



FROG GOD GAMES ADVENTURES

HAZARDOUS HABITATS

Icebound



SYSTEM
NEUTRAL

by Tom Knauss

HAZARDOUS HABITATS

Icebound

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Icebound

The yellow dwarf star at the heart of our solar system continuously radiates light and warmth into the dark, empty expanse of outer space. Our world, the third planet from the glowing orb we refer to as the Sun, orbits approximately ninety-three million miles away from the roiling sphere of searing hot plasma that makes life on Earth possible. Given the vast distance the cosmic rays must travel to reach our planet in the first place, it would stand to reason that adding a few hundred or even thousands of extra miles to their journey would have a negligible effect on the beams' strength or intensity. For instance, our celestial neighbors, Venus and Mars, which are respectively tens of millions of miles closer to or farther away from the Sun than the Earth, are only several hundred rather than thousands of degrees warmer and colder than our home. If the preceding logic were true, the whole Earth would have a uniform surface temperature, regardless of whether you were at the equator or atop one of the poles. However, climate data proves the poles and the regions around them experience significantly cooler temperatures than the locales basking in the sun at or close to the equator, even though the mere 5,400 nautical miles from the equator to either of the two poles represent an infinitesimally small fraction of the distance separating Earth from Venus and Mars. These observations naturally beg the question as to why the poles are so much colder than the tropics when we take into account how close the two locations are in the solar system's grand scheme. Several important factors provide the complex answer.

From the onset, it is important to note our spherical world rotates on an axis that is currently tilted 23.5 degrees from the plane of its orbit around the Sun. This tilt — or obliquity in scientific terms — is caused by the uneven weight distribution of landmasses and dense ice sheets on or near the North Pole. To visualize this concept, imagine spinning a child's top with globs of heavy glue randomly placed on and around the top of the toy. Although the object spins at a constant speed, over time the added weight causes its axis to wobble and shift from a vertical position to a tilted one, especially when the object revolves in an empty vacuum instead of spinning atop a hard, flat surface creating friction. It is this tilt, rather than the Earth's distance from the Sun, that causes the seasons to change especially at and around the poles, where the askew rotation can cause some regions to experience prolonged daylight during the summer and seemingly perpetual night and twilight during the long, harsh winters. Therefore, when the Northern Hemisphere tilts toward the Sun, it experiences summer while the Southern Hemisphere trudges through winter and vice versa. The Sun's extended absence during the brutal winters is the first domino in a long chain contributing to the poles' frigid temperatures.

Without the electromagnetic solar radiation that provides the planet's illumination, and equally importantly radiant heat, frigid temperatures take hold during the poles' protracted, dark winters. Removing the Sun, the lone source of warmth and light, offers a simple explanation for the bone-chilling cold pervading these areas for part of the year, but the same logic also suggests the Sun's constant presence during the summer months would make these regions exceedingly hot during that season. However, the Earth's round shape and its tilted axis again comes into play. To demonstrate this next principle, imagine the Sun as a giant flashlight. When you hold the flashlight overhead and point it straight at the ground beneath you, the narrowly focused beam basks a small area in bright light. This is how the Sun's rays strike the equator throughout most of the year and the planet's mid-latitudes during summer. Thus, when you look into the sky in most areas of the world, the Sun appears to be overhead or at least fairly close to it with the exceptions of sunrise and sunset. The poles differ in the fact that the Sun is much closer to the horizon throughout the day than in other parts of the world. To simulate how sunlight reaches the poles, take the flashlight from the earlier demonstration and point it toward the same spot on the ground at a 45-degree angle instead of directly overhead. When you hold the flashlight in this manner, the light it emits diffuses over a wider area, decreasing the beam's intensity and in turn the

radiant heat it provides. The same effect occurs at the poles, minimizing the Sun's effects on the cold temperature in these regions.

In addition to striking the Earth's surface at a pronounced angle, sunlight must also travel farther through the planet's atmosphere to reach the poles. Reverting to the preceding experiment, the shortest distance between two points is a straight line, which in the case of solar radiation would be holding the flashlight directly over a fixed point on the ground. But, unlike your floor, our world is a sphere and not a flat surface. In other words, the pole at the sphere's top or bottom is farther away from the flashlight than the spot on the sphere that curves toward the flashlight. The increased distance the beam must travel through the atmosphere, exacerbated by its low angle in the sky, increases the likelihood the already diminished radiant energy may be absorbed, reflected, or scattered by particles in the air and never reach the ground that desperately needs its warmth. Unfortunately, any sunlight that runs the daunting gauntlet and makes it to the surface faces another obstacle that may mitigate its effect. Ice, snow, and water covering the ground may reflect the solar radiation back into space, especially when the rays hit the liquid or solid water at a pronounced angle as is the case at and near the poles. Further compounding the problem is the fact that extremely cold air rarely gets warm enough to evaporate water during the winter months. Humidity in the air retains warmth, thus the lack of water vapor translates into even colder air temperatures than those in a damp environment. By its very nature, cold air is inherently dry, though the dense layers of snow and ice covering the poles may suggest otherwise. In reality, the poles and many areas close to them receive very little precipitation. By definition, many scholars consider the arid continent of Antarctica to be the world's largest desert, even though the wind-swept frozen landmass is the polar opposite of our widely held perception of a desert as a scalding inferno dominated by parched sand dunes.

The poles' topography also plays a significant role in determining the prevailing climate conditions. Although both poles experience frigid temperatures, on Earth the South Pole is significantly colder than the North Pole. Several reasons account for the vast temperature difference between the opposite ends of the world. The South Pole sits atop 9,000 feet of ice virtually dead smack in the middle of the frozen continent of Antarctica. Air temperatures generally decrease by 1° Fahrenheit for every 328 feet of elevation. Therefore, the increased altitude makes the South Pole, and much of Antarctica, 27° Fahrenheit colder than the temperature at sea level. To compound this problem, the ice and snow covering the landmass's interior sections throughout the year reflect most solar radiation back into space. In addition, the Southern Ocean completely surrounds Antarctica. The atmospheric interaction between the immense body of water and the frozen continent generates fierce winds that continually circulate around the frigid landmass's perimeter. The air current keeps warm air at bay while trapping cold air inside of the nearly perpetual cyclone. By comparison, the North Pole actually rests upon sea ice approximately eight feet thick in the middle of the Arctic Ocean rather than on solid ground. Ocean currents from the tropics and mid-latitudes substantially moderate the water temperature and in turn the air temperature at the North Pole. Nonetheless, the constant flow of temperate liquid from other parts of the world still cannot make the harsh landscape permanently habitable for humanity. The deep freeze enveloping the top and the bottom of the world transforms land and sea into a barren wasteland.

Ice is Nice

The inhospitable weather at the poles makes life miserable for humanity and most other creatures. Night seemingly lasts forever. The growing season, if there is one at all, is measured in weeks rather than months. Sea ice blocks shipping lines, while treacherous ice sheets and frigid temperatures bring overland travel to a complete standstill for much of the year. In simple terms, the poles impede progress. People can hew trees and turn a forest into arable land. Irrigation can funnel water into

a desert and make the sandy dunes habitable. Engineers can even blast holes through mountains to allow vehicles and travelers to pass through a seemingly impregnable obstacle. However, civilization feels powerless in the face of constant cold and darkness. Humanity cannot beckon the Sun to miraculously appear in the winter sky or magically conjure warmth from snow and permafrost. Taming the unforgiving land appears impossible, a realization that leads many people to conclude the poles serve no useful purpose other than to flaunt Nature's supremacy over Man. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Unlike outer space, Earth's atmosphere is not a vacuum. Sunlight, water, and surface features affect air temperatures, and in turn the temperature differences fuel weather. The jet stream, the current of air in the upper atmosphere that pushes storms and low-pressure systems across the hemispheres, draws its energy from the temperature variations between the colder high-latitudes and the warmer mid-latitudes. A marked divergence between the two extremes accelerates the steering mechanism's speed, causing storms to quickly race across the hemisphere. However, when the difference between these counterweights decreases, the jet stream's speed slows, creating several detrimental consequences. Instead of moving across the landscape at a steady pace, storms, droughts, and heat waves linger over particular regions for longer periods of time. The weaker airflow makes

the jet stream's normally linear pattern wobble and meander, prompting it to usher in cold air to regions unaccustomed to cool temperatures, while funneling warm air into the unprepared higher latitudes.

Poles covered in snow and ice play a critical role in moderating the planet's climate, because they are the only regions reflecting more solar radiation than they absorb. Blue oceans, green trees, and landmasses absorb and retain more heat and light than they deflect back into outer space. The trapped warmth slowly accumulates over time, causing temperatures to consistently rise. However, the poles regulate the climate. Warm air ascending into the higher latitudes slowly cools, while the poles function as a modern day air conditioning unit, introducing cold air into the mid-latitudes to keep overall temperatures in check. Despite this natural precaution, the inanimate planet cannot precisely balance its climate on its own accord. At various points in Earth's history, decreased solar output from the Sun, changes in Earth's orbit, the positioning of the continents, ocean circulation, and other factors caused the poles to undergo dramatic transformations. During the Eocene period millions of years ago, trees and vegetation grew in Antarctica's temperate climate. Conversely, the planet's Ice Ages saw sea ice and glaciers dramatically expand across the oceans and the continents. As the glaciers marched across North America, they gouged massive depressions in the ground.



When the same glaciers finally retreated, the melted ice filled these enormous chasms and eventually became The Great Lakes. In fact, these mobile ice sheets created many of the continent's other freshwater lakes, including the "thousand lakes" in Minnesota and other northern states.

In addition to providing potable water for humanoids inhabiting the landmasses' interior sections far from the oceans and rivers, frozen water trapped in the higher colder latitudes also benefits humanity in a less direct but equally crucial way. Liquid transformed into solid ice and snow, particularly as glaciers and ice sheets, essentially removes or sequesters that volume of water, resulting in lower sea levels. In simplest terms, less water in the oceans and rivers means more habitable dry land for man and beast alike. To illustrate this point, when the glaciers melted roughly 20,000 years ago after the last ice age, worldwide sea levels rose more than 400 feet. The thawing ice morphed into deluges of water that reshaped coastlines by flooding areas that were previously dry land. If the glaciers that currently cover the planet suddenly disappeared, the swelling oceans would swallow up nearly the entire eastern seaboard of the United States, much of the Gulf Coast, parts of the Pacific Coast, and even extend into areas far from the shore. If all of Earth's water flowed back into the seas, cities such as New York, Buenos Aires, Amsterdam, and even Baghdad would vanish beneath the waves.

Game Applications

The poles earned their reputation for being inhospitable to humanity, especially to inexperienced strangers. Yet, such hostile receptions fail to dissuade explorers and even entrepreneurs from setting foot onto the frigid ice and snow in search of adventure and riches. The bravest few come here seeking to find an overland or nautical route across the top or bottom of the world in an effort to link civilizations that would otherwise be on opposite ends of the planet. However, most daring souls who venture into this realm of perpetual light or darkness do so to claim their share of its valuable resources. The vast, chilly forests growing along civilization's edges produce some of the most prized timber in the world. When the snow and ice briefly recede back to the poles for their summer respites, fortune seekers, in a manner akin to migratory birds, flock to the cool yet habitable tundra to scrape the exposed earth for precious minerals and pan the pristine streams for nuggets of gold and silver. Fishermen delve into the frigid waters on their mission to harvest culinary delights such as the fabled king crab from the icy seas and more temperate coastlines. Hunters trek across the snowy terrain on the trail of the plentiful reindeer and other large game animals dwelling in this chilly domain. An elite handful of scholars and archaeologists comb the monotonous, white landscape for



even the slightest hint of a forgotten settlement from a bygone era when the land was a warmer and more welcoming host. The poles' most iconic monstrous denizens — greedy white dragons, barbarous frost giants, vicious trolls, and mysterious yetis — also entice the stoutest of hearts to enter their forbidden territory and wrest riches from their covetous grasps.

Polar Biomes

Life constantly demonstrates its extraordinary resolve, and even the chilly, dark places of the world cannot stifle determination forever. Indeed, many iconic animals such as polar bears, reindeer, penguins, walruses, and lynxes inhabit these frigid ecosystems characterized by long, lightless winters and short, yet perpetually sunny, summers. Scholars refer to the coldest biome as the ice cap or polar cap. Eternally covered in snow and ice, temperatures in this brutal realm rarely if ever exceed freezing. The North Pole and its immediate vicinity, particularly the sea ice floating atop the Arctic Ocean, fall into this category. Likewise, nearly the entire continent of Antarctica, with the exception of its coastline, also shares the same distinction. Although ice and snow are seemingly everywhere, ice caps are typically just as arid as a traditional hot and dry desert such as the Sahara. In addition to contending with the severe conditions, vegetation cannot survive the wicked chill or the prolonged absence of sunlight during the extended dark winter. Furthermore, dense layers of ice and snow completely cover the soil, preventing plants from taking root within the earth. The ice cap's only proverbial lifeline is the sea. Whereas terrestrial plants cannot survive on the frozen land, seaweed, phytoplankton, and algae thrive in these cool seas and oceans. These organisms occupy the lowest rung on the ice cap's food chain, providing sustenance for the semi-aquatic and land-based fauna living along the coasts, underwater, and on the floating islands of ice in the open waters.

When summer temperatures become warm enough to stave off and

ultimately melt any ice and snow that accumulated during the savage winter, the frozen soil beneath the white tapestry finally sees the proverbial light of day. Yet even several months of constant sunlight cannot completely undo winter's wrath. The frosty ground just below the surface remains rock hard throughout the year. Deep roots cannot penetrate the solid earth, thus trees, shrubs, and larger plants are completely absent from this environment. Instead, short perennials including sedges, lichens, mosses, and grasses dominate the biome commonly known as tundra or permafrost. Like the ice cap, the arid tundra receives very little precipitation. (It is important to note that on average thirteen inches of snow equals one inch of rain, though in the dry tundra biome one inch of rain can equal up to fifty inches of snow.) This harsh ecosystem experiences only two seasons — a brutally long, frigid winter spanning nine to ten months out of the year and a fleeting summer lasting for nine to twelve weeks. Temperatures during this brief respite almost never exceed 50° Fahrenheit. Ferocious winds, unfettered by trees and other natural barriers, frequently howl across the desolate tundra, sweeping away body heat from living creatures exposed to the unforgiving elements. Still, in contrast to the ice cap biome, fauna such as reindeer, foxes, and hares can thrive in interior regions far from the warmer coastlines.

Moving farther from the poles, the bleak tundra slowly transitions from treeless terrain to a thriving forest, which is called taiga or boreal forest. Apart from the world's oceans, taiga is the largest biome on Earth, where it stretches across massive swaths of Scandinavia, Russia, Iceland, Alaska, Canada and some of the northernmost portions of the continental United States. These forests benefit from more precipitation than their frigid counterparts, thus allowing coniferous trees to draw sufficient moisture from the environment's relatively young, nutrient-poor soil, which is the byproduct of the persistent cold and periodic fires that sweep across the green landscape. While ice caps and tundra are relatively static biomes experiencing little change, the infernos that race through this biome roughly once per century sow the seeds of the forest's renewal.



The more ecologically diverse taiga can see temperature extremes that dip far below those encountered on the usually chillier tundra, while also enduring summer temperatures occasionally rivaling those found in the mid-latitudes and even the tropics. In addition to playing host to the traditional cold weather animals found on the tundra, wolves, bears, moose, lynxes, and tigers also hunt for prey in this winter wonderland of deep, pristine snow blanketing the tree canopy and the undergrowth in its mighty shadow.

Ice Cap

Massive sheets of accumulated ice and snow dominate the ice cap or polar cap biome, while enormous blocks of sea ice claim dominion over the frigid world's open waters. Although the omnipresence of frozen precipitation suggests this ecosystem is subjected to frequent snowfall or ice storms, the opposite is true. Scholars aptly refer to the ice cap as the polar desert because of the arid conditions. Bitterly cold air retains very little water vapor. On those rare occasions when snow blankets the ground, it usually descends from the heavens as powder. Although one inch of rain typically converts to roughly one foot of snow, in this structure, a single inch of rain can yield approximately four feet of snow. Although temperatures in the ice cap rarely if ever eclipse the freezing point, the fluffy powder still melts slightly in the sunlight and then refreezes when temperatures dip, morphing its powdery, crystalline composition into granular ice pellets. When fresh snow descends upon the land, the weight of the new precipitation compresses the fine bits into firn. Over time, these layers of firn build atop one another until they reach a depth of roughly 165 feet, when the material undergoes another metamorphosis into a solid block of ice known as a glacier.

Characters trekking across the barren ice cap terrain generally encounter its eponymous feature — ice. Frozen water covers virtually every square inch of land and much of the neighboring seas in many circumstances. The following table describes the terrain elements found within the surrounding 2d4 miles in the ice cap based upon the season. When consulting this table, the GM rolls percentile dice for each feature to determine if it is present in the area. One or more types of terrain and/or vegetation may coexist in the same general area, though certain features negate the effects of others as described in the following table. Difficult terrain, as described in this table, only applies to determining the actions a character can take when moving through an area containing this feature rather than its effect on the creature's speed. Regardless of what terrain element appears here, overland speed is reduced by half everywhere in the ice cap biome as well as being subjected to any additional effects from these features. Unlike most other terrain element tables, the ice sheet occupies the entire area. Furthermore, there is no vegetation in the ice cap.

Table 4-1: Terrain Elements in the Ice Cap According to Season

Terrain Element	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
Fresh snow ^a	15%	20%	10%	5%
Ice sheet ^b	100%	100%	100%	100%

^a Fresh snow reduces overland speed by half and reduces wheeled vehicle speeds by three-quarters. Land vehicles whose chassis rests upon a long, narrow surface, such as blades, rails, skis, or similar devices move without impediment over this terrain. If fresh snow is present, it rests atop the ice sheet, thus temporarily negating the ice sheet's effects in that area. Areas containing fresh snow are treated as difficult terrain, if applicable.

^b The ice sheet reduces overland speed by half and halts wheeled vehicles in their tracks. Land vehicles whose chassis rests upon a long, narrow surface, such as blades, rails, skis, or similar devices move without impediment over this terrain. Areas containing an ice sheet are treated as difficult terrain, if applicable. A creature who attempts to run, charge, or suddenly stop or turn falls prone if it fails a moderate difficulty Dexterity check or appropriate Dexterity-based skill check.

The GM may consult the following table to determine the fauna, flora, and random events the characters may encounter during their journey across the ice cap. These items may be used solely as wilderness dressing, to plant the seeds for an upcoming adventure, or as an interesting side trek.

Table 4-2: Ice Cap Flora, Fauna, and Random Events

d20	Encounter
1	Two penguins waddle across the ice pushing an egg.
2	A skua suddenly dives from the sky.
3	Shredded pieces of a torn woolen coat litter the ice.
4	Part of a whale bone protrudes through the ice.
5	Someone or something created an ice sculpture of an upright walrus.
6	A polar bear cub feverishly digs into the ice.
7	A young seal climbs out of a hole cut into the ice sheet.
8	Three eggs rest atop debris in an unattended bird's nest.
9	An albatross flies overhead, circling around what looks like an ordinary mound of snow.
10	Mysterious green and yellow lights fill the sky.
11	Strange red stains mar the icy surface.
12	Snow partially covers a broken sled with the words "Faded Rose" carved onto its surface.
13	Someone or something embedded a splintered ski and pole into the ice.
14	Blank scraps of parchment dance aloft in the breeze.
15	Two seals ferociously bite each other.
16	A rusty harpoon rests upon the ice.
17	Patches of ice are inexplicably melting despite the frigid temperature.
18	Someone or something carved six parallel lines onto the icy surface.
19	Two bloody gloves lie partially buried beneath the snow.
20	Three penguins inexplicably stare at one another while standing in a circle around a fish head.

Propelled forward by their immeasurable weight, glaciers sweep aside or bury everything in their relentless march across the land. However, like liquid water, these amorphous sheets of ice and snow descend to the lowest point rather than move wholesale across the ground. Thus, an approaching glacier first fills in the gaps and depressions on the surface before expanding around the areas surrounding the basin's edges. Even the moderating effects of open water cannot completely halt the wintery behemoth in its tracks. When a glacier reaches the coastline bordering an ocean or sea, it continues its progress into the water. The ice that rests upon the boundary between dry land and water is known as the grounding line, while the structure that protrudes into the sea is commonly referred to as an ice shelf. Although this glacial ice floats atop the water, its extreme density causes roughly ninety percent of the enormous mass to sink beneath the water's surface. In time, the warmer water in contact with the ice shelf's underbelly steadily melts and weakens the shelf. Under the right conditions, this warming action can abruptly separate large chunks of ice and snow from the main body in a process referred to as iceberg calving. Once set free, the prevailing currents take hold of these gargantuan frozen mounds and lead them out to sea where they become the bane of mariners everywhere. In 1912, an iceberg in the North Atlantic presumably set adrift from an ice shelf in Greenland famously collided with the *HMS Titanic*, leading to one of the world's worst maritime disasters. Indeed, some scientists now postulate that history's most infamous iceberg originated from snow that fell 100,000 years before its untimely rendezvous with one of the most renowned vessels of its age. Because icebergs are composed of compacted glacial ice, they are frequently blue in color, making it difficult for the ship's crew to see the largely hidden, floating monstrosity at night.

Although cut from the same cloth as glaciers and icebergs, the sea ice that bobs atop the polar oceans and seas differs greatly from its related counterpart in many important respects. Sea ice is frozen ocean water rather than snow and ice that accumulates over time. Freshwater generally loses some of its density and ultimately transforms from a liquid to a solid state at 32° Fahrenheit (0° Celsius). On the other hand, the saltwater found in the oceans exhibits divergent properties when it approaches its freezing point, which is actually 3° Fahrenheit colder than freshwater. When saltwater cools, its density increases rather than decreases as in the case with freshwater, causing the chillier water to actually sink below the surface instead of float on top like the typical ice cube. This dynamic coupled with the regulating effects of comparatively warmer underwater currents surging in from the mid-latitudes substantially increases the amount of time it takes for ocean temperatures to be conducive to the formation of sea ice. In most spots, sea ice forms and grows during the protracted winters, while retreating and melting over the course of the sunny yet brief summers. The constant ebb and flow of the preceding underwater currents also limits sea ice's maximum thickness to several feet even in the coldest spots, where it remains frozen throughout the year. In these frigid locations, the sea ice's salinity declines over time increasing the concentration of salt in the water underneath the sea ice. The added salt content makes the chilly water even more dense, causing it to plummet to the ocean floor and ultimately make the long journey to the equator before beginning the cycle anew. This unending cooling and warming process fuels the ocean's conveyor belt system that helps regulate the planet's climate.

Obviously, green vegetation cannot establish roots on glaciers or draw nutrients from saline sea ice. Furthermore, for roughly six months out of the year, perpetual darkness and twilight fall across the land, preventing plants from harnessing the sun's energy to photosynthesize. The few animals that live in this harsh ecosystem typically cluster close to the coastline where krill, phytoplankton, algae, and other small aquatic organisms teeming in the chilly waters provide an ample and reliable source of food for the larger fauna living in this cold environment. Others lead a more nomadic existence atop the floating islands of sea ice that break up during the summer thaw. Penguins, polar bears, whales, seals, and walruses are among the biome's most iconic and successful predators. These hardy beasts and fowl typically visit their familiar hunting and breeding grounds on the ice cap from spring through autumn, and then move elsewhere, hibernate, or simply go without food for months at a time when winter returns with its annual vengeance. Conversely, glaciers and ice sheets provide an abundant supply of potable water, albeit in its frozen form. Sea ice that remains frozen for at least several years eventually loses its salinity and also becomes drinkable.

Like the indigenous fauna, the few humanoids who inhabit this land permanently blanketed in ice and snow take up residence along the comparatively warmer coastlines. Most lead a nomadic lifestyle, dwelling in temporary shelters close to fishing areas and hunting grounds. In what equates to summer at the ice cap, hunter-gatherers quickly assemble tents constructed from driftwood or bones covered by sealskin leather. These crude shelters provide defense against the still cool yet more manageable temperatures. During the winter, many native peoples build igloos, dome-shaped structures made from compacted blocks of snow and ice or a combination of packed snow built around a skeleton of whalebones and leather. Despite its outward appearance, this sturdy refuge provides ample protection against the bitter cold and fierce winds outside its covered or sunken entrance. Pockets of air trapped within the snow crystals function as crude insulation keeping warmth inside while preventing frigid air from entering the domicile. Body heat alone can sometimes raise the temperatures inside the home to a balmy 60° Fahrenheit. Like any domed structure, igloos face size limitations, thus they can accommodate only a small number of people at any time. To overcome this problem, extended families dig interconnected subterranean tunnels that link several igloos together.

When adventurers encounter humanoids in a predetermined location or in a randomly generated community near a body of water or a road (see **Table 4-31**), the population size affects its demographic makeup as reflected in the following table.

Table 4-3: Population Effect on Demographics

Population	Modifier
Fewer than 50	–4d10
51–200	–2d10
201–2,000	none
2,001–5,000	+2d10
5,001–15,000	+4d10
15,001–30,000	+6d10
31,000+	+8d10

After determining the modifier based upon the population size, the GM may then apply that modifier to the following table to determine the demographics of an ice cap community.

Table 4-4: Humanoid Demographics

d100	Racial Makeup
<51	Exclusively Homogenous. Everyone is a member of the same humanoid race, religion, or ethnicity, if applicable.
51–65	Predominately Homogenous. Almost everyone is a member of the same humanoid race, religion, or ethnicity, if applicable.
66–80	Largely Homogenous. The majority are members of the same humanoid race, religion, or ethnicity, if applicable.
81–85	Neutral. One race, religion, or ethnicity, if applicable outnumbers all others but does not comprise a majority. Nonetheless, their culture, traditions, and beliefs define society, though other peoples exert lesser degrees of influence as well.
86–95	Moderately Diverse. Some races, faiths, and ethnicities, if applicable, are more prevalent than others, but none greatly outnumbers all others. The traditions of several races, religions, and ethnicities combine forces to determine society's overall cultural makeup.
96–00	Largely Diverse. A multitude of races, religions, and ethnicities make up the largely integrated population. The fusion of backgrounds creates a unique society embodying traits borrowed from numerous traditions, though some perspectives influence the community more than others.
>00	Completely Diverse. Nearly every race, faith, and ethnicity imaginable can be found among the population. Most citizens are multicultural and multilingual, embracing their own customs as well as adopting those acquired from neighboring peoples.

