COMPREHENSIVE ANIMAL HANDLING MANUAL

PLAYER AND DUNGEON MASTER TOOLS

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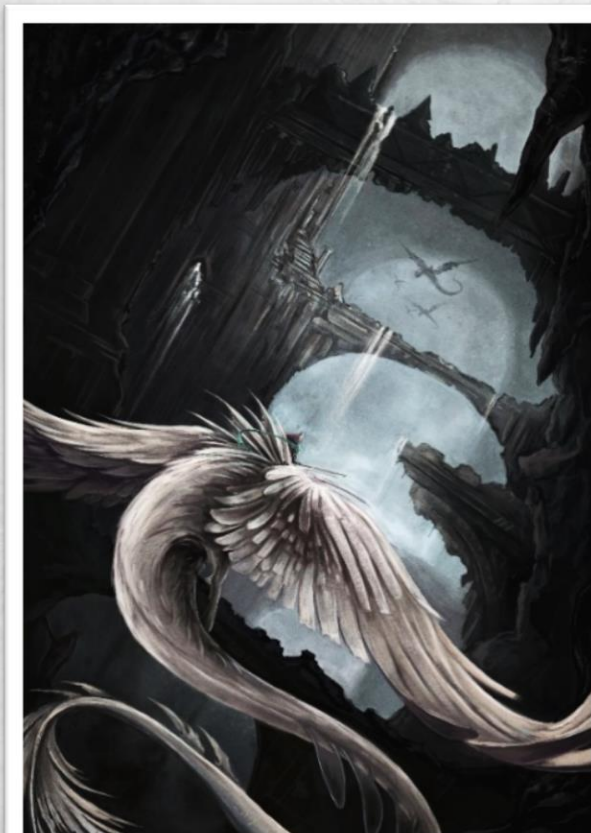
GUILD

Wraith Wright's

Comprehensive Animal Handling Manual

On the Cover
Fantasy Mount by Jack Holiday

Knights of the Sunken City ride their feathered luck dragons on a patrol near the abandoned Water Towers.

CONTENTS

Introduction

INTRODUCTION

"I've never met an animal I didn't like, and I can't say the same thing about people."

- Doris Day

THE FRIENDSHIP OF ANIMALS IS, IN MANY CULTURES, something that comes naturally to the great and the good. The nobility inherent in nature, and thus in beasts, makes animals unfailing judges of virtue. Their companionship marks someone as worthy of a true and faithful friendship. The more exceptional the animal, the more exceptional its master.

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

In DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, animals of various sorts have always been excellent adventuring companions. Across the many editions, players have employed ferocious guard dogs to watch their camps at night, surefooted mules to carry their treasure out of deep dungeons, and faithful horses to bear them into battle.

The notion of animals as adventuring tools and allies is an old one, deeply ingrained in the game.

As proof of this notion, look no further than the *Player's Handbook*. From the art within, animal companions appear to be a common fixture of the game. For example, the druids illustrated in the Classes chapter include an elf with a hawk perched on one hand and a human in front of a tiger companion. The equipment chapter presents a party of four, accompanied by two horses, a pony, a dog, and a pet raven. The chapter on Customization Options opens with a full-page depiction of a green-clad handler, his eagle's wings spread wide. Other images of animals are scattered throughout the book, some alongside characters and some on their own.

ANIMALS FOR ALL

Unfortunately, the core rules don't very well support the use of animals in the game or suggest uses that fit the existing rules. Animal companions are, in the *Player's Handbook*, limited to the Beast Master Ranger Archetype, and to the product of two spells, *find familiar* and *find steed*. Even the Animal Handling skill, a mere two sentences, only allows characters to calm animals and intuit their intentions; it has no rules, for example, explaining how to teach and bond with a purchased mastiff, taking it from its default state to a loyal, trained companion.

If an animal handling character is not a Beast Master ranger, or a character with one of these class-specific spells, the mechanism for every affable interaction with animals, from acquiring, to training, to using them on adventures, must instead spring from the Dungeon Master's imagination.

This is where Wraith Wright's *Comprehensive Animal Handling Manual* comes in.

If you are a Dungeon Master, this book will help you overcome the limitations of the core rules. Their thin support for playing with animals creates a hurdle that makes it hard for your game to reach into this space; designing new systems on the fly is time consuming and perilous. But the rules are meant as a *foundation* for play, something the Dungeon Master can build upon, not a *constraint* that the DM must always work within. This book does that work for you with a wide array of thought-out, tested systems. Take what you want from these pages and ignore the rest!

If you are a player, the options in this book open the doors of animal companionship to your character, regardless of type. Through new feats, spells, class options, and a comprehensive system for acquiring and training creatures, this book gives every character a chance to enjoy the friendship of animals.

WHO BENEFITS FROM ANIMALS?

Characters of every class can benefit from keeping animals. In general terms, any character can enjoy the companionship of such creatures, just as the players may enjoy the depiction of interesting NPCs in the game world around them. This benefit should not be ignored; having animal companions is fun and enhances players' connection to the story.

ANIMALS AND BEASTS

This book uses the word "animal" to mean a creature that can be trained and handled according to the rules in this supplement, whether that is a natural creature that also appears in the real world, or a magical creature known only in fantasy worlds.

Because the Dungeon Master is the arbitrator of exactly which creatures these rules can affect in the campaign, there is no strict definition for the word "animal." (Guidance on this definition is provided in chapter 1.) Animal is therefore a term used loosely.

Conversely, this product does not use the word "beast" in a colloquial sense. That word only applies in reference to the beast creature type.

In more technical terms, all classes benefit from having animals for riding, carrying loads, noticing threats, tracking game, and the like. Some characters may particularly use animals to aid with their own expected class functions or to enhance their class features. Each of the following divisions provides general enhancements of the classes' roles, but also specific features those classes may bring to bear. (Keep in mind that the general benefits are often applicable to more classes than mentioned here.) For more detailed information about what each class's features can add to the experience of having animals, see the "Character Options" section in chapter 2.

BARBARIAN, FIGHTER

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

A riding horse is nice for travel, but a warhorse won't balk at the sounds of battle. For characters that focus primarily on weapon use, the ability to get into melee reach (or stay at missile range) is critical to making use of those weapons. A combat-trained mount gives the rider exceptional mobility on open terrain, including the ability to move among or away from foes without provoking opportunity attacks. (See chapter 3 for more details.)

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

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

Bard, Rogue

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

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

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

Cleric, Paladin

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

As highly defensive characters, the roles of these classes are enhanced by the presence of sturdy animals that can interpose themselves between foes and weaker party members.

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

Druid, Ranger

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

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

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

Monk

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

That said, monks do benefit from animals in ways similar to the barbarian and fighter, whose roles this class shares to some degree. However, when it comes to mounted combat, monks lack many of these warriors' advantages; some of the monk's features, like Step of the Wind, do not work from the saddle, and many Monastic Traditions provide features that

enhance the character's modes of movement in ways that would leave a mount behind.

Still, monks do benefit from fighting side-by-side with trained animal combatants. They are particularly synergistic with fast-moving creatures that can match the monk's speed, balance, and stealth. Such animals aid the monk in its role of a highly mobile and adaptable striker.

SORCERER, WARLOCK, WIZARD

These classes have access to arcane magic and are well suited to enhancing animals with spells that strengthen or speed them along in combat.

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

ABOUT THIS PRODUCT

This book borrows from prior editions of DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, which gave guidance about raising and training animals, teaching them tricks, and managing them in stressful circumstances like combat. It does so while utilizing the uniquely-fifth edition mechanics. As a result, this comprehensive product includes all the systems that players and Dungeon Masters need to bring animal companions to life in their DUNGEONS & DRAGONS games.

COMPREHENSIVE MANUALS

You are looking at one of Wraith Wright Production's interrelated products addressing the acquisition and use of wealth and equipment.

The first book, the *Comprehensive Equipment Manual*, presents a vast quantity of additional armor, weapons, adventuring gear, and other equipment, as well as new rules related to the use and customization of equipment. Some of the material in this book is repeated here in chapter 5.

The second book, the *Comprehensive Wealth Manual*, includes tools for the Dungeon Master. Within its pages are guidelines for distributing treasure to parties as well as rules for just about anything the party might spend its treasure upon, from strongholds and ships, to magic items and business investments.

TRUST

Wraith Wright's Comprehensive Manuals contain unofficial rules! The very idea can chill the heart of even the most adventurous Dungeon Master. If you've played with unofficial rules in the past, perhaps some of the Unearthed Arcana playtest offerings, chances are you've regretted it at least once.

To preserve the balance and enjoyment of your game, Wraith Wright's custom rules use a "lightest touch" philosophy. The point is to not disturb existing mechanics, but rather, add to and expand them. In the very rare cases where changes do appear, they are highlighted with the "System Change" tag and their

reasonings fully explained, making them easy to adopt or to revert to the original mechanics.

These products also use stringent principles to avoid significantly increasing the potency of any particular character types. This philosophy and game-balancing approach is used to make sure our custom rules are the kind you won't regret.

Chapter Summaries

This product includes five chapters for players to use and three appendices for the Dungeon Master.

Chapter 1: Acquiring Animals

The first section quantifies what an "animal" is for the purpose of training and handling such creatures according to the rules in this book. The second section details the three acquisition methods: buying, encountering, and animal husbandry. The third section examines what is needed to adapt animals to an adventuring life, keeping them cared for and safe.

Chapter 2: Managing Animals

This chapter is dedicated to the preparation of animals and handlers to interact successfully in the field. The first section provides mechanics for dozens of tricks that animals can learn. The second section has rules for training animals and getting them to perform, as well as the logistics (mundane and magical) related to managing animals in their trained roles.

Chapter 3: Mounts in Combat

This chapter collates the rules for riding mounts and decodes their application in clear language. In addition to breaking down each aspect of mounted combat, this chapter also contains a wealth of new variant rules to make riding more useful, jousting more dynamic, and falling from the saddle more impactful.

Chapter 4: New Options

For player characters, this chapter offers a new Roguish Archetype, the Beast Whisperer, plus additional options for warlocks with the Pact of the Chain feature. It also adds new spells for druids and rangers, and a handful of new feats and magic items for animal-handling characters. The final section adds new magic items, plus rules for animals attuning and using magic items, and systems to convert existing items into the types that animals can use.

Chapter 5: At the Market

In the first section, players can find animal-related equipment specific to various types and sizes of creatures. These include combat items (a range of barding and a variety of lance types), training tools (blinkers, muzzles, and cages), and general use and management tools (riding tack, saddles, and feed varieties). The second section of this chapter prices untrained animals, trained mounts, and even a variety of monsters chosen for their usefulness for riding or serving as guardians. These monsters and mounts come with stat block summaries for easy reference.

Appendix A: Animals in Stories

This appendix provides over a hundred story hooks. The general hooks are small, creative ideas for adding animals into the campaign, introducing the advantages and adversity that animals bring to the party, and otherwise giving animal companions their selected moments on center stage. The remainder of the story hooks catalogue the most interesting animals from each of the official hardback adventures published to date, along with general advice for handling animal companions in those particular adventures.

Appendix B: Animals as NPCs

This appendix helps the Dungeon Master create fully fleshed out animals, complete with concepts, characteristics unique to animals, loyalty scores, and templates to give creatures more variety. Within these rules, the Dungeon Master will find guidance for how to regulate the power and place of animals in the adventuring party, particularly how to keep them from overshadowing player characters. This chapter further examines how to portray animals as both antagonists and companions, their default behaviors and their interactions with various game rules.

Appendix C: Sample Animals

These pages include several dozen sample animals created with the systems in appendix B, divided among the archetypes discussed there. Each creature has its own history, description, and potential point of placement in the world, as well as a complete stat block already modified with adjustments from any special training or template the animal may have.

Chapter 1

ACQUIRING ANIMALS

O F PRIMARY IMPORTANCE TO THE PROCESS OF using animal companions is getting them! This chapter talks about how player characters can acquire animals. It also talks about the logistics of bringing animals along on adventures and adapting them to the dangers of an adventuring lifestyle.

WHAT IS AN ANIMAL?

This supplement divides creatures into two classifications, "animals" and "monsters."

Animals are the creatures that can be trained and managed using the rules of this supplement. They include all the animals found in the real world, plus an assortment of fantasy creatures, most of which resemble real-world animals in some way. A few have no resemblance to real animals but have the same animalistic thought processes, making them animals because they are companionable and subjectable to training.

Every creature that is not an animal is a monster. Monsters are not your friends; they are the story's antagonists. For most monsters, no amount of acclimating will make them companionable to humanoids. Other monsters might change status, becoming animals under the right circumstances, but such transitions are left to the Dungeon Master's whims.

In game terms, animals cannot be defined purely by a creature type. The beast type includes real-world animals, both living and extinct, but if fails to capture everything suitable to animalistic roles. It also includes a few creatures smarter than the average human, thus too smart to be managed with the Animal Handling skill.

An animal is therefore defined by two factors, its Intelligence rating and its animal intellect, the latter of which depends mostly on its creature type.

INTELLIGENCE RATING

To be an animal, the creature must have an Intelligence rating of 6 or lower. Each qualifying Intelligence rating (or range) is described here.

INTELLIGENCE 1 (INSTINCT-LEVEL)

Creatures of this Intelligence rating are animals, though they barely qualify. Their animal intellects are purely instinctual; such creatures can barely process inputs beyond threats, prey recognition, and mating displays.

INTELLIGENCE 2-3 (ANIMAL-LEVEL)

Most animals have Intelligence ratings in this range. Such creatures can recognize a few pieces of language they are trained to listen for, particularly their own names. It is for these animals that most traditional training techniques and equipment exist.

INTELLIGENCE 4 (ANIMAL-LEVEL)

Creatures at this rating are exceptionally canny. They are more likely to recognize threats than are other animals and react to them of their own volition. This Intelligence rating allows the animal to learn more tricks than other animals. It also places these creatures above the reach of some spells designed to affect animals, some of which might be beneficial.

INTELLIGENCE 5-6 (CUNNING-LEVEL)

Creatures with these Intelligence scores are as smart as most children, and a few adults as well. They can learn languages, even if they lack the physical capability to speak. They can also, to a limited degree, observe and understand the feelings of creatures around them and may have alignments of their own.

INTELLIGENCE 7+ (SENTIENT-LEVEL)

At this rating and above, creatures are beyond the limitations of animalistic thinking, no matter their instincts or mental processes. The Animal Handling skill has no effect upon such creatures, even those that resemble real-world animals.

ANIMAL INTELLECT

Equally defining as a creature's "animal" mind is its intellect type. In the narrow range of Intelligence where truly smart beasts overlap with truly stupid humanoids, ratings of 3 to 6, the difference between the two is the difference between sentience and animal intellect.

For example, some primates are smart enough to understand language, but they are still characterized by the instincts and impulses of animals. They can be conditioned to perform various functions and can be reliably controlled by skilled handlers. A creature with sentience, even a very stupid one, is not subject to the same methods of training and control.

For creatures with Intelligence ratings of 6 and below, the Dungeon Master decides which creatures have animal intellects and which have sentience. For guidance, the DM may refer to a creature's description, in the *Monster Manual* or other source material, or may refer to the creature type descriptions below.

ABERRATION, ELEMENTAL

Most creatures of these types have alien mentalities and are not normally suitable for handling as animals. The low-intelligence versions have neither sentience nor animal intellect. At best, most aberrations and elementals can serve as untrained guardians through natural ferocity alone, so long as they can be safely contained in whatever area needs guarding.

Beast

Most beasts have animal intellect and fall within the range of trainable creatures. Some are domestic, while others are wild. Most are easily trained.

However, most insectoid vermin are an exception. They are, essentially, untrainable creatures, driven only by base instincts. This designation applies to insects as well as scorpions, spiders, wasps, and similar creatures, as well as their giant and swarm versions. Only those insect-like vermin with Intelligence scores of 2 or higher count as animals.

While animal in appearance and subsistence, giant apes, giant eagles, giant elk, and giant owls are self-aware enough to use languages and form complex relationships. They are far too intelligent to be manipulated with the Animal Handling skill.

Celestial, Fey, Fiend

Of these creature types, only the *Monster Manual*'s yeth hound and hell hound have animal intellect. However, natural animals from the feywild or from the various heavenly or hellish planes of existence may qualify if they resemble beasts, despite having the celestial, fey, or fiend creature type. Additionally, spell-made spirits with these types have their own rules.

Construct, Ooze, Plant

When these creatures have some sort of intelligence, it is not the sort complex enough or sufficiently beastlike to respond to training and control as animals. Even non-sentient versions lack animal thought processes.

Dragon

Guard drakes, unsurprisingly, make adept guardians. Wyverns can serve as mounts and guards as well. However, true dragons, even those with very low Intelligence scores, have sentient mental processes and cannot be manipulated with Animal Handling.

Giant, Humanoid

Giants and humanoids, even with very low Intelligence scores, have sentience. Giants and humanoids have thought processes that defy management with the Animal Handling skill.

Monstrosity

After beasts, monstrosities are the most likely of creature types to possess animal intellect. Common monstrosity mounts include the death dog, displacer beast, griffon, hippogriff, and shadow mastiff. Monstrosities that are easily trained to guardian roles include the mimic, owlbear, and rust monster. Others are naturally suited to the role of untrained, uncontrolled guardians, particularly carrion crawlers, darkmantles, and piercers.

Undead

Depending on the nature of its undeath, a creature that previously had animal intellect does not become divorced from the instincts and thought processes that guided it during life. If not controlled by other magics, an undead animal might retain enough primal instinct to be manipulated by the Animal Handling skill. A warhorse skeleton, if not controlled by magic, is a prime example of something that can be handled as an animal. However, it might be as hesitant to tolerate a living rider as the living are to tolerate it for a mount.

Animals as Allies

Creatures with Intelligence ratings of 7 or higher are not animal companions in the sense of these rules. While they can't be acclimated to a handler's presence or otherwise managed through the Animal Handling skill, smarter creatures can still become allies in the sense of any other NPC.

For example, a pegasus has an Intelligence rating of 10, the same as a normal human. A character who acquires the friendship of such a creature might ride it about like a regular mount. However, the pegasus makes its own decisions, goes where it wills, and builds bonds and relationships like any other sentient creature. In combat, it might carry a rider, but it is, by default, an uncontrolled mount.

This supplement mostly contemplates animals of a less-intelligent nature. Because some of the features in these pages apply benefits to animals, players may be eager to apply them to intelligent animal allies as well. This raises the question of whether these animal-affecting benefits and rules may be used by sentient creatures. The Dungeon Master must arbitrate each such interaction on a case-by-case basis.

For example, the Dungeon Master may allow an intelligent creature to learn tricks or roles, described in a later chapter. However, the primary benefit is that the "handler" may request the desired behavior using commands that may be faster than giving a verbal explanation, or that may be subtle enough that

bystanders don't understand the signal. The creature is not bound by its training; it always chooses whether it wants to perform as requested.

Similarly, an intelligent creature that allows itself to be ridden can choose to be controlled by its rider, as discussed in chapter 3. This limits the creature's actions in combat but gives it a synergistic benefit in relation to the rider's initiative. This is another area where an intelligent creature benefits from training; to understand the rider's signals and react instantly to them requires the creature to have learned the rider-trained role. Without this, or some telepathic bond, the creature must act independently.

METHODS OF ACQUISITION

Now having a better definition of animals, this section contemplates the various methods player characters may use to acquire them. The common methods are buying animals, encountering them in the wild, or raising juveniles derived from animal husbandry.

BUYING

While the notion of finding an orphaned beast and raising it to loyal companionship is a pleasant one, the fact is that most adventurers simply can't spare the time to look for and train creatures during their adventures. However, what most adventurers *can* spare is a bit of gold. Many useful animals are purchased at markets, at farms, or at other locations where they are bred and trained as marketable goods.

ANIMAL AVAILABILITY

The Untrained Beasts table and the Mounts table in chapter 5 show the costs of domesticated animals. These creatures are widely available in many regions. The prices on those tables assume that the creature is also young enough to train to various tricks and roles.

Other creature types almost never appear in markets of any kind and must usually be encountered in the wild. These are not domestic animals; even when a market is willing to trade such creatures, buying and selling them is a logistical nightmare.

MONSTER LOGISTICS

Generally, monsters need large storage space, eat huge quantities of (often expensive) food, are dangerous to interact with, and can be difficult and time-consuming to train. Finding a buyer or seller for a monster often means finding a place, person, or facility uniquely situated to address one or more of these problems.

Buying and selling a specific type of monster often requires finding the best intersection of factors that address each of the creature's logistical hurdles. Every other sale or purchase is essentially down to luck, like finding the creature for sale somewhere as a one-off.

For example, a non-player character able to magically control and train animals may keep a stock of monsters to sell. If a monster exclusively eats a particular plant or small creature, a market may spring up near an oasis where that plant or small creature is plentiful.

The biggest interest in monsters typically comes from the wealthy, who see them as curios, status symbols, and guardians. Finding this interest is also a matter of luck. If offered, a wealthy noble might purchase a young crag cat, or that noble might be willing to sell a crag cat or trade it for another exotic creature. But this does not mean the party will find a line of nobles willing to buy their captured crag cats! Such opportunities are few and far between.

Monster Legalities

In worlds where fantasy monsters are rare, selling them can raise incidental problems or otherwise invite trouble. A peasant trying to sell a dragon turtle egg off the back of a wagon is likely to attract the attention of the authorities. Worse, it might attract the attention of someone powerful, someone who wants that rare thing for personal reasons or who simply thinks that dangerous creatures should not be trafficked in.

Conversely, in worlds where magic creatures are common, monster markets are more feasible. These will be highly regulated, with statutes or royal decrees covering important topics from safe handling, to insurance policies, to import duties and taxation.

Finally, a truly dangerous monster is likely to cause destruction or death when placed into contact with the rest of society. For these events, the owner may have to answer with fines, payoffs, or remuneration. Some cases, particularly when children are injured, are crimes that cannot be answered with mere gold.

Sentient Creatures

A creature's suitability for sale is often down to its degree of sentience. Even goodly societies probably have no qualms about fencing-in simple beasts and using them for labor or as food sources. These animals are commonly domesticated and often available at market. Whole industries may even exist devoted to the breeding, raising, training, and selling of such animals. However, smart creatures, particularly those that can talk or are otherwise revered in society, make people less comfortable about the idea of marketing them.

For sacred animals, every society designates some as "noble," making them inedible based only on cultural relevance rather than dietary factors. Such animals are usually romanticized or are playful beasts like the horse and the dog. Additionally, some religions and cultures hold some (or all) animal life sacrosanct, and will not keep, train, or consume such animals. This concern varies by culture; the DM decides which creatures are unavailable at markets for these reasons.

Owning creatures of higher intelligence and self-awareness is a more dubious prospect. Creatures that can express complex emotions and demonstrate deduction start to resemble the creatures that humanoids think of as "people" rather than animals. This distinction is much more relevant in fantasy worlds where the variety of creatures and of sentient races is so diverse; there is no binary "human or nonhuman" distinction to fall back upon, meaning that most societies are likely to avoid keeping, using, and eating animals with Intelligence ratings of 5 or higher, particularly those that can learn languages.

Creatures with Intelligence ratings of 7 or above are truly sentient, devoid of animal-like thought processes or instincts. Only evil societies buy and sell such creatures, a process akin to slavery. Although some such creatures cohabitate with humanoid races, often on equal or near-equal social footing (as demonstrated by goblins and their worg allies), this is not commonplace. A character who rides a unicorn probably raised that creature from a young age. The human either befriended the unicorn and works with it as an ally, or it has subjugated the unicorn's will through magic or nefarious conditioning. The worst of these "alliances" invoke every negative aspect of the abusive and controlling relationships sometimes seen among humans. Helping a sentient creature leave such a relationship might lead to a true friendship.

When it comes to dragons, all of these factors are magnified; dragons are smarter than most humanoid races, more powerful when fully grown, and more naturally magical. But for their habits of solitude, it might be they who raise and train humans to perform tasks for them, rather than the other way around. Still, the fantasy tropes about dragon riders and the popular Dragonlance setting make dragon marketability relevant to some campaigns.

