill (Athletics), Wear Armor

Personality Trait: *My nobility shines through in everything I do. Even when I just stand about, I do that with the poise and grace befitting my nobility.*
Behavioral Oddity: Water Slapper. Whenever possible, Sven greets other creatures by using his tail to splash water onto them.

Physical Oddity: Pearlescent. Unlike others of his kind, Sven is pure white with a pearlescent sheen that enhances his legendary appearance.

Bond: I seek to suppress hostility in my vicinity, my allies and are wise and noble enough to temper aggression with discretion.

Ideal: Peace. I work to provide peace to my fellow creatures, even if I must be violent to do so.

Erfonair (CR 9)

This creature once belonged to an elite fighting force that guarded Mithrendain, an eladrin citadel deep in the Feywild. This force opposed uprisings by the fomorian kings and their foul minions from the Underdark.

Erfonair is a scaled dinosaur. Its scales are shaped like jagged rhomboid leaves and they change colors to match the seasons as leaves do. The creature wears a huge exotic military saddle and huge exotic splint barding fitted for a tyrannosaurus rex.

Erfonair may be found in an ancient temple bound in a state of magical slumber, still equipped and preserved for the day he will be called to serve again. Alternately, the creature may appear as the mount of an eladrin or another native of the Feywild, acquired as one of the spoils of battle, though this will be difficult given the creature's aggressive nature.

Base Creature: Tyrannosaurus rex [MM]
Template: Fey creature, rider-trained, war-trained
Tricks: Assault, Concentrate, Defend, Special Action (Slam), Wear Armor

Personality Trait: *I fight for my allies, whatever the threat.*
Behavioral Oddity: Crooner. While idle, Erfonair tends to sing to himself with a low, crooning whine.
Physical Oddity: Scar. Erfonair has a terrible scar from its left cheek down its neck to its left shoulder.

Erfonair

Huge beast, unaligned

Armor Class 17 (splint barding)
Hit Points 184 (16d12 + 80)
Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
27 (+8)	12 (+1)	20 (+5)	2 (-4)	13 (+1)	9 (-1)

Senses passive Perception 14
Skills Perception +4
Challenge 9 (5,000 xp)

Slam. If Erfonair moves at least 20 feet straight toward a Large or smaller target and then hits it with a tail attack on the same turn, the target must succeed on a DC 18 Strength saving throw or also be knocked prone. If the target is knocked prone, Erfonair can use a bite or tail attack against that target as a bonus action.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 34 (4d12 + 8) piercing damage plus 6 (1d12) poison damage. If the target is a Medium or smaller creature, Erfonair can automatically grapple it (escape DC 18). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the tyrannosaurus can't bite another target.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 21 (3d8 + 8) bludgeoning damage.

Tame New Friends and train Your Own Allies

Players! Are you wondering where your furry companions are? Are you tired of riding a horse with no name? Do you want ferocious pets and fabulous animal allies? If so, this is the book for you! The *Animal Handlers' Manual* teaches you how to acquire animals, train them from a long list of tricks and roles and handle them in a variety of scenarios. These pages also host new character options, from the Beast Whisperer Roguish Archetype and upgrades to the warlock's Pact of the Chain feature, to new feats, spells, and magic items, plus ways for animals to use old magic items. It also has a chapter of equipment for animal use and prices for buying and selling mounts and monsters.

Dungeon Masters! Do your players refuse to fight the animal antagonists in your adventures? Do they try to feed and tame them instead? If so, this is the book for you! The *Animal Handler's Manual* provides guidance for creating unique animal companions and portraying them in your stories, all while regulating and managing them in a way that won't disrupt the game. It also dedicates a chapter to decrypting mounted combat and provides a host of optional rules for using mounts.

For use with the fifth edition *Player's Handbook* ®, *Monster Manual* ®, and *Dungeon Master's Guide* ®

Best when used with these additional supplements: *Volo's Guide to Monsters* ® *Storm King's Thunder* ®, and *Mordenkainen's Tome of Foes* ®

Wraith Wright

GUILD