The following table modifies the results on **Table 4-6** based upon the community's demographics.

Table 4-5: Demographics Effect on Humanoid Attitudes

Demographic	Modifier
Exclusively homogenous	–5d10
Predominately homogenous	–3d10
Largely homogenous	–1d10
Neutral	none

Demographic	Modifier
Moderately diverse	+1d10
Largely diverse	+3d10
Completely diverse	+5d10

Few people venture to the ice cap, especially during its insufferably long and brutal winters. Therefore, strangers are a rare sight for the polar domain's indigenous people. In a frozen land where life constantly hangs in the balance, residents fear the unknown. Although they value adaptability, survival often depends upon sticking to their familiar, time-honored protocol. Change, whether it arrives in the form of anomalous weather patterns, or a stranger trudging across the snow, causes tremendous trepidation. With the preceding considerations in mind, the GM may use the following table to determine the prevailing attitudes towards others within and outside the community.

Table 4-6: Humanoid Attitudes

d100	Attitude
<36	Segregated. Society is strictly divided along racial, religious, or ethnic lines with the more populous groups assuming a dominant role. They treat minorities as inferiors, relegating them to subservient status. Civil or religious authorities strictly enforce boundaries between divergent populations through threats, intimidation, and if necessary violence.
36-55	Prejudiced. Although some integration takes place, racial, religious, or ethnic tension hangs heavy in the air. Many people hold persistent, deep-seeded opinions sowing mistrust between members of different groups. Residents keep a wary eye on those different than themselves, perceiving them as second-class citizens who pose a constant threat to their supposedly superior way of life.
56-70	Biased. Few individuals publicly express their misgivings about other people, yet it is difficult to ignore the undercurrent of bias bubbling beneath the surface. Although people can move freely about without restriction, subtle acts of discrimination still permeate society. Interactions between different sets of people may seem courteous and polite on the surface, yet words, gestures, and body language belie the person's compartmentalized suspicions.
71-85	Indifferent. An indifferent society strives to maintain the society's <i>status quo</i> sweeping any pervasive prejudices under the proverbial rug. Gradual modification of existing attitudes can occur, though some find its pace too plodding for their liking. Residents rarely let their biases govern their actions and perceptions of other people, yet few go out of their way to welcome those different than themselves.
86-95	Tolerant. Multiple languages, religions, and cultures mingle together, though members of the same race, religion, or ethnicity feel more comfortable with others of their kind than outsiders. A live and let live attitude best summarizes a tolerant society's outlook towards the community at large, though some innate biases linger in certain circles.

d100	Attitude
96-00	Accepting. Members of different races, religions, and ethnicities live side by side in almost completely integrated communities. Familiarity forms the cornerstone of an accepting society. However, those hailing from unfamiliar places or arriving with previously unseen customs encounter some misgivings and suspicion from startled observers.
>00	Welcoming. Society welcomes immigrants and visitors, regardless of race, religion, or ethnicity into the fold. Newcomers are encouraged to quickly assimilate into their surroundings as they adapt to their neighbors' customs and traditions while adding their uniqueness to the mix. Indeed, most members perceive themselves as citizens first and foremost relegating association with their race, religion, or ethnicity to a secondary status. Prejudice persists in some isolated corners, but the overwhelming majority strongly condemn such viewpoints and celebrate diversity.

Undertaking the preceding endeavors requires trust and strong leadership. Debate is not an option when making split-second decisions with lives on the line. The people of the ice cap are generally a headstrong, determined lot often willing to sacrifice their self-interest for survival. Residents hold elders and warriors in high esteem. While the gods may play some role in determining the outcomes of their lives in this world and the next, most individuals live in the here and now, entrusting their fates to their fellow people rather than distant, fickle deities. Based upon these premises, the GM may consult the following table to ascertain the system of government presiding over the people.

Table 4-7: Political System

d100	Political System
01-10	Autocracy. A single individual, who seized control of the state through bloodless or violent means, wields absolute power over his people. This individual may have attained this position from their predecessor who was a family member or hand-picked this person as their successor. An autocrat often targets one or more segments of society as their sworn enemies, encouraging their subjects to take some punitive actions against the autocrat's real or imaginary foes.
11-25	Gerontocracy. While birthright, wealth, or political connections normally determine membership in the ruling class, this political system grants supreme authority to the community's eldest residents regardless of their gender or social status. Age is a relative term based upon the person's longevity for their race rather than their age measured in years. Because these individuals cannot bequeath their station to a designated heir or successor, they often rule in a just manner, relying upon their extensive life experiences to better the lives of their subjects. Nonetheless exceptions exist, especially for those who fear death and pursue every avenue to defy their own mortality.

d100	Political System
26–35	Monarchy (Absolute). A group of blood relatives rules the land with ultimate authority vested in one or two persons known as the monarch. This individual's power is absolute, though the crown may vest some jurisdiction in others. In patriarchal societies, the eldest male descendent of the previous leader functions as the monarch, assuming the title of chieftain, elder, or another suitable designation. In a matriarchy, the oldest female descendent performs the same role as the state's queen, empress, or other lofty heading. The monarch's spouse, typically hailing from a neighboring royal family or a distant relative, functions solely as a consort, preventing the surviving spouse from inheriting the throne when the monarch dies. Younger siblings, living parents, and children undertake other civic and religious duties within the state, while extended family members also enjoy the trappings of nobility.
36–45	Oligarchy. A group of individuals determined by birthright, military might, or personal wealth oversee all matters of state and economic development. The oligarchy's views towards personal freedoms range from moderately tolerant to oppressive with most examples skewing closer to the latter option than the former. The oligarchy's members along with their family and friends, if they choose, act with impunity while those outside the inner circle must abide by the oligarchy's edicts. On some occasions, individuals outside the elite group who are fortunate enough to amass wealth under this system may be granted membership into the oligarchy.
46–55	Theocracy (God Figure). All civil authority derives from a divine source. In the case of a god figure, political power rests in the hands of one individual who may be a living deity, a demigod, or a representative chosen by one or more gods. The god figure wields absolute authority over all matters of state including serving as the head of its church.
56–75	Tribal. This society lacks any formal government. Instead, a familial patriarch, matriarch, or a family council usually consisting of the group's elders presides over their individual clans who may live cooperatively or competitively with other bloodlines in a shared community or as parts of smaller, rival communities dwelling close together. Military might, more than lineage, frequently determines an individual's status within the tribe.
76–00	Warrior State. Incorporating elements of tribalism and autocracy, the community's warriors enjoy an exalted status within society, gaining civic rights and privileges denied to average citizens. Military commanders or celebrated heroes may assume rulership over the state, though these individuals usually defer daily oversight of civic and religious matters to others.

Despite the horrific weather conditions beyond the igloo's door, humanoids must venture outdoors to find food. The sea offers the best opportunity for locating a meal during the unforgiving winter. The community's hunters board their kayaks, one-man vessels crafted from aquatic animal skins stretched around a bone frame, and paddle into the frigid waters in search of game to feed their families. They primarily target the biome's largest

aquatic and semi-aquatic beasts such as seals, whales, walrus, and fish. These excursions can last for days as the travelers must navigate around and sometimes over the abundant sea ice. During these prolonged trips, the participants frequently build igloos atop the floating sea ice to give them a temporary respite from the freezing temperatures and icy winds swirling around them. When they finally return from a successful hunt, their often large and fatty prey fulfills 11 of their basic needs. The animal's carcass provides ample meat for consumption, bones for tools, leather for clothing and construction needs, and even oil to fuel their fires. In a world almost completely bereft of life, nothing goes to waste.

Because ice cap residents cannot sow crops or raise livestock, they predominately lead nomadic existences. Taking the preceding notion into consideration, the GM may consult the following table to determine the people's lifestyle.

Table 4–8: Lifestyle

<41	Nomadic. The people live exclusively off the land and are constantly on the move, never staying in the same location for more than one night. They are exclusively hunter-gatherers. To cover more ground in a single day, most nomadic peoples ride atop domesticated animals and frequently travel with large herds of livestock. Most share common lineage with their fellow travelers.
41–70	Semi-nomadic. These individuals have no permanent home, though they may settle down in one location for several days, weeks, or even a few months under the right conditions. Their movements usually coincide with seasonal changes, though they rarely revisit the same exact locale. Although they are predominately hunter-gatherers, they may engage in limited agricultural activities before moving on to their next destination. These individuals typically reside in mobile, temporary shelters they erect soon after their arrival.
71–00	Semi-sedentary. Although they construct permanent settlements, these people divide their time among a few predetermined locations based upon the seasons. They may spend several months in one favorable spot to raise crops, fish its bountiful waters, or hunt a herd of game animals traveling along a migratory route. While they may still be classified as hunter-gatherers, they spend a roughly equal amount of their time raising domesticated livestock, growing agricultural products, and engaging in commercial activities.
>00	Sedentary. The residents live in the same location year-round, where they farm the land, tend to their domesticated flocks, hunt game in the surrounding wilderness, and develop commercial enterprises. Trade routes, civic engineering projects, and a reliable water source can be typically found in a sedentary society.

Ice Cap Campaigns

Adventurers physically and mentally unprepared for the rigors of an ice cap campaign meet a swift and painful end. In winter, the bitterly cold temperatures routinely dip more than 100° Fahrenheit (55° Celsius) below freezing before taking the chilling effects of the wind into account. Even summer offers little respite from the frigid conditions as the mercury barely approaches 32° Fahrenheit (0° Celsius) even on the warmest and sunniest days. Mundane perils such as extended darkness and insomnia caused by constant sunlight may wear on the psyche of even the most battle-hardened veteran. During the bitter winters, clothing alone cannot protect adventurers from the merciless elements. Magic becomes a necessity under these savage conditions. Travel grinds to a standstill as poor lighting, blowing snow, and numbing cold halt nearly all explorers in their tracks. Similar

logistical nightmares also plague any attempt to erect permanent manmade structures in the ice cap. In addition to dealing with the unfavorable weather and diminished manpower in the region, stone, timber, and mortar are not readily available. Likewise, any buildings constructed in the distant past usually lie buried beneath dense sheets of ice. Therefore, exploration typically takes place in the great outdoors. Merchants may hire scouts or mariners to locate a feasible overland trade route across the barren glaciers or passable shipping lanes through the sea ice. Ambitious people endeavoring to reach the top or bottom of the world for the sheer thrill of the pursuit may hire guides and mercenaries to protect them on their trek over the frozen landscape. Worried sea captains looking for a vessel lost amid the ice pack may call upon local residents and experts to find the almost certainly wrecked ship and its besieged crew.

While ice caps lack the plethora of adventuring opportunities endemic to temperate and tropical environments, the frozen world boasts its share of plots and intrigues. The GM may use the following table for inspiration when running an ice cap campaign. These ideas may be used as a side quest or form the basis for an intriguing storyline. In addition, the GM may combine these elements with the adventure settings found in the subsequent table.

Table 4-9: Ice Cap Adventure Ideas

d10	Event
1	Aurora. Green and blue bands of intermittent light illuminate the night sky. Normally, the luminescence takes the shape of randomly scattered semi-circular arcs but these lights periodically coalesce into humanoid figures standing atop lightning bolts before dissipating into nothingness. The local residents cannot identify the individuals featured in the light show, though some legends claim auroras are caused by an ancient race of imprisoned astral travelers attempting to escape their celestial bonds.
2	Cat. Against all odds, an ordinary housecat curled into a tight ball sleeps inside an abandoned den. Only a portion of its tail protrudes through the opening. The black and white cat displays no unease among strangers, greeting them with a hearty and unsolicited meow when they reach out to pet the animal. Despite the chilly temperatures, the cat never shivers or shows any outward signs of distress even though its light and fluffy fur appears insufficient to withstand the biting cold. Perhaps the cat's friendly demeanor reflects its true nature or serves as a ruse to further the cunning feline's schemes? Regardless of their suspicions, the animal loves attention and never attempts to scratch or bite the humanoids in its company. The only clue to its origins is a silver nametag affixed to a collar around its neck. The nametag reads: "Snowball."
3	Flightless Midge. These small bugs are one of the few insects who thrive in consistently cold temperatures. They burrow beneath the ice and snow, where temperatures remain stable throughout the year. On this occasion, numerous males spontaneously emerge from their hiding places to mate with their female counterparts. The insects' sudden appearance does not seem unexpected. Several vials and pieces of alchemical equipment also lie near the breeding site, indicating someone intends to harvest some biological material from these harmless creatures for their own purposes.



d10	Event
4	Flint Tools. It is easy to spot dark objects on the ice cap's monotonous white tapestry, especially when they are clustered together atop the frozen surface. Made from flint, this collection of tools includes sixteen arrowheads, four spear tips, and three knives. The snow and ice partially cover a discarded leather sack where the tools were apparently stored when not in use. The spear tips and knives lie in random locations on the ground, but someone presumably arranged the arrowheads in a circular pattern along the ice where they all point to the same, central spot.
5	Meteor Shower. Tiny objects streak across the sky, leaving a superheated trail of melted ice and debris in their wake. The meteors plummet through the atmosphere, but break up into minute particles as they near the icy surface. Although only a few pellets hit the ground with nominal effect, the inanimate cosmic visitors cause a tremendous stir among the local populace. Some believe the gods sent these emissaries as a precursor to their reemergence onto the ice cap, while others assert they are the shattered remnants of ruined planets. Regardless of the cause, the residents unanimously agree someone needs to investigate the area where these bits of space debris fell.
6	Orca. In perhaps the strange polar sight ever encountered, a lone orca slides across the ice and snow on its belly. For some unknown reason, the massive mammal abandoned its oceanic habitat and took to the land presumably searching for something. The orca constantly chatters as it moves across the ice and snow during its mysterious quest. Creatures who can understand the beast's language discover it repeats the phrase, "Danger! Danger! The ice shall part and the sea will return. It is free!" Despite its urgency, the intelligent animal cannot explain the meaning of its warning in any greater detail, even if a creature can successfully communicate with it.
7	Penguins. These iconic, polar birds predominately dwell along the coastlines bordering the polar seas and oceans. However, a few species journey deep into the ice cap's interior until they reach their ancestral breeding grounds. There, they find a mate and start a family. The flightless animals trudge across the snow and ice to complete this journey, but one of these ambitious penguins flaps its wings and incredibly takes to the skies. The other members of the flock marvel at their colleague's ingenuity and soon follow suit though only one other penguin gets airborne to join his daring associate. In an equally stranger development, the pair of polar birds deviates from the flock's intended route and heads towards uncharted territory far from the animals' breeding grounds.

d10	Event
8	Rain. Precipitation rarely falls upon the arid, polar ice caps, but when it does, it always arrives in its frozen state as snow, ice, or sleet. Although the temperature remains well below freezing, the storm clouds overhead inexplicably release their moisture as rain, which collects into several pools on the ice cap's surface. In an even odder development, the ponds of chilly liquid refuse to freeze. Within minutes after their arrival, the black clouds dry up and move elsewhere.
9	Skier. The frozen, partially mummified remains of a skier are visible on the ice cap. The human male lies on his side with his feet still resting within the boots affixed to his finely crafted wooden skis. The corpse shows no obvious signs of trauma or injury, suggesting the unfortunate soul perished from prolonged exposure to the elements or another natural cause. His clothing's style and composition as well as his meager gear and equipment appear consistent with the garments and items the indigenous people wear and use. However, he kept a flat, rectangular piece of walrus tusk in his coat pocket. The words, "Send help," were carved onto the ivory surface.
10	Skua. Renowned for their ornery disposition, this family of polar birds savagely attacks any creature who strays too close to their territories, especially their nests. In keeping up this tradition, a lone skua circles overhead, though it does not appear to be monitoring a designated location. Instead, it flies over an undisturbed, isolated patch of snow and ice far from its traditional breeding grounds. Nonetheless, when any creature wanders near the area, the skua makes a steep bank and buzzes over the trespasser's head as an apparent warning to leave the area.

Those who embark on a life of adventure by choice enter a frozen, sparsely populated world inhabited by a handful of creatures specifically adapted for life at the poles. Dreams of acquiring an impressive treasure hoard from a feral white dragon or a noble silver dragon may inspire adventurers to delve into the reptile's icy, cavernous lair and wrest the beast's amassed wealth from its greedy clutches. On a more altruistic note, beleaguered coastal populations may request the assistance of outsiders to protect them from marauding frost giants and their winter wolf pets. In hushed whispers, community elders occasionally speak of a mysterious otherworldly being that haunts their folklore and troubled minds. Most deem the malevolent wendigo as humanity's most feared and greatest enemy, yet some worship the monstrous entity as a deity, appeasing the outsider with living souls or ritualistically devouring the flesh of their fellow man. Other strange monstrosities such as the devious glacier toad and the bizarre remorhaz take up residence atop or even in melted recesses within the ice sheet's frozen heart.

Deviating from the realm of the fantastical, the massive animals that stalk the sea ice and frozen ground also feel the gnawing pangs of hunger. The powerful polar bear, the largest land carnivore on Earth, poses a significant challenge to any adventuring party especially in and around the islands of sea ice it calls home. The mighty walrus presents significant danger and opportunity to polar explorers hunting for sustenance and wealth. The blubbery creature yields a deadly bite, but its meat can practically feed an army for weeks and its ivory tusks fetch a handsome price in more temperate markets. Orcas, commonly referred to as killer whales, exhibit more intelligence than their bestial counterparts, making them a worthy adversary for any adventurer. They typically hunt in close-knit pods that can formulate and communicate battle tactics to other members of their group. Whereas polar bears and walruses are equally at home on the land and in the water, orcas are strictly aquatic predators even though they breathe air.

Although there are few man-made structures made from wood and stone in the poles, the ingenious residents use the resources at hand to construct abodes and lairs. Nonetheless, many of the poles adventuring locales are still wilderness areas. The GM may consult the following table to randomly determine a potential site for adventure in the frozen ice cap biome.

Table 4-10: Ice Cap Adventuring Sites

d10	Location
1	Cage. Someone embedded sixty 20-foot tall, 1-foot diameter icicles into the ice and snow to form a cage. The crude prison has no door or ceiling. Even a casual observer can surmise it took tremendous strength and leverage to pound the massive icicles into the compacted ice and snow. There is no tangible evidence confirming anyone used the cage to corral prisoners, though the effort and resources used to construct the isolated cell would suggest otherwise. Local residents can relay there are several recorded instances of frost giants building these types of pens to house captives taken during one of their raids. The rumors also indicate the oversized humanoid never construct them far from their strongholds.
2	Glacier. Unlike other terrestrial environments, snow and ice rarely, if ever, melt at the ice cap. Over time, the accumulated frozen precipitation compresses into a solid block known as a glacier. The mass slowly rolls across the land, displacing and crushing everything in its path, at least most of the time. In this instance, a pile of loose stones resisted the glacier's mighty push. Instead of pushing the mound of rocks aside, the compacted ice and snow avoided the obstacle entirely, leaving it completely undisturbed as if it were guided by an unseen intelligence. Other than being gathered together in one place, the stones' placement follows no discernable pattern or obvious logic. The stones' origins, architects, and purpose remain a mystery along with how or why the glacier circumvented them.
3	Iceberg. Calved from an ice shelf, this gigantic block of compacted ice and snow slowly meanders across the polar sea and ocean until it finally melts countless ages later. Because of its immense weight, roughly ninety percent of the typical iceberg rests beneath the water's surface, though on this occasion, the inverse appears to be the case. The iceberg's apex towers 200 feet above the shallow coastal waters where it was presumably born. Indeed, the colossal mass of ice and snow may have run aground close to the shoreline. While its unusual buoyancy certainly arouses suspicion, the eerie phosphorescent glow within the iceberg's proverbial heart supersedes concerns about its odd physical properties. Although it appears to be a singular mass, sunlight reflecting off its exposed surface appears to show fissures in the otherwise solid structure. An occasional hum emanating from deep within the iceberg only adds more questions than answers to the inquiry.

d10	Location
4	Ice Hole. Ice sheets sometimes rest atop polar oceans and seas. Unlike the glaciers found on land, these slabs of frozen saltwater behave much differently than their terrestrial freshwater counterparts. They are rarely more than a foot thick except in the coldest parts of the ice cap. Furthermore, sea ice is not contiguous in some spots. Gaps between ice floes and packs sometimes form, allowing aquatic mammals swimming below the sea ice to surface and breathe before diving back into the frozen depths. Seals, walruses, and orcas intermittently gather at the site to inhale precious oxygen for several minutes. Of course, the large, blubbery beasts also attract humanoid hunters to the isolated spot. Unfortunately for the sentient predators, their prey seems to have the upper hand as evidenced by the four human skulls and shattered vertebrae strewn across the ice around the hole. Something removed every scrap of flesh from the bones and bit through them with surgical precision. Igloo. Constructed from snow and ice, this temporary or permanent shelter uses the frozen precipitation's natural insulating properties to keep its occupants comparatively warm and comfortable. A portable stove inside the structure radiates light and warmth, beckoning visitors to enter. Two cords of firewood resting on the snow adjacent to the stove are the only items within the spacious abode. Although the flames still burn within the heating apparatus, there is apparently no one here to tend them. Nor are there any other signs of habitation including footprints in and around the igloo's vicinity. However, a creature who stokes the fire or watches the flames discovers something disturbing. Globules of fatty tissue hiss and pop within the blaze. Closer examination also reveals several small, charred bones mixed in with the crackling embers. Land Bridge. Water sequestered in the form of ice and snow at the poles lowers sea levels, exposing swaths of land normally submerged beneath the waves. In this case, a land bridge covered in ice and snow connects two large islands, which are usually six miles apart. The islands' inhabitants have squabbled for centuries over fishing and hunting territory. The land bridge's unexpected and sudden appearance intensified the conflict and raised some eyebrows in both camps. Only a few months ago, the shallow water separating the combatants had an average depth of twenty feet. However, the water receded overnight, suggesting an unnatural cause for the land bridge's inexplicable arrival or a potentially catastrophic seismic problem beneath the land bridge.
6	

d10	Location
7	Luge Run. At the poles, leisure is a luxury few can afford. Yet, once every year, wealthy residents from distant lands gather together at this facility to participate, observe, and wager on luge races conducted on this magnificent course. A team of six workers maintains the expensive complex throughout the year, allowing competitors to take practice runs down the track during the off-season. Despite their intense efforts, a series of devastating crashes over the past several weeks took the lives of two competitors and seriously injured three others. Many believe these tragedies were not accidents and were instead deliberate acts of sabotage. The strongest evidence to confirm this suspicion was the discovery of metal filings in the lockers where the luges are stored. Polar Bear Den. Dug out of the ice and snow, this 20-foot long tunnel descends a few feet beneath the icy surface. Inside the frozen shelter, the dead polar bear sow occupant still huddles her presumably stillborn cub in her embrace in a desperate attempt to breathe life back into her beloved offspring. At first, her tragic demise appears natural, but closer examination reveals the ugly truth. An obsidian dagger imbedded into her vulnerable belly ripped her cub from her womb and killed her in the process. Local inhabitants recognize the blade as the handiwork of the Snow Demons, a doomsday cult who sacrifices mothers and their children to their diabolical benefactor Ezzamus. They believe only the pathos of witnessing a mother grieve for her newborn child can summon their demonic patron to this realm. Fortunately, their efforts have borne no tangible results, though their failure has not stopped them from trying. Shipwreck. Sea ice is the bane of all mariners. The insidious, floating enemy rapidly surrounds vessels sailing through polar oceans and seas, forever trapping them within their frozen grip. Although equipped with an icebreaking ram and structural reinforcement, this ship could not escape its icy prison. Presumably, the crew stripped the stranded, 50-foot long cog of its cargo and provisions before abandoning it in the sea ice. Large marks gouged in the ice and sea confirm this suspicion, though the trail mysteriously and abruptly ends only one mile from the ship. The only signs of humanoid presence are broken pieces of wood and other debris littered around the area. For its part, the cog appears largely intact with the exception of a significant hole piercing its hull and some structural damage to its bow. However, the fate of the crew remains unsolved.
8	
9	

d10 Location

10

Weather Station. A circle of druids indigenous to the region built and manned this weather station to gather climate data and observe weather patterns in the region. Like most structures on the ice cap, the band built the weather stations from blocks of compacted snow and ice, and even constructed the furniture from the abundant material. Likewise, in the absence of any viable writing implements and materials, the occupants etched their observations into the ice and snow covering the walls. The information scrawled onto the walls indicates infrequent precipitation and consistently frigid temperatures with one exception — the final entry. After more than two years of constant subzero temperatures, the weather station recorded a balmy forty-six degrees Fahrenheit (nine degrees Celsius) temperature reading. There are no further weather observations after that day or any signs of the residents. They left nothing behind other than a piece of flint they used to presumably scrawl their observations onto the wall.

Tundra Biome

While winter never completely releases the ice cap from its frosty grip, the tundra escapes its frigid grasp for roughly two months out of the year and experiences a brief yet crucial interval of mild temperatures that approach and occasionally exceed 50° Fahrenheit (10° Celsius). This fleeting respite of comparative warmth melts any snow and ice that accumulated during the prolonged winter, giving green plants their lone opportunity to take root. Short perennials such as sedges, mosses, grasses, low shrubs, and lichens make the most of this chance. They sink their green tendrils into the chilly earth composed of gravel and other fine materials and hang on for dear life. Larger plants, on the other hand, cannot take advantage of the changing circumstances. Although the top layer of soil partially thaws, the ground less than one foot beneath the surface remains frozen solid throughout the year. Trees cannot embed their woody stalks into this impenetrable permafrost, thus preventing them from growing in the tundra. Even water cannot seep through this unyielding barrier. Instead, rain along with melting snow and ice collects on or percolates to the surface, where it spawns lakes, marshes, streams, bogs, and fens that teem with life during this momentary recess.

The tundra biome essentially experiences two seasons: an expanded winter that lasts for roughly ten months and a summer that encompasses approximately fifty to sixty days. Technically, spring and autumn still appear on the calendar, but the changes are so negligible they are generally just considered an extension of winter. Sunlight prevails throughout nearly the entire day during the summer, though the smoldering star remains close to the horizon lessening the amount of heat the solar radiation can generate. In winter the converse is true. Indeed, the sun does not rise for the few weeks immediately before and after the winter solstice, though the tundra experiences periods of twilight rather than complete and utter darkness throughout those dreary days.