ENCOUNTERING

This section talks about acquiring an animal from its wild habitat and applies only to the acquisition of wild or feral creatures. The type of animal and the conditions of the encounter determine whether there is a chance to acquire it.

Random Contact

Most wild animals will flee from adventurers upon initial contact. In fact, most have already sensed the approach of adventurers and have fled before being detected. Even dangerous predatory animals have reason to fear humanoids and avoid them.

Only creatures of at least Large size are unlikely to fear normal-sized adventurers, depending on their temperaments. An elk will still prefer to flee, but a brown bear may be curious and investigate Medium-sized creatures to see if they have something (or *are* something) worth eating.

In some cases, fearing adventurers does not compel an animal to flee from them. Some creatures will fight to defend their dens or their young. Predators that are driven by long-term hunger may also attack.

Whatever the circumstances or motivations by which contact with an animal occurs, chance encounters are not good ways to acquire wild animals. An adventurer seeking a particular animal is not likely to come upon it by chance, and most encounters that do not result in the animal's immediate flight are likely to result in hostility.

Stalking

Stalking is the process of tracking a chosen type of animal in its environment, as a predicate for acclimation and eventual training.

The first step is selecting the right animal. A player will propose the animal being sought and the Dungeon Master will determine if the animal can be stalked in that area; some creatures will not be found in some environments, regardless of circumstances or rolls.

If the animal sought is one that can be found in nearby environs, the stalker may spend 1 hour attempting to find the right animal's tracks and locate its territory. This requires a Wisdom (Survival) check with a DC that reflects the difficulty of the terrain and the scarcity of the animal. Rangers have advantage on this check and gain additional information through their Natural Explorer feature, provided they are operating in the correct natural environment.

This check can be repeated. However, an animal may become aware of the stalker's presence after a failed check. Particularly at Intelligence ratings of 4 or higher, an animal may be wise enough to simply relocate its territory at that point. When the stalker finally finds that animal's den, it might therefore be abandoned.

A stalker can employ stealth to avoid an animal's flight, increasing stalking time to 2 hours per check. The animal's passive Perception score is the DC for the stalker's Dexterity (Stealth) check. Success means the animal is unaware of the stalker, even if the separate stalking ability check is failed. In the appropriate natural environment, rangers can use their Natural Explorer feature to move stealthily at normal speed, employing this method with only 1 hour per check.

Once an animal has been successfully stalked, the stalker can begin the process of acclimation.

Acclimation

Acclimation means approaching a wild animal's den, hunting grounds, or other specific territory, and attempting to inure it to the character's presence.

Acclimation is typically accomplished in stages. First, the stalker repeatedly leaves food at a nearby area until the stalker's presence and scent are no longer frightening or offensive to the animal. Once this

Animal Acclimating (Downtime)

You can spend time between adventures visiting a wild animal's territory to acclimate it to you. Full acclimation makes the animal comfortable in your presence and allows you to train it. If circumstances are right, the animal may willingly leave its territory to follow you on adventures.

You must be proficient with the Animal Handling skill for this activity. Locating this territory can be the result of stalking the animal, finding it with magic, or coming across it in a chance encounter.

Normal acclimation depends on the animal's adaptability and how deep in the wilderness it lives. Most animals require 20 downtime days to acclimate. Some can require twice as long. The amount of time needed will usually be obvious to a character proficient with the Animal Handling skill.

A wild animal can also become acclimated if held in captivity, which saves time if the character can't often return to the animal's home. However, the required acclimation time is doubled because it is hard to build trust when a creature is missing the freedom and safety of its home environment.

occurs, continued and repeated contact can lead to the formation of a bond; the animal can come to trust and rely upon the stalker as a source of food and even companionship. Multiple creatures can become acclimated at once if they already have social connections amongst themselves, like a litter of wolf pups or a flock of wild geese.

In game terms, acclimating is a downtime activity that requires proximity to an animal's home territory or a method to restrain it in captivity. Acclimation can be performed intermittently, perhaps interrupted by absences for adventures, but each day devoted to the activity must be performed at the appropriate location or upon a captive animal.

HUSBANDRY

These unusual factors rarely play into an acquisition scenario, but they are worth mentioning in this supplement.

RAISING ANIMALS

Whether bought or encountered, creatures taken in young, helpless states, such as the newborn cubs of a wolf or the eggs of an eagle, can be raised and trained to companionship more easily than animals that are accustomed to living in the wild.

A wild animal raised in captivity does not require acclimation, it must simply be kept in domestic circumstances until it is old enough to be trained. This period varies between animals and is wholly up to the Dungeon Master. Most adventurers don't have those months to spare, but some scenarios, particularly in long campaigns, could allow for the raising of young animals.

For example, it takes about 100 days for new-laid owl eggs to gestate and hatch, and for the young to become capable of flight (and thus training). At the other end of the spectrum, some sharks take a century to reach maturity, thus achieving their full value as adult specimens, although they will be trainable somewhat earlier than that. Because it is a fantasy world, the Dungeon Master may have to determine growth rates appropriate to creatures not found in the real world.

BREEDING ANIMALS

Like raising animals, breeding them in captivity is a lengthy process, probably beyond the scope of most campaigns. It is, however, one of the few ways to increase the likelihood of acquiring exceptional specimens.

ADAPTING ANIMALS

This section addresses the logistics of bringing animals along with you on adventures, how they can best be adapted to an adventuring lifestyle.

FEED AND CARE

Animals need sustenance and care. The larger the animals, the greater the cost and weight of these supplies.

SUSTENANCE NEEDS

Tiny creatures need only 1/4 pound of food per day. Small and Medium creatures need 1 pound. Large creatures need 4 pounds, Huge creatures need 16 pounds, and Gargantuan creatures need 64 pounds of food per day. A creature also needs water in a number of gallons equal to its daily required pounds of food.

The type of food different animals need varies significantly. Omnivores can typically eat any kind of feed, as well as rations. Herbivores like equines can survive on grass, hay, and other herbaceous plants. (High-value feed, like oats, is simply a luxury and is unhealthy for such animals to eat all the time.)

Carnivores require meat for most of their diets. As feed, this typically takes the form of dried meat scraps or meat ground up with absorbent grains. Meat feed lasts for about seven days before it becomes spoiled and worthless. On longer trips, these animals will need to hunt, or they will need their handlers to forage game for them.

The Dungeon Master is the final arbiter of each animal's exact needs, both for quantity and type of food. Creatures who fail to get needed sustenance suffer levels of exhaustion as described in the *Player's Handbook*, in the section titled "The Environment."
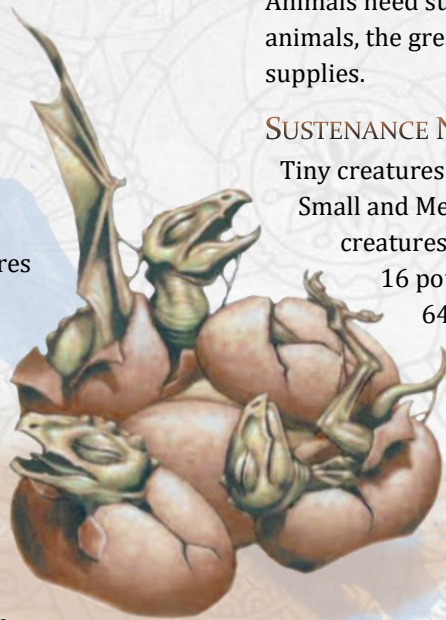
Training Needs

Part of an animal's care includes exercising its useful tricks and roles to keep the animal in practice. Along with that, animals need new training to realize their full potential. Although practice is glossed over in these rules, training new tricks and roles uses the downtime rules in a way that is analogous to the creation of equipment.

In campaigns where downtime opportunities rarely occur, the fast pace of play can leave animals without vital training. For these games, the Dungeon Master can invoke the optional Uptime Activity rules provided in the Variant: Uptime Activity sidebar. This option is taken from Wraith Wright's *Comprehensive Wealth Manual* and adapted to the downtime activities found in this book. This system allows animals to receive training while out on the trail, not just between adventures.

Self-Sufficiency

Most creatures can forage or hunt for themselves, given enough time and left to their own devices. Even domestic animals can adapt if given enough range to roam. Feed is only needed if an animal lacks the time to find its own food.

Creatures that can graze, like horses, mules, and other equines, can consume food in a small area. They can even eat periodically throughout the day, given access to herbaceous plants. However, other creatures have to travel a great distance to find food. These creatures might become lost, as most have no sense of timing nor the notion to return to their handlers immediately after eating. A very smart animal might hunt and return quickly, using the foraging rules, but other animals must be trained to do so as a trick.

Additionally, when animals are kept caged or stabled, are worked or ridden longer than eight hours in a day, or are otherwise prevented from finding their own food for significant portions of the day, they must be provided with feed.

Equipment

Keeping animals safe and calm is important when traveling and adventuring. Some animals need equipment for these purposes. Hunting hawks need hoods to remain docile. Untrained creatures might need cages to keep them restrained.

Variant: Uptime Activity

This variant allows players to access the normal downtime rules while adventuring. Downtime is an integral part of DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, but when stories are too fast paced, players might have no access to these important functions. For players wanting to use the new Animal Acclimating and Animal Training downtime activities, this variant may provide the only opportunity.

With this rule, characters make use of their free time during normal adventuring days in order to complete downtime activities. After traveling and adventuring, sleeping and eating, and performing other miscellaneous tasks, characters typically have about four hours left to themselves. Using this free time is therefore half as efficient per day as a devoting eight hours to downtime activity.

To complete activities this way, record *half* a day of downtime when the party takes a long rest. This is the usual point at which players record healing, mark off rations, and resolve other daily bookkeeping. If the party can't take a long rest on a specific day, it is probably because the characters are too busy, and such distractions tend to get in the way of uptime activity as well. Alternately, if long rests aren't taken because nothing is happening to deplete resources in that time, it is likely that the party has enough free time to spend true downtime days, adding to their accumulated activities.

To perform "uptime" activities while on the road, a character must have paid any associated costs and have along any tools, materials, or other resources the Dungeon Master deems necessary. Particularly for a wild animal being acclimated with the party while out on the adventuring trail, an animal might need a cage, hobble, hood, muzzle or other restraint.

These equipment needs vary based on the animal, its intelligence, its degree of loyalty to its handler, and its degree of training. The Dungeon Master will determine what is necessary for each animal.

Adverse Weather

Some animals are adapted to survive in a range of weather types, but others are not. While the presence

of rain, cloud cover, or direct sunlight can make animals uncomfortable, they are more often sensitive to changes in temperature. Even mild temperature changes from the animal's natural environment can result in behavior changes. Exposure to stronger changes can be dangerous.

MILD TEMPERATURES

Even mild changes in ambient weather can trigger behavioral changes in animals, particularly those with instinctive seasonal behaviors. Birds may seek to migrate and become agitated when their training prevents it. Bears may require additional food, fattening up in preparation for hibernation. Some animals try to seek out a mate.

Such changes can be alarming for a handler who does not expect them, particularly if the animal is not well understood, but most animals will eventually adapt to mild temperature changes and act normally.

EXTREME TEMPERATURES

When changes in climate are more severe, animals can be harmed or die, sometimes without real warning. A bird taken into cold climates may shiver imperceptibly, eventually dying from exposure. Only a handler aware of the danger or carefully watching the animal will have any warning.

The Dungeon Master may assign a range of temperature survivability for any given creature. For example, the human range is between 0 and 100 degrees, Fahrenheit. While a human is not comfortable at either extreme, serious harm is unlikely. The same is true of an animal that stays within its assigned range of survivable temperatures.

Whenever the temperature is at or below a creature's lowest survivable temperature, the exposed creature must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw at the end of each hour or gain one level of exhaustion. Creatures with resistance or immunity to cold damage automatically succeed on the saving throw, as do creatures who are bundled against the cold or otherwise equipped with cold weather gear.
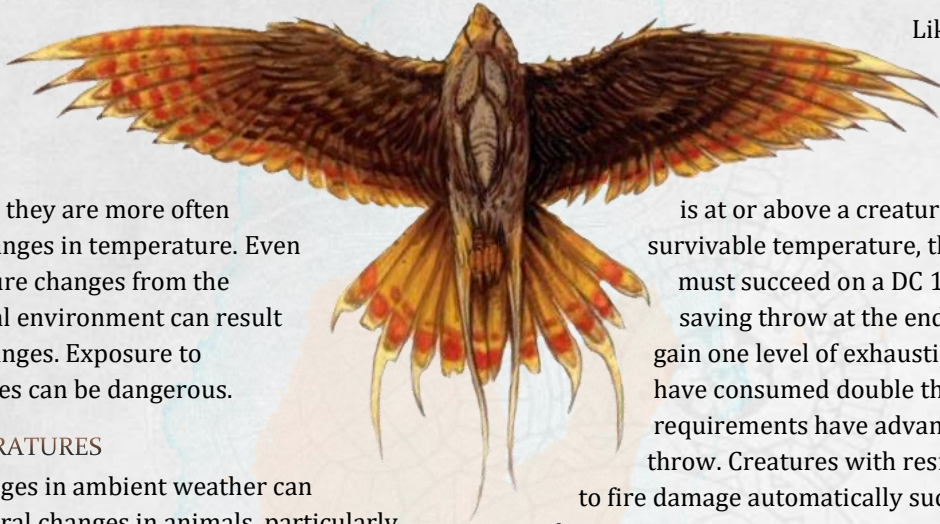
Likewise, extreme heat can be dangerous for animals. When the temperature is at or above a creature's highest survivable temperature, the exposed creature must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw at the end of each hour or gain one level of exhaustion. Creatures that have consumed double their daily water requirements have advantage on the saving throw. Creatures with resistance or immunity to fire damage automatically succeed on the saving throw.

CHALLENGING TERRAIN

Taking animal companions into certain environments can be problematic. Most animals are fine in open terrain if there are no nearby threats. Outside of these circumstances, things can get complicated.

SIZE

Some animals are unsuitable to certain adventuring locations, particularly places with narrow, constraining terrain. The larger the creature, the less adaptable it is.

For example, an elephant or stegosaurus probably won't fit in the goblin caves. It may also have difficulty moving through thick forests unless it can find a wide enough trail. An elephant handler who encounters a ruined monastery must leave the elephant behind unless the monastery was built by giants or was otherwise constructed in a large, grand style. A Huge

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SQUEEZING INTO A SMALLER SPACE

"A creature can squeeze through a space that is large enough for a creature one size smaller than it. Thus, a Large creature can squeeze through a passage that's only 5 feet wide. While squeezing through a space, a creature must spend 1 extra foot for every foot it moves there, and it has disadvantage on attack rolls and Dexterity saving throws. Attack rolls against the creature have advantage while it's in the smaller space." (*Player's Handbook*, page 192)

creature simply won't fit through narrow halls and doorways made for Medium creatures.

Large-size creatures have less difficulty indoors than do Huge creatures. An area that is comfortable for a Medium creature to move through can be navigated by a Large creature, but the squeezing rules must be used during combat in those areas. (See the "Squeezing into a Smaller Space" sidebar.)

Managing Large creatures is a common task for handlers, since most mounts are Large-size, and mounts are ubiquitous features of many adventures. A few moments taken to pull a reluctant animal down a narrow connecting hallway or to get it to duck under a low doorjamb are easy enough events to handle. However, unless the majority of the environment is large enough for the creature to move around in comfortably, with only a few smaller portals or passageways to squeeze through, bringing such a creature indoors is impractical.

A handler will find that Medium, Small, and Tiny animals serve best in these locations, since most adventures won't occur where the adventurers themselves (who are Medium- or Small-size) cannot go. The Medium-size mounts of Small-size adventurers have a tremendous advantage in this regard; a halfling cavalier typically has no trouble bringing her mastiff steed into the ruined temple and is thus able to make excellent use of features and equipment that benefit from being mounted.

Coaxing an animal into a squeezing scenario may require a Wisdom (Animal Handling) check if the creature is of a claustrophobic type, one accustomed to open ground or skies.

Obstacles

Similar to size problems, many animals are not shaped in ways that allow them to navigate humanoid habitats or other terrain that humanoids might easily pass over.

Small obstacles, like broken terrain, rubble, or stairways, can be dangerous for a horse or pony. When an equine creature tries to navigate such terrain, the Dungeon Master may call for a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw. If the save fails, the creature falls prone. An equine creature moving through the area at half speed doesn't need to make the save. Although similar looking to horses, mules are famous dungeon companions due to their Sure-

Footed special trait, which provides advantage on such saving throws. Adventurers have long-admired mules for their ability to navigate humanoid stairways and ruinous rubble, carry great weights on their backs, and fit through spaces too small for horses to pass.

Higher obstacles, like large boulders, may be completely impassible to some creatures. Even without a climbing speed, humanoid bodies are well-suited to scrambling over objects that are about their own size. But trying to jump a horse from boulder to boulder is a losing proposition; the handler is likely to get hurt and the horse is likely to break all its legs. On the other hand, a dog or axe beak is nimble enough to make such short leaps safely. The Dungeon Master determines which obstacles that each type of animal can bypass based on its physicality.

In more-difficult terrain, ropes and vertical ladders are impossible for most animals to climb. Getting an animal up or down a steep cliff may require a handler to raise or lower it using a rope, block and tackle, and a harness or sling. These elaborate measures are time-consuming, not likely to be worthwhile when attempting a casual exploration of a small area. When terrain gets vertical, creatures with flying or climbing speeds are far more useful than normal animal companions or mounts.

Animals with only swimming speeds or that breathe only water are essentially useless outside of their native environments.

Inhabited Dungeons

Taking an animal into a dangerously populated adventuring location, the proverbial "dungeon," inevitably brings it into contact with enemies. (Foes can also appear in random encounters or other seemingly safe spaces, making these considerations ever-present rather than location based.)

The challenge for animals in these scenarios is raw survivability, a comparison of damage versus hit points. Most animals are beasts. With rare exceptions, they have few hit points, low Armor Class, and poor saving throw modifiers, making them susceptible to harm and thus easily killed.

Regardless of how large a role they take in combat, animals can't reliably avoid receiving damage. Even though animals are usually minor threats, ones that monsters would not prioritize as targets, they inevitably fall into moments of vulnerability or find themselves in proximity to foes that have nothing else to do than to attack what's nearby.

As animals become more active in battle, perhaps using the Help action to aid a handler's attack, they become a higher priority. Although the combat benefit this gives could be small, an opponent may notice that the animal's advantage is easy to negate with a single attack. Then there is the *fireball*; sometimes everyone just takes a dice-load of damage, animals included.

While it is the nature of the game that threats are not perfectly anticipatable, players should particularly consider in advance whether it is wise to bring an animal into certain scenarios and should take steps to make the animal more resilient or extractable if combat should envelop it.

Foresight usually means leaving an animal in a safe place, as discussed in the "Safekeeping" subsection below. It can also mean preparing an animal with tricks that allow it to avoid danger. An animal trained to Heel or Hide can be made safer in a variety of scenarios. Magic items and spells can also be provided for the animal's protection. Finally, a handler can learn new class features and feats that allow direct intercession when attacks target animal companions.

Civilization

A creature is suitable for urban environments based on how it reacts to threats and stimuli found there, and how resident people and animals react to the creature.

Domestic animals, even feral ones, are not likely to draw attention at a mere glance. Humanoid races are used to working and living side-by-side with such creatures and don't consider them dangerous or out-of-the-ordinary until they start to exhibit strange behavior. However, creatures that are not normally domestic, particularly predators large enough to prey upon Small or Medium humanoids, will not find a warm welcome in an urban environment. Some places are particularly uninviting to animals, including common places like eating houses and public baths, and formal settings like the duke's court.

Additionally, even calm animals can be unsuited to the big city. Sudden, loud noises, the press of the market crowd, or the barking of local hounds may spook an animal, provoking it to flee or attack.

A dangerous animal can pass unremarked if it is disguised or restrained. A wolf might not arouse the city watch if it is leashed and muzzled, or if it is transported via wagon in an iron cage. Likewise, specialized equipment like blindfolds or blinkers that cover a horses' eyes can keep a skittish animal from being startled and running amok.

SAFEKEEPING

Because some creatures aren't safe accompanying characters in some areas, alternatives may be necessary to explain where these animals go when the game doesn't suit their presence. Although the Dungeon Master can suggest or mandate certain options, every player of an animal-handling character should be ready with a suggestion when necessary.

Following are some examples of how to manage safekeeping. These are easier to work out if the player is prepared to deploy them ahead of time. This often requires being mindful of upcoming difficulties; the Dungeon Master should be ready to forecast the circumstances with enough probability for players to make good choices about what to do with their animals.

ALLIES

This assumes the characters cultivate relationships with people who are capable of keeping and tending their animals. For example, if the characters met and befriended a druid who lives in a remote hermitage, they might impose upon this druid to look after their animals while the party takes on a perilous sea voyage. Animals left with true allies are likely to be well-treated and, if the characters are killed and never return, the animals will have found a good home.

HEADQUARTERS

Some adventuring parties have a permanent home they are based in, like a stronghold or manor house. Large or rural homes may have facilities for animals, be they stables, paddocks, dungeons, moats, or other animal-appropriate features. Adventurers should have hirelings who tend the home in their absence, seneschals, cooks, janitors, or other staff members who can look after animals. However, these servants share such additional duties and are probably only suited to maintaining the animals' care in the short term. Unless the characters employ a groom or another trained hireling specifically for animal care, this option is probably not good for more than a fortnight.

KENNELS OR STABLES

This option may refer to any number of commercial facilities designed to house and care for animals. In a busy city, it is likely that stables are available near the gates or at inns where horses can be left indefinitely, so long as the facility receives pay. The more exotic the creature, the less likely that such facilities will want to take on the animal as a boarder. However, any domestic animal can usually be stabled in any reasonably-sized city.

MINDER COMPANIONS

Minders are grooms or trainers that are brought along on adventures specifically to mind animals. These NPCs hang back when combat occurs, keeping the animals out of danger. Most minders are not trained for battle or are expected to stay out of it. Some minders may also be trained hirelings, brought along to further train the animals during a journey.

Minders also care for animals for short periods when separated from the party. For example, when the players reach the dungeon following a long overland journey, the paladin's NPC squire may hang back and tend the horses while the party descends into the underground ruins.

SELF-RELIANCE

Some animals can simply be left to their own devices. The efficacy of this method is based on the animal, the environment, and other circumstances.

Many animals can be left outside for short periods. For example, a business might have a hitching post outside it, perhaps with a watering trough, where horses can be left for short periods. Likewise, adventurers might hobble their horses and leave them to graze nearby while they explore the abandoned castle. These short-term options are risky since the animals are left untended and vulnerable; the Dungeon Master may employ a random encounter roll to check such animals' fates when left this way.

For animals to be safely left alone for longer, they must be more mobile and self-sufficient. An unusually intelligent hawk could be loosed to hunt while its owner has an audience with the queen. A wolf companion might run wild in the nearby forest while the adventurers enter the city to sell their loot, then allow itself to be found by the handler the next day.

MANAGING ANIMALS

OST ANIMALS CAN BE TRAINED AND managed. Given time, patience, and the correct techniques, even old dogs might learn new tricks. This chapter starts with an overview of what trained animals can do for you, within the context of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS rules. It further talks about the methods for training creatures, as well as the systems for handling them.

TRAINING

Training animals is a lengthy process undertaken by experienced handlers. This downtime process is defined in the Animal Training sidebar on the next page.

TRICKS

Each trick's description is provided below, arranged alphabetically. New tricks can be designed with the Dungeon Master's assistance.

ACT

The animal learns this trick in relation to one of its inherent actions or a special trait that it combines with an action or attack. (This trick can also apply to a supernatural gift or boon that requires an action to activate.) In the presence of its handler, the animal won't normally use the paired action or special trait until commanded to.

For example, a giant octopus has an action called "Ink Cloud." It can be trained with the Act (Ink Cloud) trick, teaching the octopus to release a cloud of ink when the handler commands it to, and (if the handler is nearby) avoid doing so until that moment.

For an effect paired with this trick that has any duration the animal must maintain, the handler can likewise order the animal to cease a use of the effect.

Commanding an initiation of the paired trick requires the handler to use an action, even if there is no target to designate. The animal's trained reluctance toward this natural capability requires a very clear instruction to overcome. Once the action is performed, the animal again refrains from using it until the handler repeats the command.

If the action cannot be used under the commanded circumstances, perhaps when the animal can't see its target or the action has a recharge mechanic that has not yet recharged, the animal will attempt to use the action at its first opportunity.

A creature with this trick and with the rider-trained role can use the related action while ridden, doing so at its rider's command, even if the animal is controlled and therefore otherwise limited to the Dash, Disengage, or Dodge actions. For example, a ridden warhorse can use its Act (Trampling Charge) trick when ridden, pairing that special trait with a natural attack, so long as the rider uses its own action to command the trick each time.

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

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ANIMAL TRAINING (DOWNTIME)

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

To start this downtime activity, a character must be proficient with the Animal Handling skill. Additionally, the creature taught must be an "animal," something the Dungeon Master determines using the guidelines in chapter 1. After a number of downtime days spent together, the animal learns the desired trick or role. A trick can be learned with 6 downtime days of training. A role has a variable downtime requirement given in this chapter, in the description of roles.

An animal can remember no more than 3 tricks per point of its Intelligence rating; if it learns an additional trick beyond this capacity, the handler decides which older trick to replace. When an animal learns a role, the role's free tricks count against this limitation, and an animal must retain all its role-granted tricks in order to retain the role. If it replaces one of those tricks, it loses the role but keeps the remainder of the role's free tricks. An animal that loses a role can replace that same role simply by relearning the lost tricks.

A handler can use this activity to train the same trick or role to multiple animals at once. The maximum number of animals that can benefit from each of a handler's expended downtime days is equal to the lowest Intelligence bonus possessed by any of the collected creatures.

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ACTIVATE MAGIC ITEM

The animal is trained to activate a magic item it wears, carries, or otherwise possesses, doing so when commanded to.

This trick is only useful for an animal that is physically able to perform the activation of a magic item but not smart enough to understand what it's doing. For example, a parrot can speak the command word for a *driftglobe*, but it lacks the wits to associate that sound with the globe's production of light unless it is conditioned to make the association by learning this trick.

This trick can be learned multiple times. Each instance teaches the animal to activate a specific function of a specific magic item; it isn't transferable to another magic item unless everything about the new item is identical to the original.

Activating an item and knowing how to use its resulting benefits may require separate tricks. (See the Use Magic Effect trick, below.) The way animals use magic items is further explained in chapter 4. Creatures with Intelligence ratings of 5 and above don't need this trick; they can already understand the use of magic items and can naturally associate an item's effects with its activation methods.

ALERT

The animal alerts on command. It makes a natural sound intended to distract, to fake the results of a Seek trick, or simply to entertain. Far reaching sounds, like a wolf's howl or a lion's roar, might also be useful for signaling distant allies on command.

The trained animal alerts once (or for one round) each time it is commanded to perform this trick.

ATTACK

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

Once ordered to attack, the animal will use the Attack action to attack its target on each of its turns. (Animal companions lose the Multiattack action if they had it before.) The animal will also use its other combat-related actions whenever it deems these effective, unless it has been trained with the Act trick to hold one or more of these in reserve.

The animal fights until its target is unconscious, or until the animal is no longer able to attack. Unless the

animal has the Desist trick, a Wisdom (Animal Handling) check is required against a DC of 15 to get the animal to stop attacking or to change targets.

If your game uses the optional Mark rule in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, the animal can also be instructed to mark an indicated target. (It will not use mark if it selects its own target.) The animal continues to mark the target with each of its attacks for as long as it continues attacking the same target.

BEHAVE

This trick is needed only for animals that are naturally aggressive and dangerous. (Domestic creatures are tame enough already.) This trick allows the animal to moderate its default aggression, making it safe to bring into proximity with other creatures, even if instinct would drive it to react violently in mixed company. An animal with this trick can also be calmed with Wisdom (Animal Handling) checks as though it was a domestic creature.

This training process is more extensive than merely acclimating a wild animal. Acclimating only makes the handler safe from the creature, it doesn't protect others from the animal's ferocity; it won't prevent an acclimated owlbear from occasionally mauling and snacking on passersby. For that, the Behave trick is required.

An animal trained with this trick will still act aggressively when prompted by its other tricks or if significantly annoyed, but its default behavior becomes that of a docile, domestic creature. The animal won't bite the hand of a child who is just trying to pet it.

COMPREHEND

The animal, which must have an Intelligence rating of 5 or 6, learns to understand the basic concepts expressed in a particular language. This understanding is sufficient to allow for tricks and role functions to be commanded with the specificity normally applied when animal and handler share a true language. If this creature is able to speak or otherwise produce nuanced sounds, it can speak in the same language, conveying very basic concepts. The exact limit of what can be understood or

conveyed with this limited degree of proficiency is left to the Dungeon Master.

CONCENTRATE

The animal performs normally, to the best of its physical ability, despite being injured. An animal's injuries can sometimes impose disadvantage on a handler's Wisdom (Animal Handling) checks or require such checks when no check is normally needed. An animal with this trick is treated as uninjured for such purposes.

This trick also provides advantage on any ability check or saving throw the animal makes to avoid mundane distractions, those unrelated to injury.

DEFEND

The animal defends the handler when a perceived threat attacks or approaches aggressively, even without a command to do so. The animal utilizes its full range of combat actions and special traits against the creature that most recently attacked its handler. Alternatively, the handler can command the animal to defend an indicated target creature, defending it as it would normally defend the handler.

DESIST

The animal breaks off from combat or otherwise backs down from its current activity. An animal that doesn't know this trick continues to fight until its target is defeated, or until it
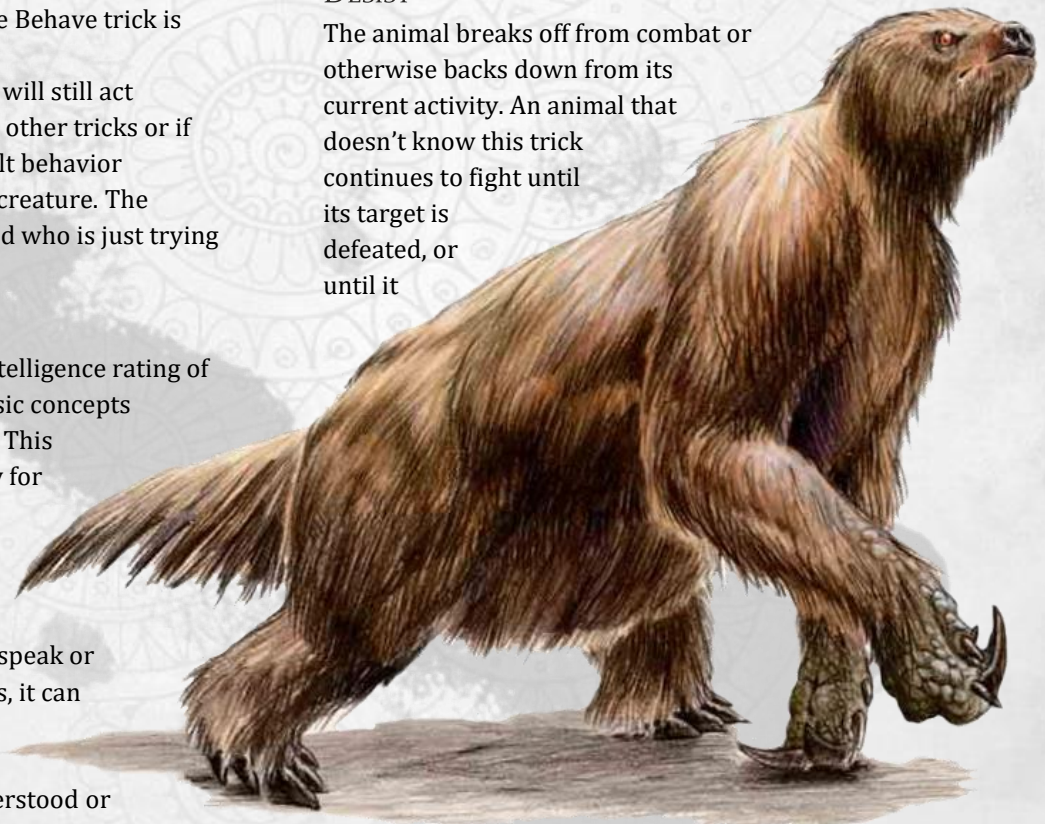
must flee due to injury or fear of the overwhelming odds against it. Alternately, the animal can have a new target indicated without much effort, even if its prior trick has not been completed.

For example, a hound instructed to Track might have to be restrained with a leash if it gets too close to its quarry and doesn't know this trick. A hawk instructed to Attack could be commanded with this trick to switch targets, without a Wisdom (Animal Handling) check, even if its current target is still moving.

Disarm

This trick is only possible if the campaign utilizes the optional Disarm rule in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. When a target is indicated, the animal attempts to disarm the creature of what it is holding.

If the target is holding more than one object, the animal will select an object randomly. A creature can be instructed to disarm a particular object by naming the item if the creature can understand the handler's language.

The animal will continue trying to disarm the target until it has successfully disarmed it of one held item.

If this animal also knows the Fetch trick, an order for the Disarm trick (the action indicating a target) can include instruction for the animal to pick up the disarmed item and bring it to the handler.

Discriminate

The animal resists the commands of other handlers. It will only perform its tricks and role functions for the handler who taught them. If any handler attempts to get the animal to perform a trick or function that the handler didn't teach it, the attempt fails automatically.

If any handler who has not taught the animal at least one trick tries to calm the animal, control it, or get it to perform the function of a role, the check is made with disadvantage. Likewise, the animal is not a "willing" mount if it learned this trick and the rider-trained role from the same handler.

An animal can learn multiple instances of this trick, each specific to a different handler, and each covering tricks and roles those handlers teach. An animal with multiple instances may also have multiple instances of subordinate tricks.

An animal with this trick can be retrained of its known tricks by a new handler. However, this trick cannot be overwritten by exceeding the animal's Intelligence-based capacity for tricks except by the one who originally trained it to Discriminate, or unless the animal has no other tricks trained by that handler.

Fetch

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

Go Home

The animal knows how to return home; it will go to where it lives or where it received training in this trick. The animal performs this trick if commanded to do so, or if it is simply left long enough without active handling or the presence of a conscious handler.

Some animals are more suited to this trick than others; horses and homing pigeons may naturally perform this trick without training, but they are not as

reliable and may not know how to overcome some challenges related to the task.

GUARD

The animal either stays in place and watches for unfamiliar creatures approaching the designated person or thing within range of its perception, or the animal patrols a small or enclosed area looking for unfamiliar creatures.

If it is able, the animal alerts loudly upon detecting an intruder and, if the intruder is not obviously visible, will face the intruder or point its body to show the intruder's position. If a creature attempts to make a Dexterity (Stealth) check while an animal is alerting at it, the creature makes the check with disadvantage.

If the animal also knows the Attack or Defend trick, it will attack an unfamiliar creature if that creature approaches the guarded person or thing, or if the animal encounters that creature in its patrolled area.

HARRY

The animal aggressively follows a designated target but does not usually attack. It instead tries to keep the target's attention by being loud and threatening, often feinting attacks. Its goal is normally to prevent the target from either fleeing or approaching the handler.

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

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

HEEL

The animal comes to the handler in response to a call and it follows the handler closely, even if it normally would not want to do so.

A particularly loyal creature will travel through dangerous terrain, provoke opportunity attacks, or otherwise make heroic efforts to reach its handler when called, and it will follow the handler into even the most foreboding or dangerous settings.

HIDE

The animal seeks out a hiding place nearby and waits for its handler to call for it. If an unfamiliar creature approaches, the animal may try to sneak away, but will later return to that area to resume hiding.

This trick helps when a handler has to go somewhere the animal is unsuited to follow, like a dangerous dungeon or a city. Depending on its attention span, an animal will wait until hunger or threats force it away. A particularly loyal creature may starve itself waiting for a handler to return.

A hunter-trained animal can forage for food without forgetting the Hide command, returning to its hiding spot when fed.

PERFORM

The animal knows a variety of simple stunts it will perform upon command. These may be anything suited to the animal, such as sitting up, rolling over, barking or squawking, and other animal-specific functions. For example, a parrot might know a few simple phrases it can repeat. A fish might swim in tight circles to get fed. A horse might "count" by pawing its hoof on the ground.

SCOUT

The animal travels in the direction instructed, attempting to pass unnoticed. When it detects a creature, something other than a beast of Medium or smaller size, it returns to its handler and performs an alert. This alert is something like emphatic squeaking, a single sharp bark, a scratching of the earth, or some other sound or signal the animal is capable of making. The handler can roughly determine the scouted creatures' distance based on the scouting animal's speed and the time it was gone.

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

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

SEEK

The animal searches the nearby area for a specific thing it has been trained to find. Upon finding one such thing, the animal alerts, using vocalization and body alignment to show the subject's location. If a creature attempts to make a Dexterity (Stealth) check while an animal is alerting at it, the creature makes the check with disadvantage.

If this trick is learned without specifying a subject, the animal is trained to seek out anything that is obviously alive or animate, and it will alert toward the first example it finds.

An animal can learn this trick multiple times, each specifying a different thing the animal will seek out. Examples include a particular rare fungus, a particular race of humanoid, a particular person, or anything else within the animal's natural abilities to distinguish.

SHOVE

The animal will attempt to shove an assigned target using the shoving rules.

When a command for this trick is given, it takes one of two forms. The handler can instruct the animal to knock the target prone or to shove it toward a location the handler designates.

The animal continues to shove the target if that creature stays standing or if it stands up again, or until the target is shoved into the location the handler indicated.

STALK

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

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

STAY

The animal stays in the exact designated spot, waiting for another command to stop doing so. It does not challenge other creatures that approach, but it will defend itself when threatened. (An animal that lacks an attack action flees if seriously threatened.)
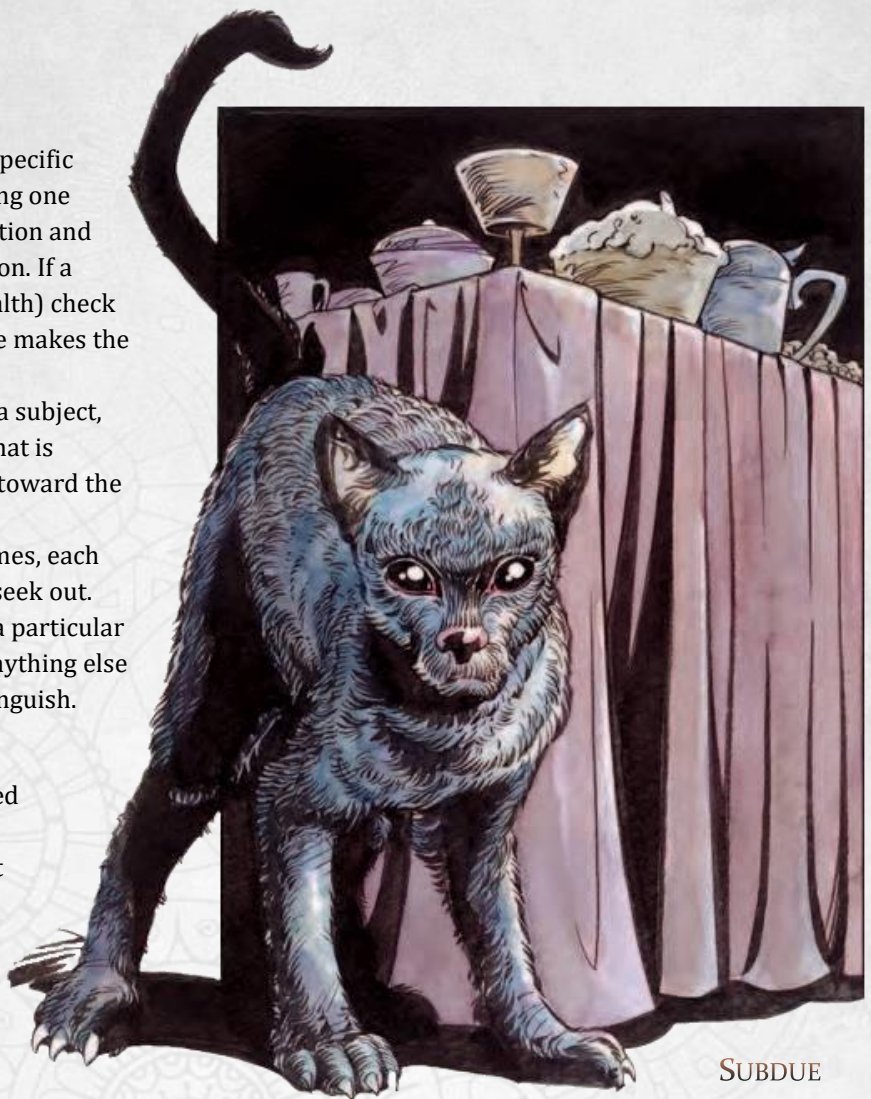
SUBDUE

The animal will attempt to grapple an indicated target using the grappling rules. Once a grapple is established, the animal will use the Dodge action, shaking or unbalancing the target or otherwise positioning itself to avoid retaliatory attacks. If the grapple is broken, the animal will attempt to grapple again.

When a command for this trick is given, it takes one of two forms. The handler can either instruct the animal to hold the target in place or instruct it to drag the target toward the handler.

TRACK

The animal uses its exceptional senses to track by smell. It will use Wisdom (Perception) checks to follow whatever scent its handler indicates.

Other versions of this trick may exist for animals that have supernatural senses that allow them to track in ways other than parsing smells.

Use Item

The animal learns to use or activate a specific mundane item in a specific way, usually applying it to an indicated target. The item must be one that an animal can reasonably manipulate, and the animal trained must be physically suited to manipulating it. Beyond this, the Dungeon Master must regulate this trick by comparing the item's complexity of use against the rating of the animal's Intelligence.

For example, a bear might learn to pull open a hunting trap with its paws, thus resetting the trap. However, the creature probably lacks the physicality and Intelligence rating necessary to stake the trap's lead chain into the ground. An ape has both the manual dexterity and the intellect required to use a tinderbox to light torches, kindling piles, or other targets indicated by the handler.

The exact use contemplated by this trick, the exactness of the item to be used, and the effects of the use are also considerations. An animal trained to carry a pouch to a designated area and upend it there could be spreading caltrops or ball bearings to make the area less passable, silver coins to distract a crowd of villagers, or any other effect the "upending pouch" trick might cover. In this case, the DM might decide that a purse or other small bag qualifies as a "pouch"; the item used doesn't need to be a perfect match.

In game terms, this trick allows an animal to interact with an object in a way that constitutes the Use an Object action (or the Help action if assisting another user of the item).

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

Use Skill

The animal becomes proficient with one of the following skills: Acrobatics, Athletics, Insight, Intimidation, Perception, Performance, Sleight of Hand, Stealth, or Survival.

The animal uses the skill in any scenario it would naturally apply in, as well as when directed to by its handler. The animal is limited to the functions of skills that it can realistically utilize according to its innate senses, its degree of intellect, and its physical capabilities.

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

Use Magic Effect

This trick trains an animal to perform in a way that makes use of a spell or other effect put upon it. Whereas a smart creature, one with an Intelligence rating of 5 or higher, can grasp an effect's parameters and the best way to make use of it, a less-intelligent animal will have to substitute conditioned behavior in place of truly understanding magic applied to it.

This trick can be learned multiple times; each instance trains the use of only a single effect. When the spell, magic item, or other effect is used on the animal, the handler gives a command or signal to let the animal know that the trained-for magic is active. Thereafter, the animal behaves in a way that makes use of the effect. If the handler fails to signal when the magic ends (perhaps the handler has become unconscious), the animal may waste some effort, perhaps an action or two, trying to use the magic even after it has ended.

For example, an animal trained in the Use Magic Effect (*dragon's breath*) trick will know how to make use of that spell's resulting breath attack in combat. An animal trained in the Use Magic Effect (*ring of water walking*) trick will understand that it can run on water; something it wouldn't normally attempt to do.

Spirit creatures produced by the *find familiar*, *find steed*, and *find greater steed* spells share a telepathic bond with their creators and do not need this trick to make intelligent use of any spells their creators cast upon them.

Wear Armor

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

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

Work

Upon command, the animal pulls or pushes a load. This can be a drawn vehicle, the capstan arms for a mill or coil pump, a farming plow, a tree that has fallen

across the road, or some other burden to which the animal has been attached.

Without this trick, an animal is not inclined to utilize its full dragging potential by straining against a heavy load or pulling a wagon. Some creatures can be pushed to this behavior, but they require constant handling to maintain the effort.

YIELD

This trick is common to creatures that provide animal byproducts. It makes the animal easier to harvest those byproducts from. For example, the animal will remain docile while milked by its udders, shorn of its wool, or drained of its venom.

This trick is not required for harvesting animal byproducts, but it makes the process easier and risk-free. Without this trick, most animals must be restrained during the harvesting process. Untrained, a domestic cow might allow itself to be milked without much complaint, but a doe will not.

Particularly in the case of harvesting venom from an animal, this trick means there is no chance for the harvester to accidentally suffer the effects of the poison. See the "Crafting and Harvesting Poison" section of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. (See also, chapter 5 of the *Comprehensive Equipment Manual*.)

ROLES

Roles are complex sets of functions connected by a common theme. The focus on a theme lets the animal learn any number of functions that fill in the gaps between the role's specific tricks, allowing the animal to execute a more complex set of duties than tricks alone allow.

If an unanticipated situation arises related to its role, one not covered by its listed tricks or described within the role itself, an animal is still considered to have training in that function. The animal will automatically conform to the expected behavior or, in the case of difficult or dangerous functions, the handler can get the animal to perform the function using one or more Wisdom (Animal Handling) checks.

Roles often take longer to teach than individual tricks. Their training times are based on the animal's base value, not a static number of days. This is because roles are more complex and specifically address the animal's inherent capabilities, each of which will get adapted to useful functions within the role.

Most roles require a number of training days equal to one-fifth of the animal's base gp value. For example, an untrained elephant (100 gp) requires 20 days to rider-train.

The combat-trained role is harder to learn and must be applied when the animal is still young enough to gain the benefits of extensive mental and physical conditioning. It is the only role that truly changes the animal's stat block. This role can be taught in a number of days equal to double the animal's base gp value. For example, an untrained elephant (100 gp) requires 200 days to combat-train.

An animal that learns a role automatically learns all of its associated tricks except those tricks it already knows. (An animal does not learn the Use Skill trick if it is already proficient with the designated skill, nor does it learn Behave if it is already domestic.) For the purposes of training limitations, an animal cannot learn a role if its Intelligence is not sufficient to learn the role's tricks. However, an animal with too many already-known tricks can have some overwritten by the tricks of the new role.

COMBAT-TRAINED

Included Tricks: *Act (Slam), Attack, Concentrate, Defend, Desist, Wear Armor*

Except under exceptional circumstances, combat-trained creatures require no checks to control in battle (in the case of a mount) or prevent from fleeing (in the case of an unridden creature).

Combat-trained creatures gain 1 Hit Die, a bonus of +2 to Strength and Dexterity, a bonus of +1 to Constitution and Wisdom, and an overbearing or slamming trait:

> ***Slam.*** If the creature moves at least 20 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with one of its natural attacks on the same turn, the target must succeed on a Strength saving throw or also be knocked prone. The DC is 10 + the creature's Strength modifier. If the target is knocked prone, the creature can make a normal natural attack against that target as a bonus action. The creature cannot use this feature on targets of its own size or larger.

Left to its own devices, a combat-trained animal will linger nearby and defend a fallen handler until it is calmed with a Wisdom (Animal Handling) check. Even normally docile animals like horses will not shy away from battle with this training.

Because combat training permanently alters the animal's stat block, an animal that learns this role cannot unlearn it, nor can the resulting tricks be overwritten by learning new ones.