From a logical standpoint, it stands to reason that the seemingly endless winter would generate enough accumulated snowfall to last through the compacted summer and coat the ground in a constant layer of ice and snow. While most precipitation in the tundra falls as snow, by definition the biome, like its ice cap neighbor, receives so little moisture that it also meets the criteria for being a desert. This factor gives the sun and any accompanying rainfall enough time during the summer to melt or wash away any residual snow and ice that fell during the winter.

Characters trudging over the tundra face an arid and virtually lifeless landscape. Snow and ice cover the ground for much of the year with the exception of summer's brief respite. The following table describes the terrain elements found within the surrounding 2d4 miles in the tundra based upon the season. When consulting this table, the GM rolls percentile dice for each feature to determine if it is present in the area. One or more

types of terrain and/or vegetation may coexist in the same general area, though certain features negate the effects of others as described in the following table. Difficult terrain, as described in this table, only applies to determining the actions a character can take when moving through an area containing this feature rather than its effect on the creature's speed.

Table 4-11: Terrain Elements in the Tundra According to Season

Terrain Element	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
Fresh snow^a	15%	5%	10%	20%
Ice sheet^b	70%	—	80%	100%
Gravel^c	10%	10%	10%	—
Undergrowth^d	10%	40%	10%	—
Peat^e	15%	25%	5%	—
Shallow water^f	15%	25%	10%	—

^a Fresh snow reduces overland speed by half and reduces wheeled vehicle speeds by three-quarters. Land vehicles whose chassis rests upon a long, narrow surface, such as blades, rails, skis, or similar devices move without impediment over this terrain. If fresh snow is present, it rests atop the ice sheet, thus temporarily negating the ice sheet's effects in that area. Areas containing fresh snow are treated as difficult terrain, if applicable.

^b The ice sheet reduces overland speed by half and halts wheeled vehicles in their tracks. Land vehicles whose chassis rests upon a long, narrow surface, such as blades, rails, skis, or similar devices move without impediment over this terrain. Areas containing an ice sheet are treated as difficult terrain, if applicable. A creature who attempts to run, charge, or suddenly stop or turn falls prone if it fails a moderate difficulty Dexterity check or appropriate Dexterity-based skill check.

^c Gravel consists of small, loose rocks and stones resting atop a base of granular earth. Gravel has no effect on overland speed, but areas containing gravel are treated as difficult terrain, if applicable.

^d Undergrowth includes vines, roots, and soft-stemmed vegetation covering the ground. These plants cannot cohabitate areas with gravel. Undergrowth has no effect on overland speed, but areas containing undergrowth are treated as difficult terrain, if applicable.

^e Peat reduces overland speed by half and halts all wheeled vehicles in their tracks. If peat is found alongside gravel, the earth is soft and yielding, reducing overland speed by half and all vehicle speeds by three-quarters. Areas containing shallow water completely cover the peat and negate its effects on movement. Areas containing peat are treated as difficult terrain, if applicable. Peat exposed to an open flame has a 50% chance of igniting and starting a peat fire. (See the upcoming **Hazards** chapter for more details regarding peat fires.)

^f Shallow water is 1 foot or less in depth. It reduces overland speed by half and halts all land vehicles in their tracks. Watercraft with a draft greater than the water's depth automatically run aground while those with a draft greater than 1d4 inches have a 50% chance of running aground per 100 feet traveled. Areas containing shallow water are treated as difficult terrain, if applicable.

The GM may consult the following table to determine the fauna, flora, and random events the characters may encounter during their journey across the tundra. These items may be used solely as wilderness dressing, to plant the seeds for an upcoming adventure, or as an interesting side trek.

Table 4-12: Tundra Flora, Fauna, and Random Events

d20	Encounter
1	The scent of freshly brewed tea drifts through the air.
2	Lichens flourish atop bare rocks.
3	A strong breeze propels cottonseeds through the air.

d20	Encounter
4	A dead snowshoe hare lies on the ground next to a bunch of low-lying plants with white flowers.
5	A snowman silently watches over the area.
6	Two lemmings burrow into the snow and ice while vigilantly gazing at the skies overhead.
7	A desperate insomniac offers his life's fortune to anyone who can help him fall asleep.
8	An oblong, leather ball rests on a mound of snow overlooking a rectangular field.
9	Someone or something embedded reindeer antlers into the frozen soil.
10	A snowy owl coos at constant one-minute intervals.
11	Shards of metal litter the ground near a splintered axe with a shattered blade.
12	Sixty musk oxen slog across the tundra grazing on the terrain's meager vegetation.
13	Two foxes play a game tossing a mole back and forth to each other.
14	Snow partially covers a reindeer carcass with a few scraps of flesh still clinging to its bones.
15	A teenage boy inhales the crushed leaves of a yellow flowering plant.
16	Exposed peat slowly smolders, spewing out thick clouds of caustic, black smoke.
17	A polar bear cub uses a snow bank as a pillow for its nap.
18	Two dogs lug an unmanned sled across the tundra.
19	Despite the chilly temperatures, mosquitoes buzz around a small pond.
20	A falcon dives head first into a snow pile.

The lack of rainfall and snow coupled with the permafrost further inhibits biodiversity amongst the ecosystem's flora. Furthermore, the complete absence of trees and other tall, sturdy plants along with the tundra's typically flat terrain offers no protection or buffer against the wind. On our planet, this biome lies on or close to the landmass' coastline with a polar ocean or sea. The interaction between the colder air on the surface and the comparatively warmer body of water adjacent to it fuels strong breezes that whip across the defenseless landscape, uprooting plants daring to reach into the skies. Therefore, plants must overcome not only the rigors of protracted cold and darkness, but they must also contend with adapting to frozen soil, receiving little moisture, and withstanding fierce winds if they hope to survive in this challenging domain.

Vegetation adopts several approaches for dealing with these harsh conditions. Most species are perennials, cyclical plants that grow and bloom in the summer, die in the winter and then regenerate from their underground root stock the following summer. Their shallow roots embedded in the gravelly soil just above the rock-hard permafrost make them vulnerable to strong gusts. To overcome this problem, flora generally stays low to the ground, keeping out of harm's way from the howling currents of air sweeping across the land. This strategy also benefits plants in other ways. As in the case of the manmade igloo, a blanket of snow offers plants natural insulation against the most frigid temperatures. Even when completely covered by snow, some plants can still photosynthesize to produce energy. Furthermore, simple root structures allow these plants to cluster close together, which fortifies them against the detrimental effects of blowing snow and wind. Various dwarf shrubs, grasses, liverworts, heath, sedges, mosses, and lichens make up the tundra's limited flora. These include bearberries, a short evergreen that produces edible fruit

and can also be used for a host of medicinal and recreational purposes. Likewise, the marsh tea plant is another species that produces leaves with healing properties. These plants and their stubby, hardy counterparts form the foundation of the tundra's food chain for its herbivores.

Unlike its plant life, the tundra's fauna comes in all shapes and sizes ranging from smaller plant eaters such as lemmings, voles, squirrels, and arctic hares to its bulkier herbivores such as musk oxen, reindeer (also known as caribou), and the undisputed kings of the tundra's plant-eaters, the fabled woolly mammoths that walked the Earth during the last ice age. The carnivorous species that prey on these beasts include arctic foxes, wolves, wolverines, and bears, including the polar bear though the latter animal rarely ventures inland and typically hunts close to neighboring bodies of water with sea ice. Like the indigenous flora, these mammals developed a host of adaptations allowing them to outlast the extended winters. Bears and other beasts hibernate in enclosed shelters when snow covers the ground and food is scarce only to reemerge when the weather warms and life returns to the frigid tundra. Thick fur and layers of fat beneath the skin retain body heat and provide insulation for those creatures that tough out the cold, such as the iconic reindeer and musk oxen. Still, other species including the tundra's migratory birds, such as snowy owls, falcons, ravens, and loons, along with some mammals retreat altogether and seek out warmer climates only to return during the fleeting summer to breed and raise their young in the numerous marshes, bogs, and fens that spring up when the snow melts and the ground thaws. Numerous insects also awaken from their winter slumber and descend upon the freshwater havens dotting the chilly landscape, providing the tundra's avian population with a reliable and bountiful food source. In perhaps the most unique adaptation, the tundra's native mosquitoes shed water from their bodies as winter approaches and replace the fluid with glycerol, a chemical that functions as modern-day antifreeze. This compound allows the pest to withstand winter's bitter chill and return in summer to plague warm-blooded guests visiting the tundra's marshes, bogs, and fens.

Like the peoples of the ice cap, the humanoids who inhabit this desolate region predominately lead a nomadic lifestyle primarily focused on dry land rather than navigating the open waters seeking sustenance. Although some settlements still spring up close to large bodies of water, many exist in remote interior regions sheltered from the wind by the prevailing topography or alongside lakes, rivers, and streams with plentiful supplies of fish. Instead of constructing igloos and kayaks, native residents build stable peat huts during the long winters, and then transition to more mobile leather tents when traveling across the grassy terrain throughout the brief summer. Unlike the ice cap, the domain's numerous bogs and fens produce tremendous quantities of peat in the tundra. Residents use this organic material as insulation for their homes and a fuel source for heating and cooking purposes. Indeed, many scholars refer to this biome as a carbon sink because the frozen landscape, particularly its chilly wetlands, absorbs and retains more carbon dioxide than it releases into the atmosphere.

When adventurers encounter humanoids in a predetermined location or in a randomly generated community near a body of water or a road (see **Table 4-31**), the population size affects its demographic makeup as reflected in the following table.

Table 4-13: Population Effect on Demographics

Population	Modifier
Fewer than 50	-4d10
51-200	-2d10
201-2,000	none
2,001-5,000	+2d10
5,001-15,000	+4d10
15,001-30,000	+6d10
31,000+	+8d10

After determining the modifier based upon the population size, the GM may then apply that modifier to the following table to determine the demographics of a tundra community.

Table 4-14: Humanoid Demographics

d100	Racial Makeup
<36	Exclusively Homogenous. Everyone is a member of the same humanoid race, religion, or ethnicity, if applicable.
36–50	Predominately Homogenous. Almost everyone is a member of the same humanoid race, religion, or ethnicity, if applicable.
51–65	Largely Homogenous. The majority are members of the same humanoid race, religion, or ethnicity, if applicable.
66–75	Neutral. One race, religion, or ethnicity, if applicable outnumbers all others but does not comprise a majority. Nonetheless, their culture, traditions, and beliefs define society, though other peoples exert lesser degrees of influence as well.
76–85	Moderately Diverse. Some races, faiths, and ethnicities, if applicable, are more prevalent than others, but none greatly outnumbers all others. The traditions of several races, religions, and ethnicities combine forces to determine society's overall cultural makeup.
86–95	Largely Diverse. A multitude of races, religions, and ethnicities make up the largely integrated population. The fusion of backgrounds creates a unique society embodying traits borrowed from numerous traditions, though some perspectives influence the community more than others.
>95	Completely Diverse. Nearly every race, faith, and ethnicity imaginable can be found among the population. Most citizens are multicultural and multilingual, embracing their own customs as well as adopting those acquired from neighboring peoples.

The following table modifies the results on **Table 4-16** based upon the community's demographics.

Table 4-15: Demographics Effect on Humanoid Attitudes

Demographic	Modifier
Exclusively homogenous	–5d10
Predominately homogenous	–3d10
Largely homogenous	–1d10
Neutral	none
Moderately diverse	+1d10
Largely diverse	+3d10
Completely diverse	+5d10

Tundra people work cooperatively to survive in this harsh environment. This spirit also carries over to their interactions with other people, though they can be headstrong when dealing with others. However, as a whole, they strongly resist cultural changes. Therefore, while they are willing to accept newcomers into their communities, they resent others trying to impose their beliefs upon them. Given these preconditions, the GM may use the following table to determine the prevailing attitudes towards others within and outside the community.

Table 4-16: Humanoid Attitudes

d100	Attitude
<26	Segregated. Society is strictly divided along racial, religious, or ethnic lines with the more populous groups assuming a dominant role. They treat minorities as inferiors, relegating them to subservient status. Civil or religious authorities strictly enforce boundaries between divergent populations through threats, intimidation, and if necessary, violence.
26–35	Prejudiced. Although some integration takes place, racial, religious, or ethnic tension hangs heavy in the air. Many people hold persistent, deep-seeded opinions sowing mistrust between members of different groups. Residents keep a wary eye on those different than themselves, perceiving them as second-class citizens who pose a constant threat to their supposedly superior way of life.
36–45	Biased. Few individuals publicly express their misgivings about other people, yet it is difficult to ignore the undercurrent of bias bubbling beneath the surface. Although people can move freely about without restriction, subtle acts of discrimination still permeate society. Interactions between different sets of people may seem courteous and polite on the surface, yet words, gestures, and body language belie the person's compartmentalized suspicions.
46–75	Indifferent. An indifferent society strives to maintain the society's <i>status quo</i> sweeping any pervasive prejudices under the proverbial rug. Gradual modification of existing attitudes can occur, though some find its pace too plodding for their liking. Residents rarely let their biases govern their actions and perceptions of other people, yet few go out of their way to welcome those different than themselves.
76–85	Tolerant. Multiple languages, religions, and cultures mingle together, though members of the same race, religion, or ethnicity feel more comfortable with others of their kind than outsiders. A live and let live attitude best summarizes a tolerant society's outlook towards the community at large, though some innate biases linger in certain circles.
86–95	Accepting. Members of different races, religions, and ethnicities live side by side in almost completely integrated communities. Familiarity forms the cornerstone of an accepting society. However, those hailing from unfamiliar places or arriving with previously unseen customs encounter some misgivings and suspicion from startled observers.
>95	Welcoming. Society welcomes immigrants and visitors, regardless of race, religion, or ethnicity into the fold. Newcomers are encouraged to quickly assimilate into their surroundings as they adapt to their neighbors' customs and traditions while adding their uniqueness to the mix. Indeed, most members perceive themselves as citizens first and foremost relegating association with their race, religion, or ethnicity to a secondary status. Prejudice persists in some isolated corners, but the overwhelming majority strongly condemn such viewpoints and celebrate diversity.

Although tundra residents display remarkable self-sufficiency, they recognize the importance of organization and cohesion to survive in their inhospitable environment. In addition to overcoming the challenges posed by the harsh climate, these communities must also defend against incursions from neighboring settlements, nomadic raiders, and seafaring marauders. They grudgingly cede personal liberty for enhanced security against these and other threats imperiling their existence. The bonds of family and faith run deep in many tundra cultures, which is also reflected in their chosen political system. The GM may use the following table to determine the political system found in a tundra community.

Table 4-17: Political System

d100	Political System
01-05	Autocracy. A single individual, who seized control of the state through bloodless or violent means, wields absolute power over his people. This individual may have attained this position from their predecessor who was a family member or hand-picked this person as their successor. An autocrat often targets one or more segments of society as their sworn enemies, encouraging their subjects to take some punitive actions against the autocrat's real or imaginary foes.
06-15	Gerontocracy. While birthright, wealth, or political connections normally determine membership in the ruling class, this political system grants supreme authority to the community's eldest residents regardless of their gender or social status. Age is a relative term based upon the person's longevity for their race rather than their age measured in years. Because these individuals cannot bequeath their station to a designated heir or successor, they often rule in a just manner, relying upon their extensive life experiences to better the lives of their subjects. Nonetheless exceptions exist, especially for those who fear death and pursue every avenue to defy their own mortality.
16-25	Monarchy (Absolute). A group of blood relatives rules the land with ultimate authority vested in one or two persons known as the monarch. This individual's power is absolute, though the crown may vest some jurisdiction in others. In patriarchal societies, the eldest male descendent of the previous leader functions as the monarch, assuming the title of chieftain, elder, or another suitable designation. In a matriarchy, the oldest female descendent performs the same role as the state's queen, empress, or other lofty heading. The monarch's spouse, typically hailing from a neighboring royal family or a distant relative, functions solely as a consort, preventing the surviving spouse from inheriting the throne when the monarch dies. Younger siblings, living parents, and children undertake other civic and religious duties within the state, while extended family members also enjoy the trappings of nobility.

d100	Political System
26-35	Oligarchy. A group of individuals determined by birthright, military might, or personal wealth oversee all matters of state and economic development. The oligarchy's views towards personal freedoms range from moderately tolerant to oppressive with most examples skewing closer to the latter option than the former. The oligarchy's members along with their family and friends, if they choose, act with impunity while those outside the inner circle must abide by the oligarchy's edicts. On some occasions, individuals outside the elite group who are fortunate enough to amass wealth under this system may be granted membership into the oligarchy.
36-50	Theocracy (Clerical State). In a clerical state, the clergy interprets the deity's or deities' commands and codifies them as law. Priests enforce the gods' edicts, allowing them to preside over all religious and secular matters. Unlike the god state, the priests may select one of its members to serve as its high priest, a role granting the individual supreme authority but not divinity.
51-60	Theocracy (God Figure). All civil authority derives from a divine source. In the case of a god figure, political power rests in the hands of one individual who may be a living deity, a demigod, or a representative chosen by one or more gods. The god figure wields absolute authority over all matters of state including serving as the head of its church.
61-85	Tribal. This society lacks any formal government. Instead, a familial patriarch, matriarch, or a family council usually consisting of the group's elders presides over their individual clans who may live cooperatively or competitively with other bloodlines in a shared community or as parts of smaller, rival communities dwelling close together. Military might, more than lineage, frequently determines an individual's status within the tribe.
86-00	Warrior State. Incorporating elements of tribalism and autocracy, the community's warriors enjoy an exalted status within society, gaining civic rights and privileges denied to average citizens. Military commanders or celebrated heroes may assume rulership over the state, though these individuals usually defer daily oversight of civic and religious matters to others.

Despite the existence of a growing season, the poor soil quality, aridity, and prolonged cold prove too much for even the hardiest food crops to overcome. Instead, humanoid frequently resort to hunting and animal husbandry to get through the arduous winters. Extended family units or entire villages may raise a herd of reindeer or musk oxen that serves as the community's primary source of leather, bone, and meat. They supplement this diet with fish caught in nearby lakes and streams as well as any other smaller game animals or larger predators killed during a hunting excursion into the untamed wilds far from home. When the weather improves during the short-lived summers, residents gather wild berries and edible leaves from the handful of plants that thrive in this difficult environment. The GM may consult the following table to determine the people's lifestyle.

Table 4-18: Lifestyle

<11	Nomadic. The people live exclusively off the land and are constantly on the move, never staying in the same location for more than one night. They are exclusively hunter-gatherers. To cover more ground in a single day, most nomadic peoples ride atop domesticated animals and frequently travel with large herds of livestock. Most share common lineage with their fellow travelers.
	Semi-nomadic. These individuals have no permanent home, though they may settle down in one location for several days, weeks, or even a few months under the right conditions. Their movements usually coincide with seasonal changes, though they rarely revisit the same exact locale. Although they are predominately hunter-gatherers, they may engage in limited agricultural activities before moving on to their next destination. These individuals typically reside in mobile, temporary shelters they erect soon after their arrival.
11-30	
31-90	Semi-sedentary. Although they construct permanent settlements, these people divide their time among a few predetermined locations based upon the seasons. They may spend several months in one favorable spot to raise crops, fish its bountiful waters, or hunt a herd of game animals traveling along a migratory route. While they may still be classified as hunter-gatherers, they spend a roughly equal amount of their time raising domesticated livestock, growing agricultural products, and engaging in commercial activities.
>91	Sedentary. The residents live in the same location year-round, where they farm the land, tend to their domesticated flocks, hunt game in the surrounding wilderness, and develop commercial enterprises. Trade routes, civic engineering projects, and a reliable water source can be typically found in a sedentary society.

Tundra Campaigns

Despite receiving a brief reprieve from the elements, tundra campaigns face many of the same natural hazards that torment ice cap explorers. Freezing temperatures, frigid winds, snow, and ice curtail most outdoor activities and travel throughout much of the year. Travelers endeavoring to make their fortunes in this rough and tumble environment must take the necessary precautions to escape winter's grasp with their lives and treasures intact. Although the ground briefly thaws during the short summer, the layer of permafrost just beneath the surface remains rock hard throughout the year. The subterranean complexes and underground lairs that house fabulous riches and fearsome denizens in more temperate environments are few and far between in this realm dominated by frozen earth. Permanent manmade structures are also a rarity in this windswept world, thus adventurers accustomed to delving into forsaken dungeons and poking around in lost ruins must quickly adjust to their newfound reality in the great outdoors.

Nonetheless danger abounds in the tundra, particularly near the fetid bogs and malodorous marshes that spring up on these icy plains. In addition to the wolves, bears, and canine predators stalking their prey across the snowy terrain, vicious monsters and men also inhabit these regions. Ferocious white dragons, frost giants, and other denizens encountered in the ice cap biome also dwell here. Evil men sometimes gather in the tundra's most isolated corners to venerate the vile deities of cold and darkness holding sway over their temperamental lands. These

worshippers vainly hope their sickening offerings appease these sinister deities and in turn prevent them from unleashing their wicked servants and foul weather upon the tenuous humanoid communities struggling to survive in an unforgiving world. When their sacrifices and pleas for mercy go unanswered desperate times occasionally call for more direct measures. When these dark times befall a community, its elders cast their eyes in the direction of brave adventurers to save the day.

The tundra may lack precipitation and biodiversity, yet it teems with imagination. The GM may use the following table for plotlines when running a tundra campaign. These ideas may be used as a side quest or form the basis for an intriguing storyline. In addition, the GM may combine these elements with the adventure settings found in the subsequent table.

Table 4-19: Tundra Adventure Ideas

d10	Event
1	Blanket Toss. After a prosperous hunting trip, community leaders celebrate their heroes with a blanket toss. The people who participated in the expedition stand atop blankets held by their fellow residents and are flung into the air, much like a modern trampoline. Naturally, a feast soon follows to consume the meat harvested from the kill. Injuries during the blanket toss are rare and minor, but on this occasion, the excursion's leader, Atchuk, inexplicably collapsed and subsequently died during the exercise. No one recalls seeing him strike a solid object or fall in an awkward manner, though a few witnesses testify he flew almost 40 feet in the air at some point. What everyone unanimously agrees upon is Atchuk's surly demeanor and legendary temper rightfully earned him numerous enemies who would savor his demise.
	Cotton. Few people associate the cotton plant with the arid, frigid tundra, but the resourceful plant carves out a unique niche in this frozen world. Although it does not grow in sufficient abundance to support a large-scale textile industry, the residents of a local community harvest its fibers to produce clothing for themselves and families. At first, they noticed nothing remarkable about the garments they wove. However, a passing adventurer who purchased an overcoat from a resident raved about the protection it granted him against the cold and wind, but he also claimed it shielded him from a juvenile white dragon's breath. As word spread throughout the community about the fantastical claims, others sought to verify the story and unravel the secret of the tundra cotton.
2	
3	Harpoon. Whaling is a way of life in many polar societies, and the harpoon is the hunter's most valuable tool. Obviously, whalers take to the sea in pursuit of their quarry, but this harpoon pierces the ice and snow on land. Even more curiously, fresh blood slowly oozes from the wound in the ice, even though the weapon struck no visible target. No one can explain why the harpoon's wielder thrust the weapon into the ice at this spot or the blood's origin. However, most pious community members believe the blood represents the gods' displeasure.

d10	Event	d10	Event
4	Lichens. Although commonly mistaken for plants, lichens are composite organisms living in a symbiotic relationship with various fungi growing in the tundra. This patch of greenish-brown material resembles gossamer flourishing atop a white canvas. Animals sometimes burrow through the snow seeking a few strands of this organic matter during the tundra's harsh winters. Indeed, several residents claim to have seen reindeer, musk oxen, and hares root through the snow and devour these lichens. Moments after consuming these organisms, the creature's irises turned red while they expelled gray steam through their suddenly enlarged nostrils. The metamorphosis lasted only a few seconds before the animals returned to normal. Creatures affected in this manner never grazed in this location ever again.	8	Toboggan. Someone or something tore this leather toboggan into four separate pieces. Whatever caused the devastation splintered its wooden frame and shredded its leather exterior scattering the remnants across a several hundred square foot patch of snow. The party presumably responsible for its destruction left no signs of its presence. Even stranger, the creature pulling the toboggan also left no trace of its existence even though the vehicle pushed aside the snow and ice in its path. Two frayed pieces of rope with one still tethered to the front of the vehicle lie atop the snow in the immediate vicinity. Surprisingly, a sharp instrument did not sever the ropes. Instead, it appears they broke from excessive wear.
5	Messenger. One morning, a woman no one has ever seen before arrives at the edge of the settlement. Although she carries no written documents, she insists she carries a crucial message from an entity she calls The Slumbering White Bear. "My lands are sacred ground," she proclaims in a booming voice. "Your bows will break, your spears shall shatter, and your blades dull when you trespass in my territory. The beasts beseech my aid, and I answer their cries. You have been warned." The enigmatic woman answers no questions and refuses to converse with anyone other than to once again repeat her message. Furthermore, none of the residents have any information about The Slumbering White Bear.	9	Warm Breeze. With no trees or other natural barriers to impede its progress, frigid polar winds howl across the tundra with unbridled ferocity. These icy currents of air normally intensify the numbing cold's effects on living creatures, but this anomalous breeze defies convention. Instead of reinforcing the cold, this blast of warm air offers respite from the frigid outdoor conditions. The breeze culminates in a swirling vortex similar to a waterspout, where it hurls ice and snow into the air transforming the frozen precipitation into a fine mist. After a few minutes, the cyclone and warmth dissipate into oblivion just as suddenly as they appeared.
6	Polar Bear. Polar bears spend much of the hunting season on the sea ice moving from one floe to the next searching for prey. This rebellious beast refuses to follow the natural order and instead saunters across the tundra with an obnoxious strut reminiscent of a proud rooster. A scrimshaw crown fastened onto its head completes its arrogant ensemble. The animal displays no overt indications of sentience. The consensus holds a human handler trained the polar bear to behave in this manner and fitted it with its regal crown and demeanor for an unknown purpose.	10	Woolly Moth. Few insects thrive in the tundra, but the woolly moth represents one of the rare exceptions. Some indigenous people search the surrounding wilderness for its caterpillar form, believing they can portend the weather by analyzing the coloration of its eponymous fur. However, one fact about the woolly moth and its caterpillar is undeniable. Someone has been placing the moth's larvae inside the mouths of the recently departed in the local area. The bodies show no obvious injuries. Therefore, no one can confirm whether someone murdered them, or they died from natural causes. A popular, regional myth claims the woolly moth's caterpillar can bring the dead back to life, leading most residents to speculate the culprit responsible for putting the larvae into the decedent's mouths is undertaking this macabre action post-mortem in an attempt to resurrect the dead.
7	Reindeer. Stories circulate among the local villages about a reindeer who can cast a small repertoire of arcane spells. While the beast's mastery of magic seems limited, the animal's intelligence leads many to speculate it may be someone's animal companion or a wizard polymorphed into a reindeer. A few tales insist the reindeer speaks a strange, foreign language never heard before in this remote part of the world. The listeners could not understand the words, but they believe the reindeer's mannerisms and inflections sound like a desperate plea for help.	When intrepid souls come face to face with any of these horrors, they generally do so somewhere on the tundra proper rather than inside a manmade building or an underground chamber. The disgusting stench from a festering bog or anomalous plant growth in a particular spot occasionally marks these adversaries' lairs or usual stomping grounds for adventurers who seek out these wicked creatures. Peat harvested from the decaying wetlands may be used to construct rudimentary huts, but these precarious buildings crumble into ruin much quicker than stone structures erected in a more hospitable environment. Despite the pervasive permafrost, melting snow and ice can gradually carve out abscesses in rock formations, giving birth to caves that frequently host hibernating beasts and monsters alike. Building materials are scarce in the tundra. Therefore, most adventuring locales are found outdoors or in natural abscesses carved out of the snow and ice. The GM may consult the following table to randomly determine a potential site for adventure in the tundra biome.	