DISABILITY-TRAINED

Included Tricks: *Fetch, Go Home, Heel, Seek, Stay, Use Skill (any)*

A creature trained to this role helps a handler who lacks a significant sense or a major motor function typical to others of the handler's species, or who has a sense or motor function that works in ways not typical to the handler's species.

This role is specific to a particular disability or difference, one that limits how the handler gets around and interacts with societal infrastructure and tools, things designed to synergize with the typical capabilities of the handler's species.

For example, an animal trained to aid a sightless character can guide it around obstacles, make different alert sounds in response to dangerous events or circumstances, and manage some simple

environmental interactions that normally rely upon sight. Such animals are trained to respond to visual cues and signs, sometimes literal signs, to assist the supported handler.

GUARD-TRAINED

Included Tricks: *Attack, Defend, Desist, Guard, Use Skill (Perception)*

Guard-trained creatures respond to attacks or intrusions by making noise, attacking, or both. Animals can make excellent guards when they have useful senses or when intruders are not prepared to face them; a spy expecting a human guard won't get any use out of the *charm person* spell when faced with a guard dog. A creature with this role has the attention span to stick to guard duty for days on end, pausing only to eat and sleep.

HUNTER-TRAINED

Included Tricks: *Desist, Heel, Seek, Track, Use Skill (Perception)*

An animal trained to this role knows how to hunt a variety of things in a variety of ways. It can look for game in a familiar environment, either on its own or with a handler. The animal can attempt to forage according to the "Wilderness Survival" rules of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, although it will consume or abandon extra game if working alone. Alternately, the animal can assist another forager, providing advantage to that Wisdom (Survival) check.

Creatures with this role know how to hunt alongside a handler, often doing so in concert with other hunting creatures. When being handled directly, such creatures will not attack or consume any prey they find unless specifically allowed by the handler.

A hunter-trained creature can also seek out a specific type of hidden creature, or it can follow and find an individual creature based on physical clues.

Typically, the animal employs its exceptional senses in this task. Most handlers prefer to teach this role to creatures with special traits like Keen Hearing and Smell or just Keen Smell. Such animals, like bears, dogs, and pigs, are valued for their ability to find specific prey by scent alone. Depending on what and how they are trained to hunt, creatures with unusual senses like blindsight are also great candidates for this role.

Performance-Trained

Included Tricks: *Behave, Fetch, Heel, Perform, Stay, Use Skill (Acrobatics)*

The animal is trained to perform a variety of exceptional and dangerous tricks typical of circus work or similar spectacles. It is used to performing in costumes, jumping through flaming hoops, remaining calm and unaggressive amidst crowds of spectators, and exhibiting other interesting behaviors that would normally run contrary to an animal's instincts.

Profession-Trained (Generic)

Included Tricks: *Varies*

The Dungeon Master may design additional roles based on the specific uses to which an animal may be put. Such functions should conform to the role's theme, and the theme should include diverse functions that cannot otherwise be represented sufficiently by one or two tricks.

For example, a hound trained to water-rescue scenarios (a "lifeguard") may need to leap into a rough river upon command, swim reliably, and pull a flailing or unconscious creature to shore. Depending on its location, the animal might need to stand watch and recognize a distressed swimmer, perhaps initiating a rescue without the direction of a handler. This example role probably includes the Skilled trick (Perception to notice or find a drowning person and Athletics to swim reliably in difficult waters). Its functions include avoiding the flailing strikes of a drowning person, knowing how to grab clothing to drag an unconscious creature, or how to swim beside someone who just needs a little extra support to get to shore. The multiple tricks and smaller nuances of this lifeguard profession make it suitable for a role.

In designing the particulars of a role, the Dungeon Master should apply a few included tricks and enumerated functions, as well as a general description of the role that could inform the unusual or "corner-case" functions the animal can perform. Additionally, the DM should consider mental prerequisites for the role, physical feature requirements, and every other factor that roles refer to.

Rider-Trained

Included Tricks: *None*

This is a common example of the profession-trained role. It can be taught to an animal with physical features suitable for riding. Most Large and Medium mounts are quadrupeds with horizontal backs suitable for saddling and riding by humanoids.

Rider-trained creatures serve as mounts and require no special control to ride normally. For additional guidance on riding mounts in combat, see the next chapter.

All creatures listed on the Mounts table in chapter 5 are already trained for use as mounts. Untrained creatures cannot be controlled as mounts, even with Wisdom (Animal Handling) checks; they will buck, roll, or otherwise try to dislodge a rider unless controlled by magic.

Rider-training includes a number of functions not covered by tricks. For example, a rider-trained horse will hold still while a saddle and tack are applied, will not revolt when ridden near other creatures or on busy roadways, won't insist on grazing or eating when food is immediately available, and won't fight when shoed by a farrier. In short, a rider-trained creature will act like we expect mounts of its type to act. In some cases, and depending on the particular sort of animal, a Wisdom (Animal Handling) check may be required for a miscellaneous function. For example, horses are trained to jump obstacles when serving as mounts but getting a horse to jump a significant barrier or gap is difficult, requiring a check.

Handling

This section discusses the basics of handling animals, how players get benefits from their training or their animals' training.

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

Animal Handling (Skill)

"When there is any question whether you can calm down a domesticated animal, keep a mount from getting spooked, or intuit an animal's intentions, the DM might call for a Wisdom (Animal Handling) check. You also make a Wisdom (Animal Handling) check to control your mount when you attempt a risky maneuver." (*Player's Handbook*, page 178)

LISTED FUNCTIONS

For the functions of the Animal Handling skill listed in the *Player's Handbook*, a check is always required.

These functions are:

1. Intuit intentions of an animal
2. Prevent spooking of a mount
3. Calm a domestic animal

The skill describes three categories of affectable creature ("animal," "domestic animal," and "mount"). It further provides three specific things a character can do when targeting an animal with the skill. Each of these functions is explored below.

INTUIT INTENTIONS OF AN ANIMAL

This function of the skill is written in a way that applies to animals of any kind. Unfortunately, "animals" is a broad term, one without definition. It logically includes more than just the beast creature type. For a Dungeon Master wondering what sorts of creatures might best be considered animals, some guidance is provided in chapter 1.

A successful Wisdom (Animal Handling) check tells the handler what the animal intends to do. This further implies some insight into the creature's motivations, a common-sense gateway to understanding intentions. For example, knowing that a bear intends to attack is less useful than knowing why, whether because of extreme hunger, fear for its nearby young, or having been driven to rage by a festering arrow wound in its back. Attention to these details is what informs the character of the animal's intentions.

PREVENT SPOOKING OF A MOUNT

When an event would spook a mount, whether it is being ridden or simply within the handler's reach, a successful Wisdom (Animal Handling) check prevents the animal from being spooked.

This function, as written, applies only to mounts. Mounts are creatures with the rider-trained role, or creatures that have been subdued into being ridden, by magical means or otherwise.

At the Dungeon Master's discretion, this check may also overcome a mount's magically induced fear. The DC to calm a magically frightened animal is the DC of the spell or effect that applied the frightened condition. If successful, the condition remains, but the animal will not flee, whether compelled to by an additional function of the magic or because the animal's instinctive response would be to flee.

Smarter animals are subject to regular social manipulations. You can use Deception, Insight, Intimidation, and Persuasion checks normally on an animal if it has an Intelligence rating of 5 or higher, and it can understand your language (or if you can communicate with it telepathically). Even with animal instincts, its understanding of social queues is nuanced; it can be manipulated just like other NPCs.

TRAINED FUNCTIONS

Animal Handling can also be used to get animals to perform their trained tricks and miscellaneous role functions. Unlike the skill's listed functions, these usually require no ability checks. However, there are four common exceptions that require a roll:

1. The trick's description calls for a check
2. The circumstances are particularly difficult
3. The animal is injured
4. The animal lacks the prerequisite training

Each of these exceptions is explored below.

TRICK DESCRIPTIONS

Almost none of the standard tricks call for Wisdom (Animal Handling) checks in their normal applications. However, some of the functions of a trick may require the animal itself to make Strength or Dexterity checks to physically perform it, Wisdom checks to find things, or Intelligence checks to avoid being fooled by distractions or similar-looking targets.

PARTICULARLY DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES

The Dungeon Master determines what is "particularly-difficult." This should be something significant, more than the mere difference between performing under training conditions and applying the trick in-the-field.

Specifically, these circumstances should relate to the animal's willingness to perform or its ability to understand the command. If the desired activity itself is what's hard, that would normally affect the animal's ability check to get the task done instead of the handler's check to elicit the attempt. In some cases, physical difficulties, particularly dangerous ones, can affect both the animal's ability to perform *and* its willingness to make the attempt.

For example, jumping obstacles is a function of a rider-trained mount's training, requiring no checks.

CALM A DOMESTIC ANIMAL

As written, this function only works on domestic animals. (The difference between domestic and trained animals is better described in appendix B.) It has no effect on wild or feral creatures.

The handler's Wisdom (Animal Handling) check can prevent any behavior that an animal would not perform if "calmed." Calming is a broad term. Logically, it can remove an animal's fear, but also other agitating influences like anger or hunger, things that might provoke the animal to attack or flee.

UNLISTED FUNCTIONS

At the Dungeon Master's discretion, you can use Animal Handling on creatures of Intelligence 6 or lower in the place of the Deception, Insight, Intimidation, or Persuasion skills to understand and influence them. To do this, substitute Wisdom (Animal Handling) checks for any of those Charisma or Wisdom checks.

However, if the obstacle is a high one, the mount may balk, calling for a successful Wisdom (Animal Handling) check before it will make the attempt. Additionally, the Dungeon Master might require the mount to make a Strength (Athletics) check to clear the obstacle.

In extreme circumstances, the DM may determine that the animal knows its own limitations and simply won't attempt the task, regardless of handling rolls.

Animal Injury

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

The performance of an animal with the Concentrate trick isn't affected by injuries. Similarly, an animal that is particularly loyal may ignore the effects of injury if defending its handler.

Lack of Training (Pushing)

At the Dungeon Master's discretion, an animal can be "pushed" to perform a trick it hasn't been trained to perform, so long as the circumstances are right, and the animal is naturally inclined to that behavior.

Pushing requires a Wisdom (Animal Handling) check, and the Dungeon Master may apply disadvantage if the trick would normally require a check when trained.

For example, a dog might be convinced to Fetch, even without learning the trick. A homing pigeon might be released at the right time of day or in the right way to assist or encourage it to Go Home. A warhorse might Work to pull a wagon if hitched up.

A very common form of pushing is getting a mount to remain in battle, despite it lacking the combat-trained role. In this case, the check is performed at the start of each rider turn. Success prevents the mount from fleeing because of its injuries or proximity to battle, at least until the start of the rider's next turn.

Mundane Logistics

Handlers control animals by issuing commands. Commands are usually verbal, requiring the animal to hear the handler. Some commands may be delivered physically, as gestures or touches; these rely upon having the animal's attention or being in contact with the animal.

Sometimes, both verbal and physical commands are used; a handler may call for an animal's attention then deliver a gestured command or may issue a verbal command while gesturing to indicate a target. Unless the Dungeon Master dictates otherwise, any trick can be prompted with audible or visible signals, or both.

A handler can command one trick or role function on its turn, doing so as part of the "brief utterances and gestures" each character is allowed during each turn. As part of these signals, some circumstances may require the handler to use an action or bonus action, make an ability check, or both, but these factors are unusual.

In response to the command, each of the animals the handler manages nearby will respond if it can perceive these signals and it knows the commanded trick or role function. To get just one animal to perform the trick when two present animals know it, a successful Wisdom (Animal Handling) check is required against a DC of 10. The DC goes up to 15 when three or more animals with that training are present.

Actions and Targeting

A handler must usually use an action for any of the three enumerated functions of the Animal Handling skill, discussed above. In contrast, using the skill to get an animal to perform a trick or to control it in battle requires no action at all, with one exception.

Any trick that requires the handler to "indicate" a target in its description, such as Fetch or Attack, requires the handler to use an action making dramatic pointing gestures. These are usually accompanied by emphatic verbal commands or by sounds that draw the animal's attention to the handler's gestures, regardless of a shared language or other factors. The target specified must be within 30 feet of the handler unless the trick states a different range. The animal must be able to see the handler and the target to understand the handler's instruction.

If the trick can be performed without an indicated target, or the animal fails to perceive the target, the animal picks its own target. This is usually the closest or most interesting of all possible targets, as determined by the Dungeon Master.

Once a target is indicated, the animal will continue to perform the trick with the same target round-after-round, even without further instruction from the

handler (or *despite* further instruction). Animals are often quite single-minded in the pursuit of an assigned task. A successful Wisdom (Animal Handling) check or the Desist trick may be necessary to get the animal to break off or to allow it to heed a command to change targets. Otherwise, the commanded activity continues until the trick is completed, as in the case of tricks like Fetch, until the target is killed as with Attack, until the target is found as with Track, and so on.

Animal Attacks (Multiattack)

The Multiattack action exists as a mechanism to enhance the power of creatures, to make them more viable as opposition to the player characters. Animals that switch sides, those that fight on behalf of the party, lose the Multiattack action. Every option in the core rules that puts an animal on the players' team removes the Multiattack action, and this supplement does as well. By switching sides, the impact of these creatures on the action economy, the number of attacks aimed at player characters versus the number aimed at monsters, is reversed and must therefore be compensated by this change.

An animal that had Multiattack keeps its individual attack actions, it simply can't combine them as part of the Multiattack action.

Trick Results by Animal

The Dungeon Master may rule that a particular animal simply lacks the physical or mental features necessary to perform some tricks, or that it lacks the correct disposition. In these cases, the trick may be impossible to learn or difficult to employ. Alternately, different animals can perform the same trick with different results or under different circumstances.

For example, house cats famously won't come when called by name, so the DM may rule that a cat can't learn Heel or that the handler has disadvantage on checks for that trick.

Communication

Communication is an important aspect of training an animal, affecting its behavior and understanding its mood. Most communication with animals is limited, achieved with directed attention, body language, and a few familiar or empathic noises. The normal rules for handling an animal assume these limitations. However, limited communication is not always present in these interactions.

The ability to use true language or telepathy, at least in one-way communications, provides exceptional benefits when training or managing a creature. These communication modes can be achieved in several ways. Spells, class features, and racial traits are the most common methods, but some animals are smart enough to comprehend speech without magic. Animals with Intelligence ratings 5 or higher are able to learn languages, and some even have their own languages specific to their kind. If such an animal learns the handler's language, or vice versa, this is sufficient to gain the benefits of true communication.

When an animal understands a handler's language, or vice versa, the handler has advantage on Wisdom (Animal Handling) checks to intuit the creature's intentions, or to control or calm it. Precise exchanges help the animal better understand the importance of the circumstances or the unthreatening nature of whatever stimulus is agitating it.

Beyond mere rolls, true language allows an animal to perform its tricks with greater precision or nuance. For example, the animal might immediately understand which sack from the pile it should Fetch, which scent it should Seek out, or the exact location at which it should Stay.

Character Options

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

Spells for Animals

This section lists the common animal-affecting spells and describes how they fit in the context of this supplement's rules.

Animal Friendship. The 24-hour duration of this spell means that, when cast daily, a beast could be constantly charmed, cementing a magical alliance.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

An animal that gains sentience may acquire its own alignment, motivations, and complex personality. While it can no longer be managed with the Animal Handling skill or made to perform tricks, the awakened creature does not forget the nature of its learned tricks, nor does it forget how it's handler previously treated it, whether good or bad. If your game uses the optional loyalty rules, the animal now uses normal NPC loyalty mechanics from the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

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

The primary function of this spell is to enhance an animal when working directly with the caster.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

System Change: When correctly counting creatures' food requirements, this spell will daily sustain 11 Large steeds, like horses and camels, or 5 Huge ones, like elephants. Alternately, the Dungeon Master may attribute the sustenance provided by this spell to some magic that makes the quantity of food irrelevant, allowing only 5 steeds to be fed, no matter their size.

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

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

In addition to finding the creature, the ten-minute duration of this spell allows you a lot of time to work;

with the right tools, you can isolate a target by cutting off its avenues of escape, making it easier to capture.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

This spell is limited in that it cannot locate a specific member of the species sought. For areas rife with the specified animal, the general nature of the results can make the spell less useful. Each casting might point to a different member of the species and, particularly if the animal is territorial, repeated castings may lead you toward different animal dens.

This lack of specificity also means the spell has little utility in finding an exceptional specimen. Neither is it much help in tracking down the specific creature that recently attacked a villager's livestock. However, if you are looking for a specific beast that travels in a pack or herd, judicious use of this spell may bring you into

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Control by Magic Item

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

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

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

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

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

Racial Traits

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

Bugbear. While mounted, the Long-Limbed trait allows you to better exploit the power of the lance, a one-handed weapon on par with the highest damage

ratings for even two-handed weapons, using it a range of up to 15 feet.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Classes and Class Archetypes

A great many classes and class archetypes have mechanical advantages applied to their handling of animals or their use of animals in combat. Not every class's features are mentioned when applicable to animals; these are just the most useful or interesting. A particular focus is given to synergizing features with mounted combat.

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

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

Additionally, various totemic aspects help this barbarian move and fight in concert with animals that are faster or can fly.

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

Bard (College of Glamour). It is hard to separate this character from its mount; the Mantle of Inspiration feature allows extra movement useful for approaching and mounting an animal. At the same time, a mount that receives the boost can move to meet you, all without provoking opportunity attacks.

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

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

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

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

Cleric (Order Domain). The Voice of Authority feature can allow a combat-trained mount, like a warhorse, to use an action or trait like Trampling

Charge. It can't normally do so while controlled, being limited in the actions it performs, but this reaction is allowed.

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

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

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

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

Fighter (Samurai Martial Archetype). When combined with the Mounted Combat feat, the Rapid Strike feature allows a rider to double all its attacks against most enemies on foot.

Fighter, Paladin, Ranger (Fighting Styles). A rider with the Archery Fighting Style feature can benefit from the mobility of mounts, which can Disengage and move a great distance. This helps the rider not suffer disadvantage on ranged attacks for being next to foes.

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

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

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

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

> System Change: Because this book facilitates animal companions for characters of all classes, with its own level-based restriction on challenge ratings, the Beast Master's Ranger Companion is not restricted to having a CR of 1/4 or lower. Instead, it has the same level-based CR limitation applicable to all animal companions, discussed in appendix B. The enhancements applied by this feature do not raise the animal's CR for the purpose of this calculation.

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

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

> System Change: Because this book allows a broader range of companions than mere beasts, something

the *Player's Handbook* did not consider, some potential Ranger Companions can end up with far too many attacks under the Multiattack action. To compensate, a Ranger Companion gets to make no more than three attacks with this feature's command, regardless of its Multiattack description.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Wizard (School of Transmutation). This wizard's Transmuter's Stone can provide one of a range of useful enhancements to an animal ally. While these benefits might be of little use applied to some transmuters, they are particularly useful on animals.

Chapter 3

CHAPTER THREE

MOUNTS IN COMBAT

OUNTS ARE ANIMALS CAPABLE OF, AND trained to, carry riders. They can be trained and handled just like any other viable creature. However, when ridden, they invoke various special rules, variant rules, and techniques for play. The complexity of these rules best lends itself to an entire chapter.

This chapter examines the standard "Mounted Combat" rules from page 198 of the *Player's Handbook* and explores some nuances and corner cases left unanswered. It also provides new variant rules to cover some of the common complications of riding.

QUALIFIED CREATURE

As a prerequisite to carrying a rider, a potential mount must meet qualifications set by the *Player's Handbook*.

> "A willing creature that is at least one size larger than you and has an appropriate anatomy can serve as a mount…" (*Player's Handbook*, page 198)

ANATOMY

The first step to riding is selecting a creature you can mount. A potential mount must have the right physicality to bear a rider. This usually means the animal's back is horizontal during the creature's normal mode of movement, as with most quadrupeds. For a non-humanoid rider, a different shape of mount

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

Relatedly, an animal's musculature, reflected by its Strength rating, plays a role in whether it has the right anatomy to serve as a mount. Again, this factor must be considered in the context of the rider. If a creature's Strength rating is not sufficient to carry the weight of all its riders and their gear, it can be mounted but might not be able to go anywhere. An animal makes a poor mount if rendered immobile or reduced to a 5-foot speed because it carries a load that exceeds its capacity.

SIZE

In addition to having the right general physicality, a mount must be big enough to carry you. A suitable mount is one that is larger than the rider, by at least one size category. If the mount's anatomy allows it to carry more than one rider, each rider must conform to the size requirement individually.

Regulating an animal's larger size raises complications when the game uses miniatures on a grid. In these scenarios, the riders effectively occupy some or all of the mount's space, despite being smaller. Regardless of the cover rules, riders and mount don't grant cover to one another.

Normally, the player of a riding character determines which of the larger mount's covered grid

squares the rider will occupy when it mounts. Shifting from one of the mount's squares to another of its squares is possible, perhaps using the rider's own movement to make the adjustment. Alternately, the Dungeon Master can simply rule that any attack that can reach any square occupied by the mount can reach any rider and that any attack performed by a rider can originate from any square covered by the mount.

VARIANT: SAME-SIZE MOUNTS

Some mounts can carry a rider of their own size, but they do so with some difficulty. For example, a hearty mountain pony might be ridden by an adult human or a dwarf. In such cases, the mount's speed drops by 20 feet and it has disadvantage on Strength-, Dexterity-, and Constitution-based rolls, including ability checks, attack rolls, and saving throws. This penalty is not cumulative with the one for being heavily encumbered when using the Variant Encumbrance rule.

WILLING

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

A rider-trained creature is usually a willing mount if it is handled by the riding methods it was trained to respond to. For example, a horse trained in traditional methods will allow a humanoid to get into the saddle. It will turn in response to the reins and increase its speed when pressured by the rider's heels. However, in unusual circumstances, such as when frightened or enraged, a trained mount may instead shy away from a would-be rider.

It is possible to get onto an unwilling mount, as discussed below, but the creature will be uncontrolled, simply doing as it pleases rather than taking directions or suggestions from its rider. Depending on the creature's temperament, it may try to throw the rider off or simply lay prone until the rider gives up.

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

VARIANT: UNWILLING MOUNT

If a creature is not willing to be mounted, some special effort is required to get onto it and to stay in the saddle. The *Player's Handbook* makes no allowance for getting onto an unwilling mount, making these rules optional.

In addition to spending the necessary movement to mount (see below), getting onto an unwilling creature also requires an action. The would-be rider launches itself onto the creature's back and tries to cling there.

The rider makes a Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check contested by the mount's Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. If the check fails, the movement is expended and the action is wasted, without results; the rider does not mount. If the check succeeds, the rider is strong and lithe enough to hit the saddle and hold on; despite the mount sidestepping or twisting away, the would-be rider gets on, moving into the creature's space.

If a mounted creature is (or becomes) unwilling to serve as a mount, it probably reacts badly to having a rider. The animal does whatever it pleases instead of accepting the rider's instructions. A docile creature might simply lay prone to relieve itself of the weight if it feels safe doing so in that area. A more spirited animal might try to buck the rider off. A cunning or malicious creature might even allow itself to be mounted before attempting to remove the rider violently.

At the Dungeon Master's discretion, a rider-trained animal that is simply being obstinate may automatically revert to its trained behavior after being successfully mounted, allowing itself to be ridden as normal. Alternately, the DM may require the rider to make Wisdom (Animal Handling) checks each round, trying to calm the animal into willingness before the animal can buck the rider off.

GETTING ON AND OFF

This section unpacks the standard rules relating to mounting and dismounting a creature.

> "Once during your move, you can mount a creature that is within 5 feet of you or dismount." (*Player's Handbook*, page 198)

Once During Your Move

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

This supports the notion that mounting and dismounting are not merely flavors of movement. They constitute activities of their own sort, ones that costs movement to perform, like standing from a prone position. Otherwise, why limit these activities to one use per turn? Regardless, the Dungeon Master should feel free to relax this restriction when the player isn't abusing it to repeatedly reset a mount's initiative.