Table 4-20: Tundra Adventuring Sites

d10	Location
1	Copper Vein. For two fleeting months in the summer, prospectors venture into the tundra searching for an elusive copper deposit rumored to be buried within the permafrost. The tales started several decades earlier when an explorer with a penchant for tall tales described stumbling upon a rich vein of the exposed metal protruding above the surface. Although many doubted the known huckster's account, the visitor produced a large stone bristling with copper flecks as proof of his discovery. Unfortunately, he could not remember the vein's exact location, though his faulty memory never stopped him from leading paid excursions into the wilderness to find it. The only clue he ever divulged about the vein's exact location was that it lay at the intersection of two streams flowing in opposite directions. Because the streams only flow during the brief thaws, speculators only scour the land during the late spring and early summer when the waters flow. Despite the prospector's purported evidence, the lack of success over the passing decades leads many to dismiss the claims as a money-making hoax.
2	Glacial Lake. Summer's thaw keeps this mighty glacier at bay, forestalling its progress at the tundra's edge. In addition to impeding its march inland, the seasonal warmth also transforms some of the compressed ice and snow into a magnificent marvel — a glacial lake held in check by a dam of ice. The chilly, pristine waters beckon visitors to drink from its cool, refreshing liquid and admire its astounding beauty. Adventurers also travel here for another reason. Ancient legends claim a white dragon used the glacial lake as a portal into an extradimensional space where it resides with its gargantuan treasure hoard. The tales fall woefully short of explaining how to gain entrance to the lair through the glacial lake, though the lack of details fails to deter treasure hunters from delving into its depths. A recent theory suggests the hidden doorway only becomes visible during a full moon on the winter solstice, yet like the other claims the hypothesis remains unverified.
3	Hallowed Ground. To the casual observer, this swath of snowy, windswept terrain appears ordinary. There are no manmade objects or natural landmarks celebrating its significance, and no outward signs of humanoid intervention. Yet, clerics and druids have confirmed someone or something consecrated the land for a purpose presumably lost to time. Because of its protective qualities, tribal chieftains, priests, and other important figures sometimes gather here to discuss critical topics or conduct sensitive negotiations. While the place's magic continues to hedge out undead abominations and summoned servants, foul creatures loiter around the area in greater numbers over the past several weeks. The unwelcome monsters mindlessly mill about the hallow ground's perimeter, anticipating some unforeseen event about to befall the area.

d10	Location
4	Kayak. Indigenous people use these small, nimble vessels to hunt and fish in the rivers and lakes dotting the tundra's landscape. Kayaks are light enough to haul overland for great distances, something this vehicle's operator appears to have undertaken prior to abandoning the watercraft at this landlocked location. The boat still appears seaworthy, and the paddle needed to propel and steer the vessel rests against its side. The owner left few traces of her whereabouts behind her. A pink ribbon, which appeared to wrap around a rolled document, lies on the bottom of the kayak. Meanwhile, her footsteps head off to the east, presumably following a route described in the document. Why she decided to leave her kayak behind remains part of the mystery.
5	Mammoth Graveyard. The bones and carcasses of these massive beasts litter an area encompassing several square miles. None of the remains display any signs of a violent demise, likely ruling out the theory humanoid hunters lured the animals into ambushes at this site. Instead, the mammoths appear to come here of their own volition to die alongside their fallen kin. A branch of shamanism known as The Children of the Tusk believe the mammoths were once sentient creatures who worshipped a long dead deity at this holy site where the god first encountered his worshippers. When their divine patron perished in a battle against a trio of humanoid gods, the victorious divine beings condemned their enemy's worshippers to a bestial existence. Although poachers and scavengers have looted the mammoth carcasses for ivory, meat, and wool for centuries, none have ever excavated the grounds searching for razed structures, idols, or other evidence of a past mammoth civilization.
6	Outpost. Far from any vestiges of civilization or supply chains, this lonely outpost constructed from dried peat stands at the frontier's edge. Its four defenders fend for themselves in this remote enclave. They spend their monotonous days hunting, fishing, and patrolling the tundra. However, when questioned, the quartet have no recollection of how they got here, why they are here, and what they are monitoring on the tundra. Judging by their physical condition, the middle-aged men have been here for at least twenty years. They cannot recall ever meeting anyone else while here. Furthermore, their light clothing seems to be inconsistent with the regional style and unsuitable for polar weather. In addition, they converse with unusual jargon and speak with a curious accent commonly associated with seafarers.

7 **Reindeer Trail.** Like many herd animals, reindeer frequently follow the same migratory paths in their unending search for food in the barren tundra. Humanoid hunters depending upon these animals for their survival follow the same trails in hot pursuit of their quarry. The beasts' hoofprints through the snow follow a typical pattern of tightly bunched steps until any trace of the herd abruptly vanishes from the ground. The hunters who scoured the area for any trace of the herd insist the animals appeared to rear back on their hind legs immediately prior to the spot where their trail disappears. Some scattered, unreliable reports claim to have seen apparitions of the beasts roaming the tundra, while other witnesses insist the animals inexplicably took to the skies.

8 **Salmon Spawning Ground.** Like clockwork, salmon brave the freezing waters to make the arduous journey upstream to return to the place of their birth to begin the cycle of life anew. However, before they reach their intended destination, they must navigate through a gauntlet of hungry predators waiting to feast on their fatty flesh. The skeletal remains of previous gluttonies litter the frozen ground adjacent to the river. Worse still, the stench of rancid fish guts lingers in the crisp, chilly air. Yet, interspersed among the fishbones are three bear skulls and the tentative footprints of something emerging from the water and onto dry land. After several uncertain steps, the stride grows more confident as it leads off into the surrounding wilderness.

9 **Totem Pole.** This wooden pole bears numerous carved depictions of jovial young faces on its surface. The images are equally divided between males and females, though some appear too androgynous to differentiate. During the summer solstice, local children perform a ceremonial dance around the totem pole and then leave offerings of sweets and other tasty treats at its base. Nonetheless, the totem pole's history has seen its disproportionate share of tragedies. Over the last twenty years, six young people took their own lives underneath its shadow within days after they danced around the pole for the last time before their eighteenth birthday disqualified them from partaking in the event.

10 **Whale Bone Arch.** Two massive, whale bones pounded into the frozen earth form an impressive arch towering twenty feet above the ground. Originally intended to commemorate the whale's sacrifice for the community, the monument slowly yet steadily gained religious significance among the indigenous population who built it. The homespun faith bestowed exalted status upon all whales, even to the point where some members began worshipping the mammals as gods. Followers gather at the arch every night to offer prayers and sacrifices to these magnificent beasts. Devotees never received any tangible response to their supplications until recently. Over the last three days, a circular fissure in the ground reminiscent of a whale's blowhole has belched out a cloud of steam. Skeptics dismiss the sign as a natural phenomenon or an elaborate fraud. Believers, on the other hand, perceive the unearthly gasps as messages from the whale gods, though they remain unable to decipher their meaning.

In *The Lost Lands Campaign Setting* by Frog God Games, tundra covers countless square miles of territory in the vast region of Nùkland, which currently appears in *LL6: The Northlands Saga Complete* also by Frog God Games. The native people, the apropos Nùklanders, inhabit this immense domain. Although considered by most to be an indigenous race, these nomadic elven offshoots migrated here only a few thousand years ago after falling under the dire influence of a trickster god who led them into a disastrous conflict against the followers of the traditional elven pantheon. In the campaign's aftermath, the survivors fled to this remote corner of the world where they eke out a meager living as reindeer hunters and herders.

Taiga Biome

The milder and wetter taiga, or boreal forest as it is known in some circles, covers more square miles of dry land than any other biome on Earth. Spread across the breadth of three continents, the sprawling evergreen forests benefit from receiving significantly more snowfall than their normally chillier counterparts. Although the cold temperatures and deep snow are not conducive to fostering deciduous trees and plants, coniferous trees thrive in the cool, moderately moist environment, giving this ecosystem its signature characteristic as a year-round green forest with a dense canopy. These woody giants never shed their needle-like leaves. Hence, the absence of decaying organic matter on the forest floor leaves the taiga's young soil thin, acidic, and nutrient poor. To make matters worse for low-lying plants, the tightly bunched spruces, pines, larches, and birches greatly restrict the amount of meager sunlight striking the ground beneath them. In general, the taiga's undergrowth remains spotty at best, consisting almost entirely of mosses, wild flowers, and pockets of shrubbery.

Characters venturing into the rugged taiga encounter a landscape dominated by coniferous trees throughout the year. However, the ground beneath the tree undergoes dramatic seasonal changes. During the chilly winters, snow blankets the terrain. When the ice and snow melt, the water left in its wake saturates the exposed soil, transforming much of it into mud and shallow bogs. The following table describes the terrain elements found within the surrounding 2d4 miles in the taiga based upon the season. When consulting this table, the GM rolls percentile dice for each feature to determine if it is present in the area. One or more types of terrain and/or vegetation may coexist in the same general area, though certain features negate the effects of others as described in the following table. Difficult terrain, as described in this table, only applies to determining the actions a character can take when moving through an area containing this feature rather than its effect on the creature's speed.

Table 4-21: Terrain Elements in the Taiga According to Season

Terrain Element	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
Tree^a	60%	60%	60%	60%
Shrubs^b	15%	20%	15%	10%
Undergrowth^c	20%	30%	15%	10%
Mud^d	40%	30%	25%	10%
Fresh snow^e	25%	–	40%	20%
Deep snow^f	20%	–	10%	80%
Shallow water^g	15%	25%	10%	–
Deep water^h	5%	15%	10%	–

^a Trees found in the taiga are almost exclusively coniferous. The tree's trunk provides cover, if applicable, to any creature behind them. When trees are present, each individual tree is 1d4+1 x 5 feet away from the its closest neighbor. Trees have no effect on overland speed, but they reduce the speed of all land vehicles and watercraft in half.

^b Shrubs have no effect on overland speed, but areas containing shrubs are treated as difficult terrain, if applicable.

^c Undergrowth includes vines, roots, and soft-stemmed vegetation covering the forest floor. These plants cannot cohabitate areas with gravel. Undergrowth has no effect on overland speed, but areas containing

undergrowth are treated as difficult terrain, if applicable.

^d Mud reduces overland speed by half and halts all wheeled vehicles in their tracks. If there is no mud, the ground is soft and yielding during the spring and summer, and firm during the autumn and winter. Soft and yielding earth reduces overland speed by half and wheeled vehicle speeds by three-quarters. Firm soil has no effect on overland speed or wheeled vehicles. Areas containing fresh snow, shallow water, or deep water completely cover the mud and negate its effects on movement. Areas containing mud are treated as difficult terrain, if applicable.

^e Fresh snow reduces overland speed by half and reduces wheeled vehicle speeds by three-quarters. Land vehicles whose chassis rests upon a long, narrow surface, such as blades, rails, skis, or similar devices move without impediment over this terrain. If fresh snow is present, it rests atop any vegetation, thus temporarily negating the vegetation's effects in that area. If shallow or deep water occupies the same area as fresh snow, it becomes an ice sheet covered by fresh snow. (See **Table 4–11**) Areas containing fresh snow are treated as difficult terrain, if applicable.

^f Deep snow measuring 1d3+1 feet covers the ground and vegetation. If deep snow is present, it completely covers any mud and undergrowth in the area, negating their effects. It reduces overland speed by three-quarters and halts all wheeled vehicles in their tracks. Land vehicles whose chassis rests upon a long, narrow surface, such as blades, rails, skis, or similar devices move without impediment over this terrain. If shallow or deep water occupies the same area as deep snow, it becomes an ice sheet covered by deep snow. (See **Table 4–11**). Deep snow cannot occupy the same area as fresh snow. Areas containing deep snow are treated as difficult terrain, if applicable.

^g Shallow water is 1 foot or less in depth. It reduces overland speed by half and halts all land vehicles in their tracks. Watercraft with a draft greater than the water's depth automatically run aground while those with a draft greater than 1d4 inches have a 50% chance of running aground per 100 feet traveled. Areas containing shallow water are treated as difficult terrain, if applicable.

^h Deep water reaches a depth of 2d4 feet. It reduces overland speed by three-quarters and halts all land vehicles in their tracks. Charging and running are impossible for creatures whose height is less than five times the water's depth. Creatures not tall enough to keep their heads above water risk drowning, though they benefit from cover, if applicable. Watercraft with a draft equal to or less than half the water's depth can safely navigate through deep water. Watercraft with a draft greater than half the water's depth but less than its depth have a 50% chance of running aground for every 100 feet traveled, while vessels with a draft equal to or greater than the water's depth automatically run aground. Areas containing deep water are treated as difficult terrain, if applicable.

The GM may consult the following table to determine the fauna, flora, and random events the characters may encounter during their journey across the taiga. These items may be used solely as wilderness dressing, to plant the seeds for an upcoming adventure, or as an interesting side trek.

Table 4–22: Taiga Flora, Fauna, and Random Events

d20	Encounter
1	A disproportionate amount of snow clings to a pine tree's needles.
2	Two squirrels fight over an oblong acorn sitting on the forest floor.
3	An owl partially concealed within the branches of a tree intently focuses its gaze on a mound of debris littering the forest floor.
4	Discarded woolen gloves rest atop an exposed stone.
5	A raven perched on a tree limb caws out what sounds like the name "Poe."
6	A wolverine inexplicably rolls around on its back.
7	At least several hundred pine needles form a large pile, even though there are no pine trees in the surrounding area.

d20	Encounter
8	Four weasels scurry up and down the trunk of a dead tree.
9	Someone embedded a rusty axe into a tree stump.
10	Two young wolves feverishly dig a hole near the base of a tree.
11	Sunlight breaks through the canopy, illuminating and warming the ground with its bright rays.
12	Two young boys tell passersby they are looking for the "mink someone stole."
13	The undercarriage from a sleigh is embedded into a tree stump, but the rest of the carriage is missing.
14	Strands of garland adorn the lower half of a fir tree.
15	A spruce tree grows at a 45-degree angle.
16	Tufts of soft, luxurious gray fur cling to the bark of several tightly clustered larches.
17	A carpenter makes a box from red cedar wood.
18	Three teenage boys chop up a fallen birch tree for firewood.
19	A tiger cub chases a squirrel up a tree.
20	Two buzzards pick on the flesh of a decaying bison.

While trees are commonly associated with great age, the world's taigas are relative newcomers to Earth's proverbial stage. They made their first appearance roughly 10,000 years ago when the last ice age's glaciers steadily retreated toward the frozen poles and allowed life to again take hold on land previously covered by dense sheets of compressed ice and snow. Although damper in comparison to their polar cousins, taigas are significantly drier than temperate and tropical forests. On average, fires spawned by the inherently sere conditions sweep across this verdant landscape roughly once per century, forcing the taiga to begin the process of renewal again from tentative saplings. In more ways than one, these cold forests adhere to cyclical changes closer to those experienced in temperate climates.

Unlike the ice cap and some parts of the tundra, taigas witness sunrise and sunset on a daily basis, though both may take place in close proximity to one another. The sun basks the forest in light for twenty hours per day at the peak of summer before receding to dim twilight, though as in all polar biomes the yellow star remains fairly close to the horizon. Conversely, during the extended winter, the forests remain shrouded in darkness for much of the day, seeing the sun peek over the horizon for only a few fleeting hours before withdrawing from the sky. This important difference from its polar counterparts lessens winter's duration to approximately 200 days out of the year. However, the taiga's winter is still brutal even by typical polar standards. Temperatures can occasionally drop below –50 degrees Fahrenheit (–45 degrees Celsius) and even approach the planet's record lows, especially on clear nights devoid of any cloud cover. While deep snow typically covers the ground, the majority of precipitation falls during the short yet surprisingly warm summers where the mercury often reaches a comparatively balmy 70° Fahrenheit (21° Celsius). Spring heralds the sun's prolonged return to the heavens, where its solar radiation dispels any residual snow from the long winter. The taiga's flowers bud, its frozen bodies of water melt, and its hibernating animals awaken from their slumber. Those beasts that slept through the cold and darkness feast and breed in earnest during their waking hours in preparation for when autumn's chill comes back just a few months later. Naturally, some predators who outlasted the elements during the savage winter hardily greet the sleepy newcomers with bared fangs and sharp claws, thus granting them an unexpected eternal rest.

The taiga features a diverse array of flora and fauna specially adapted to cope with the polar biome's tremendous extremes and seasonal changes. Indeed, the disparity between its summer high temperature and winter low temperature exceeds those encountered anywhere else in the world.

As previously noted, coniferous trees dominate this chilly forest. These green behemoths' shallow roots are ideally suited for the thin soil, while the trees' downward-facing needle-like leaves mimic the action of a slanted roof, causing excess snow to slide down to the ground rather than accumulate on their limbs. Furthermore, the trees' dark coloration and the retention of their leaves allow them to absorb more sunlight and photosynthesize throughout the year instead of exclusively during the brief growing season. Smaller green plants are forced to make due in the literal and figurative shadows of their burlier brethren. Lichens and mosses flourish in damp patches of earth beneath trees or in some cases on their trunks. In spots where sunlight actually reaches the soil, wildflowers, grasses, and shrubs lay down roots and stake their proverbial claim to this precious piece of real estate. Some of these resourceful plants produce berries that supplement many omnivores' diets. Still, in most locations, undergrowth tends to be sparse or completely absent within the shade.

More animals and species populate the cool forest than the other polar biomes, but the ecosystem's biodiversity generally pales in comparison to temperate and tropical climates. Several varieties of bears and the fearsome tiger make up the taiga's apex predators. Many of these beasts' relatives, such as wolves, foxes, lynxes, and wolverines also hunt for prey in these woods alongside the ecosystem's smaller mammals, including minks, sables, and weasels. Moose, reindeer, musk oxen, and bison stand atop the taiga's list of herbivores. Hares, squirrels, beavers, mice, moles, and a host of smaller mammals feed on any edible leaves and berries. The cunning creatures who dwell in this wintry environment rely upon several adaptations to make it through the coolest six months. Rodents and small mammals typically live beneath the snow close to ground level where they feed on refrigerated plants that survived the winter or burrow underground and ride out the winter in subterranean chambers and tunnels in a near comatose state. Larger beasts grow shaggy coats of coarse hair or fur over layers of accumulated fat to retain heat by insulating their bodies from the elements. Others insatiably gorge and pack on the pounds when food is plentiful during the spring and summer. As winter approaches, these animals locate a suitable shelter where they hibernate until spring returns the following year. The taiga also hosts many avian guests that descend upon the forest in spring to mate and feed on the abundant insects emerging from the ground within and adjacent to the taiga's plentiful bogs and fens as well as its swampy sections. Ravens, eagles, and buzzards stick around when the weather turns cool, but nearly all other birds depart in autumn and head for warmer lands elsewhere.

When adventurers encounter humanoids in a predetermined location or in a randomly generated community near a body of water or a road (see **Tables 4–31**), the population size affects its demographic makeup as reflected in the following table.

Table 4–23: Population Effect on Demographics

Population	Modifier
Fewer than 50	–4d10
51–200	–2d10
201–2,000	none
2,001–5,000	+2d10
5,001–15,000	+4d10
15,001–30,000	+6d10
31,000+	+8d10

After determining the modifier based upon the population size, the GM may then apply that modifier to the following table to determine the demographics of a taiga community.

Table 4–24: Humanoid Demographics

d100	Racial Makeup
<21	Exclusively Homogenous. Everyone is a member of the same humanoid race, religion, or ethnicity, if applicable.
21–35	Predominately Homogenous. Almost everyone is a member of the same humanoid race, religion, or ethnicity, if applicable.
36–50	Largely Homogenous. The majority are members of the same humanoid race, religion, or ethnicity, if applicable.
51–60	Neutral. One race, religion, or ethnicity, if applicable outnumbers all others but does not comprise a majority. Nonetheless, their culture, traditions, and beliefs define society, though other peoples exert lesser degrees of influence as well.
61–75	Moderately Diverse. Some races, faiths, and ethnicities, if applicable, are more prevalent than others, but none greatly outnumbers all others. The traditions of several races, religions, and ethnicities combine forces to determine society's overall cultural makeup.
76–85	Largely Diverse. A multitude of races, religions, and ethnicities make up the largely integrated population. The fusion of backgrounds creates a unique society embodying traits borrowed from numerous traditions, though some perspectives influence the community more than others.
>85	Completely Diverse. Nearly every race, faith, and ethnicity imaginable can be found among the population. Most citizens are multicultural and multilingual, embracing their own customs as well as adopting those acquired from neighboring peoples.

The following table modifies the results on **Table 4–26** based upon the community's demographics.

Table 4–25: Demographics Effect on Humanoid Attitudes

Demographic	Modifier
Exclusively homogenous	–5d10
Predominately homogenous	–3d10
Largely homogenous	–1d10
Neutral	none
Moderately diverse	+1d10
Largely diverse	+3d10
Completely diverse	+5d10

The taiga's humanoid population is not as isolated as those encountered in the more desolate ice cap and tundra biome. The demand for commercial products produced in this fertile biome bring residents into greater contact with outsiders seeking to do business in this chilly realm. This increased exposure to different peoples and cultures gives residents a better understanding of the world around them, lessening their fear of the unknown.

Table 4-26: Humanoid Attitudes

d100	Attitude
<11	Segregated. Society is strictly divided along racial, religious, or ethnic lines with the more populous groups assuming a dominant role. They treat minorities as inferiors, relegating them to subservient status. Civil or religious authorities strictly enforce boundaries between divergent populations through threats, intimidation, and if necessary, violence.
11-20	Prejudiced. Although some integration takes place, racial, religious, or ethnic tension hangs heavy in the air. Many people hold persistent, deep-seeded opinions sowing mistrust between members of different groups. Residents keep a wary eye on those different than themselves, perceiving them as second-class citizens who pose a constant threat to their supposedly superior way of life.
21-30	Biased. Few individuals publicly express their misgivings about other people, yet it is difficult to ignore the undercurrent of bias bubbling beneath the surface. Although people can move freely about without restriction, subtle acts of discrimination still permeate society. Interactions between different sets of people may seem courteous and polite on the surface, yet words, gestures, and body language belie the person's compartmentalized suspicions.
31-50	Indifferent. An indifferent society strives to maintain the society's <i>status quo</i> sweeping any pervasive prejudices under the proverbial rug. Gradual modification of existing attitudes can occur, though some find its pace too plodding for their liking. Residents rarely let their biases govern their actions and perceptions of other people, yet few go out of their way to welcome those different than themselves.
51-70	Tolerant. Multiple languages, religions, and cultures mingle together, though members of the same race, religion, or ethnicity feel more comfortable with others of their kind than outsiders. A live and let live attitude best summarizes a tolerant society's outlook towards the community at large, though some innate biases linger in certain circles.
71-90	Accepting. Members of different races, religions, and ethnicities live side by side in almost completely integrated communities. Familiarity forms the cornerstone of an accepting society. However, those hailing from unfamiliar places or arriving with previously unseen customs encounter some misgivings and suspicion from startled observers.
>90	Welcoming. Society welcomes immigrants and visitors, regardless of race, religion, or ethnicity into the fold. Newcomers are encouraged to quickly assimilate into their surroundings as they adapt to their neighbors' customs and traditions while adding their uniqueness to the mix. Indeed, most members perceive themselves as citizens first and foremost relegating association with their race, religion, or ethnicity to a secondary status. Prejudice persists in some isolated corners, but the overwhelming majority strongly condemn such viewpoints and celebrate diversity.

Communities rarely expand beyond the level of a disorganized, scattered settlement spread out across a wide area. Villagers are typically self-sufficient, producing enough food, clothing, and other goods to satisfy their individual and familial needs, though they are not averse to banding together when one of their own is down on their luck, especially if they share some common lineage. In their minds, pitching in to help a friend or relative through tough times comes from making a voluntary and deliberate decision rather than obeying a civic obligation. Thus, while the residents share a common identity, the concept of banding together to establish a formal government escapes them. Choice and not duty govern a person's actions. The GM may use the following table to determine the political system found in a taiga community.

Table 4-27: Political System

d100	Political System
01-05	Autocracy. A single individual, who seized control of the state through bloodless or violent means, wields absolute power over his people. This individual may have attained this position from their predecessor who was a family member or hand-picked this person as their successor. An autocrat often targets one or more segments of society as their sworn enemies, encouraging their subjects to take some punitive actions against the autocrat's real or imaginary foes.
06-15	Elected Official. Residents select an individual to serve as the settlement's leader. The person may wield absolute authority or share civic responsibilities with a council of fellow citizens. The elected official, known as a mayor, magistrate, or similar title typically defers judicial matters to a judge or sheriff appointed by the elected official.
16-20	Gerontocracy. While birthright, wealth, or political connections normally determine membership in the ruling class, this political system grants supreme authority to the community's eldest residents regardless of their gender or social status. Age is a relative term based upon the person's longevity for their race rather than their age measured in years. Because these individuals cannot bequeath their station to a designated heir or successor, they often rule in a just manner, relying upon their extensive life experiences to better the lives of their subjects. Nonetheless exceptions exist, especially for those who fear death and pursue every avenue to defy their own mortality.
21-25	Monarchy (Absolute). A group of blood relatives rules the land with ultimate authority vested in one or two persons known as the monarch. This individual's power is absolute, though the crown may vest some jurisdiction in others. In patriarchal societies, the eldest male descendent of the previous leader functions as the monarch, assuming the title of chieftain, elder, or another suitable designation. In a matriarchy, the oldest female descendent performs the same role as the state's queen, empress, or other lofty heading. The monarch's spouse, typically hailing from a neighboring royal family or a distant relative, functions solely as a consort, preventing the surviving spouse from inheriting the throne when the monarch dies. Younger siblings, living parents, and children undertake other civic and religious duties within the state, while extended family members also enjoy the trappings of nobility.

d100 Political System

26–30 **Oligarchy.** A group of individuals determined by birthright, military might, or personal wealth oversee all matters of state and economic development. The oligarchy's views towards personal freedoms range from moderately tolerant to oppressive with most examples skewing closer to the latter option than the former. The oligarchy's members along with their family and friends, if they choose, act with impunity while those outside the inner circle must abide by the oligarchy's edicts. On some occasions, individuals outside the elite group who are fortunate enough to amass wealth under this system may be granted membership into the oligarchy.

31–35 **Republic.** Citizens elect representatives to create laws and govern the populace. These representatives may choose an executive to oversee the legislative body, establish the judiciary, command the state's military forces, craft economic policies, or undertake any other task delegated to that individual. Alternatively, the citizens can directly elect the executive. The written charter creating this form of government may be drafted by the executive, the representatives, the people themselves, or any combination of these individuals. The charter, usually referred to as a constitution or governing articles outlines the powers delegated to each branch of government. By their nature, most republics grant enhanced rights to citizens. However, there are circumstances where the executive or a group of representatives abuses their authority and transforms the republic into an autocracy or an oligarchy. Although they may keep the vestiges of the republic alive, elected representatives wield no real power.

36–40 **Theocracy (Clerical State).** In a clerical state, the clergy interprets the deity's or deities' commands and codifies them as law. Priests enforce the gods' edicts, allowing them to preside over all religious and secular matters. Unlike the god state, the priests may select one of its members to serve as its high priest, a role granting the individual supreme authority but not divinity.

41–45 **Theocracy (God Figure).** All civil authority derives from a divine source. In the case of a god figure, political power rests in the hands of one individual who may be a living deity, a demigod, or a representative chosen by one or more gods. The god figure wields absolute authority over all matters of state including serving as the head of its church.

46–85 **Tribal.** This society lacks any formal government. Instead, a familial patriarch, matriarch, or a family council usually consisting of the group's elders presides over their individual clans who may live cooperatively or competitively with other bloodlines in a shared community or as parts of smaller, rival communities dwelling close together. Military might, more than lineage, frequently determines an individual's status within the tribe.

86–100 **Warrior State.** Incorporating elements of tribalism and autocracy, the community's warriors enjoy an exalted status within society, gaining civic rights and privileges denied to average citizens. Military commanders or celebrated heroes may assume rulership over the state, though these individuals usually defer daily oversight of civic and religious matters to others.

Despite the comparatively warmer climate, the growing season remains too short to adequately support most humanoid food crops. Some legumes and grains such as barley, millet, peas, and wheat can persevere in the thin, acrid soil. However, few individuals engage in large-scale agricultural operations. The act of clearing any patch of arable land requires felling numerous softwood trees, which dampens residents' enthusiasm for partaking in farming endeavors. Instead, the rugged residents gather wild berries and hunt game in the forest while raising livestock herds or individual animals for food, milk, and clothing. Unlike the inhabitants dwelling in the barren ice cap and tundra, humanoids generally lead a sedentary existence, erecting a permanent shelter made from wood and other readily available materials in one particular location. The GM may consult the following table to determine the people's lifestyle.

Table 4–28: Lifestyle

<06 **Nomadic.** The people live exclusively off the land and are constantly on the move, never staying in the same location for more than one night. They are exclusively hunter-gatherers. To cover more ground in a single day, most nomadic peoples ride atop domesticated animals and frequently travel with large herds of livestock. Most share common lineage with their fellow travelers.

06–15 **Semi-nomadic.** These individuals have no permanent home, though they may settle down in one location for several days, weeks, or even a few months under the right conditions. Their movements usually coincide with seasonal changes, though they rarely revisit the same exact locale. Although they are predominately hunter-gatherers, they may engage in limited agricultural activities before moving on to their next destination. These individuals typically reside in mobile, temporary shelters they erect soon after their arrival.

16–30 **Semi-sedentary.** Although they construct permanent settlements, these people divide their time among a few predetermined locations based upon the seasons. They may spend several months in one favorable spot to raise crops, fish its bountiful waters, or hunt a herd of game animals traveling along a migratory route. While they may still be classified as hunter-gatherers, they spend a roughly equal amount of their time raising domesticated livestock, growing agricultural products, and engaging in commercial activities.

>30 **Sedentary.** The residents live in the same location year-round, where they farm the land, tend to their domesticated flocks, hunt game in the surrounding wilderness, and develop commercial enterprises. Trade routes, civic engineering projects, and a reliable water source can be typically found in a sedentary society.

Some industrious humanoids look beyond the boundaries of their little world and engage in a host of commercial enterprises with neighboring populations. Most notably, the biome produces tremendous quantities of prized softwood timber that citizens use to construct their permanent settlements and homes. Logging interests, both local and from foreign lands, export this valuable commodity to merchants throughout the civilized world for building purposes, firewood, and to manufacture paper. Exotic, luxurious pelts harvested from the indigenous fauna such as foxes, lynxes, minks, and sables also command high prices as they frequently communicate the wearer's social status and wealth among that person's peers. Some members of the furrier profession trap these coveted animals in the wild. However, the most successful businessmen breed and raise some of these creatures, particularly the smaller and less-aggressive species, on

sprawling farms. Keeping large predatory beasts in captivity for any purpose poses too much danger to the animals' handlers in addition to necessitating constantly satisfying their voracious appetites for fresh meat. In addition to the native flora and fauna, rich deposits of stone, minerals, and precious metals frequently lie just beneath the taiga's floor. While the same natural resources are often prevalent in other polar biomes, the more hospitable forest presents fewer logistical obstacles than its desolate and unforgiving counterparts. Prospectors seeking fame and fortune venture into the taiga to fulfill their dreams of striking it rich by unearthing a mother lode of gold, silver, copper, coal, or some other valuable commodity. Nonetheless, the taiga can still be the most ungracious of hosts, especially to those seeking to exploit its natural treasures.

Taiga Campaigns

Adventuring in the cold forest adheres more closely to conventional norms than the wicked extremes found in the tundra and ice cap biomes. Frigid temperatures and deep snow still persist as a brutal fact of life in the taiga for roughly half the year, but the chilly woodlands are a far cry from the destitute glaciers and frozen plains in terms of finding suitable shelter and necessary resources, particularly food within an established settlement. While the natives may not greet visitors with open arms, they are more accustomed to interacting with strangers than the isolated nomads found in other polar environments. Civilization's tenuous foothold in the region also offers more opportunities for explorers to embark on perilous quests to save embattled townsfolk from the domain's sinister denizens or gather crucial intelligence about a nearby monster's immense treasure hoard. These settlers commonly build permanent structures made from wood, stone, or a combination of materials that may remain active or fall into ruin and disrepair when the residents abandon the community or another entity forcibly expels them from their homes.

The GM may use the following table for plotlines when running a taiga campaign. These ideas may be used as a side quest or form the basis for an intriguing storyline. In addition, the GM may combine these elements with the adventure settings found in the subsequent table.

Table 4-29: Taiga Adventure Ideas

d10	Event
1	Burl. These unusual tree growths fetch a handsome price in some markets but also bedevil the carpenters and craftsmen attempting to work with this anomalous wood. In contrast to typical wood, burl follows no grain pattern making it difficult to properly cut and carve. Despite these challenges, admirers value burl's unusual properties, especially when cut from the trunk of the fabled devil's share spruce tree. According to legend, a devil impaled its dread glaive into this tree's trunk during a confrontation with an angel. As the wound healed, the burl tainted with the infernal being's ichor giving it a unique, brownish red coloration. In addition, when squeezed, the burl releases molten sulfur, which alchemists greatly covet. Two days ago, a lumberjack chopping a growth of burl on a spruce tree hacked into pulp oozing a malodorous substance. The startled woodsman fled, telling his friends and family about the strange occurrence, which naturally sent others in search of the devil's share spruce.
2	Hare. A hare covered in white fur but clad in a doll's waistcoat nervously fidgets and frets near a tree. The animal frantically looks around and scratches his head in a vain attempt to jog its memory. When the animal notices onlookers, it becomes even more nervous scurrying around the trees desperately searching for something. Finally, the hare spots a winding hole burrowing into the ground. It suddenly ducks down the hole and disappears from sight.



d10 Event

- 3 **Lynx.** Consistent with his feline kin, this charming fellow demonstrates remarkable curiosity. Something about a hollow log captured his imagination. The lynx repeatedly sticks his paw into the abscess and pokes around in the opening for several seconds before withdrawing its limb from the wood. Although it cannot grasp whatever resides inside, its sharp claws pierced into a scrap of vellum stuffed into the recess. It is impossible to discern any writing or symbols on the small fragment of writing material. However, the lynx retrieved a tiny dab of wax along with the vellum, suggesting it may be part of a previously sealed document.

- 4 **Ornament.** A glass ornament blown into the likeness of the moon hangs from a silver filament tied around an overhanging tree limb. When the moonlight strikes the ornament at a precise 25-degree angle, the object spins on its axis and projects the holographic image of a grand winter ball teeming with dancing couples attired in flowing gowns and dress robes. Snowflakes gently descend from the heavens, but the scene's focus abruptly shifts to a stunningly gorgeous young woman sobbing in a corner. Her gown soaks up her voluminous tears. Her eyes then turn to another attractive young lady wearing a sleek black dress dancing with a burly, handsome soldier. Under her breath, the melancholy young lady repeatedly mutters, "Liar," while glaring in their direction. What happens next and the ornament's connection to this event remain unclear.

- 5 **Parachute.** Ropes dangle from the limbs of a tall tree. When traced back to their source, the ropes attach to a tangled mass of torn fabric caught in the tree's upper branches. In addition, a discarded harness lies at the base of the tree. It appears someone cut the ropes to release the harness from the assembly. Thirty-six silver coins and numerous drops of blood litter the ground near the harness. Footprints imbedded in the snow lead away from the tree and into the surrounding wilderness. Contemporaneous reports also claim an elusive thief infiltrated a nearby mountain stronghold and escaped with a portion of its treasury.

- 6 **Pine Cone.** Pine trees are endemic to the taiga. These evergreens disseminate their seeds in sticky cones coated with resin. One pine cone differs from the others. As it falls to the ground, it spontaneously combusts in a ball of blue-green flames bellowing a plume of purple smoke. The pine cone momentarily hovers in mid-air while it smolders. Then, its flames die out and the pine cone harmlessly plummets to the forest floor. The tree that shed the pine cone seems ordinary except for the scorch marks marring several of its limbs. This discovery implies the self-immolating pine cone is not an isolated incident, though the find fails to provide a plausible explanation for the strange phenomenon.

d10 Event

- 7 **Sled Dog.** Trained, domesticated dogs assembled into teams frequently pull sleds across the snow. An exhausted, hungry dog who once belonged to such a unit as verified by its snapped reins and collar trudges aimlessly across the snow and ice. The animal responds to simple verbal commands, especially when rewarded with food, but it cannot communicate its plight or offer any additional insight about its current predicament. Its severed reins suggest it left its master and teammates somewhere in the neighboring woods. Its leather collar provides a clue regarding its owner's identity. A gold tag sewn onto its collar reads, "First Place—Tremorra Sweepstakes." The GM may tie this storyline to the upcoming Kennel adventuring site.

- 8 **Sleigh.** Bells ring through the frosty air as two sturdy horses pull a magnificent sleigh across the snow. A devilishly attractive man and his beautiful paramour sip vodka in the upholstered cabin while its driver occupies a seat in the front of the vehicle. Bells tethered to the sleigh's rear suggest the lucky couple inside the sleigh were recently married. However, the honeymoon abruptly ends when the driver suddenly slumps over causing the horses to bolt through the forest while trying to avoid the numerous trees lining the route. A look of panic and terror overcomes the young lovers as their newfound marriage suddenly careens towards tragedy. Although stopping the sleigh takes top priority, what caused the driver to suddenly keel over remains an unsolved mystery.

- 9 **Tiger.** A distraught mother tiger frantically searches for her missing cub in the forest. The youngster's three siblings tag along behind their mother. The quartet fans out across the area, desperately calling the wayward six-month old female cat. Rumors from the surrounding settlements tell of an adolescent feral child seen in the company of a juvenile tiger whom the teenager seems to have adopted as a pet.

- 10 **Wheel.** This lonely wagon wheel is the only remnant from a hopelessly misguided treasure hunting expedition from several seasons ago. The explorers were woefully unprepared for the region's brutal weather and travel conditions, which rendered their wheeled wagon useless. Marooned and lost in a horrific snowstorm lasting three weeks, the survivors first used their wagons for firewood before eating their draft animals and ultimately each other when all else failed. Many believe the cannibals fell under the sway of the wendigo, a legendary spirit who lurks in the area where the travelers fell.

In addition to many of the same sentient monsters encountered in other cold locales, the biome also supports megafauna including dire versions of many common animals such as bears, tigers, wolves, and wolverines to name just a few. However, the ice cap's iconic creatures, most notably frost giants, white dragons, silver dragons, and yetis are less commonly encountered here than in the harsher and usually more isolated polar domains. Whereas the dense ice sheets and permafrost prevent many of these denizens from constructing or dwelling within subterranean lairs, the loose ground in the trees' shadow can accommodate underground complexes to a degree. The bedrock typically found just a few feet below the ground's surface provides a stable foundation to prevent cave-ins, provided the builder possesses some engineering skill, yet the frozen soil farther down inhibits the ability to excavate far beneath the forest floor. Extensive dungeons burrowing into the earth remain a rarity. Instead,



caves and small hovels dug into the roots of decaying trees or into the sides of elevated mounds represent the norm in the taiga. When exploring the taiga, the GM may consult the following table to determine a location for the adventure.

Table 4–30: Taiga Adventuring Sites

d10 Location	
1	Charcoal Kiln. During its heyday, this kiln transformed wood into valuable charcoal. Indeed, the area around the kiln has been greatly deforested save for a handful of trees scattered throughout the surrounding area. The kiln operated for sixty years until it fell into disuse following a sickening incident. After a pitched battle in the forest, the victorious commander burned the bodies of his wounded adversaries in the superhot charcoal kiln. When the workers returned to the kiln after the atrocity, they experienced terrifying visions of being roasted alive in the kiln's smoldering flames. Not surprisingly, the kiln garnered a well-earned reputation for being haunted. Even though the local residents shun the kiln, tales of immolated skeletons shambling through the forest still persist to this day. No one can say for certain whether the tales are true or the products of overactive imaginations.
2	Foundation. Saplings now grow within the stone boundaries of an unfinished foundation. The builder constructed the foundation from stones and mortar, creating a remarkably level surface for the structure to rest upon when fully assembled. Four dead stumps just outside the foundation's walls suggest the owner compiled some materials for the project but never followed through on it for an obvious reason. A partially disinterred skull in the earth inside the foundation's boundaries implies the builder either unearthed a burial ground on the property or died here. A hole at the base of the skull points to the latter premise, though the skull and its accompanying bones appear to date back centuries, well beyond the builder's presumed time period.
3	Frozen Pond. The pristine waters contained within this pond have frozen solid. Although there are no footprints leading to or from the pond, deep grooves cut into the ice indicate someone or something recently ice skated on the pond, carving figure-eight designs onto the smooth, untouched surface. In addition, the ice shavings periodically glow. Residents claim the figure-eight appears every year, though their appearances follow no recognizable patterns and have no known purpose. The general consensus attributes the ice skating to a reclusive fey creature who defends this section of the forest against trespassers.

d10	Location
4	Kennel. In a world where snow and ice render wheeled vehicles practically useless, polar residents must look to alternative means of transportation. The dogs raised in this state-of the art kennel offer a reliable option. The animals bred and trained in this kennel rank among the finest in all the land. Renowned for their compliant demeanors, astounding strength and stamina, and most notably, their loyalty, the best mushers venture here from far and wide to purchase dogs for their sled teams. However, the kennel stands on edge when its prized alpha dog, Polar Thunder, goes missing. The employees are equally divided between whether someone stole the dog or the animal escaped of his own volition. Log Cabin. Smoke bellows from the brick chimney of a rustic log cabin on the outskirts of civilization. The roaring hearth inside and the neatly piled cords of firewood outside confirm someone dwells inside the cozy residence. The home appears normal, yet rumors swirl about the hermetic owner. Locals universally agree he or she came here to escape the past, though no one knows what circumstances compelled the person to live in total isolation. 5 Some blame a personal tragedy. Others surmise the person is running from something. Whatever the motivation, no one has ever seen the person living here even though the cabin's exterior and the outer grounds are meticulously maintained throughout the year. In fact, no one can say if multiple people reside in the log cabin. Not surprisingly, this degree of secrecy leads many to suspect the log cabin's occupant plans a nefarious scheme. Longhouse. Once the scene of raucous celebrations and roaring fireplaces, this longhouse now stands neglected and forgotten. Its owner, Jarl Cronberg, passed away a decade ago. His sons Firngard and Helspar squabbled over the luxurious residence for six months after their father's death until they finally decided to walk away from the property. Apparently, their selfish choice angers their father's restless spirit. The family patriarch loved to entertain during his raucous lifetime. Although no one lives in the longhouse anymore, passersby claim to see flickering lights, hear bawdy songs, and feel the vibrations of dancing feet emanating from inside the longhouse. Indeed, a handful of local residents with a penchant for heavy drinking swear they recently shared several beers with the deceased jarl during a wild party. 6 Lumber Mill. The forests surrounding the poles produce some of the most desirable woods. The lumberjacks who hew these mighty trees transport them down river to this bustling mill, where the logs are milled into various shapes and sizes for numerous industrial purposes. The lumber mill operates at full capacity, but a series of freak accidents over the past several weeks have its employees on edge. A worker lost a hand last week while sawing a piece of wood, and two employees lost an eye when wood chips flew into their faces. The owner suspects a disgruntled former employee may be sabotaging his business. Most others believe a gang of mischievous fey creatures are the most likely culprits considering the accident magically overrode the mill's safeguards. 7

d10	Location
8	Mink Farm. Fur coats, stalls, and other garments are symbols of great wealth and status in many cosmopolitan social circles. This farm, situated in the heart of the taiga raises minks, ermines, and sables for their fur. Most farmers keep their livestock caged, yet the animals freely roam the grounds here, while the humans never venture outdoors. Indeed, the farm's long-term vendors claim they have not purchased any furs or animals from the owners for the last six months. The most recent visitors claim to have seen several minks standing upright and conversing with each other while their human masters silently watched them from the windows. Ring of Fire. Charred toppled trees radiate roughly one mile outward from an oddly undisturbed central point at the center of the ring. The overturned trunks and branches point away from this central location, as if they were blown back by a tremendous blast that occurred at this site. A failed alchemical experiment, an act of the gods, an extraterrestrial object, and a power spell represent a fraction of the causes bandied about the region. Those who ventured to the site to investigate it complained of crippling headaches, blurred vision, and tremendous fatigue while in the area. No one produced any credible evidence to support any of the widely touted theories regarding the circle's creation. However, some individuals reported seeing a brief yet intense light hovering above the circle's epicenter before it instantly disappeared again. 9 Snow Drift. The winds whipping through the forest pushed the fresh, powdery snow into a massive 10-foot diameter drift roughly 30 feet high that resembles a broad pillar. The accumulation in this spot defies logic because the drift bypassed several large trees blocking its path. Residents believe a creature who can harness wind steered the current in this manner to conceal something buried under the snow drift. To bolster this theory, witnesses claim the snow drift periodically pulsates and shakes, as if something were trying to escape from underneath it. 10 Giant beasts and wicked monsters are not the only terrors stalking the taiga. Most humanoids who call the crisp woodlands home are content to lead quiet lives tending to their herds and hunting for game. However, the taiga's valuable natural resources draw all types of people to this demanding biome. Some of them respect the land and its people. These upstanding individuals may seek assistance from intrepid explorers ready, willing, and able to clear out wicked creatures from a targeted patch of land. Likewise, entrepreneurs may need security to protect their investment from thieves, unwelcome trespassers, and stray animals. Conversely, the most amoral of this lot treat the land and its residents like property. Whether they harvest timber, gold, furs, or peat, the allure of amassing an immense fortune spurs them to commit unspeakable deeds to satisfy their greed. The unlucky, powerless souls in their sights may seek adventurers to right their countless wrongs and preserve their way of life in the face of their reckless exploitation. In addition, the careless actions of these unscrupulous developers may deliberately or inadvertently unleash a slumbering horror upon the terrified local inhabitants. In any event, organized settlements and businesses provide adventurers passing through the taiga a home base or a way station to replenish their supplies and get some much-needed rest. In <i>The Lost Lands Campaign Setting</i> by Frog God Games, taiga stretches across immense swaths of land in Nükländ, adjacent to the region's expansive tundra. The boreal forest's exact dimensions remain

a subject of debate, though it is certain that they border the Worlds Edge Mountains and the Endless Glacier. The area currently appears in *LL6: The Northlands Saga Complete* also by **Frog God Games**. The humanoid residents known as the Nùklanders are described in the preceding *Tundra Campaign* section.

Polar Travel

Every trip comes with some measure of uncertainty regardless of its duration or destination. A confrontation with a ruthless highwayman, foul weather, a lame mount, and countless other difficulties can end the best-planned journey in sudden, tragic fashion. The daring souls who abandon the security and comforts of home for the unpredictable world outside their door take a chance that good fortune awaits on the road ahead of them. With that said, all risks are not equal. A short jaunt along a well-traveled thoroughfare poses far less danger than blazing a fresh trail through feral wilderness. Nowhere is this more apparent than at the poles.

Anytime a traveler sets foot or sets sail into this unforgiving environment, the explorer's life hangs in the balance. Nothing can be taken for granted here. Those unprepared for the rigors encountered in these demanding biomes quickly falter and perish. Proper equipment, training, and experience can give a seasoned veteran a fighting chance against the numbing cold, ferocious winds, blowing snow, and treacherous ice, but guaranteed safety falls by the wayside in a realm where travelers face extreme conditions at every turn. In the face of these perilous obstacles, it seems foolish to venture outdoors for any reason especially during the protracted winter. However, the constant need for sustenance compels daring people to leave their warm shelters for excursions into the great unknown. Indigenous peoples predominately trudge across land and sea in search of food. Those hailing from other lands typically face off against the savage elements for less-urgent reasons. Some embark on a quest to wrest wondrous treasures away from one of the domain's monstrous denizens or to extract mineral wealth from the land itself. Others aspire to indirectly amass a fortune by locating a feasible overland or maritime trading route through these frozen domains. Regardless of their motivations for trekking into these perilous lands and waters, all travelers must overcome the same harsh realities and demanding limitations.

Trails

Blindly wandering across uncharted terrain can be fatal, especially at the poles. The unforgiving elements brutally punish mistakes. In a land teeming with danger yet almost utterly devoid of visible landmarks, a novice explorer can easily wander off course with deadly consequences. Even the most-tested experts experience trepidation at the prospect of forging a new trail through virgin territory. Yet necessity and want allay fear. When either force spurs someone to set their will against Nature's awesome might, the resulting journey can leave an indelible mark on the land that allows others to follow in the trailblazer's footsteps. Of course, the concept of a trail varies greatly from one biome to the next. Powerful nation-states lording over more-hospitable lands can lay down permanent roads made from stone, wood, and other suitable materials that form networks of highways and thoroughfares linking far-flung cities and locales to a greater whole. In more-rugged terrain, trails can take the form of an elevated path stripped clear of vegetation or even a fortuitous natural pass between neighboring mountains.

Dense ice sheets hundreds of feet thick ravaged by fierce winds and frozen precipitation prove far less accommodating than earth and stone. While it may seem possible to build a conventional road upon an ice cap or perhaps tundra, the logistical hurdles shift such a massive engineering project from the realm of the theoretical into the domain of the impossible without the intervention of nearly godlike magical might. The absence of an onsite quarry and easily accessible timber means these crucial components must be transported from somewhere else to the building site. Likewise, feeding, sheltering, and paying at least several hundred humanoid laborers further strain the endeavor's fragile supply chain and fiscal resources. Most importantly, for much of the year, the brutal weather conditions make going outdoors, let alone performing strenuous physical tasks, impractical and life

threatening. Even if a private or governmental entity could overcome all of these daunting problems, the long-term maintenance costs of constantly keeping the trail clear of blowing ice and snow, repairing damage caused by shifts in the glacier's structural integrity, and protecting travelers from native wildlife and monstrous denizens would be astronomical.

In light of these challenges, engineers and explorers must sometimes turn to unconventional means to solve these dilemmas when establishing trails across the ice cap and, to a lesser extent, tundra biomes. In the polar cap, trails take the form of compressed or groomed ice and snow across flat terrain and natural passes in mountainous areas. These manmade paths typically parallel commonly used migratory routes for game animals such as reindeer, or they may connect coastal settlements to prime hunting grounds located in the ice cap's interior. In an innovative twist that turns the tables on the inhospitable glaciers, the trail's designers typically sink colorful banners or flags attached to wooden poles or for added irony, a long icicle, deep into the compacted snow and ice to designate the thoroughfare's boundaries. Set against the purely white backdrop, the vibrant markers can be seen from great distances on a bright, sunny day. When these materials are not readily available, the path's builder may create a cairn from any accessible stones or even erect the equivalent of a modern-day snowman from piles of snow and ice heaped atop one another. However, when the sun retreats from the sky and prolonged twilight takes hold for months on end, the conspicuous signage is no longer visible. In addition, fresh precipitation and the howling gusts often accompanying new snow undo the designer's efforts to distinguish the depressed path from the surrounding terrain. Despite their valiant attempts, manmade ice cap trails usually last just a few seasons before vanishing altogether without concerted maintenance.