Within 5 Feet

To mount a creature, a would-be rider must be within 5 feet of it. By logical inference, dismounting places the rider on the ground within 5 feet of the mount, mirroring the distance requirement for mounting.

Unless the particular shape of a creature reasonably prevents it, the rider should be able to choose which space within 5 feet to dismount to. Alternately, if using miniatures, the rider must dismount to a square adjacent to its own position upon the mount, not just any square a larger mount is adjacent to.

Control and Initiative

This section deals with the control and initiative of mounts, two concepts that the *Player's Handbook* ties together.

The Two States

A mounted creature operates under one of two modes, "controlled" or "uncontrolled." This state significantly impacts the rules governing the interaction of mount and rider.

> "When you're mounted, you have two options. You can either control the mount or allow it to act independently." (*Player's Handbook*, page 198)

Outside of combat, during overland travel, it doesn't really matter which state the mount has unless it is completely uncontrollable for some reason. This is because the rules for a creature's state only relate to combat actions and initiative.

Controlling a mount requires that the creature be trained for riding.

> "You can control a mount only if it has been trained to accept a rider. Domesticated horses, donkeys, and similar creatures are assumed to have such training." (*Player's Handbook*, page 198)

This product assumes that *all* ridable animals in chapter 5 of the *Player's Handbook* come rider-trained.

Without this training, an animal doesn't understand (and can't react to) the rider's signals of control, even if the creature is charmed or otherwise cooperative. In the terms used by this supplement, a regular creature that is not rider-trained has no option but to act in an uncontrolled fashion when ridden, unless that creature has a telepathic bond with the rider.

An intelligent creature is assumed to act independently, preferring the "uncontrolled" state.

> "Intelligent creatures, such as dragons, act independently." (*Player's Handbook*, page 198)

The *Player's Handbook* doesn't define "intelligent creatures" in this context.

To answer this need, the *Comprehensive Animal Handling Manual* defines such creatures as those with Intelligence ratings of 5 or higher. Despite thinking animalistically and having limited self-awareness, these animals are smart enough to overcome conditioned behavior and defy handling if they choose.

However, an intelligent creature can allow itself to be controlled. In this case, mount and rider must share a language or a telepathic bond if the mount is not rider-trained (unable to take normal riding signals.)

The spirits created by the *find steed* and *find greater steed* spells are an example of such mounts. These are described as particularly intelligent, but the terms of these spells ensure that the steeds are controlled. Effectively, the rider, not the intelligent animal, is in charge of whether and when the mount is controlled.

DM's Corner: *Why is this Confusing?*

The "Mounted Combat" section of the *Player's Handbook* states, *"The initiative of a controlled mount changes to match yours when you mount it. It moves as you direct it, and it has only three options: Dash, Disengage, and Dodge. A controlled mount can move and act even on the turn that you mount it."*

What happens when a controlled mount's initiative changes to match the rider's? Does the word "matches" have a special meaning that falls outside the normal rules for tied initiative rolls? The rules themselves, and the lead designer's clarifications, all seem to be in conflict. No wonder mounted combat seems so complex!

There are two schools of thought that interpret the meaning of "matches" when it comes to this rule. Wraith Wright's *Comprehensive Animal Handling Manual* endorses the second of these two options because it essentially concords with the rules text and the majority of the lead designer's clarifications (or all of those clarifications if you read them while holding them at an angle). Further, once the second school of thought is employed, all the complexity of mounted combat and its otherwise-necessary Ready actions falls away, leaving a system that resembles that of earlier editions. This supplement therefore assumes option two, further below, is correct.

Option One: Sequential

The first school of thought says that mount and rider share an initiative number but have separate, sequential turns. The standard initiative rules in the *Player's Handbook* only apply "simultaneous" activity to groups of identical creatures. All other characters and monsters must determine a sequential order when their initiative rolls tie. Players can only choose the order among their tied characters and, since the mount is not a player's character, its sequence does not fall to player choice. Instead, as when monsters tie with characters or with other monsters, the DM chooses the sequence or uses a d20 roll-off to determine it.

This option is supported by the lead designer's Twitter messages ("tweets") of April 26, 2017. In these, he stated, "A rider and a controlled mount have separate turns, but they have the same initiative, which means **you decide which one goes first**." (Emphasis added.) On March 3, 2018 (after the interview quoted below), he further tweeted that, "A controlled mount has its own turn, but that turn takes place on the same initiative count as the rider's turn" (emphasis added), although this statement supports either option.

Option Two: Overlapping

The second school of thought says that mount and rider share time, using separate-but-overlapping turns. They can go back and forth in their uses of actions, movement, and the like, each still within its own turn, until both creatures have exhausted their full range of desired functionality.

This option is supported by the lead designer's interview of February 2018, titled *Sage Advice on Mounted Combat*. In this interview, the lead designer stated that the controlled mount's turn "**basically overlaps with yours**." He repeated this notion several times, also saying, "It's moving on your turn. Its movement is taking place on your turn." He further stated that, "The mount almost becomes a movement and action extension for the rider."

This is further supported by the *Player's Handbook*, which states, "A controlled mount can move and act even **on the turn that you mount it**." (Emphases added.) The mount is therefore acting during *the rider's* turn, the turn in which it was mounted. If the turns did not overlap, the mount could not act until that turn had concluded.

UNCONTROLLED INITIATIVE

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

> "An independent mount retains its place in the initiative order. Bearing a rider puts no restrictions on the actions the mount can take, and it moves and acts as it wishes. It might flee from combat, rush to attack and devour a badly injured foe, or otherwise act against your wishes." (*Player's Handbook*, page 198)

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

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

CONTROLLED INITIATIVE

A controlled mount's initiative changes to match the rider's initiative.

> "The initiative of a controlled mount changes to match yours when you mount it… A controlled mount can move and act even on the turn that you mount it." (*Player's Handbook*, page 198)

The meaning of this text is subject to some debate, as shown in the sidebar titled "No One Knows How This Works." This supplement suggests that rider and controlled mount can perform the full range of their turns' activities together in overlapping time. For example, this overlapping allows the mount to move up to an enemy, the rider to attack, and the mount to move away from the enemy, completing its movement.

TIMING

In battle, a mount's state of control is determined at the moment a rider takes control. This is usually when the rider climbs on but could also mean when combat starts if the rider is already on the mount.

If a controlled mount ceases to be controlled, perhaps because it can choose its own state of control, it does not return to its prior initiative number. It maintains the initiative count it acquired from having been controlled earlier but its turn reverts to being sequential with the rider's, not overlapping. The Dungeon Master determines which of the two goes first on that shared initiative count.

If a previously controlled mount returns to being controlled, perhaps because the rider succeeded on a Wisdom (Animal Handling) check to calm the mount or convince it to be willing, the rider and mount act synergistically again with overlapping turns.

VARIANT: MULTIPLE RIDERS

Some mounts are capable of bearing multiple riders. With this optional rule, a mount's initiative and state of control only change once per round, regardless of how many additional riders clamber onto the mount and take control of it.

VARIANT: TIMING CHANGES

If the mount is intelligent, in control of the choice of mode, the mount can revisit its choice at the end of each of its turns, switching to uncontrolled activity or vice versa. Likewise, if the rider is in control of the choice of mode, the rider can revisit its choice at the

end of each of its turns, releasing control or asserting control at that time.

This suggested rule is to prevent modes of control from changing in the middle of a turn because that would allow the mount to gain the benefits of both modes while ignoring the drawbacks.

ACTIONS AND MOVEMENT

A mount has its own actions and movement, depending on its state of control. Its use of these actions, and its movement, can both affect the rider; when the mount moves on its turn, the rider is moved with it. This raises several important questions, particularly related to actions and opportunity attacks.

CONTROLLED ACTIONS

A rider's activities are normally unrestricted from atop a mount, but its movement is essentially useless while it remains mounted.

A controlled mount's actions are not as flexible. It is limited in what it can do because it is busy paying attention to the rider's orders and carrying out the rider's commands.

> "[A controlled mount] moves as you direct it, and it has only three action options: Dash, Disengage, and Dodge." (*Player's Handbook*, page 198)

A mount can perform no other actions, unless a special rule provides an exception. *However, the mount is still free to perform a reaction or bonus action.* This option usually presents itself as an opportunity attack.

A handful of character effects, like the Battle Master fighter's Commander's Strike maneuver, can allow an allied creature to move, attack, or perform some other activity that would be otherwise forbidden by the action restriction. For example, a cleric with the Order Domain uses Voice of Authority to get her warhorse to make an attack. If this occurs on the same turn that the creature moved 20 feet toward the target, the Trampling Charge trait means the target may also be knocked prone, and the warhorse can use a bonus action as a follow-up attack. This class feature has effectively elicited two attacks from of the mount, which is otherwise forbidden from attacking through the Attack action.

EXTRA TURN?

A newly controlled mount gets a turn immediately when mounted. This can result in an extra turn in a round if the mount previously acted because it began combat with a higher initiative.

> "A controlled mount can move and act even on the turn that you mount it." (*Player's Handbook*, page 198)

In a tweet of April 26, 2017, the lead designer for DUNGEONS & DRAGONS confirmed the possibility of an extra turn from this rule. No doubt this is to facilitate the usefulness of riding mounts, allowing them to be available for use when needed. The mount's limited range of actions in the second (controlled) turn means that it is not truly doubling its potential activity.

OPPORTUNITY ATTACKS

When a mount moves, the rider does not provoke normal opportunity attacks because it is being moved by another creature.

> "You also don't provoke an opportunity attack when you teleport or when someone or something moves you without using your movement, action, or reaction." (*Player's Handbook*, page 195)

However, the "Mounted Combat" rules have a special mechanism to apply opportunity attacks to you or the mount based on the mount's movement, whether controlled or not.

> "In either case, if the mount provokes an opportunity attack while you're on it, the attacker can target you or the mount." (*Player's Handbook*, page 198)

Because even a controlled mount can use the Disengage action, the combination of these two rules means that the movement of mount and rider need not provoke opportunity attacks, allowing the rider to benefit from the Disengage while still able to use its own action. This combination facilitates such cinematic mounted combat events as attacking an opponent while riding past it.

FALLING FROM THE SADDLE

This section explores the rules for falling off a ridden creature.

FORCED DISMOUNTING

Falling from a mount is not the same as dismounting. It typically reflects a failure of the rider's balance or strength and puts the rider in a bad position.

Falling from a mount occurs in several scenarios, most of which call for a Dexterity or Strength saving throw to avoid. These saving throws are made at disadvantage if the animal lacks riding equipment like a saddle. A military saddle grants advantage to the save, while a strap saddle allows the rider to succeed automatically, so long as the device is fully fastened.

The most common scenario, the one described by the *Player's Handbook*, involves forced movement.

> "If an effect moves your mount against its will while you're on it, you must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or fall off the mount… If you're knocked prone while mounted, you must make the same saving throw." (*Player's Handbook*, page 198)

Note that a creature can choose to drop prone "without using any of [its] speed." (*Player's Handbook*, page 190.) A rider can therefore leap from the saddle on its turn without

dismounting. A tricksy player can then spend movement to stand up, the same movement cost normally paid for dismounting. This effectively overcomes the limitation that prevents a mounting and dismounting within the same turn. (These scenarios are best addressed by the Fall Damage variant rule, described below.)

"VARIANT": HANGING TO THE SIDE

With no change in the rules, a rider may choose to drop down in the saddle without trying to fall off. This requires the normal Dexterity saving throw to stay on the animal. A prone rider lays flat or hangs off to one side of the mount, reducing its profile against ranged attacks. However, all of the penalties of being prone apply alongside the advantages. A rider is easier to hit in melee when hanging on precariously, and its own attacks are penalized until it spends half its movement to relieve itself of the prone condition, either rising back up in the saddle or climbing off the animal.

VARIANT: BUCKING BRONCO

When an unwilling animal has a rider, particularly if it is a creature not trained to be ridden, it may try to throw off the rider. This requires the mounted creature's action on its turn.

When an animal bucks as its action, the rider must make a Strength saving throw to hold on. The DC is the mount's passive Strength (Athletics) score, or 10, whichever is higher. If the saving throw fails, the rider falls off.

VARIANT: LANCING

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

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

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

FALLING RIDER

Riders may fall in a number of scenarios. A rider that falls from a mount in any scenario lands in a space within 5 feet of the creature, determined by the Dungeon Master. Unless another rule specifies otherwise, the rider becomes prone in the fall.

When a rider falls off of a flying mount, the mount is unlikely to be able to catch the rider; even the fastest dive isn't likely to catch up to the rider, who is falling at 500 feet per round.

"When you fall from a great height, you instantly descend up to 500 feet. If you're still falling on your next turn, you descend up to 500 feet at the end of that turn. This process continues until the fall ends..." (*Xanathar's Guide to Everything*, page 77)

The falling rider's only hope is to use magic or some manner of equipment to slow the fall. (See "falling sails" in the *Comprehensive Equipment Manual*.)

VARIANT: SLUMPED IN THE SADDLE

An unconscious creature automatically fails Strength and Dexterity saving throws, meaning a rider that is knocked out or killed will fall prone and always fail the resulting saving throw to remain in the saddle. With this optional rule, the rider can attempt one last saving throw at the moment it is rendered unconscious (or killed). If successful, the rider slumps prone in the saddle instead of falling off the mount. This facilitates cinematic scenes where a dead or unconscious rider is carried home by its trusty steed. Any further interactions that would cause the unconscious rider to fall have no chance to be saved against.

VARIANT: FALL DAMAGE

The bad part about falling is hitting the ground. If a rider falls from a Large-size or bigger mount and becomes prone as a result, the rider takes 1d6 bludgeoning damage from the impact.

The DM can choose to forego this damage under ideal circumstances; perhaps the mount is standing still, or the ground is particularly soft. Alternately, the damage dice may be doubled if the creature moved a distance of 60 feet or farther in the round before the fall, having carried the rider at a high speed.

When falling from a flying mount, the rider instead takes damage based on its actual falling distance. In an underwater scenario, the rider simply sinks until it can start swimming on its turn; it does not take damage if it hits bottom before that.

VARIANT: SNATCHED FROM THE AIR

At the Dungeon Master's discretion, a flying mount can try to grab its falling rider before the rider passes out of range. The mount must have claws, a large jaw, tentacles, or other body parts suitable to grasping and holding a rider of that size and shape. To perform this maneuver, the mount uses its reaction and attempts a Dexterity saving throw against a DC of 15. If successful, the mount catches the rider before the rider falls past the mount's reach. In this case, the rider is grappled by the mount. A caught rider can use an action to climb back onto the mount, returning to a riding status.

CAVALIERS

These two examples, taken from other locations in the rules, show that various character options can also affect a rider's ability to stay mounted.

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

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

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

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

FALLING MOUNT

Other common rider-falling scenarios occur when the mount falls to the ground. A mount falling prone occurs not just when an attack or spell would impose that condition; more likely the mount has died or been rendered unconscious, thus dropping prone. Sometimes, an obstinate mount simply lays down in objection to being ridden, gaining the prone condition.

Because the rider's platform is descending, a mindful rider can leap (or step) off at the right time, using a reaction to avoid falling prone. This requires no check.

"If your mount is knocked prone, you can use your reaction to dismount as it falls and land on your feet." (*Player's Handbook*, page 198)

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

NEW OPTIONS

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

ROGUE CLASS

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

BEAST WHISPERER (ROGUISH ARCHETYPE)

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

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

ANIMAL AUTHORITY

When you choose this archetype at 3rd level, you gain proficiency in the Animal Handling skill if you don't already have it. Your proficiency bonus is doubled for any ability check you make that uses this proficiency.

As a Beast Whisperer, you can silently and subtly handle the animals you have trained. Particularly when giving orders or assigning targets for tricks, you can avoid using verbal commands. Your animals are trained to watch for your nonverbal signals, which are too subtle for other bystanders to pick up on.

SPLIT SKIRMISH

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

EXPERT HANDLING

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

For example, you are hiding alongside a wolf you have trained. Because the wolf is proficient with the Stealth skill, it normally adds its proficiency bonus of +2 to such checks. In this case, because you command the wolf to remain hidden, and because your current proficiency bonus in this example is also +2, the wolf's Dexterity (Stealth) check adds a total of +4 as a combined proficiency bonus.

ANIMAL SPEAKER

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

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

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

Additionally, when using the Animal Handling skill to calm animals or keep them from getting spooked, your talents allow you to affect wild or feral creatures as though they were domestic.

LOYAL FRIEND

Beginning at 13th level, you can cause an animal companion to suffer an attack meant for you, or vice versa. When you or an animal you have trained are the target of an attack while you are within 5 feet of each other, you can use your reaction to change the target of the attack from yourself to the animal, or from the animal to yourself. You can choose to use this feature after the attack is rolled, but before the outcome is determined.

VICIOUS TANDEM

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

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

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

WARLOCK CLASS

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

PACT OF THE CHAIN (PACT BOON)

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

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

ELDRITCH INVOCATIONS

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

DARK CONFEDERATE

Prerequisite: Pact of the Chain feature

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

SHARED MASTERY

Prerequisite: Pact of the Chain feature

Select 3 tricks from chapter 2 when you take this eldritch invocation. Any creature you train in at least one trick or role gains these bonus tricks, additional to any it already knows. (The bonus tricks do not count against the creature's Intelligence-based capacity for learning tricks.) The animal retains these bonus tricks for as long as you know this eldritch invocation.

OTHER OPTIONS

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

NEW FEATS

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

ANIMAL AFFINITY

Prerequisite: Proficiency in the Animal Handling skill

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

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

Battle Handler

You are an expert at managing animals in combat.

- Increase your Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- No additional check or disadvantage penalty applies to your attempts to command tricks or role functions because of a target animal's injuries.
- For the Act, Attack, Disarm, Harry, Shove, or Subdue tricks, you can designate targets up to 60 feet away, rather than 30 feet.
- If a beast within 60 feet of you is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, you can use your reaction to cause the creature to take half damage if it fails and no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw.

Matching Hearts

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

- When handling the animal, you can use a bonus action instead of a normal action to designate a target for any of its tricks.
- While your bonded animal can see or hear you, it can use your proficiency bonus in place of its own for any ability check it makes to perform a trick you have commanded it to do.
- While the animal is within 10 feet of you, it is immune to the frightened and charmed conditions.
- If your game uses the optional loyalty rules for animals, your bonded companion's loyalty score for you will not drop below 10, regardless of events or treatment.

Natural Familiar

Prerequisite: The ability to cast at least one spell

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

- Your familiar acts independently of you, but always obeys your commands. In combat, it rolls its own initiative and acts on its own turn.

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

New Spells

This section contains a handful of new spells. These are available to druids and rangers at their listed spell levels.

Bridle of Madness
1st-level enchantment

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

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

The charmed beast is a willing mount for you if its size and shape qualify it to serve you as such. (See chapter 3 for details.) The creature will perform as if rider-trained, even in combat. It fulfills all of a mount's expected functions but does not otherwise respond to your commands or serve in ways unrelated to being ridden.

Bond Companion
1st-level enchantment

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

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

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

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

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

Hold Beast
1st-level enchantment

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

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

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

Nature's Ward
1st-level transmutation

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

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

Create Fodder
1st-level conjuration

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

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

Revitalize Beast
2nd-level necromancy

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

You return a dead beast you touch to life,

provided that it has been dead no longer than 1 day. The beast returns to life with 1 hit point.

This spell also neutralizes any poison and cures nonmagical diseases that affected the beast at the time it died. This spell doesn't remove magical diseases, curses, or similar effects; if these aren't first removed prior to casting the spell, they take effect when the creature returns to life. The spell can't return an undead creature to life.

This spell closes all mortal wounds, but it doesn't restore missing body parts. If the creature is lacking body parts or organs integral for its survival—its head, for instance—the spell automatically fails.

TOPIARY CREATURES
5th-level conjuration

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 60 feet
Components: V, S
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You cause vines, weeds, and other vegetation to sprout from the ground around you, twisting and coalescing into the shape of one or more beasts. These creatures form in unoccupied spaces that you can see within range. Choose one of the following options for what appears.

- One beast of challenge rating 5 or lower
- Two beasts of challenge rating 3 or lower
- Four beasts of challenge rating 2 or lower
- Eight beasts of challenge rating 1 or lower

Each creature has the statistics of the beast that it imitates, except that its creature type is plant instead of beast. Each creature disappears when it drops to 0 hit points or when the spell ends.

The summoned creatures are friendly to you and your companions. Roll initiative for the summoned creatures as a group, which has its own turns. The creatures obey any verbal commands that you issue to them (no action required by you). If you don't issue any commands to them, they defend themselves from hostile creatures, but otherwise take no actions.

The DM has the creatures' statistics.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using certain higher-level spell slots, you choose one of the summoning options above, and more creatures appear: twice as many with a 7th-level slot or three times as many with a 9th-level slot.

WILD EMPATHY
1st-level enchantment

Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Self
Components: V, S
Duration: 8 hours

For the duration, you gain magical insight into the minds of animals that are within 30 feet of you. You automatically succeed at Wisdom (Animal Handling) checks to intuit an animal's intentions and you have advantage on all other ability checks making use of that skill.

MAGIC ITEMS

This section addresses magic items intended for use by, or upon, animals.

ANIMALS USING MAGIC ITEMS

Magic items that are merely worn, with passive effects, are easiest for animals to use. These require no considerations beyond the animal's physical ability to wear or carry them. Other options raise additional challenges, particularly because most animals lack the intellect to purposefully attune and activate magic items.

INTELLIGENCE 5+

Animals need an Intelligence rating of 5 or higher to attune magic items without assistance, to cast spells through a magic item, or to purposefully activate any other function of a magic item.

At lower Intelligence ratings, animals simply can't comprehend the complexities (or even the basics) of magic item use, even if they have the right physical features to perform an activation.

For activating magic items, this limitation can be overcome on a case-by-case basis by teaching the animal the Activate Magic Item trick. For example, a parrot might be able to produce a sound identical to the activation word of a magic item, but it lacks the intellect to know that the sound relates to the item activating unless trained to make that association.

PURPOSEFUL ACTIVATION

In addition to having an Intelligence rating of 5 or higher, an animal needs features that allow it to match the activation method required for an item's purposeful activation.

For example, activating a scroll requires the creature to understand a written language. Activating an item that needs words or button-pushing requires the animal to be able to articulate the words or physically depress the buttons. Similarly, a mouth lets an animal consume a potion, but the creature might not be able to uncork and hold the bottle on its own.

SPELLS

Some magic items give the user the ability to cast spells. Because spellcasting through magic items omits spell components, animals would easily be able to make use of them, but for the fact that most such items require attunement by members of a stated character class. When such flavors of attunement are not required, it is perfectly reasonable, for example, to see a displacer beast wielding a *wand of magic missiles* in one of its tentacles.

ATTUNEMENT

An animal with an Intelligence rating of 4 or lower cannot attune a magic item on its own. Many magic items intended for animals therefore don't require attunement.

However, such animals can attune a magic item with assistance of a smarter creature who participates in the one-hour process. In truth, it is the smarter creature that is performing the work of attunement, while the animal is the passive recipient of the attunement, benefiting from that process.

VARIANT: ASSISTED ACTIVATION

At the Dungeon Master's discretion, a handler can activate a magic item being worn or used by an animal, so long as the handler is in contact with the animal or the item. This can make it more likely that an animal will benefit fully from using a purposefully activated item.

For example, a gnomish knight assists her mastiff mount in attuning *animal boots of levitation* and can thereafter activate the boots, which affect the mount.

If the item is one that requires attunement, the handler must have participated in the process of attuning the item to the animal.

Note that some of this book's new magic items allow this sort of activation as part of their standard mechanics, without reference to this optional rule.

CONVERTING OLD MAGIC ITEMS

Existing magic items come in three general categories: items intended for animal use, items that animals can use despite not being intended for their use, and standard items whose form or configuration is slightly changed to facilitate use by animals.

Examples of items already made for animals include *saddle of the cavalier*, *horseshoes of a zephyr*, and *horseshoes of speed*. There are very few items made uniquely for animals, although this book adds more at the end of this chapter.

The *Dungeon Master's Guide* talks about non-humanoid creatures' use of magic items. It suggests, for example, that a ring might be used by placing it on a creature's tentacle. Other applications follow this logic; an ape can wear magic gloves, given the humanoid-like structure of its hands, and creatures of all shapes can use *Ioun stones*, since these float nearby the user regardless of that creature's shape.

The third category includes magic items with standard enchantments that appear in forms specifically crafted for use by animals. The most commonly adapted magic items are those that require no purposeful activation, but it is not unheard of for items that need activation or that provide spellcasting to be made for smarter animals' use.

Standard items crafted in animal-specific forms can't normally be worn by humanoids. Even though these items magically resize, they do not reshape. For example, animal boots have very short feet (for hooves or paws) and require four legs to wear. See "Wearing and Wielding Items" in chapter 7 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for more guidance.

ANIMAL BOOTS

Quadrupedal animals that walk on paws, hooves, and similar appendages can be fitted with foot protection to suit difficult or dangerous terrain. These are sometimes called hoof boots or paw protectors, but they are interchangeable when created as magic items. Animal boots come in sets of four, all four of which must be worn by the beneficiary of the item's effects.

Animal boots differ from horseshoes, which can only be worn by hooved animals.

The following footwear from the *Dungeon Master's Guide* may appear as animal boots without altering their mechanics: *boots of elvenkind*, *boots of levitation*, *boots of striding and springing*, *boots of the winterlands*, *horseshoes of the zephyr*, *horseshoes of speed*, *slippers of spider climbing*, and *winged boots*.

ANIMAL COVERS

Many types of animals can wear fitted covers, like blankets, sweaters, or caparisons. These are particularly common for horses. Covers can provide warmth, depending on their construction, but are more likely to be decorative, displaying the owner's heraldry. Like barding, animal covers can magically resize themselves, but they are a bit more forgiving when it comes to covering animals of different shapes.

Most magical capes, cloaks, and robes can appear as animal covers. The following versions from the *Dungeon Master's Guide* may take animal cover forms without altering mechanics: *cloak of arachnida*, *cloak of displacement*, *cloak of elvenkind*, *cloak of invisibility*, *cloak of protection*, *mantle of spell resistance*, *robe of eyes*, *robe of scintillating colors*, and *wings of flying*.

Barding

Barding comes configured for specific non-humanoid body types. Its three categories are equine, canine, and exotic, as described in chapter 5. Although magic barding will resize itself to fit creatures of any size, an animal can't wear barding made for a creature with a different body shape. For example, exotic barding built for a Large dragon will fit a dragon of any size, but it won't fit an elephant.

Magic barding must also conform to the restrictions given in a magic item's description. For example, *plate armor of etherealness* appears only as plate armor; it therefore can't take the form of chainmail or studded leather barding, just plate barding.

The following magic armors from the *Dungeon Master's Guide* may appear as barding without altering mechanics: *adamantine armor, armor (+1, +2,* or *+3), armor of invulnerability, armor of resistance, armor of vulnerability, dragon scale armor, dwarven plate, elven chain, glamoured studded leather, mariner's armor, mithral armor,* and *plate armor of etherealness.*

Demon armor and *efreeti chain* may appear as barding, but the wearer does not gain the ability to understand and speak languages unless its Intelligence rating is 5 or higher.

Kernels

Kernels are consumable items. Their potent magical ingredients are condensed into small lumps, about the size of a nut.

All potions can appear in the form of kernels.

While humanoids can consume kernels, their odor and flavor are particularly pleasing to animals. A kernel can be administered to an animal within 30 feet by throwing it to the animal as an action. The animal can use its reaction to snatch the kernel out of the air with its mouth (or off the ground, in the case of slower-moving creatures) gaining the benefits of the kernel. An animal that cannot use its reaction may instead use an action to find and consume the kernel on its next turn.

Trinkets

Trinkets are charms or icons that are worn attached to the tack or harness of an animal. These are usually made of metal, wood, or bone and can take any number of interesting shapes, typically something representative of the trinket's magic. For example, a trinket that provides the protection of the *feather fall* spell may be shaped like a bird or a feather (or it may be an actual feather).

Many amulets, brooches, rings, and other magic jewelry can be made as trinkets. The following versions from the *Dungeon Master's Guide* may appear as trinkets without altering mechanics: *amulet of health, amulet of proof against detection and location, brooch of shielding, necklace of adaptation, periapt of health, periapt of proof against poison, periapt of wound closure, ring of evasion, ring of feather falling, ring of free action, ring of invisibility, ring of jumping, ring of protection, ring of regeneration, ring of resistance, ring of swimming, ring of warmth, ring of water walking, scarab of protection,* and *stone of good luck.*
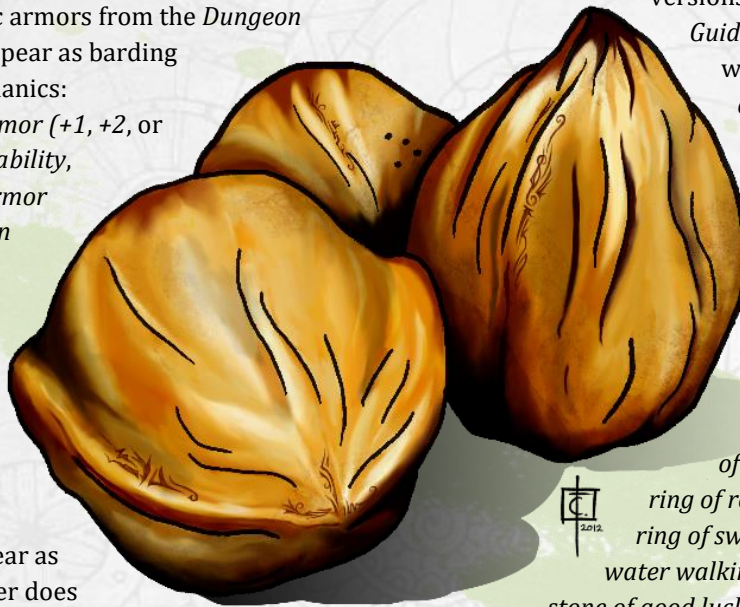
New Magic Items

These items are presented in alphabetical order. Each description includes the item's name, category, rarity, and magical properties. To maintain compatibility with *Xanathar's Guide to Everything* and Wraith Wright's *Comprehensive Wealth Manual*, each item also states whether it is a major or minor item and lists a specific gp value.

Bridle of Intellect

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)

The wearer's Intelligence score is 6 while wearing this bridle. It has no effect if the creature's Intelligence is already 6 or higher.

Value: 375 gp, *major*

COVER OF DISGUISE

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)

The wearer of this cover takes on a specific disguise, appearing to be a different animal of a very similar shape. The creature appears to be of the same size category, but the disguise can be 1 foot taller, shorter, wider, or thinner than the animal.

The disguise provided by a *cover of disguise* is determined when the item is created, including the exact features, coloration, and worn items or barding. (The disguise can even alter the appearance of this cover or make it seem as though the animal is wearing nothing at all.) This disguise can't be changed later; it applies consistently to each qualifying animal that wears it.

A *cover of disguise* has no effect when placed on a creature that doesn't physically resemble the item's disguise. The animal can't change its body type, so the disguise must apply a form that has the same basic arrangement of limbs. For example, a horse could be affected by a disguise that looks like a different-looking horse or a unicorn, but it could not appear to be a pegasus because wings count as extra limbs.

Value: 125 gp, *minor*

HORSESHOES OF COLD IRON

Weapon (weapon-like device), rare

These cold-forged magic horseshoes come in a set of four. While all four shoes are affixed to the hooves of a horse or similar creature, the wearer is affected by the *protection from evil and good* spell effective only against fey creatures.

Any hoof attacks by the wearer of these horseshoes are considered to come from magic weapons. When the wearer makes a successful attack with its hooves against a fey creature, it deals an additional 1d6 necrotic damage.

Value: 750 gp, *major*

PENDANT OF SHARED SIGHT

Wondrous item, very rare

This magic item comes as a set of two metal disks, each bearing the image of an eye. The handler's item hangs on a pendant and the matching piece is born by an animal as a trinket.

The wearer of the handler's pendant can use an action to see through the eyes of the creature bearing the trinket, so long as the bearer of the trinket has an Intelligence rating of 6 or lower. While doing so, the wearer of the pendant gains the benefit of any special senses possessed by the bearer of the trinket.

This effect relies upon the items of this set being within 100 feet of each other. The effect lasts until the start of the user's next turn. During this time, the user is blind with regard to its own sense of sight.

Value: 435 gp, *major*

SADDLEBAGS OF PROVENDER

Wondrous item, uncommon

This item takes the form of regular saddlebags, two connected bags worn across a creature's back, typically behind a saddle, one bag hanging to either side of the creature. These bags use extradimensional spaces to carry great quantities of fodder, hay in one bag and water in the other.

When herbaceous feed is placed into the hay bag, it goes into an extradimensional space that can contain up to 500 pounds of the feed. Similarly, when water is placed into the water bag, its extradimensional space can contain up to 500 gallons.

If items other than herbaceous feed or water are placed into either bag, those items are contained in the bag's regular space. However, most users of this item leave the bags empty of other equipment because accessing the feed or water requires tipping the bag to pour out its contents, which will also tip out anything carried in the bags' mundane spaces.

Saddlebags of provender weigh 30 pounds empty, or without regard to their extradimensional contents, but items in the saddlebags' regular spaces add their weights accordingly.

Placing this item inside an extradimensional space created by a *bag of holding*, *portable hole*, or similar item instantly destroys both items and opens a gate to the Astral Plane. The gate originates where the one item was placed inside the other. Any creature within 10 feet of the gate is sucked through it to a random location on the Astral Plane. The gate then closes. The gate is one-way and can't be reopened.

Value: 180 gp, *minor*

HARNESS OF ARTICULATION

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement)

This harness supports two prosthetic arms with hands. It is designed to allow arm-less creatures to pick up and manipulate objects in the environment. When worn, the arms fold or flatten to the wearer's body to stay out of the way. By concentrating, the creature can use the arms and hands as a normal humanoid would, lifting, carrying, and manipulating objects. For example, a pegasus wearing this harness could pull a potion from its saddlebags, remove the cork, and hold the bottle to its mouth for drinking.

The hands of the *harness of articulation* are not particularly dexterous; they cannot shape somatic components, make unarmed attacks, wield weapons, or don a shield. Any activity that requires a Dexterity check, like trying to pick a lock with thieves' tools, applies disadvantage to the roll. If the wearer loses concentration while using this harness, the arms drop whatever they are holding and return to their folded default position.

As a worn item, this object resizes itself for creatures of any size, but it is also versatile enough to be configured to fit a variety of body types, from horses to giant snakes.

Value: 775 gp, *major*

TOME OF ANIMAL ENHANCEMENT

Wondrous item, very rare

This book contains magic to enhance an animal. If you spend 48 hours over a period of 6 days reading this tome to another creature, the target creature's Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores increase by 2 each, to maximum ratings of 6. The manual then loses its magic but regains it in a century.

Value: 24,000 gp, *major*

TRINKET OF AMPHIBIOUSNESS

Wondrous item, uncommon

While wearing this coral trinket, an air-breathing creature can breathe water while submerged in it, even partially. If the creature is water-breathing, it can instead breathe air while it is emerged from the water.

Value: 325 gp, *minor*

Trinket of Life Warding

Wondrous item, rare (requires attunement by a creature with an Intelligence rating of 6 or lower)

This item appears to be a tiny pearl enmeshed in a golden net. The first time the wearer would drop to 0 hit points as a result of taking damage, it instead drops to 1 hit point, and this item becomes unattuned. If the item is still attuned when the target is subjected to an effect that would kill it instantaneously without dealing damage, that effect is instead negated against the target, and the item becomes unattuned.

Value: 3,750 gp, *major*

Trinket of Night

Wondrous item, uncommon

While wearing this onyx trinket, the creature has darkvision out to a range of 60 feet. If it already has darkvision, wearing this trinket increases the range by 60 feet.

Value: 220 gp, *minor*

Trinket of Harnessing

Wondrous item, uncommon

This trinket takes the form of an iron coin. If worn by a spirit that was summoned with the *find familiar*, *find steed*, or *find greater steed* spell, the creature retains its worn equipment when it disappears, whether it disappeared because it was dismissed or because it was reduced to 0 hit points. When the creature is summoned again, it returns with the equipment it disappeared with.

This affects tack and harness, saddle, barding, magic items, and any other of the creature's worn gear. It does not otherwise affect carried items, nor will it affect a worn magic item that gives access to an extradimensional space, like a *bag of holding*. Although a worn pack saddle or saddlebags are affected, any luggage or burdens within (or attached to) such containers are not. If the spirit creature is ever permanently dismissed, it leaves behind its worn equipment, including this token.

Value: 150 gp, *minor*

Wind Barding

Armor (light or medium), rare (requires attunement)

As a bonus action, an animal wearing this barding can teleport, along with any riders and gear it is carrying, to an unoccupied space it can see within 30 feet. Immediately after teleporting this way, draw a line between the creature's old location and new location. A momentary gust of strong wind travels down this line extending ten feet to either side of it. The wind disperses gas or vapor, and it extinguishes candles, torches, and other unprotected flames in the area.

If this teleportation feature is used within 1 hour of a previous use, roll a d20. On a 6–20, the item functions as normal. On a 2–5, the item fails to activate, and the bonus action is wasted. On a 1, the creature arrives at a different unoccupied space within range, one selected randomly or by the Dungeon Master.

If this barding's wearer does not have an Intelligence rating of 5 or higher, the item can be activated by a handler who helped the animal attune the item, while the handler is in contact with the animal or riding it. In this case, it is the handler who must use a bonus action.

Value: 2,450 gp, *major*

New Supernatural Gifts

These powers are rewards from beings of great force or great magical power. They can be acquired by characters and by animal companions alike.

An animal that has a blessing should have an increased market value, but the exact change in value is hard to quantify. Charms do not tend to make an animal more valuable since they last only until used; proving that an animal can use a charm tends to waste the charm's only use. The additional value is left to the imagination of the Dungeon Master.

Supernatural gifts are further described in chapter 7 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, under "Other Rewards."

Blessings

Normal blessings are rewards for performing great works on behalf of a deity, or they are granted to assist in the performance of great works.

When animals receive blessings, they are more likely to be agents of a deity, blessed to increase the animal's chance of success for a particular mission. For example, a paladin that swears to a holy quest may find an animal with a blessing, a creature sent by a god to help the paladin complete that quest.

The following examples expand the selection provided in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Blessing of Adaption. This blessing grants you the ability to breathe water and provides a swimming speed equal to your normal speed.

Blessing of Agility. Your Dexterity score increases by 2, up to a maximum of 22.

Blessing of Arachnida. You have a climbing speed equal to your walking speed. You can move up, down, and across vertical surfaces and upside down along ceilings, while leaving your hands free.

Blessing of Courage. You are immune to the frightened condition.

Blessing of Cunning. Your Intelligence score increases by 2, up to a maximum of 22.

Blessing of Personality. Your Charisma score increases by 2, up to a maximum of 22.

Blessing of Power. Your Strength score increases by 2, up to a maximum of 22.

Blessing of Resistance. You have resistance to a single type of damage from the following list: acid, cold, fire, lightning, necrotic, poison, radiant, or thunder. You can benefit from multiple instances of this blessing, so long as each applies to a different damage type.

Blessing of Telepathy. This blessing grants you the benefits of a *helm of telepathy*.

Blessing of the Planar. You are immune to the negative plane-specific effects that natives of the Material Plane suffer when visiting other planes.

Charms

Charms are single-use or limited-use supernatural gifts. They come from a variety of sources. Animals most often acquire charms by visiting magical locations. For example, certain holy shrines, enchanted glades, or planer nexuses naturally invest charms in the animals who spend a day or more there. Finding one of these places of power, one close enough to be revisited with some frequency, can itself be considered a treasure like a significant magic item.

Charm of Animal Allies. This charm allows the holder to gain the benefits of a *potion of animal friendship* as an action. Once the holder does so, the charm vanishes.

Charm of Comprehension. This charm allows the holder to cast the *comprehend languages* spell as an action. No components are required. Once used three times, the charm leaves the holder.

Charm of Elemental Warding. This charm allows the holder to cast the *absorb elements* spell (1st-level version) as a reaction. No components are required. Once used three times, the charm leaves the holder.

Charm of Enhanced Health. This charm allows the holder to cast the *false life* spell (1st-level version) at will, as an action. No components are required. Once used for the first time, the charm leaves the holder after 1 day.

Charm of Fast Fleeing. This charm allows the holder to cast the *expeditious retreat* spell as a bonus action. No components are required. Once used three times, the charm leaves the holder.

Charm of False Flames. This charm allows the holder to cast the *faerie fire* spell as an action. No components are required. Once used five times, the charm leaves the holder.

Charm of Invulnerability. This charm allows the holder to gain the benefits of a *potion of invulnerability* as an action. Once the holder does so, the charm vanishes.

Charm of Seeing. This charm grants the holder the benefits of a *robe of eyes*. Once activated as an action, the benefits last for 5 days, after which the charm leaves the holder.

Charm of Telekinesis. This charm has 10 charges. The holder can use an action to expend 1 of the charges to cast *telekinesis*. This spell can only target objects that are not being worn or carried. No components are required. Once all its charges have been expended, the charm leaves the holder.

Charm of Warding Force. This charm allows the holder to cast the *shield* spell as a reaction. No components are required. Once used three times, the charm leaves the holder.
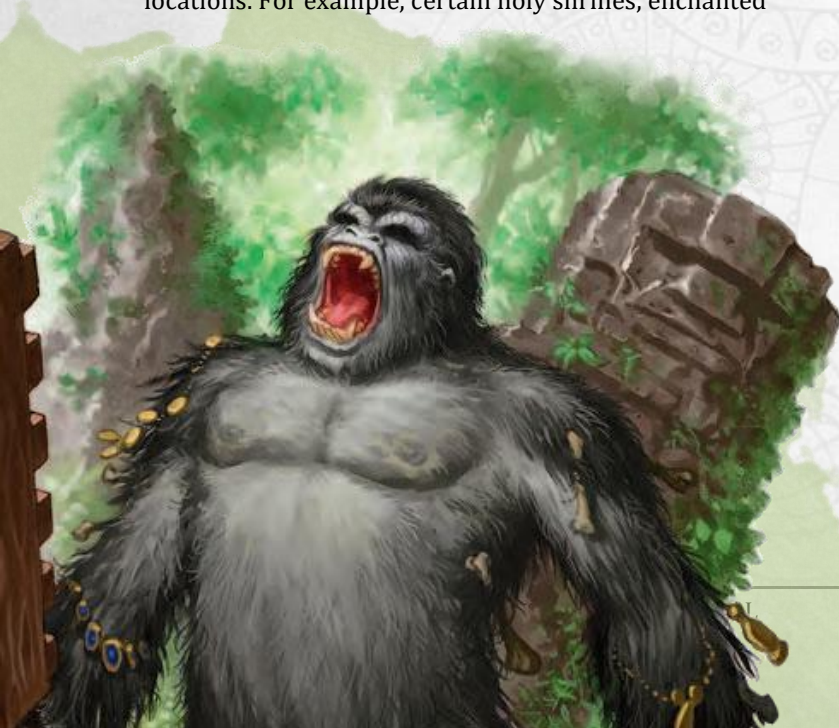
Chapter 5

AT THE MARKET

ANIMALS ARE THINGS OF VALUE. ALTHOUGH THEIR greatest worth may be rooted in their potential for companionship, animals are still quantifiable in terms of the wealth and time invested into them. This chapter addresses the monetary value of animals, and the costs to acquire, equip, and educate them. It also talks about marketing monsters, an option that some Dungeon Masters may allow.

EQUIPMENT

The animal-specific adventuring gear and weapons in this chapter greatly expand upon the options found in the *Player's Handbook*. This gear is particularly useful for campaigns that focus on travel or for military campaigns wherein the players fill cavalry roles or similarly work with beasts of war. This gear is repeated as an excerpt from Wraith Wright's *Comprehensive Equipment Manual*.

DESCRIPTIONS

Descriptions for animal-specific gear are provided here, listed alphabetically.

Barding (all). Barding is armor designed for mounts or other animals. It typically covers the head, neck, and body, leaving the legs relatively free of impediment (and protection).

Any armor shown on the Armor table in chapter 5 of the *Player's Handbook* (or chapter 2 of the *Comprehensive Equipment Manual*) can be purchased or crafted as barding. The costs and weights are shown as multiples of the equivalent armor when made for humanoids. For example, "x2" cost doubles what the armor would normally cost.

Canine barding typically fits all canines of the same size, and equine barding typically fits all equines of the same size, but exotic barding is made for animals of a specific type as well as a specific size.

For example, despite both being Large size, an allosaurus' exotic barding will not fit a rhinoceros.

Bit and Bridle. Most mounts require some sort of head harness, something attached to a lead that is held by the rider. In the case of traditionally trained mounts, a bit and bridle allow the rider to direct the animal and keep it restrained. For optimal control, animals of various kinds require different sizes, shapes, and secondary functions built into these devices. For short-necked creatures, like dogs, this means a collar.

Canine bridles typically fit canines of any size, and equine bridles typically fit equines of any size, but exotic bridles are made for animals of a specific type as well as a specific size. For example, despite being the same size, a Large dragon's exotic bridle cannot be transferred to a giant seahorse.

ADVENTURING GEAR (TACK AND HARNESS)

Item	Cost	Weight
Barding		
Canine (Large)	x3	x2
Canine (Medium)	x2	x1
Equine (Large)	x4	x2
Equine (Medium)	x3	x1
Exotic (Gargantuan)	x10	x8
Exotic (Huge)	x7	x4
Exotic (Large)	x5	x2
Exotic (Medium)	x4	x1
Exotic (Small)	x3	x1/2
Exotic (Tiny)	x2	x1/4
Bit and bridle		
Canine (Large)	3 gp	1 lb.
Canine (Medium)	2 gp	1/2 lb.
Equine (Large)	2 gp	1 lb.
Equine (Medium)	2 gp	1/2 lb.
Exotic (Gargantuan)	18 gp	8 lb.
Exotic (Huge)	10 gp	4 lb.
Exotic (Large)	6 gp	2 lb.
Exotic (Medium)	5 gp	1 lb.
Blinkers	1 gp	1 lb.
Blinkers, exotic	4 gp	1½ lb.
Body harness		
Gargantuan	80 gp	55 lb.
Huge	30 gp	35 lb.
Large	15 gp	17 lb.
Medium	8 gp	8 lb.
Small	3 gp	3 lb.
Tiny	1 gp	1 lb.
Cage		
Gargantuan	950 gp	3,800 lb.
Huge	300 gp	675 lb.
Large	120 gp	300 lb.
Medium	40 gp	75 lb.
Small	15 gp	60 lb.
Tiny	5 gp	25 lb.
Falconry kit	3 gp	2 lb.
Feed		
Grain (oats)	1 sp	4 lb.
Herbaceous (hay)	2 cp	4 lb.
Meat (scraps)	1 sp	1 lb.
Hobble	2 gp	2 lb.
Hobble, exotic	5 gp	4 lb.

Item	Cost	Weight
Howdah		
Exotic (Gargantuan)	190 gp	455 lb.
Exotic (Huge)	65 gp	235 lb.
Exotic (Large)	35 gp	125 lb.
Muzzle		
Gargantuan or Huge	8 gp	4 lb.
Large or Medium	2 gp	1 lb.
Small or Tiny	1 gp	1/2 lb.
Saddlebags	4 gp	8 lb.
Saddle, canine (Large or Medium)		
Military	12 gp	25 lb.
Pack	3 gp	10 lb.
Riding	6 gp	20 lb.
Saddle, equine (Large or Medium)		
Military	20 gp	30 lb.
Pack	5 gp	15 lb.
Riding	10 gp	25 lb.
Saddle, exotic (Gargantuan)		
Military	225 gp	70 lb.
Pack	60 gp	55 lb.
Riding	120 gp	65 lb.
Strap	210 gp	70 lb.
Saddle, exotic (Huge)		
Military	105 gp	50 lb.
Pack	30 gp	35 lb.
Riding	60 gp	45 lb.
Strap	120 gp	50 lb.
Saddle, exotic (Large)		
Military	52 gp	40 lb.
Pack	15 gp	25 lb.
Riding	30 gp	35 lb.
Strap	60 gp	40 lb.
Saddle, exotic (Medium)		
Military	26 gp	30 lb.
Pack	8 gp	15 lb.
Riding	15 gp	25 lb.
Strap	30 gp	30 lb.
Saddle, exotic (Small)		
Military	13 gp	20 lb.
Pack	4 gp	5 lb.
Riding	8 gp	15 lb.
Strap	15 gp	20 lb.