Snow-covered mountain passes, on the other hand, stand the test of time. These gaps between adjacent stony giants offer the traveler an easier, though still hazardous, route into or through the intervening mountain range. Rather than facilitate transportation between two or more communities, these steep, winding trails frequently lead to rich veins of gemstones or precious metals. Like their flatter counterparts, these passes lack any clear indications that they constitute part of a trail at all with one notable exception — increased traffic. When word of a newly found vein reaches civilization, eager prospectors race to the site to stake their claim on the discovery. Hundreds or possibly thousands of miners, fortune hunters, curiosity seekers, and entrepreneurs descend upon the remote locale within a matter of months, taking every imaginable route to potentially unearth their newfound prosperity. Because the ice cap is always covered in thick layers of ice and snow completely covering these lucrative veins, these hybrid trails are almost exclusively found in the tundra and taiga biomes, though they may still cross through areas containing immense glaciers.

The sudden population influx also gives rise to settlements that quickly spring up at strategic locations along this trail. Gold fever runs wild in these lawless outposts. Ambition combined with the allure of acquiring instant wealth spur countless disputes among the community's rough and tumble inhabitants. Fueled by alcohol and decadence, squabbles over matters both trivial and vital rapidly escalate into violent confrontations and longstanding feuds extending beyond the original combatants to include family, friends, and sometimes mere acquaintances. Commonly referred to as "boom towns," their existence depends solely upon the mineral wealth hauled out of the earth. While the commodity flows, the community thrives. When the vein goes dry, the village busts.

Despite the abominable weather conditions that persist for six months out of the year, taigas are more favorable to conventional trail construction than their polar counterparts and many temperate environments. Ample quantities of wood and accessible stone alleviate any concerns about procuring sufficient quantities of raw materials. Undergrowth tends to be sparse in most spots, making it easy to clear a trail. However, making a path and marking a path present two very different logistical challenges. While it may be simple to remove patches of brush and lay down timber or stone, snow completely buries the planks and rocks beneath a fluffy, white blanket throughout the long winter as well as portions of the adjacent seasons. This reality stops wheeled vehicles in their tracks and bogs down traditional pack animals such as mules, donkeys, and horses. On the other hand, the deep snow facilitates sleds. Whether propelled by a team of dogs, reindeer, or a humanoid driver, these vehicles are ideally suitable for winter travel across

the frozen landscape and waterways. Even without obvious signage or the telltale signs of manmade intervention, seasoned travelers usually recognize the trail's presence from the lack of natural obstructions blocking their way and the wide clearance between neighboring trees. The permanent residents inhabiting the taiga rely upon sleds to transport goods and people across their frigid domain. Some use them to reach distant hunting grounds or to deliver supplies to family and friends. Others operate them for commercial purposes. The cold forests host logging enterprises, fur traders, mining operations, and other businesses that produce and sell the biome's natural resources to local entities and far-flung markets. Transportation is the lifeblood of these industries.

The following table represents the percentile chance of encountering a settlement at or near trails passing through polar biomes. (Cities are not included on the table because they are large enough to generally appear on a map of the immediate area.) These tables apply only to trails that are actively maintained. Those that have fallen into disrepair are treated as ordinary trackless terrain.

The GM may consult **Table 4–31** at the beginning of every 25-mile interval while traveling on the river. If the characters are slated to come across a settlement at some point during the next 25 miles, the community appears at an appropriate or random location somewhere along the way. Vehicles that can cover more than 25 miles in a single day may require the GM to consult the table more than once over the course of the day, and those moving slower may roll on the table every other day instead. The GM should attempt only one roll for each 25-mile interval.

Table 4–31: Settlements Along a Trail in Polar Biomes

Settlement Type	Percentage Chance of Presence		
	Ice Cap	Tundra	Taiga
Village (fewer than 201 residents)	01–05%	01–15%	01–25%
Town (201–5,000 residents)	—	16–20%	26–30%
No Settlement	06–00%	21–00%	31–00%

Traveling Polar Trails

At best, polar trails function more as rudimentary guides rather than corridors offering safe passage through untracked wilderness. Paths direct travelers to important sites, remote settlements, mineral wealth, hunting grounds, or most importantly key mountain passes. In the tundra and taiga, they can wind circuitous routes leading toward or around the treacherous bogs and fens dotting the thawing landscape when the weather warms. Yet in most cases, travelers walking along a trail or trudging across uncharted frozen terrain rarely notice any physical difference between these two options. The crude highways offer no tangible benefit to conventional vehicle traffic and mounts in terms of smooth, sturdy surfaces that grant traction to wheels and hooves. With the exception of pointing visitors to negotiable gaps between neighboring hills and mountains, those trekking across the unkempt, predominately barren wilderness can typically see and avoid any natural barriers blocking their way from a great distance.

Logistics aside, the humanoid who build and use these trails lack the manpower and will to safeguard the individuals traveling along these trails from the dangers around them. A clearly marked, open road provides less protection against the bitter cold, blizzards, snow, and icy winds than a dense patch of coniferous trees. The savage predators and angry beasts living here also fail to recognize the sanctity of the open road. Indeed, experience teaches many of these brutal animals as well as opportunistic bandits that they are far more likely to happen upon potential victims along these trails than wandering aimlessly across the desolate landscape. Foot traffic on the trails is too light and sporadic to bestow any safety in numbers. Most trails stretch for hundreds of miles, making it impractical to safely garrison troops at regular intervals in frigid and isolated conditions. Despite the preceding drawbacks, trails usually represent the only opportunity explorers have to find any trace of civilization

in an otherwise bleak and hostile world. The chances of stumbling upon an inn, a herd of game animals, a merchant laden down with provisions, or potential adventure are exponentially greater on these crude walkways than amid the pristine snow. When travelers calculate risk, sticking to the trails is a wager most are willing to make.

Great Outdoors

Seasoned polar explorers often share a popular axiom about the two types of trails in their wicked environment. When speaking with novices, they impart that, “There are those trails that you create yourself and those trails that kill you while trying to find them.” These haggard veterans realize that one cannot solely rely upon the labors of others to point out the way. The wilderness is too rugged, unforgiving, and mutable to count upon roads for directions, especially when taking its sheer vastness into account. With the exception of the ice cap, travel conditions change in the polar biomes in accordance with the seasons. While snow covers the ground throughout the winter, the long sunny days of summer melt the precipitation and turn the soil into partially thawed earth. The following sections address the changes that can occur in each biome.

Ice Cap

If nothing else, the ice cap represents the model of stability. Although bathed in constant sunshine during the summer months, temperatures rarely, if ever, exceed 32° Fahrenheit (0° Celsius). Snow and ice periodically melt and ultimately refreeze in the sun's constant glow. However, these minute variations have no visible impact on the glacier as a whole without broader climactic change persistently keeping temperatures above the freezing point. Indeed, when an ice sheet finally disappears, the land beneath the ice almost always transforms into tundra. Thus, it is important to note the distinction between the ice cap and all other terrestrial biomes. While tundra and taiga are usually covered in snow, the frozen precipitation annually melts, exposing the soil or stone beneath it albeit for only a brief period. When ice and snow no longer continuously cover the ground, the area is no longer part of the ice cap biome.

Tundra

Winter relentlessly buffets the beleaguered tundra for nearly the entire year before easing its icy grip on the weary landscape, giving it a brief respite to recover from the frosty battering before beginning the cycle anew. During this short recess, the snow and ice temporarily retreat toward the poles, revealing the gravelly, soggy ground that slumbered underneath its frozen blanket for many months. The tundra receives so little precipitation that it can technically be categorized as a desert. However, the permafrost beneath the soil prevents the melting ice and snow from seeping into the ground, causing the chilly water to collect or percolate back onto the surface to create bogs and fens. Thus, the tundra can simultaneously be classified as a desert and a wetland, particularly during the comparatively warmer summer months.

Taiga

The taiga is an environmental chameleon. During the long winter, the biome is a straightforward cold forest with scarce undergrowth and deep snow. When the white tapestry melts in spring, opportunistic vegetation rushes in to take its place in some spots. In other locations, the chilly water collects and stagnates on the surface, transforming the frozen ground into malodorous bogs and fens. In both cases, the biome retains its primary identity as a forest with several unexpected additions. Like its counterpart, the drearier tundra, the taiga incorporates some terrain elements normally encountered in the wetlands such as swamps, bogs, and fens. However, the more hospitable taiga also benefits from more rainfall and warmer temperatures than its bleaker cousin, which allows

the comparatively balmy biome to support a greater variety of green plants and deeper pools of stagnant water. In summer, it is even possible to run across terrestrial hazards such as quicksand more commonly associated with temperate and even tropical climates in areas close to bodies of running or still water.

Floe if by Sea

Bitter cold holds sway over the land and sea at and surrounding the poles. When subjected to such frigid temperatures for prolonged stretches, water inevitably succumbs to winter's chill. Its resistance eventually fails, causing it to transform from its life-sustaining liquid state into its more-menacing solid form known as ice. As previously discussed, saltwater fares better than freshwater in its efforts to forestall the preceding metamorphosis. Therefore, the oceans and seas as well as the saline waters in coastal regions typically provide a better medium for waterborne travel than the usually shallower freshwater rivers, streams, lakes, and ponds found in the biome's interior regions. This notion especially holds true in the perpetually frozen ice cap biome where temperatures never get warm enough to liquefy ice in any interior location, though scholars have occasionally discovered lakes and streams inside glaciers. The scattered bands of humanoids who inhabit these forsaken areas depend upon the open waters for their very survival. Indeed, the oceans and seas serve as a veritable lifeline, allowing them to hunt the massive aquatic beasts and fish inhabiting the icy waters and floating sea ice.

Obviously, the terrain elements encountered on land do not exist at sea, though it is possible for rivers and streams to carve out a path into or periodically flood the tundra, which may permanently or temporarily turn the cold forest into a chilly swamp. By and large though, the lone obstacle waterborne travelers face is ice. The insidious substance can appear as a completely frozen stream, a massive sheet of solidified water atop a lake's surface, a pack of dense sea ice, or a massive chunk of floating material propelled by the prevailing current.

Kayaks, nimble crafts that can accommodate up to two people, offer the best option for navigating these perilous waters. These lightweight boats can be pulled out of the sea ice when necessary, then hauled overland until the driver reaches another locale with suitable water access. Commercial ships that dare test their mettle on the chilly seas and oceans require special modifications to cope with the rigors of polar travel. Known as icebreakers in some circles, these typically flat-bottomed craft reinforce their hulls and crossbeams to withstand collisions with sea ice. Double planking in strategic structural spots allows the ship to avoid being crushed by onrushing sea ice. Furthermore, because of the vessel's flat hull, incoming sea ice functions in a manner akin to a modern hydraulic lift. The sea ice squeezes the boat's sides, which literally picks the vessel out of the water and places it gently atop the ice thanks to its level hull design. Nonetheless, innovation cannot fully compensate for inexperience. The brave people who unfurl their sails or dip their oars into the frigid blue rely more upon their guile, wits, and knowledge than their vessels' wood, bone, and leather components. Conditions can change for the worst in an instant, leaving mariners with two choices — adapt and overcome on the fly, or sink to their doom in a frigid, watery grave.

It is impractical to determine whether ice occupies a particular square in any body of water. Thus, the subsequent tables are based upon whether ice occupies a one-square-mile area rather than an individual square. Difficult terrain, as described in these tables, only applies to determining the actions a character can take when moving across an area containing this feature rather than its effect on the creature's speed. The tables are further delineated in accordance with the type of water present at the location in addition to the current season. For added accuracy, freshwater is also broken down into open systems and closed systems. Open systems include bodies of running water such as rivers and streams. Closed systems include bodies of comparatively still water such as lakes and ponds. Only one type of ice can be found in a specific area. To determine the type of ice, if any, present in a specific location, the GM must roll percentile dice in the order presented in the table.

Table 4-32: Type of Ice Found in a Closed Polar Freshwater System According to Season

Type	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
Solid ice^a	20%	—	50%	80%
Ice sheet^b	40%	10%	30%	30%
Thin ice^c	20%	30%	20%	10%

^a Solid ice reduces overland speed by half and halts wheeled vehicles in their tracks. Land vehicles whose chassis rests upon a long, narrow surface, such as blades, rails, skis, or similar devices travel at normal speed. The ice is so thick that creatures cannot fall through it regardless of their weight. It is impossible to navigate watercraft through solid ice.

^b An ice sheet affects movement and watercraft in the same way as solid ice. An ice sheet is 1d4+2 inches thick. A creature who attempts to run, charge, or suddenly stop or turn falls prone if it fails a moderate difficulty Dexterity check or appropriate Dexterity-based skill check. An ice sheet is treated as difficult terrain, if applicable. Medium and smaller creatures can safely move across the ice sheet without causing the ice to collapse and break apart under their weight. For every 100 feet traveled, there is a 10% chance that a Large creature falls through the ice; a 20% chance that a Huge creature falls through the ice; a 40% chance that a Gargantuan creature falls through the ice; and an 80% chance that a Colossal creature falls through the ice.

^c Thin ice affects movement and watercraft in the same way as solid ice. A creature who attempts to run, charge, or suddenly stop or turn falls prone if it fails a moderate difficulty Dexterity check or appropriate Dexterity-based skill check. An ice sheet is treated as difficult terrain, if applicable. This feature appears in the “Thin Ice” section in the **Hazards** chapter of this sourcebook.

Table 4-33: Type of Ice Found in an Open Polar Freshwater System According to Season

Type	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
Solid ice^a	20%	—	40%	60%
Ice sheet^b	20%	—	30%	40%
Thin ice^c	40%	20%	20%	10%

^a Solid ice reduces overland speed by half and halts wheeled vehicles in their tracks. Land vehicles whose chassis rests upon a long, narrow surface, such as blades, rails, skis, or similar devices travel at normal speed. The ice is so thick that creatures cannot fall through it regardless of their weight. It is impossible to navigate watercraft through solid ice.

^b An ice sheet affects movement and watercraft in the same way as solid ice. An ice sheet is 1d4+2 inches thick. A creature who attempts to run, charge, or suddenly stop or turn falls prone if it fails a moderate difficulty Dexterity check or appropriate Dexterity-based skill check. An ice sheet is treated as difficult terrain, if applicable. Medium and smaller creatures can safely move across the ice sheet without causing the ice to collapse and break apart under their weight. For every 100 feet traveled, there is a 10% chance that a Large creature falls through the ice; a 20% chance that a Huge creature falls through the ice; a 40% chance that a Gargantuan creature falls through the ice; and an 80% chance that a Colossal creature falls through the ice.

^c Thin ice affects movement and watercraft in the same way as solid ice. A creature who attempts to run, charge, or suddenly stop or turn falls prone if it fails a moderate difficulty Dexterity check or appropriate Dexterity-based skill check. An ice sheet is treated as difficult terrain, if applicable. This feature appears in the “Thin Ice” section in the **Hazards** chapter of this sourcebook.

Table 4-34: Type of Ice Found in Polar Saltwater System According to Season

Type	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
Solid ice^a	10%	—	20%	30%
Ice sheet^b	20%	10%	40%	60%
Sea ice^c	60%	40%	30%	20%
Iceberg^d	1%	2%	1%	1%

^a Solid ice reduces overland speed by half and halts wheeled vehicles in their tracks. Land vehicles whose chassis rests upon a long, narrow surface, such as blades, rails, skis, or similar devices travel at normal speed. The ice is so thick that creatures cannot fall through it regardless of their weight. It is impossible to navigate watercraft through solid ice.

^b An ice sheet affects movement and watercraft in the same way as solid ice. An ice sheet is 1d4+2 inches thick. A creature who attempts to run, charge, or suddenly stop or turn falls prone if it fails a moderate difficulty Dexterity check or appropriate Dexterity-based skill check. An ice sheet is treated as difficult terrain, if applicable. Medium and smaller creatures can safely move across the ice sheet without causing the ice to collapse and break apart under their weight. For every 100 feet traveled, there is a 10% chance that a Large creature falls through the ice; a 20% chance that a Huge creature falls through the ice; a 40% chance that a Gargantuan creature falls through the ice; and an 80% chance that a Colossal creature falls through the ice.

^c Sea ice consists of non-contiguous blocks of frozen seawater. It takes a successful moderate difficulty Dexterity check to maneuver a one or two-man vessel through the sea ice. Larger ships require a suitable moderate difficulty check in a specialized field relating to seafaring to navigate a vessel through one mile of sea ice. The check's DC increases by +4 for a Large vehicle, +8 for a Huge vehicle, +12 for a Gargantuan vehicle and +16 for a Colossal vehicle. On a failed check, the sea ice surrounds the watercraft, completely halting its progress for 1d4 x 10 minutes. If the operator removes the vehicle from the water and drags it to another location within the same pack of nearby sea ice, he can attempt another check 1d4 x 10 minutes later. Otherwise, sea ice has the same properties as an ice sheet.

^d A typical iceberg measures 10d10 x 10 feet in diameter. It protrudes 1d10 x 10 feet above the waterline and another 9d10 x 10 feet below the waterline; thus, it cannot be encountered in shallow water unable to support its mass. It has 360 hit points for every 10 feet of diameter. Watercraft can navigate around, but not through an iceberg. For more details about icebergs, see the "Iceberg" section in **Hazards** chapter of this sourcebook.

Modes of Travel

Snow and ice halt most forms of conventional transportation in its proverbial tracks. The wheel — one of humanity's most ingenious ideas — fails miserably in polar biomes. The round invention tirelessly spins in place on solid ice where it generates no traction at all. Likewise, the circular structure comes to an utter standstill in deep snow where it hopelessly sinks into the white powder. The animals that propel many of these wheeled vehicles also perform poorly in these demanding environments. Many beasts cannot weather the icy temperatures and chilly winds without suffering significant harm or even death. Some pack animals that can withstand the bitter cold labor across the snowy landscape as their small hooves and paws plunge to the bottom of the fluffy frozen precipitation or wildly flail about on the countless patches of ice that dot the terrain.

One general principle governs nearly all successful forms of travel at the top and bottom of the world — increased surface area. Wheels, hooves, and most paws flounder in snow and ice because these devices and appendages barely touch the ground. Their weight is concentrated in a disproportionately small surface area. However, if the same weight is distributed across a greater surface area, the pressure against the snow as measured in pounds per square inch decreases.

The following example explains this concept. When a 200-pound man takes his first step onto fresh snow, half of his weight is concentrated in his foot, which is the only part of his body in direct contact with the snow. For the sake of argument, let us say his foot is twelve inches long and three inches wide, which means that it measures thirty-six square inches (12-inch length x 3-inch width = 36 square inches). In this case, he exerts roughly 2-3/4 pounds of pressure per square inch (100 pounds divided by 36 = 2.78 psi). If the same man instead placed a 24-inch-long and 6-inch-wide snowshoe onto the same foot before stepping into the snow, we would see a much different result. In this instance, his weight is distributed across a much greater surface area, increasing from thirty-six square inches in the first case to 144 square inches (24-inch length x 6-inch width = 144 square inches). When you compute the pressure the same person exerts against the snow, you see a substantial decrease from roughly 2-3/4 psi for the man wearing a regular shoe to less than 1 psi (100 pounds divided by 144 = .69 psi) for the same person equipped with a snowshoe. Therefore, the animals, vehicles, and equipment that apply this basic principle toward locomotion move across the snow with greater ease than those creatures and devices that disregard this idea.

Ice poses a different challenge to overland travelers. While heavy creatures and objects crush and compact powdery snow, ice proves more resilient and more resistant to pressure than its frozen counterpart. Wheeled vehicles and hoofed animals can move across ice without bogging down in the hardened material, but these modes of travel face another dilemma when they encounter this solid surface — its slipperiness. To be more exact, ice is slick because surface melting from a variety of factors including friction and pressure creates an invisible layer of water and a liquid-like substance that rests atop the solid ice. When a creature or object slips or slides, it is actually gliding across this minute sheet of water and liquid-like material rather than the ice itself. In simple terms, this fluid layer acts as a natural lubricant akin to coating a combustion engine's internal parts with motor oil.

Polar travelers devised several solutions to this problem. As in the case of overcoming snow, increased surface area provides additional stability. For instance, reindeer evolved specialized, oversized hooves containing the equivalent of four toes they can spread out and use in a manner similar to snowshoes. In a strange twist, the opposite approach can also prove effective, provided the creature possesses the agility and skill to perfect the method. Ice skates and sleds operate on the notion of generating enough friction to penetrate into the ice proper while instantly melting water on the surface to allow the wearer to glide across the increased layer of water and liquid-like material atop the solid surface without creating too much drag to counteract the effect. To achieve this delicate balance, only two or more sharp blades with comparatively small surface areas come into contact with the frozen water. Although sleds and ice skates operate under the same concept, ice skates require significantly more proficiency to maintain an upright posture and proper equilibrium. In a similar yet modified vein, footwear and natural appendages with contact areas strong and sharp enough to bypass the watery surface layer and dig into the ice offer another alternative. However, the time-consuming process of continuously inserting and withdrawing shoes or toes from the ice is substantially slower and more exhausting than the two preceding options.

Self-Propulsion

At the poles, walking is not the only means of traveling by foot. Although snow and ice typically confound novice travelers unequipped and unaccustomed to trudging through powdery flakes or across frozen water, the acrobatic daredevils who master gear specially adapted for this environment can move at breakneck speeds normally reserved for swift mounts and vehicles. Skis are the most common and versatile examples of these types of footwear in the polar explorer's bag of tricks. They operate under the same general principle of maximizing weight distribution described in the preceding section with one noteworthy modification. Instead of being short and broad like snowshoes, skis redistribute the user's weight across the entire length of these narrow planks of wood, bone, or other suitable material that are typically just as long as the user. This sleeker design reduces drag and friction, allowing the wearer to glide across snow and ice with tremendous ease as opposed to slogging across the white landscape while wearing snowshoes or insulated boots.

However, improved speed comes with a drawback. Anyone can master snowshoes after a few tentative steps, but skiing requires extraordinary balance and practice. Contrary to popular misconception, skiers typically rely heavily upon the skis' sharp edges to push forward, to turn, and to stop rather than placing their weight on the skis' flat portion. In addition, not all disciplines of skiing are the same. Cross-country skiing, the art of skiing across flat or undulating surfaces, differs greatly from downhill skiing, which as the name suggests, incorporates skiing down a slope.

Ice skates adhere to the same basic philosophy as skis by disbursing the wearer's weight across a narrow, albeit shorter surface than skis. Like their longer counterparts, ice skates demand devotion to the craft and good equilibrium. However, they are more specialized than skis. Ice skates are the better choice when gliding across frozen water, but they are an enormous hindrance when marching through snow.

Whereas skis and ice skates require prowess and agility to master, snowshoes and crampons serve as a viable option for less-nimble adventurers. The former resembles a modern-day tennis racket tethered to the wearer's foot, while the latter consists of downward-facing spikes made from metal or another sturdy component that gets affixed to the sole of a boot or shoe akin to the cleats worn by today's football and soccer players. Snowshoes adhere to the poles' golden rule regarding weight distribution. The footwear's increased surface area prevents the wearer from sinking into the snow, thus making for more-efficient motion. Creatures who trudge through fresh snow and deep snow while wearing snowshoes halve any reductions to the creature's overland speed. Thus, instead of moving at half speed through fresh snow, the creature moves at three-quarters speed. However, most snowshoes fare poorly on ice as well as bare earth and grass. On the other hand, crampons perform well over ice where their sharp points dig into the frozen surface and give the wearer improved traction over a normally slippery surface. Because of their exceptional gripping properties, mountaineers commonly use these devices as well. Like ordinary boots, crampons plunge deep into the soft powder when plodding through snow, making them no more useful than simple boots. Making matters worse, the sharp tips gouge any manufactured and natural surfaces coming in contact with the metallic spikes, which may trip the wearer under certain circumstances.

In light snow or the muddy conditions encountered during the annual thaw, explorers often forego the preceding specialized footwear and opt for insulated shoes that provide protection against the cold weather and chilly water. Mukluks, a high-topped boot made from layers of fur and aquatic animal leather, ideally fit the bill for most polar explorers. They keep the wearer's feet extremely warm and repel moisture from damp soil, melting snow, and standing water.

Land Vehicles

The roads and highways facilitating overland vehicular traffic in more-hospitable environments are noticeably absent from polar biomes. Instead, the apparatuses used to haul people and material from one place to another must generally blaze their own trails across pristine snow and treacherous ice. No vehicle may be more synonymous with these frigid lands than the ubiquitous sleigh. Forever immortalized in holiday folklore, the typical sleigh resembles a conventional carriage with the exception that two long sharp runners affixed to its undercarriage support the device's weight in place of its more familiar wheels. (While the terms sleigh and sled are interchangeable, for the purposes of this sourcebook, a sleigh refers to a sled that can carry two or more passengers, while a sled refers to a one-person vehicle). The runners attached to the bottom of the vehicle can resemble those found on ice skates in the case of sleighs that skim across the surface atop sharp, elongated blades or the runners may incorporate a design identical to a conventional ski. In either instance, they operate on the same principles governing the smaller, personal varieties of these pieces of equipment.

Most sleighs are open carriages with an outer frame and a rudimentary seat for the driver and one passenger. While primarily intended for personal transportation, they can also be outfitted to haul cargo or a combination of people and provisions depending upon the designer's needs. More extravagant designs can include a covered, insulated, or even heated seating area for the vehicle's occupants. Upholstered chairs, luggage areas, arrow slits, and other amenities present more options for those who

Are There Red-Nosed Reindeer?

Reindeer are an integral part of the Santa Claus legend and according to a popular Christmas song, no member of the species is more famous than Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer. No reindeer actually has a red nose, but the fictional story's origins may have some factual basis. Numerous vessels flow through the animal's highly specialized nose, which contains bones that dramatically increase the nostril's surface area. When reindeer inhale cold air, the blood circulating through the expanded nasal passages rapidly warms the air before reaching the animal's lungs. This respiratory process keeps the beast's vital organs at a comfortable temperature and also draws water from the exhaled air to help moisten its mouth and throat in addition to preventing it from dehydrating. While the reindeer's nose is not red to the naked eye, it appears bright red when viewed through a thermal camera.

can afford such luxuries. More opulent or personalized versions of these vehicles may cost substantially more based upon the owner's individual tastes and the composite materials used in construction.

As in the case of wheeled vehicles, beasts of burden lug the sleigh and its occupants on its journey across the rugged terrain. Thanks to its shaggy fur coat, unique hooves, and powerful physique, no animal is more up to this arduous task than the reindeer. The muscular, semi-domesticated herbivore can propel these vehicles across snow and ice at a slow yet steady pace in the desolate ice cap and tundra biomes. By using their sharpened hooves to burrow into packed snow and ice, the animals dig down to the surface to devour the mosses and lichens attached to the frozen ground. Reindeer are not particularly swift of foot, but their knack for finding food in the unlikeliest places eliminates the need to stock provisions for these burly members of the deer family on a long jaunt across this cold environment.

Horses offer an alternate means of propulsion for sleighs in some cold domains, but these sturdy creatures also come with several critical limitations. Although they can actually trudge through snow faster than reindeer, their smaller, rounded hooves prevent them from gaining any traction on ice, thus limiting their effectiveness across that particular medium. Horses weather cold temperatures better than expected provided they consume enough food to continually generate the body heat necessary to survive. Even in the dead of winter, horses can usually find enough plant matter to graze on in the grasslands, but the same cannot be said of conditions in the polar biomes. Essential nourishment, if it exists at all, typically lies beneath a blanket of ice and snow the horse cannot penetrate. Overcoming this logistical difficulty would require the sleigh's operator to pack enormous quantities of provisions in the vehicle while frequently stopping along the way to let the animals feed and rest, which essentially defeats the purpose of using horses in the first place. With the preceding considerations in mind, horses offer a feasible option only in regions where there is sufficient and easily accessible undergrowth, such as the taiga and parts of the tundra.

Where horses fear to tread, man's best friend steps in to take their place. While reindeer and horses dwarf the average sled dog in size and strength, these determined pack animals make up for their smaller stature with tenacity and teamwork. Blessed with two layers of fur designed to retain heat and repel water, the determined animals can withstand the ravages of the brutal cold and driving snow. Although not big enough to haul the larger sleigh, dogs serve as the plucky engines pulling sleds great distances over the frozen landscape. The typical sled consists of a small frame fashioned from bone predominately harvested from walrus and whales. Like its wintery counterpart, the vehicle rests upon two runners. The driver, more often referred to as the musher, stands atop the sled's rear, urging the pack forward with verbal commands while steering the sled with the reins tethered to each member of the team. With the musher neatly tucked onto the back of the sled, gear and provisions, including the dogs' food, are then lashed to the front of the sled. The dogs subsist on fatty meats culled from oily fish carcasses and the flesh stripped from blubbery

sea mammals, such as seals, walruses, and otters. When pulled by a team of well-trained dogs, the significantly lighter and more-maneuverable sled can cover far more ground in a single day than the bulkier sleigh propelled by reindeer or horses. These streamlined vehicles negotiate narrow passes and tight corners far better than their heavy counterparts, making them the only viable choice for polar expeditions through mountainous terrain.

Toboggans also fall under the auspices of the term sled, but these simple devices differ slightly from their kin in the fact they lack runners to support their weight and do not carve a path through the ice and snow. Instead, the flat underside rests directly on top of the snow or ice much like a flat-bottomed boat sitting upon the water. They are traditionally made from parallel wooden planks bound together with sinew or wrapped within a leather frame that are then bent forward at the front to accommodate the rider's feet. The rider can use a rope placed through a loop at the top of the vehicle to steer the toboggan. In some cases, it can be tethered to a reindeer, horse, dog, or even another person to provide a means of propulsion. However, toboggans are generally slower, smaller, and less efficient than sleds and sleighs because they have greater drag than these sleeker vehicles. They are predominately used to slide down slopes for recreational purposes or to rescue stranded explorers from hard-to-reach locations.

Mounts

As discussed in the preceding **Land Vehicles** section, polar travelers generally use beasts of burden to propel sleds across the white landscape rather than ride them in a manner befitting the typical terrestrial mount. This preference is based upon the provable fact that the animal can pull more weight laden down on a sled than it can with a rider on its back. Obviously, the average sled dog lacks the size and strength necessary to support any humanoid rider other than possibly a halfling or gnome, which generally eliminates these durable animals from consideration. Horses, on the other hand, clearly possess the physical prowess to transport a passenger, but their calcified hooves make for treacherous going across icy paths and trails. Furthermore, their voracious sustenance requirements make it unfeasible to venture across the frosty terrain on horseback for more than a day or two without subjecting the mount to the ravages of starvation and biting cold. Reindeer straddle the middle ground between dogs and horses, but they merely represent the best of the mediocre. The sure-footed beasts can accommodate only a lone rider and a modest amount of gear in comparison to the loads they routinely lug across the frozen landscape. Despite the placid depictions pervasive throughout popular folklore, humanity never fully domesticated these wild and sometimes feisty animals, thus necessitating the removal of their antlers to prevent injury to the rider.

The polar explorers who opt to ride atop a beast suffer through the logistical nightmares in exchange for enhanced combat proficiency. They usually forego the domain's conventional pack animals and turn to the exotic or fantastical to strike terror into the hearts of their adversaries. The ferocious polar bear occupies the top rung of this exclusive list. Equally at home roaming the land and ice floes or swimming amid the sea ice, this massive and aggressive carnivore wields the combined might of several people. Countless legends speak of polar bears dragging the extravagant sleds of fabled kings and queens across the frigid wastelands or functioning as cavalry mounts in their dreaded armies. In a similar vein, the taiga's more-ambitious residents may set their sights on taming one of their smaller yet no less surly cousins, the powerful grizzly bear. Others look toward the pair's feline foil, the savage tiger. Indigenous predators such as the wolf or even the monstrous winter wolf also make for popular mounts in these circles. Naturally, none of these creatures willingly serves a humanoid master without coaxing. Barbarians, druids, and rangers may attempt to tame the wild animals or select one of these creatures as their animal companion, in which case the otherwise feral beast faithfully serves its trusted associate. Less naturally, empathetic individuals may turn to magic to exercise control over the wild beasts. Outfitting any of these exotic animals for riding purposes requires an exotic saddle and other specialized equipment. While most polar explorers rear their mounts from birth or capture them in the wild and then break them, some adventurers purchase these animals instead.

Watercraft

The vessels that take to the seas must be equipped to deal with the turbulent water's gravest danger — ice. The galleys dominating the waves in more temperate climates fare poorly on the frigid oceans at or near the top of the world. They prove too slow and bulky to nimbly navigate through water choked with sea ice. Despite their size and perceived strength, the mighty ships buckle and sink when they collide with a block of frozen water or when the encroaching ice squeezes their wooden hulls, turning the proud craft into a bundle of splintered tinder twigs. The pole's indigenous people learned that their boats must either maneuver around the sea ice with ease or withstand its frigid blows and ride out the proverbial storm.

The versatile, lightweight kayak accomplishes both. This agile watercraft manufactured from water-resistant leather wrapped around a wooden or bone skeleton can accommodate one or, in some cases, two passengers. Propelled by oars plunged into the icy waters, the vessels can quickly pivot or turn to avoid onrushing sea ice. In a pinch, the occupants may also remove the kayak from its preferred medium and drag it overland or across ice floes until it reaches more hospitable seas and oceans. Kayaks give the driver and passenger the opportunity to hunt aquatic animals in their native habitats or dip their hooks into the icy liquid in the hopes of catching the domain's oily, fatty fish. However, they are too small and lightweight to transport cargo great distances without overburdening the crew and the rudimentary vessel.

Icebreakers, also known as a koch in some circles, fit the bill for meeting commercial demands. These larger ships boast formidable defenses against winter's worst effects. Outfitted with reinforced hulls and crossbeams for added support, these sturdy sailing vessels brush aside loose chunks of sea ice with no difficulty. In the worst-case scenario, the vessel's flat-bottom design and false keel allows encroaching sea ice to physically lift the koch out of the water and safely deposit it atop the frozen water without sustaining any structural damage. Because many of these ships were also equipped with runners affixed to the hull, the crew could then tug the vessel along the ice until it reached navigable waters. The versatile watercraft serves as the workhorse of any polar fleet. They perform admirably as cargo ships, whalers, passenger liners, and even warships with some minor modifications. Of course, supplemental structural support comes at a price. The added weight from its extra beams and double planking decreases the koch's speed and increases its draft, making it impossible to sail the vessel in shallow waters even with its relatively flat bottom. Furthermore, its specialized design renders it vulnerable to capsizing in rough seas. The preceding drawbacks almost exclusively relegate icebreakers to the chilly oceans, seas, and rivers bordering the ice cap, tundra, and taiga biomes.

Expeditions

Even the most seasoned polar travelers never willingly go it alone when making a long trek across the frozen landscape. Reaching isolated interior locales far from the friendlier and more accessible coastal regions demands an exhaustive quantity of supplies, particularly in the ice cap and tundra where humanoids must compete with the domain's vicious predators for scant resources. Under these circumstances, running afoul of a hungry polar bear or a pack of starving wolves spells disaster for all but a handful of elite adventurers. Teamwork, whether in the form of cooperation among individuals or between person and beast, is a necessity for survival in this relentlessly brutal environment. Most expeditions rely upon a combination of the two preceding options. Veteran explorers load their provisions onto a fleet of sleighs, sleds, and toboggans pulled by their loyal and determined pack animals and then head out into the frozen wilderness.

These expeditions never venture into the great outdoors without good reason. Rather, they risk life and limb at the behest of their affluent clients who rely upon their services to lead them to a predetermined destination or to accurately map previously untouched lands for commercial purposes. Some visitors seek passage across the frozen landscape on their quest to discover a viable land or sea route that could open up trade to otherwise distant partners. Others aspire to do battle against the indigenous denizens in an effort to claim their riches or mete out well-deserved punishments for their past transgressions. Whatever the guests' motivations, expeditions never come cheap.

On overland treks, the costs vary based upon the services rendered. Merely booking passage on a sleigh or sled traveling on a regularly scheduled, predetermined route incurs a nominal fee per person per mile. Hiring the services of a sleigh driver or musher to transport passengers somewhere off the beaten path or to a notoriously dangerous locale like a treacherous mountain pass or the vicinity of a dragon's lair increases the charge to a pricier fare per person per mile. Alternatively, explorers can rent or lease sleighs, sleds, toboggans, and pack animals from an expedition at a cost equal one-fifth of the equipment's value. In this case, the expedition members travel alongside their clients offering them general advice and directions at a nominal cost per person per mile. In addition to lending their eyes, minds, and experience to the journey, many guides also spent parts of their careers as mercenaries or even healers. Clients must negotiate any arrangement that including fighting or spellcasting in advance. Naturally, expecting aid in a time of need comes with an added cost that fluctuates depending upon the guides' abilities and resources.

Sea voyages usually have fewer variables than overland journeys. No captain worth his salt would lend a vessel as large as an icebreaker to someone he or she likely just met. Entrusting novices to safely navigate a bulky ship like a koch through icy waters poses substantial risks that no ship owner is willing to take. Therefore, adventurers endeavoring to travel aboard an icebreaker must travel as a passenger rather than a pilot at a moderate cost per person per mile, provided the route is well-traveled and relatively free of ice floes. Commissioning the skipper to sail his icebreaker into uncharted waters or perilous seas doubles or perhaps even triples the cost per person per mile. Furthermore, locating a suitable vessel in the polar biomes proves quite challenging. They are found only in ports and harbors deep enough to accommodate their size and draft. The preceding limitations confine them to coastal cities neighboring seas and oceans notoriously choked with sea ice.

By comparison, securing a seat on a significantly smaller kayak proves much easier and less expensive. Only one passenger can accompany a driver on one of these sleek, nimble craft. Money, which holds sway in most parts of the world, carries practically no weight with primitive people in a remote domain where barter and self-sufficiency replace merchants and marketplaces. Travelers seeking passage on one of these agile crafts must provide the driver food and useful supplies equal to a nominal fee per person per mile. Settling on a fair price may require at least one successful Charisma or appropriate Charisma skill check at an easy level of difficulty. Larger adventuring parties usually require multiple boats and an equal number of guides to meet their demands. Unfortunately for polar travelers, indigenous people depend upon their watercraft for survival, particularly during the lean winter months. They cannot afford to lend out or sell nearly all of their precious kayaks to complete strangers for more than a day at a time even in exchange for stockpiles of food and other necessities. Instead, they may allow travelers to join them on a hunting excursion or fishing trip traveling in the same direction, though they refuse to deviate from their designated course to suit their polar hitchhikers' fancy. Explorers already equipped with their own kayaks may alternatively hire local residents to serve as guides on their journey. In this case, the natives add their expertise to the mix. In return, they demand that their associates aid them in slaying any game animals they encounter along the way. If the hunt proves successful, they split the kill between themselves and their newfound friends. Although these guides willingly fight even the most fearsome animals, they flee from any encounters against all other creatures, particularly those wielding magic or those that are otherworldly or unnatural in nature, such as undead, demons, and devils.

Polar Hazards

By most peoples' calculations, the risks of venturing into polar biomes greatly outweigh the rewards. In the seemingly perpetual darkness pervading these frozen lands, death comes swiftly and without warning. Winter's chilly embrace grabs her unfortunate victims and squeezes the life from their shivering bodies. While the intense heat encountered in the hot and dry deserts takes its inevitably lethal toll over time, the bitter cold claims its foes in a matter of hours, or on some rare occasions, within minutes. If the low temperatures were not dangerous enough in their own right, the howling, icy winds and blowing snow accompanying them further compound the frigid agony.

Polar explorers who successfully withstand nature's freezing fury face another basic challenge — finding sustenance. Although water is

plentiful, albeit in its solid form as ice and snow, finding food, adequate shelter, and even one's way in a monotonous, white landscape presents a significant challenge. To make matters worse, the domain's apex predators and monstrous denizens hotly contest the disbursement of its meager resources to uninvited guests. A fresh carcass adrift in the snow almost immediately attracts the interest of indigenous wildlife, some of whom can pick up the scent of spilled blood from miles away.

Located at diametrically opposite ends of the globe, polar biomes exhibit nature's most extreme behavior. While winter holds sway in polar biomes for large portions of the year, it eases its chilly grip for a few fleeting weeks or months and allows spring and even summer briefly to flourish. During this short respite, the pests normally plaguing temperate and tropical dwellers emerge in droves. Ticks and mosquitoes literally swarm any warm-blooded creature who passes too close to their respective arboreal or watery abodes. In addition, the previously frozen ground transforms into a spongy morass of damp peat, wet mud, and cool water that halts travel and wreaks havoc on the explorer's shoes and feet. The harsh environment combines winter's extended wrath with spring's concentrated renewal, often bringing out the worst in both temperamental seasons.

Overview

The hazards lurking in polar biomes fall into one of two categories — the patently obvious or the subtly surprising. The biting cold and fierce breezes buffeting the snowy landscape blatantly announce their bad intentions to all who set foot in their domain. On the other hand, perils such as unseen crevasses and thin ice masquerade as hardened snow and solid ice, luring the unwary to a chilly demise in a glacial labyrinth or at the bottom of a frigid river. No summary of polar hazards would be complete without touching upon its fauna and the monsters lying in wait for unwary polar adventurers. The eponymous polar bear stands atop the heap of the biome's most lethal bestial predators, while a host of contenders including other species of bears, tigers, and wolves vie for their position beneath this mighty beast. In addition to its fearsome carnivores, these bastions of ice and snow surprisingly host utterly voracious, bloodthirsty insects commonly associated with more hospitable climates. Of course, no discussion could overlook the icy domain's most feared residents — its brutal white dragons and aggressive frost giants. The polar biomes' foremost danger is its ferocious weather. The bitter cold, brutal wind, and hellish blizzards that ravage the landscape take center stage.

Polar Inhabitants

By and large, polar biomes offer no rest for the weary, especially in the perpetually frozen ice cap. Where glaciers rule the land, winter becomes an unending reality. Frigid temperatures and chilly winds buffet a domain completely devoid of vegetation or, for that matter, any tangible building blocks of life. Life flourishes in those locales only where the massive blocks of ice meet their watery kin along the coastlines bordering vast seas and oceans. Here, the biome's mightiest beasts coalesce on these cool beaches to partake in the grand spectacle known as the circle of life. The participants come in all shapes and sizes, from the tiniest rodents and birds to the corpulent seals, blubbery polar bears, and the deadly orca, the ocean's most-intelligent animal predator.

Sentient beings also carve out a niche in this challenging environment, surviving on the bounties of the sea during lean times and feasting on the fat of the land when the savage elements take a momentary breather. Humanoids generally lead a nomadic lifestyle in the unforgiving ice cap and tundra biomes, where they follow the migratory paths of their chosen prey. Those dwelling in the more-hospitable taiga use the environment's bountiful materials and water sources to establish permanent settlements. While humanoids must contend with the bitter cold temperatures, the brutal weather has no effect on its most-powerful monstrous inhabitants, the callous white dragons, the lofty silver dragons, and the belligerent frost giants. Although these creatures must still eat to survive, their immunity to the ravages of the elements gives them an enormous advantage against their shivering adversaries.

Despite the terrible winters that befall polar biomes, some of the pests better associated with tropical and temperate environments also torment residents and visitors alike. Mosquitoes, the scourge of humanity and its deadliest foe, emerge from their hibernation during the late spring and summer to devour their victim's fresh blood. Although none of the polar species carry the diseases found in more-welcoming climates, a small handful of these insects can transmit contagions to their unfortunate host. Likewise, ticks also lurk amid the soaring coniferous trees and patches of undergrowth found in the taiga. These bugs are more apt than mosquitoes to pass along debilitating viruses to their humanoid and animal victims.

Animals

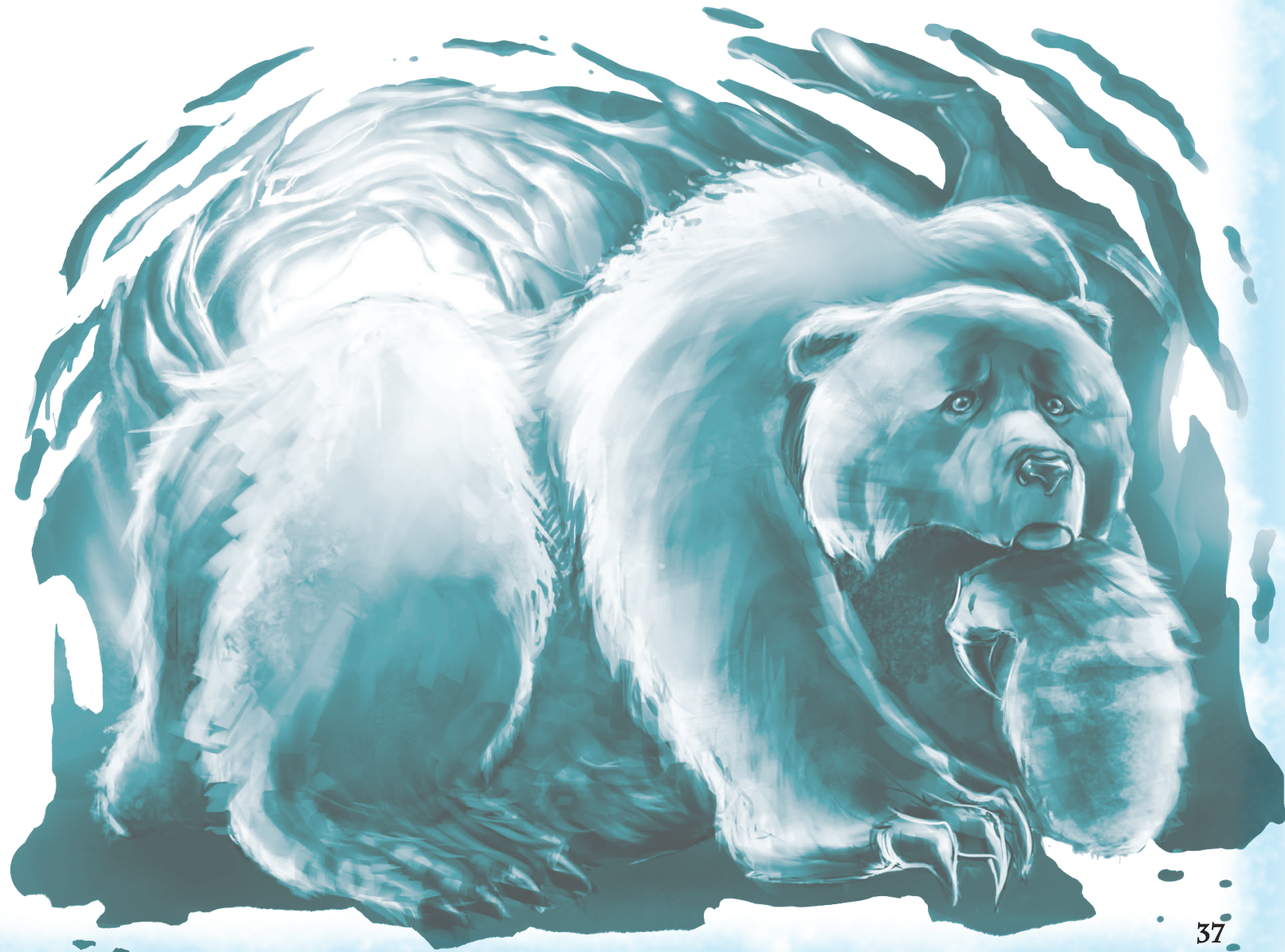
The fauna inhabiting polar landmasses depends upon the seas and oceans bordering their terrestrial home for survival, especially in the virtually lifeless ice cap biome. The simple organisms and tiny animals dwelling in these chilly bodies of water provide the foundation for the ecosystem's complex and delicately balanced food chain. Indeed, the fates of many iconic polar animals are intertwined with harvesting the bounties of the sea. Penguins, seals, walruses, birds, and polar bears spend considerable amounts of their time trolling the open waters and the islands of sea ice for suitable prey. For this reason, any discussion of the indigenous animals must at least touch upon the creatures dwelling exclusively in the sea.

No aquatic or terrestrial animal can compete against the orca for the illustrious title of apex predator. These enormous mammals boast a fearsome set of teeth, incredible strength, and most importantly,

remarkable intelligence. Although they are not exclusively confined to polar seas and oceans, they make enough of a mark on this environment to warrant mention here. They predominately feed on many of the species indigenous to polar biomes including seals, walruses, penguins, sea lions, fish, and on some occasions, even polar bears.

With the preceding statement in mind, polar bears occupy the highest rung of the terrestrial food chain and are generally only vulnerable to an orca's attack while swimming through open waters. Despite their dominant position on land, these animals spend the majority of their time at sea, leaping from one pack of sea ice to another in search of their favorite meal: seals. Polar bears rely upon their superb sense of smell to detect the location of a seal's breathing hole. The cunning predator then patiently lies in wait for its prey to use the breach in the ice to exhale or inhale. When it does, the massive bear reaches into the water beneath the hole and drags the overmatched seal out of the water and onto the ice where it cracks its skull with a single bite to the head. Waterborne polar bears may also ambush seals resting atop a patch of sea ice.

Despite their carnivorous nature, these animals rarely attack humanoids. Of course, the limited interaction between the two species in these sparsely inhabited regions plays some role in minimizing the number of violent confrontations. Nonetheless, a polar bear who feels threatened, especially in the presence of young cubs, or an animal desperate for a meal may target a humanoid. Conflicts between polar bears and humanoids are most likely to occur when sea ice levels decline during the summer months or in a polar region experiencing accelerated warming. When the polar bears' habitat shrinks, it forces a larger population of animals to compete for fewer resources in a smaller area. Humanoids passing through such



a locale face an increased risk of running afoul of a mother and her cubs as well as enticing a hungry polar bear to immediately expand its diet to less-conventional fare.

Fortunately for most polar travelers, these massive beasts predominately hunt on the sea ice packs and atop the remote glaciers in the ice cap biome. In the taiga and tundra biomes, other animals step to the forefront in their absence. The polar bears' cousin, the fearsome grizzly bear, plays a significant ecological role in its indigenous environment. Despite their formidable weaponry, these massive animals are omnivores. They routinely ingest fleshy fruits and their bountiful seeds. When they later excrete the fruit's undigested seeds, they accomplish the tasks of dispersing and fertilizing the seeds all in one fell swoop. When they hunt for meat, fish, especially fatty salmon, tops their list of preferred meals. As in the case of polar bears, grizzlies rarely attack humanoids unless provoked, are startled at close range, or are threatened, which usually occurs when a traveler encounters a mother and her cubs. Unlike the more numerous and frequently encountered black bears, grizzlies are poor climbers. Therefore, a humanoid staring down an angry grizzly may climb up a tree to temporarily evade the mighty beast's vicious claws and its powerful bite rather than try to outrun the remarkably swift bear or best the creature in physical combat.

Pound for pound, grizzly bears have no animal rivals in the taiga save one — the muscular tiger. Like nearly all of their feline cousins, tigers rely upon stealth and speed rather than brute strength to catch their next meal. They often hide amid the snow, behind layers of undergrowth, or among the trees, waiting for an opportunity to pounce on any suitable creature straying too close to the concealed predator. Despite their impressive size and strength, tigers prefer assaulting overmatched adversaries rather than those that can put up a significant fight. Fortunately for them, the tigers dwelling in this chilly environment rank among the largest cats in the world. They tip the scales at a comparable weight to the grizzly bear and actually display remarkable success in matchups against their ursine rivals. Although tigers usually target herbivores such as deer, they are not averse to ambushing their fellow predators, particularly bears, by leaping down from an overhanging tree branch and onto their foe's back. Naturalists surmise that tigers resort to this seemingly contradictory behavior not only out of a need for sustenance, but also to eliminate a potential challenger.

Despite their willingness to tackle such formidable adversaries, healthy tigers generally display little interest in attacking defenseless humanoids except when provoked. However, sick or injured big cats may set their deadly sights on humanoids, particularly those ill-suited to fight back such as children and the elderly. When they attack prey smaller than themselves, such as humanoids, the potent felines drag their victim to the ground and then snap the foe's spinal column with their burly paws. Tigers that combat opponents of their size or greater clamp their jaws around the enemy's throat, ensuring a swift demise.

A cadre of smaller hunters occupies the rungs of the food chain beneath the preceding predators. Black bears, the smaller and more-numerous cousins of polar bears and grizzly bears, dwell in the taiga and portions of the tundra biomes. The omnivorous black bears avoid their larger kin and tigers whenever possible. Adept climbers, they can pursue prey up a tree or escape an adversary in a pinch, particularly a hungry grizzly bear or a pack of ravenous wolves, another relentless predator found in these parts.