Blinkers. Blinkers are made for equine creatures: horses, ponies, donkeys, and mules. They are usually attached to the animal's bridle and cover most (or all) of each eye with a cup-shaped device. Blinkers can control an animal's field of vision, restricting the animal to seeing only what is in front of it.

This item prevents distractions and, at the DM's discretion, can prevent the handler from having to make Wisdom (Animal Handling) checks under some circumstances. A creature wearing blinkers has disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on vision. A creature wearing blinkers that fully cover the eyes automatically fails such checks.

Blinkers, Exotic. Exotic blinkers are each made for a specific type of creature. Some animals have multiple sets of eyes or otherwise require unusually constructed blinkers. Some exotic blinkers have additional functionality. For example, exotic blinkers might fully cover a creature's eyes until the rider pulls a special cord to reveal them. This facilitates using the animal's gaze as a weapon, as with the basilisk's petrification or the catoblepas' death ray.

A creature wearing blinkers has disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on vision. A creature wearing blinkers that fully cover the eyes automatically fails such checks.

Body Harness (any). These sets of secure straps serve multiple functions. Typically, they allow an animal to draw vehicles such as carts or wagons, attaching the worn harness to one or two of the vehicle's forward-pointing shafts. The straps are placed in such a way as to distribute the force evenly across the most accommodating surface of the animal's body. A body harness can also be re-configured to help lift or carry an animal. In this case, straps are shifted to more supportive positions on the animal's body, suitable to raising or lowering it, perhaps via block and tackle. Travelers navigating rough terrain may find such tools necessary to bring their mounts across steep hills, cliffs, or similar obstacles.

Cage (any). A cage is large enough for an animal of the listed size to stand within it, turn around fully, and lie down. (A winged creature does not have space to fully spread its wings.) A cage's size rating must fit a contained creature's size exactly; too small a cage prevents the creature from fitting into it while too large a cage might allow the creature to escape through the spacing in the bars.

Cages are made of iron, with Armor Class 19. These resilient objects usually have hit points and damage thresholds as follows: Tiny (5/1), Small (10/2), Medium (18/4), Large (27/6), Huge (39/8), and Gargantuan (54/12). Because they are constructed to resist intentional breakage by their contained creatures, cages are typically immune to damage from natural attacks. Additional information on the health of objects can be found in the "Objects" section of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Falconry Kit. This kit comes in a satchel that contains all the tack needed to manage birds of prey. It includes a thick glove for the animal to perch on, a hood that blindfolds the creature, a 50-foot lightweight cord leash, and additional equipment needed to care for, train, and hunt with a bird of prey.

MARTIAL MELEE WEAPONS				
Item	Cost	Damage	Weight	Properties
Lance				
Combat	10 gp	1d12 piercing	6 lb.	Reach, special
Combat, light	8 gp	1d10 piercing	4 lb.	Reach, special
Great	35 gp	2d8 piercing	15 lb.	Reach, special, two-handed
Jousting	10 gp	1d8 bludgeoning	6 lb.	Reach, special
Jousting, light	8 gp	1d6 bludgeoning	4 lb.	Reach, special

Feed (any). The type of food needed for different animals varies significantly. Omnivores can typically eat any kind of feed, as well as rations. Herbivores, particularly equines, can survive on grass, hay, and other herbaceous plants. High-value feed, like oats, is simply a luxury and is unhealthy for such animals to eat all the time. Dogs and other carnivores require meat for most of their diet. As feed, this typically takes the form of dried meat scraps or meat ground up with absorbent grains. Meat feed lasts for about seven days before it becomes spoiled and worthless.

Most creatures can forage or hunt for themselves, given enough time and left to their own devices. Feed is only needed when animals are kept caged or stabled, worked or ridden longer than eight hours in a day, or otherwise prevented from finding their own food for significant portions of the day. Tiny creatures need only 1/4 pound of food per day for sustenance. Small and Medium creatures need 1 pound. Large creatures need 4 pounds, Huge creatures need 16 pounds, and Gargantuan creatures need 64 pounds of food per day. The DM is the final arbiter of each animal's needs for quantity and type of food.

Hobble. A hobble is a set of manacles for an animal, particularly suited for equines like horses. Equines will typically graze in a small area while hobbled and can be left alone for hours. Other animals, like dogs, are less docile and will chew through the restraint; such creatures are instead leashed when left unattended. Some hobbles are built weakly enough that a truly panicked creature can break the binding, running away at full speed if attacked by a predator or otherwise seriously threatened. Hobbles are also used as training tools for animals that will serve as mounts and laborers.

Applying or removing a hobble takes an action. A hobble reduces an animal's speed to 5 and discourages it from traveling far.

Hobble, Exotic. This complex hobble can be used on docile animals of any size, creatures with multiple legs, or creatures with alternative movement modes like flight. It otherwise operates as a normal hobble.

Howdah (any). A howdah is a partially enclosed platform mounted on an animal. It surrounds one or more riders, offering protection from attackers or from the elements. Most howdahs include a roof.

One Medium- or Small-sized rider can fit in the howdah of a Large creature. Most Large creatures are not quite big enough for a howdah, but camels are a notable exception. Four Medium- or Small-sized riders can fit in the howdah of a Huge creature. Sixteen Medium- or Small-sized riders can fit in the howdah of a Gargantuan creature. Riders in howdahs have half cover from the attacks of creatures on the ground if those creatures are smaller than the mount.

Lance (any). A long-hafted weapon with a sharp point, ideal for wielding from the back of a charging mount. A lance is long enough to brace under the arm of the wielding hand, allowing it to be used one-handed if a mount provides the strikes' forward momentum.

VARIANT: LANCES AND MOUNT SIZES

The standard lance sizes are meant for use with Large mounts like horses or camels. With this optional rule, using a combat lance or a jousting lance one-handed from the back of a Medium size creature (like a mastiff) applies disadvantage to the weapon's attack rolls. The size and bulk of the combat lance and jousting lance make them too unwieldy for one-handed use from the back of such a small mount. This penalty does not apply if the lancer is wielding a *light* combat lance or *light* jousting lance, weapons designed for use with smaller mounts.

combat lances (martial melee)

light combat lance (martial melee)

jousting lance (martial melee)

light jousting lance (martial melee)
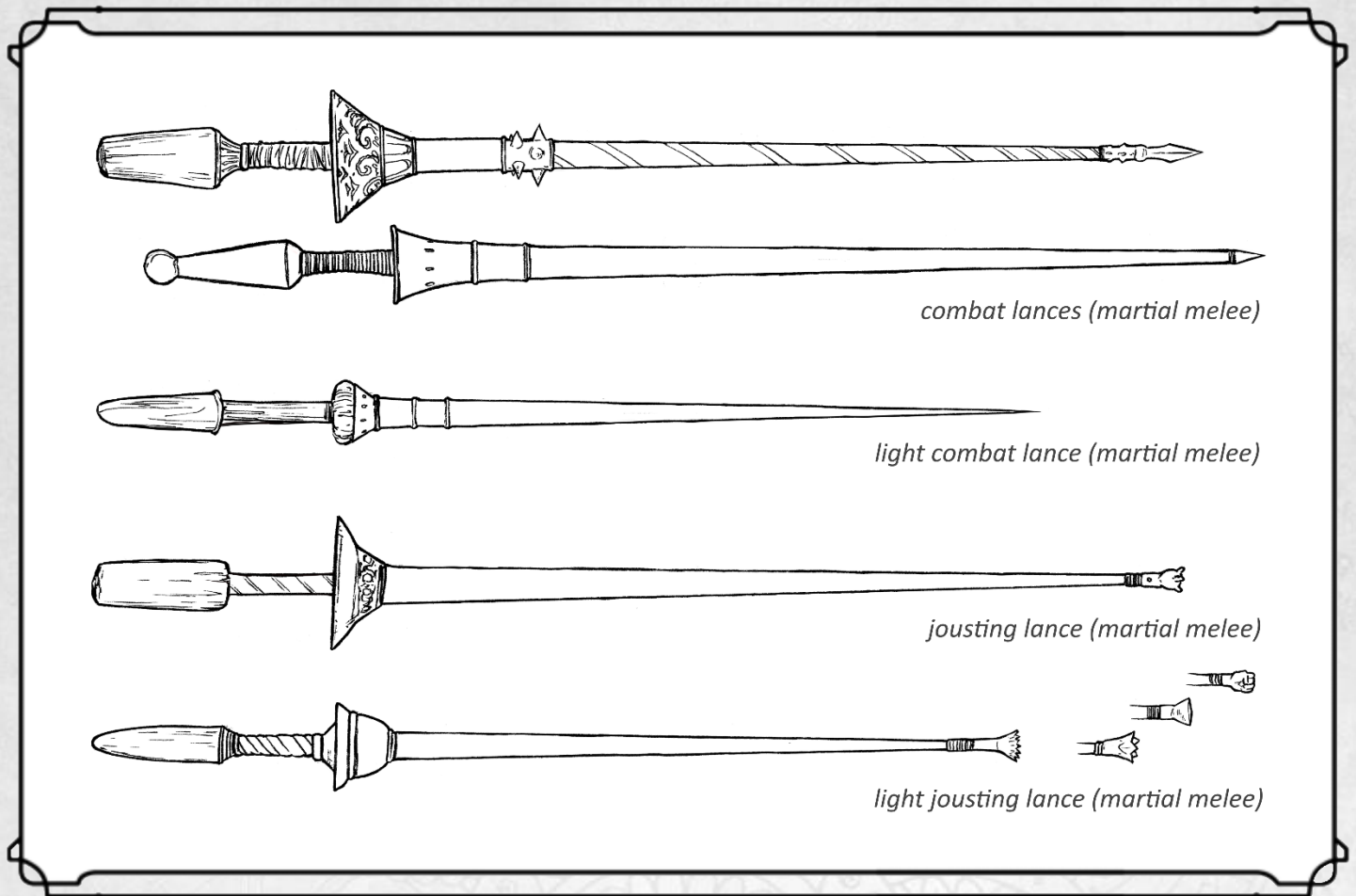
Lance, Combat (any). You have disadvantage when you use a combat lance to attack a target within 5 feet of you. Also, a combat lance requires two hands to wield when you aren't mounted.

Lance, Great. *A great lance is an extra-long, sharpened pole, supported by a swiveling pintle mount.*

This weapon is too large to use unless affixed to an exotic saddle or howdah on a Huge-size (or larger) creature. This weapon has a 15-foot reach. You have disadvantage when you use a great lance to attack a target within 10 feet of you.

Lance, Jousting (any). You have disadvantage when you use a jousting lance to attack a target within 5 feet of you. Also, a jousting lance requires two hands to wield when you aren't mounted.

A jousting lance has a blunt end made for practicing against armored riders. A creature wearing heavy armor has resistance to damage inflicted by a jousting lance.

Muzzle (any). *Muzzles are each made for animals of a specific type and size. A muzzle prevents the wearer from biting or eating. It also makes dangerous-looking animals appear to be safer, meaning bystanders are often less intimidated and more accepting of their presence.*

A muzzle takes one action to apply or remove. At the DM's discretion, use of a muzzle can prevent the handler from having to make Wisdom (Animal Handling) checks under some circumstances.

Saddlebags. *This device consists of two large satchels with a wide connecting strap. They are meant to straddle a Medium or Large mount and hang to either side, just behind a saddle.*

Saddle, Canine (any). *Saddles for dogs are lightweight and built to accommodate the greater range of motion that dogs have over equine mounts.*

Such saddles are also suitable for wolves of Large or Medium size and similar creatures. A military version gives the rider advantage on any check or saving throw to remain mounted. A pack version has no accommodation for a rider; it simply provides a frame to which baggage can be tied.

Saddle, Equine (any). *An equine saddle fits horses and ponies as well as donkeys and mules. It also fits similar equine creatures such as unicorns.*

Equine saddles are not suited for equines with additional limbs or wings like a pegasus. (Such a creature requires an exotic saddle instead.) A military version gives the rider advantage on any check or saving throw to remain mounted. A pack version has no accommodation for a rider; it simply provides a frame to which baggage can be tied.

Saddle, Exotic (any). *Creatures not in the shape of equines (horses, mules, etc.) or canines (dogs, wolves, etc.), require exotic saddles to use as mounts or beasts of burden.*

Exotic saddles are each made for animals of a specific type and size. For example, despite both being Large, a wyvern's riding saddle cannot be used on an owlbear. A military version of an exotic saddle gives the rider advantage on any check or saving throw to remain mounted when the animal is not climbing, flying, or moving underwater. A pack version of an exotic saddle has no accommodation for a rider; it simply provides a frame to which baggage can be tied.

Creatures capable of burrowing cannot do so without automatically dismounting their riders, regardless of saddle type. Creatures capable of other three-dimensional movement (climbing, flying, or underwater travel) require strap saddles to keep riders secure. Strap saddles require the use of two actions to strap in after mounting, performed by the rider or by aides. Thereafter, the rider cannot be dismounted short of very exceptional circumstances (like the mount burrowing). Using a strap saddle without strapping in is treated as using a riding saddle.

The Dungeon Master may impose Strength saving throws every round to stay mounted in cases of climbing, flying, pouncing, and (particularly) underwater travel while not strapped in or while using another type of saddle.

Military Saddles

System Change: These rules alter the mechanics for military saddles as they appeared in the *Player's Handbook*. The original military saddle rule gave "advantage on any check you make to remain mounted." However, the "Mounted Combat" rules apply saving throws, not ability checks, to all attempts to remaining mounted. To compensate, the military saddle rules in this product are changed to give advantage to saving throws.

ANIMALS

The full stat blocks of monsters here can be found in the *Monster Manual*, unless otherwise noted on the tables. Sources for these table notations include *Volo's Guide to Monsters* [VGM], *Storm King's Thunder* [SKT], and *Mordenkainen's Tome of Foes* [MTF].

UNTRAINED CREATURES

The beasts on the Untrained Creatures table serve as trade goods but can also be pets or animals for training. They include mostly mundane creatures.

Although these animals currently lack any roles or tricks, they are old enough to begin training in such things.

Animals named "untrained" on the table also appear in their rider-trained forms on the Mounts table, where they are priced to reflect this additional value.

MOUNTS

This table provides animals commonly rated as mundane mounts. Non-mount animals, and untrained versions of normal mounts, are categorized as trade goods and are listed on the Untrained Creatures table.

All creatures on the Mounts table are rider-trained. The value of this training is already figured into the prices listed on the table.

The Dungeon Master might increase the price of any creature on this table, depending on its rarity in the region. For a "standard" campaign, this probably includes any creatures rated for exotic saddles.

DESCRIPTIONS

The fragile horse and the warhorse are two examples of animals modified from their base form, the *riding horse*. Both variants serve very important roles and have prominent places on the Mounts table.

Fragile Horse. Fragile horses are mounts of poor quality. Often, they are older, somewhat swaybacked creatures. While normally undesirable, for starting characters in need of mounts for their adventure, these might be the only affordable option.

A fragile horse has a delicate constitution, as indicated in the stat block. It cannot be designated a fragile specimen because it already has the penalties of that template. A fragile horse may have the combat-trained role for an additional cost of 15 gp.

UNTRAINED CREATURES

Value	Goods
1 cp	Frog, rat, or spider
2 cp	Cat or chicken
5 cp	Lizard, quipper, or turtle
1 sp	Bat, crab, or octopus
5 sp	Raven or scorpion
1 gp	Goat, owl, songbird, or weasel
2 gp	Hyena, jackal, poisonous snake, or sheep
3 gp	Baboon, common dog, giant crab, giant rat, pig, or deer
4 gp	Badger, giant fire beetle, giant sea horse, untrained donkey, or untrained mule
5 gp	Ape, boar, giant frog, small parrot, vulture, or wolf
10 gp	Constrictor snake, cow, elk, giant centipede, giant goat, giant weasel, giant wolf spider, or untrained dolphin
12 gp	Crocodile, eagle
12.5 gp	Untrained mastiff
15 gp	Giant badger, giant bat, giant spider, hawk, ox, untrained axe beak, untrained pony, or yak
20 gp	Black bear or giant wasp
25 gp	Giant poisonous snake, untrained camel, untrained draft horse, or untrained steeder (male)
35 gp	Blood hawk, brown bear, large parrot, or untrained steeder (female)
37.5 gp	Untrained riding horse
50 gp	Almiraj, giant hyena, giant toad, panther, or untrained aurochs
75 gp	Dire wolf, giant eagle, giant octopus, giant owl, giant vulture, lion, reef shark, or tiger
100 gp	Giant constrictor snake, flying monkey, giant elk, untrained elephant, or untrained giant lizard (+100 gp for "hold breath," +200 gp for "spider climb")
125 gp	Untrained flying snake
150 gp	Untrained giant seahorse
200 gp	Giant boar, hunter shark, polar bear, or saber-toothed tiger
250 gp	Giant scorpion, killer whale, or rhinoceros
500 gp	Giant ape, giant crocodile, giant shark, or mammoth
800 gp	Hulking crab

FRAGILE HORSE

Large beast, unaligned

Armor Class 9
Hit Points 11 (2d10)
Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	8 (–1)	11 (+0)	2 (–4)	10 (–0)	5 (–3)

Senses passive Perception 10
Challenge 1/8 (25 xp)

Unreliable. Apply disadvantage to any Wisdom (Animal Handling) checks made to control this mount in battle or to get it to perform tricks or difficult maneuvers.

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

Actions

Hooves. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (2d4 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

Warhorse. The warhorse is the only animal named on the Mounts table that comes combat-trained at its listed cost, complete with the free tricks for that role described in chapter 2. (It gets a cost discount because horses are pervasive as mounts and because most cultures have ancient and well-developed techniques for raising and training warhorses.) The other benefits of this role are included in the warhorse's stat block.

The warhorse's special slam action has its own name, "trampling charge," and the trick for its combat-trained role is called Act (Trampling Charge), not Act (Slam).

MONSTERS

The animals in the previous section are the common species to find at a market. Those creatures are either domesticated or are used as mounts, food, or trade goods in various cultures; depending on location, their presence in a market won't seem out of place or raise any concern.

In contrast, the creatures in this next section, the so-called "monsters," are far less common. They are typically the enemies of the player characters (and of society at large).

MOUNTS							Carrying
Creature	Cost	Intel.	Align.	CR	Saddle	Speed	Capacity
Aurochs VGM	100 gp	2	Un.	2	Large exotic	50 ft.	600 lb.
Axe beak	30 gp	2	Un.	1/4	Large exotic	50 ft.	420 lb.
Camel	50 gp	2	Un.	1/8	Large exotic	50 ft.	480 lb.
Donkey or mule	8 gp	2	Un.	1/8	Equine	40 ft.	420 lb.
Elephant	200 gp	3	Un.	4	Huge exotic	40 ft.	1,320 lb.
Giant seahorse	300 gp	2	Un.	1/2	Large exotic	(40 ft.)	360 lb.
Horse							
Draft	50 gp	2	Un.	1/4	Equine	40 ft.	540 lb.
Riding	75 gp	2	Un.	1/4	Equine	60 ft.	480 lb.
Fragile CEM	15 gp	2	Un.	1/8	Equine	40 ft.	420 lb.
Warhorse	400 gp	2	Un.	1/2	Equine	60 ft.	540 lb.
Giant lizard	200 gp	2	Un.	1/4	Large exotic	30 ft.	450 lb.
+ hold breath	+100 gp	—	—	—	—	—	—
+ spider climb	+200 gp	—	—	—	—	—	—
Mastiff	25 gp	3	Un.	1/8	Canine	40 ft.	195 lb.
Pony	30 gp	2	Un.	1/8	Equine	40 ft.	225 lb.
Steeder, female OotA, MTF	80 gp	2	Un.	1	Large exotic	30 ft.	450 lb.
Steeder, male OotA, MTF	50 gp	2	Un.	1/4	Medium exotic	30 ft.	225 lb.

Monster Tables

The monsters listed on these tables are divided into six categories, based primarily upon Intelligence.

Instinct Level

Instinct-level creatures are those with Intelligence ratings of 1. Some creatures with Intelligence ratings as high as 3 still qualify because of their wholly-alien thought processes. These creatures are perceived as instinct-driven by those who don't understand them.

Animal Level

Animal-level creatures have Intelligence ratings between 2 and 4. Often, but for their rarity or dangerousness, such creatures would serve as mounts and domestic beasts in civilized lands. These are the monsters most likely to be successfully trained and employed by player characters.

Creatures with Intelligence ratings of 4 partly transcend the limitations of normal animal thought processes. They are sufficiently self-aware to be immune to some spells that target animals, those with Intelligence ratings below 4.

Monsters (Instinct-Level Intelligence)						Carrying
Creature	Cost	Int.	Alignment	CR	Saddle	Speed	Capacity
Ankheg	1,750 gp	1	Unaligned	2	Large exotic	30 ft. (30 ft.)	510 lb.
Carrion crawler	2,750 gp	1	Unaligned	2	Large exotic	30 ft. (30 ft.)	420 lb.
Flail snail	8,000 gp	3	Unaligned	3	Large exotic	10 ft.	510 lb.
Fungi							
Gas spore	750 gp	1	Unaligned	1/2	n/a	0 ft. (10 ft.)	150 lb.
Shrieker	40 gp	1	Unaligned	0	n/a	0 ft.	15 lb.
Violet fungus	375 gp	1	Unaligned	1/4	n/a	5 ft.	45 lb.
Gibbering mouther	1,500 gp	3	Neutral	2	n/a	10 ft. (10 ft.)	150 lb.
Neothelid	9,000 gp	3	Chaotic evil	13	Gargantuan exotic	30 ft.	3,240 lb.
Oozes							
Black pudding	2,750 gp	1	Unaligned	4	n/a	20 ft. (20 ft.)	480 lb.
Gelatinous cube	1,750 gp	1	Unaligned	2	n/a	15 ft.	420 lb.
Gray ooze	750 gp	1	Unaligned	1/2	n/a	10 ft. (10 ft.)	180 lb.
Ochre jelly	1,500 gp	2	Unaligned	2	n/a	10 ft. (10 ft.)	450 lb.
Piercer	750 gp	1	Unaligned	1/2	n/a	5 ft. (5 ft.)	150 lb.
Purple worm	20,000 gp	1	Unaligned	15	Gargantuan exotic	50 ft. (30 ft.)	3,360 lb.
Purple wormling	1,925 gp	1	Unaligned	2	Large exotic	20 ft.	480 lb.