Like the black bear, most wolves are less specialized for life in the tundra and taiga than polar bears and to a lesser extent, grizzly bears. Although most wolves inhabiting polar lands retain their characteristic gray coats, several subspecies evolved snow-white fur over time, allowing them to blend in with their snowy environment. While bears and tigers are predominately solitary predators, wolves coalesce into packs consisting of numerous related individual animals. Wolves hunt in a cooperative, coordinated manner that allows them to take down prey much larger than a single individual. A lone wolf poses little threat to an adult moose, but a group of wolves acting in choreographed and well-rehearsed unison can easily slay prey animals ten times the lone wolf's size.

Black bears and wolves that have rarely, if ever, encountered a humanoid generally keep their distance from the unfamiliar and strange-looking creature who walks in an oddly upright manner. As in the case of the preceding predators, they attack only when provoked or threatened. With that said, when these animals come into more-frequent contact with humanoids, they typically shed their timidity and as the old adage says,

“familiarity breeds contempt.” Over time, black bears and wolves routinely accustomed to seeing humanoids overcome their inherent fear and may see people as a viable food source, especially those most vulnerable to an attack such as the elderly and children. On the other hand, some indigenous people may also strike up an unlikely friendship or symbiotic bond with the canine predators that ultimately allows them to domesticate the formerly feral predators. The preceding considerations aside, black bears and wolves normally treat humanoids with extreme caution.

A collection of smaller predators posing little danger to adventurers also makes its mark on the tundra and taiga biomes. The wolves' smaller and less-social canine kin, coyotes and foxes, display the uncanny ability to thrive in cold-weather environments such as those encountered in Alaska and Northern Canada, while also inhabiting the semiarid deserts of the Southwestern United States and Mexico. Coyotes live in packs, but at roughly half the size of their wolf counterparts, they pose no serious threat to an adult humanoid. Still, a pack of hungry coyotes can gravely endanger a small child or another vulnerable person. Foxes are even smaller than coyotes, though they display the same adaptability as their closely related counterparts. The species that dwell in the tundra and taiga biomes develop a dense, white coat during the protracted winter months and a brown coat during the brief summer. In the tundra and taiga, foxes are the primary hosts of the rabies virus because of their proclivity for eating the small rodents and other animals carrying the disease. Therefore, a fox encountered in a polar biome has a 10% chance of being rabid.

On the feline side of the equation, the majestic lynx, which includes the bobcat, fills the same role as the coyote and fox. Indeed, these rival predators live side by side in many of the same regions, which inevitably lead to conflicts with their canine counterparts. The lynx's size falls between that of the larger coyote and the smaller fox. The solitary, nocturnal hunters primarily feed on hares, supplementing their diet with small rodents, ungulates, and the occasional bird. They usually lie in wait alongside paths and trails frequented by prey animals. When the lynx senses an opportunity to strike, it leaps onto its target and sinks its teeth into the victim's soft throat, nape, or skull.

Birds stalk the skies and the labyrinth of branches and leaves composing the taiga arboreal canopy. Owls, hawks, falcons, ravens, and several other predatory birds inhabit and breed in polar coastlines, boreal forests, and the tundra, though most migrate to warmer environments during the long winters. These aerial predators ignore humanoid trespassers with one noteworthy exception — the skua. These seabirds average two feet in length, though some species grow larger while others measure slightly smaller, but they all fall into the category of kleptoparasites, meaning they steal prey from other animals. Few animals can match the skua's belligerence. Whenever a creature gets too close to the bird's nest, it swoops down from the heavens and attacks the interloper by targeting its head and eyes.

Reptiles are noticeably absent from the list of fauna inhabiting the polar biomes because of their inability to withstand the brutally cold temperatures that grip the taiga and tundra for large parts of the year. Yet amazingly, a pair of pests commonly associated with temperate and even tropical environments defies the long odds and makes a go of life amid the ice and snow. Mosquitoes, the scourge of jungle explorers, emerge with a vengeance from their lengthy slumber during the milder spring and summer months to feast on the blood of the living. Meanwhile, ticks, the sly hitchhikers who hang onto the stalks of undergrowth flourishing in the taiga, wait for an opportunity to latch onto a suitable host who brushes against their hiding spot.

Men and Monsters

On many worlds, the poles are the least habitable and most desolate places on the planet, especially in a landlocked ice cap. For most people, achieving prosperity and a better life seem completely unattainable in a bleak, dark domain where a resident's very survival hangs in the balance on a daily basis. Those people willing and able to endure the rigors of this unforgiving realm constantly test their resilience, determination, and ingenuity in ways unimaginable to the genteel folk leading their comfortable, sedentary lives. For some though, the rewards outweigh the risk in an environment where competition can be as scarce as a warm spell. The rugged nomads who troll the polar seas and oceans for fish, blubbery aquatic mammals, and the tasty crustaceans scuttling across the watery bottom can fetch a handsome price on the open market for their dangerous catches. Not surprisingly, most

covetously guard their most-profitable fishing spots and techniques from newcomers, even resorting to killing busybodies who snoop around too much. Still, maritime entrepreneurs are few and far between on the polar seas as most inhabitants hunt and fish to feed themselves and their families rather than fill their coffers with gold and riches.

Snow and ice cover the earth for much of the year in the tundra and taiga. Many residents thus turn to hunting and trapping for income and sustenance rather than farming the thin and frequently frozen soil. Unfortunately, concealed spring traps and snares may capture or maim more than their intended targets. Adventurers and travelers walking across the snow-covered landscape can easily fall victim to the remorseless devices' steel jaws bristling with serrated teeth. In some cases, the mechanical contraptions' owner can be more terrifying than his or her equipment. Settlers greatly value their independence, and some view strangers through a highly suspicious lens. They may see outsiders as agents of an unwanted civic or business interest seeking to size up their territory for future exploitation. In a similar vein, some current inhabitants may have relocated to these remote locales to escape justice or scrutiny at the hands of governmental, religious, or social authorities. The characters' sudden, unexpected arrival may fuel their worst fears that their anonymous existence is about to come to an abrupt and possibly bloody end.

Unlike those seeking to lead an innocuous lifestyle far removed from civilization's prying eyes, others embark on a life of plunder aboard a swift yet sturdy longboat, where they rely upon the efforts and industry of neighboring communities to amass unfathomable wealth, fame, and glory. Bred into a savage warrior culture, these barbarous marauders pillage food, raw materials, and wondrous treasures from settlements that can produce these valuable commodities. These brutal raiders defy the conventional stereotypes that brand them as ignorant savages. Their ability to navigate their vessels through tumultuous waters to far-flung destinations clearly demonstrates their mastery over the sea, while their cohesive tactics, exquisite weaponry, and bravery attest to their military prowess and surprising sophistication on the battlefield. Yet even these courageous people pose only a minor nuisance to the polar biome's mightiest monstrous denizens.

White dragons and frost giants sit atop the heap of contenders vying for supremacy over these frozen lands. Juvenile and young adult dragons assume a subservient posture to the huge humanoids nurturing these ferocious reptiles from a humble egg. As the dragon ages and its power steadily increases, the roles reverse. The formerly dominant frost giants play second fiddle to their colossal yet brutish counterparts. Although these creatures frequently cohabitate, over time, the dragon simply outlives or outmuscles its humanoid associates. When this happens, the feral dragon may reshape the abode it shared with the frost giants into something of its own design; it may strike out into the wilderness in search of a lonely, frozen mountaintop to inhabit; or it may search for a glistening ice cave deep within the heart of a glacier. Whatever it decides, its vast mound of riches always goes with it. Dragons that take this path do so alone, leading a solitary existence amid their piles of coins, artworks, and magical objects.

Despite their immense wealth and tremendous might, both creatures need food to survive, an inescapable fact that sows conflict between these potent monsters and the humanoid communities battling against them for the same scarce resources. In addition to competing with villagers for wild game and domesticated animals, white dragons and frost giants view people as resources. Frost giants often take humanoid captives, using them as slaves, food, or both when the prisoner can no longer perform hard labor. In addition to amassing servants and livestock from polar settlements, an entourage of indigenous monsters such as ogres and winter wolves also accompany the bestial giants at home and abroad. Fending off a lone giant exceeds the military capabilities of most polar communities. Repelling a frost giant raiding party and its retinue of winter wolf scouts and ogre guards proves impossible without outside intervention from adventurers or another external fighting force.

Legends tell of desperate residents abandoning their gods when faced with certain destruction and turning to a being of ancient evil for aid in their struggle against the frost giants and other monsters. Oral tradition refers to this vile outsider as a wendigo, a wicked being steeped in the stuff of nightmares. Those who foolishly follow this path ultimately come to the gruesome realization that a life in chains in a frost giant enclave or a warm death inside of a frost giant's belly is a better fate than making

a cruel bargain with a devious wendigo. The frost giant's brutality and the white dragon's savagery pale in comparison to the wendigo's revelry for madness and cannibalism. Whereas the former creatures destroy their victim's body, the wendigo tortures and mutilates its foe's delusional mind, twisting the previously rational, sentient being into a blithering mass of hopelessly deranged flesh and blood. Fortunately for humanity, an encounter with one of these sinister monsters remains a rarity.

Adventurers are far more likely to run afoul of the polar biomes' more numerous monstrous denizens than the solitary wendigo. Resourceful and regenerative trolls and otherworldly yetis inhabit the frigid hills and mountains protruding above the snow-covered terrain, while the oxymoronic remorhaz dwells within the glaciers making up the ice cap biome. Because of the trolls' insatiable appetite, it lives close to areas with ample food supplies such as coastal areas bordering a polar sea or ocean, alongside well-traveled reindeer, musk-oxen, or deer migratory routes, and of course near humanoid settlements. On the other hand, yetis prefer solitude and isolation, only periodically descending from their mountaintop abodes to pillage supplies from neighboring communities. The bestial remorhaz displays surprising cunning and some sentience for what, at first glance, appears to be a mindless, oversized worm. The beast can understand, though not reply, to verbal commands spoken in Giant, which makes it a potentially valuable tool for large humanoids seeking to use its ability to generate heat as a mobile forge or to carve out tunnels inside a block of solid ice. Although clearly not as fearsome as the dreaded wendigo, any polar adventurer who survives an encounter against any of these frightening monsters certainly earns a seat at a table set for the polar biomes' greatest warriors.

While traveling through the poles, the GM may use the following table to determine random encounters. To use the table, roll 1d1000 (3d10). Consult the ice cap table to determine encounters in that environment, the tundra table for encounters in that environment, and the taiga table for encounters in that environment.

Table 4-35: Random Polar Encounters

Creature	No. App.	Ice Cap	Tundra	Taiga
Basilisk	1–6	001–030	001–020	001–010
Bison	1–50	–	021–040	011–035
Bear	1–4	–	041–060	036–070
Dire bear	1–4	–	061–070	071–085
Dire tiger	1–6	–	–	086–100
Dire wolf	1–8	–	071–090	101–120
Dire wolverine	1–2	–	091–110	121–130
Dog	1–12	–	111–135	131–150
Doppelganger	1–6	031–050	136–140	151–160
Elk (Moose)	1–50	–	141–170	161–180
Frost giant	1–12	051–150	171–200	181–200
Gargoyle	1–12	151–170	201–210	201–210
Ghost	1	171–200	211–220	221–230
Ghoul	1–12	201–230	221–230	231–245
Giant elk	1–12	–	231–245	246–255
Gray ooze	1	–	246–255	256–265
Hell hound	1–12	231–250	256–260	266–270
Ice golem	1	251–290	261–280	271–280
Lich	1	291–300	281–300	281–290
Lynx	1–2	–	–	291–310
Mastodon (Wooley mammoth)	1–50	–	301–325	311–320
Mimic	1	301–320	326–340	326–330

Creature	No. App.	Ice Cap	Tundra	Taiga
Minotaur	1–4	321–340	341–350	331–345
Mummy	1–12	341–360	351–360	346–360
Polar bear	1–2	361–440	361–420	361–400
Rakshasa	1–12	441–460	421–430	401–415
Rat	1–20	–	431–460	416–440
Reindeer	1–50	461–550	461–550	441–500
Remorhaz	1	551–600	551–570	–
Shadow	1–12	601–620	571–590	501–520
Silver dragon	1	621–630	591–600	521–530
Skeleton	1–50	631–650	601–620	531–560
Specter	1–12	651–680	621–640	561–590
Spider	1–20	–	641–650	591–610
Tiger	1–2	–	–	611–630
Troll	1–4	681–750	651–700	631–670
Vampire	1	751–770	701–710	671–680
Wendigo	1	771–780	711–720	681–690
Werebear	1–6	–	721–740	691–710
Weretiger	1–8	–	–	711–730
Werewolf	1–8	–	741–760	731–750
White dragon	1	781–800	761–770	751–760
Wight	1–12	801–830	771–785	761–780
Winter wolf	1–6	831–890	786–830	781–820
Wolf	1–12	–	831–860	821–860
Wolverine	1–8	–	861–880	861–880
Wooley rhinoceros	1–2	–	881–890	–
Wraith	1–12	891–920	891–910	881–900
Yeti	1–8	921–970	920–960	901–950
Zombie	1–50	971–000	961–000	951–000

Weather

For roughly six months out of the year, polar weather remains decidedly consistent regardless of the biome. During this period, prolonged darkness, numbing cold, and extreme aridity grip the top and bottom of the planet. Fierce winds accompany the savage blizzards occasionally rolling across the shivering domain, encasing the ground in another layer of ice and snow. In simplest terms, the ice cap, tundra, and taiga biomes experience a bitter deep freeze that puts many lifeforms into a protracted state of suspended animation. Living creatures who dare venture into the outdoors during the seemingly endless winter must take extensive precautions to deal with the frequent subzero temperatures, provided that they are susceptible to the ravages of extreme cold. When the sun returns from its extended absence to illuminate the sky, its rays briefly thaw the frozen precipitation covering the forest floor and permafrost. Conditions in the comparatively warmer taiga usually resemble those found in temperate environments, which allows for a fleeting yet robust growing season in a land normally synonymous with copious snowfall and drab vegetation. Despite the brief respite, winter's impending wrath is never far from the polar adventurer's worried mind.

The following tables detail the number of hours of darkness, daylight, and twilight in each polar biome based upon the month. The tables include the name of the month based upon the Lost Lands calendar as well as its real-world equivalent.

Table 4–36: Ice Cap Lighting Conditions

Lost Lands Month	Real World Month	Conditions
Oeros	January	15 hours of darkness, 9 hours of twilight
Foeros	February	9 hours of darkness, 15 hours of twilight
Freyrmond	March	15 hours of twilight, 9 hours of daylight
Eostre	April	18 hours of daylight, 6 hours of twilight
Tiwemond	May	24 hours of daylight
Daan	June	24 hours of daylight
Haymond	July	24 hours of daylight
Hummidos	August	24 hours of daylight
Mithrond	September	15 hours of daylight, 9 hours of twilight
Blótmund	October	18 hours of twilight, 3 hours of darkness, 3 hours of daylight
Winterfyll	November	12 hours of twilight, 12 hours of darkness
Yule	December	15 hours of darkness, 9 hours of twilight

Table 4–37: Tundra Lighting Conditions

Lost Lands Month	Real World Month	Conditions
Oeros	January	14 hours of darkness, 10 hours of twilight, 2 hours of daylight
Foeros	February	12 hours of darkness, 8 hours of twilight, 4 hours of daylight
Freyrmond	March	10 hours of daylight, 8 hours of darkness, 6 hours of twilight
Eostre	April	15 hours of daylight, 9 hours of twilight
Tiwemond	May	20 hours of daylight, 4 hours of twilight
Daan	June	24 hours of daylight
Haymond	July	24 hours of daylight
Hummidos	August	16 hours of daylight, 8 hours of twilight
Mithrond	September	15 hours of daylight, 9 hours of twilight, 3 hours of darkness
Blótmund	October	9 hours of darkness, 9 hours of daylight, 6 hours of twilight
Winterfyll	November	12 hours of darkness, 6 hours of twilight, 6 hours of daylight
Yule	December	15 hours of darkness, 9 hours of twilight

Table 4–38: Taiga Lighting Conditions

Lost Lands Month	Real World Month	Conditions
Oeros	January	14 hours of darkness, 6 hours of daylight, 4 hours of twilight
Foeros	February	12 hours of darkness, 8 hours of daylight, 4 hours of twilight
Freyrmond	March	10 hours of daylight, 6 hours of darkness, 6 hours of twilight
Eostre	April	14 hours of daylight, 6 hours of twilight, 4 hours of darkness
Tiwemond	May	16 hours of daylight, 8 hours of twilight
Daan	June	20 hours of daylight, 4 hours of twilight
Haymond	July	18 hours of daylight, 6 hours of twilight
Hummidos	August	16 hours of daylight, 4 hours of twilight, 4 hours of darkness
Mithrond	September	12 hours of daylight, 6 hours of twilight, 6 hours of darkness
Blótmond	October	10 hours of darkness, 10 hours of daylight, 4 hours of twilight
Winterfyll	November	12 hours of darkness, 6 hours of twilight, 6 hours of daylight
Yule	December	15 hours of darkness, 5 hours of daylight, 4 hours of twilight

Daily Weather

Cold and aridity are near constants in the polar biomes, particularly in the ice cap and tundra. Despite the prevalence of ice and snow, precipitation falls most often during the summer. However, winter storms are particularly brutal in any of these environments because they combine low temperatures, high winds, and driving snow. Presented below are several tables that allow GMs to determine the weather in the ice cap, tundra, and taiga. The tables are organized according to biome. The tables allow the GM to determine the daily high temperature, daily low temperature, wind speed, and most importantly the chance of precipitation. All of the tables are based upon percentile dice.

Ice Cap Biome

The following tables generate the daily high temperatures, low temperatures, wind speed, and chance of precipitation in the ice cap according to season.

Table 4–39: Daily High Temperature

Die Roll	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
01–10	–14+3d4° F	–4+4d6° F	–28+3d4° F	–40+2d4° F
11–20	–16+3d4° F	–6+3d4° F	–30+3d4° F	–44+3d4° F
21–30	–18+3d4° F	–8+3d4° F	–32+3d4° F	–48+3d4° F
31–40	–20+3d4° F	–10+3d4° F	–34+3d4° F	–52+3d4° F
41–50	–22+3d4° F	–12+3d4° F	–36+3d4° F	–56+3d4° F
51–60	–24+3d4° F	–14+3d4° F	–38+3d4° F	–60+3d4° F
61–70	–26+3d4° F	–16+3d4° F	–40+3d4° F	–64+3d4° F
71–80	–28+3d4° F	–18+3d4° F	–42+3d4° F	–68+3d4° F
81–90	–30+3d4° F	–20+3d4° F	–44+3d4° F	–72+3d4° F
91–00	–32+3d4° F	–22+3d4° F	–46+3d4° F	–76+2d4° F

To determine the daily low temperature, subtract the amounts shown on the following table from the day's high temperature. For instance, if the preceding table generates a high temperature of –50° Fahrenheit, and the low temperature generates a result of –14 + 2d4 degrees, which results in a total of 20°, the daily low temperature is –70° Fahrenheit (–50° – 20° = –70° Fahrenheit).

Table 4–40: Daily Low Temperatures

Die Roll	Low Temperature
01–10	–2+2d4
11–20	–4+2d4
21–30	–6+2d4
31–40	–8+2d4
41–50	–10+2d4
51–60	–12+2d4
61–70	–14+2d4
71–80	–16+2d4
81–90	–18+2d4
91–00	–20+2d4

The following table determines the wind speed measured in miles per hour based upon the season.

Table 4–41: Daily Wind Speed (miles per hour)¹

Die Roll	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
01–10	1d8	1d4	1d10	2d6
11–20	1d0	1d6	2d6	2d8
21–30	2d6	1d8	2d8	3d6
31–40	2d8	1d10	3d6	3d8
41–50	3d6	2d6	3d8	4d6
51–60	3d8	2d8	4d6	4d8
61–70	4d6	3d6	4d8	5d6
71–80	4d8	3d8	5d6	5d8
81–90	5d6	4d6	5d8	6d6
91–00	5d8	4d8	6d6	6d8

¹ Increase the daily wind speed by 6d6 mph in the event of a thunderstorm or blizzard.

The following chart determines the daily chance of experiencing a storm. It is also based upon the season.

Table 4–42: Daily Chance of Precipitation

Result	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
No Precipitation	01–96	01–95	01–97	01–98
Rain ¹	97–98	96–98	98–99	99
Thunderstorm ²	99–00	99–00	00	00

¹ If the temperature is 32° Fahrenheit or less, the rain falls as snow.

² If the temperature is 32° Fahrenheit or less, the thunderstorm becomes a blizzard.

Tundra

The following tables generate the daily high temperatures, low temperatures, wind speed and chance of precipitation in the tundra according to season.

Table 4-43: Daily High Temperature

Die Roll	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
01-10	14+4d6° F	38+4d6° F	-3+4d6° F	-18+3d4° F
11-20	12+3d4° F	35+3d4° F	-6+3d4° F	-21+3d4° F
21-30	10+3d4° F	32+3d4° F	-9+3d4° F	-24+3d4° F
31-40	8+3d4° F	29+3d4° F	-12+3d4° F	-27+3d4° F
41-50	6+3d4° F	26+3d4° F	-15+3d4° F	-30+3d4° F
51-60	4+3d4° F	24+3d4° F	-18+3d4° F	-32+3d4° F
61-70	2+3d4° F	21+3d4° F	-21+3d4° F	-35+3d4° F
71-80	0+3d4° F	18+3d4° F	-24+3d4° F	-38+3d4° F
81-90	-2+3d4° F	15+3d4° F	-27+3d4° F	-41+3d4° F
91-00	-4+2d4° F	12+2d4° F	-30+2d4° F	-44+2d4° F

To determine the daily low temperature, subtract the amounts shown on the following table from the day's high temperature. For instance, if the preceding table generates a high temperature of 20° Fahrenheit, and the low temperature generates a result of -8 + 1d4 degrees, generating a result of 10° F, the daily low temperature is 10° Fahrenheit (20° - 10° = 10° Fahrenheit).

Table 4-44: Daily Low Temperatures

Die Roll	Low Temperature
01-10	-2+1d4
11-20	-4+1d4
21-30	-6+1d4
31-40	-8+1d4
41-50	-10+1d4
51-60	-12+1d4
61-70	-14+1d4
71-80	-16+1d4
81-90	-18+1d4
91-00	-20+1d4

The following table determines the wind speed measured in miles per hour based upon the season.

Table 4-45 Daily Wind Speed (miles per hour) ¹

Die Roll	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
01-10	1d10	1d10	1d8	1d10
11-20	2d6	2d6	1d10	2d6
21-30	2d8	2d8	2d6	2d8
31-40	3d6	3d6	2d8	3d6
41-50	3d8	3d8	3d6	3d8
51-60	4d6	4d6	3d8	4d6
61-70	4d8	4d8	4d6	4d8
71-80	5d6	5d6	4d8	5d6
81-90	5d8	5d8	5d6	5d8
91-00	6d6	6d6	5d8	6d6

¹ Increase the daily wind speed by 6d6 mph in the event of a thunderstorm or blizzard.

The following chart determines the daily chance of experiencing a storm. It is also based upon the season.

Table 4-46: Daily Chance of Precipitation

Result	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
No Precipitation	01-94	01-85	01-92	01-96
Rain ¹	95-98	86-95	93-98	97-98
Thunderstorm ²	99-00	96-00	99-00	99-00

¹ If the temperature is 32° Fahrenheit or less, the rain falls as snow.

² If the temperature is 32° Fahrenheit or less, the thunderstorm becomes a blizzard.

Taiga

The following tables generate the daily high temperatures, low temperatures, wind speed and chance of precipitation in the taiga according to season.

Table 4-47: Daily High Temperature

Die Roll	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
01-10	42+4d6° F	66+4d6° F	38+4d6° F	6+4d6° F
11-20	38+3d4° F	64+3d4° F	34+3d4° F	2+3d4° F
21-30	34+3d4° F	62+3d4° F	30+3d4° F	-2+3d4° F
31-40	30+3d4° F	60+3d4° F	26+3d4° F	-6+3d4° F
41-50	26+3d4° F	58+3d4° F	22+3d4° F	-10+3d4° F
51-60	24+3d4° F	56+3d4° F	20+3d4° F	-12+3d4° F
61-70	20+3d4° F	54+3d4° F	16+3d4° F	-16+3d4° F
71-80	16+3d4° F	52+3d4° F	12+3d4° F	-20+3d4° F
81-90	12+3d4° F	50+3d4° F	8+3d4° F	-24+3d4° F
91-00	8+2d4° F	48+2d4° F	4-4d6° F	-28-4d6° F

To determine the daily low temperature, subtract the amounts shown on the following table from the day's high temperature. For instance, if the preceding table generates a high temperature of 70° Fahrenheit, and the low temperature generates a result of 14 + 2d4 degrees, which results in a total of 20°, the daily low temperature is 50° Fahrenheit (70° - 20° = 50° Fahrenheit).

Table 4-48: Daily Low Temperatures

Die Roll	Low Temperature
01-10	-2+2d4
11-20	-4+2d4
21-30	-6+2d4
31-40	-8+2d4
41-50	-10+2d4
51-60	-12+2d4
61-70	-14+2d4
71-80	-16+2d4
81-90	-18+2d4
91-00	-20+2d4

The following table determines the wind speed measured in miles per hour based upon the season.

Table 4-49: Daily Wind Speed (miles per hour)¹

Die Roll	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
01-10	1d4	1d3	1d3	1d3
11-20	1d6	1d4	1d4	1d4
21-30	1d8	1d6	1d6	1d6
31-40	1d10	1d8	1d8	1d8
41-50	2d6	1d10	1d10	1d10
51-60	2d8	2d6	2d6	2d6
61-70	3d6	2d8	2d8	2d8
71-80	3d8	3d6	3d6	3d6
81-90	4d6	3d8	3d8	3d8
91-00	4d8	4d6	4d6	4d6

¹ Increase the daily wind speed by 6d6 mph in the event of a thunderstorm or blizzard.

The following table determines the daily chance of experiencing a storm. It is also based upon the season.

Table 4-50: Daily Chance of Precipitation

Result	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
No Precipitation	01-80	01-70	01-60	01-65
Rain ¹	81-95	71-90	61-90	66-90
Thunderstorm ²	96-00	91-00	91-00	91-00

¹ If the temperature is 32° Fahrenheit or less, the rain falls as snow.
² If the temperature is 32° Fahrenheit or less, the thunderstorm becomes a blizzard.