Monsters (Animal-Level Intelligence)

Creature	Cost	Int.	Alignment	CR	Saddle	Speed	Carrying Capacity
Basilisk	2,500 gp	2	Unaligned	3	Medium exotic	20 ft.	240 lb.
Bulette	3,500 gp	2	Unaligned	5	Large exotic	40 ft. (40 ft.)	570 lb.
Catoblepas	6,000 gp	3	Unaligned	5	Large exotic	30 ft.	570 lb.
Chimera	6,500 gp	3	Unaligned	6	Large exotic	30 ft. (60 ft.)	570 lb.
Cockatrice	1,250 gp	2	Unaligned	1/2	n/a	20 ft. (40 ft.)	90 lb.
Crag cat	1,000 gp	4	Unaligned	1	Large exotic	40 ft.	480 lb.
Darkmantle	1,000 gp	2	Unaligned	1/2	n/a	10 ft. (30 ft.)	240 lb.
Death dog	1,000 gp	3	Unaligned	1	Canine	40 ft.	225 lb.
Dinosaur							
Allosaurus	500 gp	2	Unaligned	2	Large exotic	60 ft.	570 lb.
Ankylosaurus	500 gp	2	Unaligned	3	Huge exotic	30 ft.	1,140 lb.
Brontosaurus	1,000 gp	2	Unaligned	5	Gargantuan exotic	30 ft.	2,520 lb.
Deinonychus	500 gp	4	Unaligned	1	Medium exotic	40 ft.	225 lb.
Dimetrodon	175 gp	2	Unaligned	1/4	Medium exotic	30 ft. (20 ft.)	210 lb.
Hadrosaurus	200 gp	2	Unaligned	1/4	Large exotic	40 ft.	450 lb.
Plesiosaurus	850 gp	2	Unaligned	2	Large exotic	20 ft. (40 ft.)	540 lb.
Pteranodon	250 gp	2	Unaligned	1/4	Medium exotic	10 ft. (60 ft.)	180 lb.
Quetzalcoatlus	700 gp	2	Unaligned	2	Huge exotic	10 ft. (80 ft.)	900 lb.
Stegosaurus	850 gp	2	Unaligned	4	Huge exotic	40 ft.	1,200 lb.
Triceratops	1,000 gp	2	Unaligned	5	Huge exotic	50 ft.	1,320 lb.
Tyrannosaurus rex	2,000 gp	2	Unaligned	8	Huge exotic	50 ft.	1,500 lb.
Velociraptor	250 gp	4	Unaligned	1/4	n/a	30 ft.	45 lb.
Froghemoth	6,000 gp	2	Unaligned	10	n/a	30 ft. (30 ft.)	1,380 lb.
Giant strider	1,000 gp	4	Neutral evil	1	Large exotic	50 ft.	540 lb.
Guard drake	1,500 gp	4	Unaligned	2	Medium exotic	30 ft.	240 lb.
Gorgon	3,500 gp	2	Unaligned	5	Large exotic	40 ft.	600 lb.
Grick	1,500 gp	3	Unaligned	2	n/a	30 ft. (30 ft.)	210 lb.
Griffon	2,750 gp	2	Unaligned	2	Large exotic	30 ft. (80 ft.)	540 lb.
Hippogriff	2,250 gp	2	Unaligned	1	Large exotic	40 ft. (60 ft.)	510 lb.
Hydra	5,000 gp	2	Unaligned	8	n/a	30 ft. (30 ft.)	1,200 lb.
Owlbear	2,000 gp	3	Unaligned	3	Large exotic	40 ft.	600 lb.
Rhinoceros	2,450 gp	2	Unaligned	2	Large exotic	40 ft.	630 lb.
Roc	10,000 gp	3	Unaligned	11	Gargantuan exotic	20 ft. (120 ft.)	3,360 lb.
Rust monster	750 gp	2	Unaligned	1/2	Medium exotic	40 ft.	195 lb.
Stench kow	750 gp	2	Unaligned	1/4	Large exotic	30 ft.	540 lb.
Stirge	1,000 gp	2	Unaligned	3	n/a	10 ft. (40 ft.)	30 lb.
Trapper	1,000 gp	2	Unaligned	3	n/a	10 ft. (10 ft.)	510 lb.

Cunning Level

Cunning-level creatures are fully self-aware, with Intelligence ratings of 5 or 6. These creatures typically have alignments and understand languages. Some have unique languages of their own. Cunning-level creatures make excellent animal companions, but their relationship to humanoids is often closer to alliances than to service. These monsters' allegiances aren't

MONSTERS (CUNNING-LEVEL INTELLIGENCE)

Creature	Cost	Int.	Alignment	CR	Saddle	Speed	Carrying Capacity
Displacer beast	2,000 gp	6	Lawful evil	3	Large exotic	40 ft.	540 lb.
Dolphin ^{VGM}	200 gp	6	Unaligned	1/8	Medium exotic	(60 ft.)	210 lb.
Girallon	2,500 gp	5	Unaligned	4	n/a	40 ft. (40 ft.)	540 lb.
Hell hound	2,000 gp	6	Lawful evil	3	Canine	50 ft.	255 lb.
Mimic	1,500 gp	5	Neutral	2	n/a	15 ft.	255 lb.
Otyugh	3,000 gp	6	Neutral	5	n/a	30 ft.	480 lb.
Shadow mastiff	1,500 gp	5	Neutral evil	2	Canine	40 ft.	240 lb.
Wyvern	8,000 gp	5	Unaligned	6	Large exotic	20 ft. (80 ft.)	570 lb.
Yeth hound	2,500 gp	5	Neutral evil	4	Canine	40 ft. (40 ft.)	540 lb.

likely to be commanded by characters whose goals and philosophies are oppositional.

SENTIENT LEVEL

Sentient-level creatures have Intelligence ratings of 7 or higher. They are as smart as other sentient creatures, no matter what their shapes.

DRAGONS

The sixth category includes dragons. These two tables are listed separately without regard to the creatures' Intelligence ratings. Dragons don't really fit among the monsters selected for this section; these powerful, intelligent creatures are more likely to use humanoids as their pets rather than vice versa. Dragons are included in this chapter only because so many fantasy stories are based upon finding and allying with young dragons or using dragons as mounts.

All dragons have a flying speed, one not listed on the dragon tables, that is double the rate of their normal speed. Based on type, dragons may also have climbing, burrowing, or swimming speeds listed parenthetically.

If your campaign uses the variant rule Dragons as Innate Spellcasters, double the listed costs for adult and ancient dragons.

MONSTERS (SENTIENT-LEVEL INTELLIGENCE)

Creature	Cost	Int.	Alignment	CR	Saddle	Speed	Carrying Capacity
Behir	8,000 gp	7	Neutral evil	11	Huge exotic	50 ft. (40 ft.)	1,380 lb.
Blink dog	750 gp	10	Lawful good	1/4	Canine	40 ft.	180 lb.
Barghest	2,500 gp	13	Neutral evil	4	Canine	60 ft. / 30 ft.	570 lb.
Leucrotta	2,000 gp	9	Chaotic evil	3	Canine	50 ft.	540 lb.
Manticore	2,500 gp	7	Lawful evil	3	Large exotic	30 ft. (50 ft.)	510 lb.
Nightmare	2,500 gp	10	Neutral evil	3	Large exotic	60 ft. (90 ft.)	540 lb.
Pegasus	2,000 gp	10	Chaotic good	2	Large exotic	60 ft. (90 ft.)	540 lb.
Unicorn	4,000 gp	11	Lawful good	5	Equine	50 ft.	540 lb.
Winter wolf	2,000 gp	7	Neutral evil	3	Canine	60 ft.	540 lb.
Worg	500 gp	7	Neutral evil	1/2	Canine	50 ft.	480 lb.

USE AS ANIMALS

Players often want to tame monsters for use as pets or allies, typically when they encounter a juvenile specimen that seems easy to manage at the time. Some of the statistics on the tables in this section are included to facilitate the use of monsters as allies, guardians, and mounts. However, using monsters as animals raises important concerns.

The Dungeon Master is ultimately in charge of which creatures can be trained and managed as animals; while some creatures might fit the guidelines for defining animals in chapter 1, the DM can rule them out for any reason. Some creatures just don't make sense as animal companions, whether in specific campaign worlds, or just in that one game the DM is running.

In addition to concerns about their viability for training and handling, making any use of monsters probably requires the measures for adapting animals to civilized settings, described in chapter 1. If monsters are commonly used as animals in the game world, additional concerns of licensing, taxation, and other governmental regulations may apply to owning monsters of various types.

STANDARD PRICES

The set prices for monsters in this book are based primarily on how dangerous they are, as reflected by their challenge ratings. Monster rarity and reputation also play a role in their pricing. Additionally, creatures with the ability to generate monster byproducts, like poison, have significantly higher values.

If the Dungeon Master allows that player characters can sell a live monster in their possession, the standard price of that creature is 1/2 of the market value listed here.

MONSTERS (CHROMATIC DRAGONS)

Creature	Cost	Int.	Alignment	CR	Saddle	Speed	Carrying Capacity
Black							
Ancient	155,000 gp	16	Chaotic evil	21	Gargantuan exotic	40 ft. (40 ft.)	3,240 lb.
Adult	60,000 gp	14	Chaotic evil	14	Huge exotic	40 ft. (40 ft.)	1,380 lb.
Young	19,000 gp	12	Chaotic evil	7	Large exotic	40 ft. (40 ft.)	570 lb.
Wyrmling	6,000 gp	10	Chaotic evil	2	Medium exotic	30 ft. (30 ft.)	225 lb.
Blue							
Ancient	230,000 gp	18	Lawful evil	24	Gargantuan exotic	40 ft. (40 ft.)	3,480 lb.
Adult	70,000 gp	16	Lawful evil	16	Huge exotic	40 ft. (30 ft.)	1,740 lb.
Young	25,000 gp	14	Lawful evil	9	Large exotic	40 ft. (20 ft.)	630 lb.
Wyrmling	8,000 gp	12	Lawful evil	3	Medium exotic	30 ft. (15 ft.)	255 lb.
Green							
Ancient	180,000 gp	20	Lawful evil	22	Gargantuan exotic	40 ft. (40 ft.)	3,240 lb.
Adult	65,000 gp	18	Lawful evil	15	Huge exotic	40 ft. (40 ft.)	1,380 lb.
Young	22,000 gp	16	Lawful evil	8	Large exotic	40 ft. (40 ft.)	570 lb.
Wyrmling	6,000 gp	14	Lawful evil	2	Medium exotic	30 ft. (30 ft.)	225 lb.
Red							
Ancient	230,000 gp	18	Chaotic evil	24	Gargantuan exotic	40 ft. (40 ft.)	3,600 lb.
Adult	75,000 gp	16	Chaotic evil	17	Huge exotic	40 ft. (40 ft.)	1,620 lb.
Young	28,000 gp	14	Chaotic evil	10	Large exotic	40 ft. (40 ft.)	690 lb.
Wyrmling	10,000 gp	12	Chaotic evil	4	Medium exotic	30 ft. (30 ft.)	275 lb.
White							
Ancient	130,000 gp	10	Chaotic evil	20	Gargantuan exotic	40 ft. (40/40 ft.)	3,120 lb.
Adult	55,000 gp	8	Chaotic evil	13	Huge exotic	40 ft. (30/40 ft.)	1,320 lb.
Young	16,000 gp	6	Chaotic evil	6	Large exotic	40 ft. (20/40 ft.)	540 lb.
Wyrmling	6,000 gp	5	Chaotic evil	2	Medium exotic	30 ft. (15/30 ft.)	210 lb.

Monsters (Metallic Dragons)

Creature	Cost	Int.	Alignment	CR	Saddle	Speed	Carrying Capacity
Brass							
Ancient	130,000 gp	16	Chaotic good	20	Gargantuan exotic	40 ft. (40 ft.)	3,240 lb.
Adult	55,000 gp	14	Chaotic good	13	Huge exotic	40 ft. (30 ft.)	1,380 lb.
Young	16,000 gp	12	Chaotic good	6	Large exotic	40 ft. (20 ft.)	570 lb.
Wyrmling	4,000 gp	10	Chaotic good	1	Medium exotic	30 ft. (15 ft.)	225 lb.
Bronze							
Ancient	180,000 gp	18	Lawful good	22	Gargantuan exotic	40 ft. (40 ft.)	3,480 lb.
Adult	55,000 gp	16	Lawful good	13	Huge exotic	40 ft. (40 ft.)	1,500 lb.
Young	22,000 gp	14	Lawful good	8	Large exotic	40 ft. (40 ft.)	630 lb.
Wyrmling	6,000 gp	12	Lawful good	2	Medium exotic	30 ft. (30 ft.)	255 lb.
Copper							
Ancient	155,000 gp	20	Chaotic good	21	Gargantuan exotic	40 ft. (40 ft.)	3,240 lb.
Adult	60,000 gp	18	Chaotic good	14	Huge exotic	40 ft. (40 ft.)	1,380 lb.
Young	19,000 gp	16	Chaotic good	7	Large exotic	40 ft. (40 ft.)	570 lb.
Wyrmling	4,000 gp	14	Chaotic good	1	Medium exotic	30 ft. (30 ft.)	225 lb.
Gold							
Ancient	230,000 gp	18	Lawful good	24	Gargantuan exotic	40 ft. (40 ft.)	3,600 lb.
Adult	75,000 gp	16	Lawful good	17	Huge exotic	40 ft. (40 ft.)	1,620 lb.
Young	28,000 gp	16	Lawful good	10	Large exotic	40 ft. (40 ft.)	690 lb.
Wyrmling	8,000 gp	14	Lawful good	3	Medium exotic	30 ft. (30 ft.)	275 lb.
Silver							
Ancient	205,000 gp	18	Lawful good	23	Gargantuan exotic	40 ft.	3,600 lb.
Adult	70,000 gp	16	Lawful good	16	Huge exotic	40 ft.	1,620 lb.
Young	25,000 gp	14	Lawful good	9	Large exotic	40 ft.	690 lb.
Wyrmling	6,000 gp	12	Lawful good	2	Medium exotic	30 ft.	275 lb.

Additional Values

In addition to the costs listed on their respective tables, creature values in this chapter may have adjustments based on training, templates, and other factors.

Value of Training

Training takes time, and time has value that can be measured in gold. An animal that has useful training can therefore be purchased at an additional cost that is based on its roles and tricks.

Although trained animals probably require a period of adjustment to get used to taking commands from their new owners, this occurs during abstract periods of travel or at other times when animal and owner are together. For the purpose of these rules, a trained

Monster Markets

Although the monsters in this chapter are given prices, saddle ratings, and stat block summaries similar to mounts, they are not readily available for purchase anywhere. Unless the Dungeon Master determines that the campaign is particularly cosmopolitan, one that fully embraces magical and exotic creatures as commonplace, no market will collect and sell such creatures in quantity. Instead these prices serve only as a reference point. On rare occasions, a party might find a single monster for sale somewhere, or a party might capture such a creature and, having found a willing buyer, need a price point for selling the creature.

animal is ready to use its training immediately upon purchase.

The value added by a role or trick is 5 gp per day required to teach it to the animal:

- A *trick* (one not provided by a role) adds <u>30 gp</u> to the animal's value.

- The gp value added by the *combat-trained role* is <u>10 times</u> the animal's base price, while all *other roles* add a gp value <u>equal to</u> the animal's base price.

An animal gains no value when trained to a role or trick that has no practical function or for which there is almost no market. For example, a rider-trained crow is too specialized in function to sell at a normal market. Likewise, a fish trained to Fetch has no value enhancement because of that training since its physicality drastically limits what it can pick up.

Like used equipment, the value of animals (including each trained trick and role) is halved when a player character sells it under normal circumstances.

For characters who don't have time to train their own animals, hirelings can be employed for the task. Because it requires a particular skill (and probably some tools and facilities), animal handlers are skilled hirelings that cost 2 gp per day to employ.

It is difficult and expensive to find trainers for wild or dangerous animals, like bears or griffons. Such trainers charge between 3 gp and 10 gp per day. They can only be found near large settlements or where market industries for those particular creatures are based. They may need very specialized equipment or magical capabilities to help them control and train such exotic creatures.

Domestic animals, those who perform valued, specialized roles in society, are sometimes trained in group facilities like horse ranches or dog kennels. Animal trainers employed at such facilities can be hired for only 1 gp per day since much of their work is shared efficiently among all the trainers.

VALUE OF TEMPLATES

Templates are described in appendix A. Their value is related to the animal's base value. Except where noted, these templates do not affect other price adjustments that refer to the creature's base value.

If you are applying one of these templates to an animal from the Mounts table, remember that those values include the cost of the rider-trained role. Halve Mount table gp costs to find those creatures' base, untrained values or refer to their costs on the Untrained Creatures table instead.

Fragile Specimen. A fragile specimen's cost is decreased to two-fifths of its standard, untrained value. This does not affect most other template prices based on the creature's normal value. Nor does it affect the training time and cost of a creature's roles, except the combat-trained role.

A combat-trained fragile specimen is far beyond its prime; the value of its battle training is therefore much reduced, based on its modified price, not its base price. A combat-trained fragile

specimen has an additional cost equal to its reduced purchase value. For example, a combat-trained fragile riding horse (normally 75 gp when rider-trained), can be purchased at a *total* cost of 30 gp, double its reduced price. A fragile specimen cannot become combat-trained after it gains this template.

Juvenile Specimen. A juvenile specimen is valued the same as an adult. Although it is not as effective, it is young enough for combat training and its reduced Intelligence means a handler can form a bond with the creature before it gains an adult's degree of independence.

Reluctant Creature. A reluctant specimen's value is not changed because its state of reluctance may result from one of any number of factors, some of which won't apply to another buyer.

Exceptional Specimen. An exceptional specimen's value is 5 times its standard value. This does not affect other template prices based on the creature's normal value.

Planar Creature (or Undead Creature). The base value of a *planar creature* is 10 times that of a normal version. For example, an untrained celestial hawk's base value is 100 gp, when a normal hawk's base value is only 10 gp. An undead animal has the same price modification among willing buyers, but most markets want nothing to do with such creatures.

Dire Animal. The base value of a dire animal is 15 times that of a normal version. For example, an untrained dire wolf's base value is 75 gp, when a normal wolf's base value is only 5 gp.

Legendary Creature. The base value of a legendary creature is 20 times that of a normal version. For example, an untrained legendary elk's base value is 300 gp, when a normal elk's base value is only 15 gp.

Appendix A

ANIMALS IN STORIES

I N THIS FIRST DUNGEON MASTER APPENDIX, STORY seeds are provided. These are small story ideas related to when the party finds or manages their animals. The first seeds are generic, addressing acquisition methods, caretaking, and other moments when animal companions can take center stage. The rest of the seeds are taken from official hardcover adventures; each adventure is examined for circumstances that affect animal handling and for instances of interesting animals that already appear in those books and may be acquired.

STORY SEEDS

These small story ideas are directed at incorporating or accommodating animals in DUNGEONS & DRAGONS games.

ACQUIRING ANIMALS

This section seeds ideas for the three standard methods of animal acquisition: encountering, buying, and husbandry. It also has ideas for getting rid of animals when the Dungeon Master needs them to make an exit.

ENCOUNTERING

In these scenarios, the players have the least input on the type of animals they acquire.

Random Encounter. The party notices an animal of an interesting type, perhaps one that the Dungeon Master knows that a player character is looking for. The animal is too distant to perceive the party or to be immediately attacked by it; this space creates a moment of contemplation without rolling for initiative. The encountered animal's behavior is not one that suggests hostility toward the party either. Perhaps the creature is lounging, sleeping, or lapping water from a pool. The most interesting behaviors are playful and frolicking, activities that give the animal personality unrelated to its hunting or combat capabilities. To signal the creature's unique nature, give the animal unusual coloration, scars or other marks.

Rumors in the Night. The party hears a rumor of an impressive animal specimen at a certain location up in the hills. There is a bounty on the creature, but a concerned local asks the party to try to relocate the creature instead of killing it. When they find the animal, it has already been wounded by a hunter's arrow and needs assistance. If the characters help, the animal forms a bond and stays with them.

Remaining Young. After an encounter wherein the characters slay an adult animal or mated pair of animals, the characters discover that those creatures left mewling young or untended eggs that the characters must either adopt or abandon to die.

Strange Bedfellows. While traveling, a natural disaster strikes, like a flood or fire. It forces animals to flee their wilderness homes and come into close contact with each other and with the player characters. For example, a flashflood may strand animals and the characters on a high peak, or a wildfire may force them to swim to an island in the river. While the animals are huddling in fear, as far from one another as possible, a character notices the encountered animal. Alternately, when the threat has receded, the encountered animal is found without its parents, unable to fend for itself, or an animal curiously follows the characters as they leave.

Lost and Alone. While the party is camped, the animal walks into their midst and begins to display performative tricks, begging for food. It is obviously either domestic or tamed, but it has been separated from its former handler. It may show signs of hunger or neglect. The animal might begin with a trick already trained, perhaps something it demonstrates as a surprise, doing so at just the right moment to be helpful to the party. For additional drama, the animal's original handler may come looking for it later, perhaps after the party has gained a few levels and become attached to the animal.

Experiment. The party encounters the animal caged in the lair of an evil spellcaster. Experiments were performed on the animal and it might now have magical properties. Alternately, the animal may be a particularly intelligent specimen from among a collection that were kept for sacrifices.

Wounded Handler. The party finds an old (or terminally injured) handler somewhere in the wild or out on the trail. The handler asks a player character to take care of his or her beloved animal companion.

Caught in a Trap. An animal is discovered with one leg in a hunting trap. The creature should be put out of its misery or rescued. If relieved of the trap, the animal might follow the party, sensing the opportunity for kinship or protection.

Reluctant Aggressor. An antagonist attacks the party with a bevy of trained creatures, like attack dogs, but one of the creatures is reluctant and refuses to fight the party. This raises the antagonist's anger toward the creature, which probably makes the party sympathetic to it. If the party acquires this animal after the battle, they may find it simply isn't combative by nature. More likely, as heroic animals are likely to

do, it simply recognizes the goodness of the party and refuses to fight them on behalf of an abusive master.

Buying

Markets present an opportunity for players to have more control over the type of animals they acquire. Most markets, if of the appropriate size, will offer access to most of the animals in chapter 5 of the *Player's Handbook*.

Kismet. The animal is noticed in a common market, perhaps in a cage or tied to a post at a market stall. The character and this animal notice one another at the same time, their eyes locking onto one another with an instant sense of connection. The animal might be instantly acclimated to the character who purchases it.

Exotic Wares. A traveling merchant has several interesting and exotic animals on offer. The merchant claims that these creatures are magical, part of the menagerie of a distant ruler who recently sold them all in a fit of pique. Unfortunately, most of these are just normal animals, their appearances altered by such artifice as bright-colored dye in the fur. One creature, however, is truly a magical thing. Although the merchant doesn't know this, a perceptive character might spot this authentic creature among the collection of fakes. This animal is somehow magical, perhaps with the *planar creature* template or possessing of a supernatural gift.

Twins. A local noble has put out the word that she wants to sell her exotic pet. Perhaps the noble needs the money. Perhaps the animal can't be tamed, and the noble wants rid of it out of frustration. Perhaps it was a gift for the noble's child, who now shows no interest in the animal and won't take time to clean up after the creature. The noble has even provided a sketch of this animal, posted in the local market. When the party sees this, they notice that the creature is identical to a beloved animal they already have in the party, right down to that strange physical feature they thought no other member of the species would have. Perhaps the beloved party animal itself notices the posted sketch and shows inordinate interest in it.

A Circus Comes to Town. A large traveling band of entertainers comes to town. While here, they set up a stall in the local market or near their pavilions, where they offer to sell some offspring of their exotic trained creatures. This is an opportunity for the Dungeon

Master to seed an exotic creature, one wholly outside of its natural environment, without the animal's appearance seeming incredulous.

Celebrity Estate Sale. A famous singer recently died. His many, many offspring have decided to sell his possessions and split the proceeds evenly, but they are selling everything at inflated prices to cash in on the singer's fame. Among the entertainer's possessions is a useful or interesting animal, but other buyers are bidding on it too. This story doubles as an opportunity to drain off some of the party's excess coin.

Husbandry

Characters with enough time (or who own facilities, and who employ hirelings to run them), can acquire and keep animals for breeding or can otherwise acquire young animals and raise them to viable ages. This method represents the greatest degree of control that characters can exercise over the types of animals they acquire.

Last Will and Testament. The character has become acquainted with another animal trainer, either in the same area or raising the same type of animals. When that trainer dies mysteriously, the player character is surprised to inherit the dead handler's large breeding stock. The authorities (or disowned relatives) might investigate why the dead animal trainer included the player character in the will.

Extra. The party's breeding efforts produce more stock than needed. A pregnant animal unexpectedly yields twins or has a litter with extra members. If the players keep the extra animals and bring them along on adventures, the Dungeon Master may decide that the extra animals can't get along with one another in close proximity.

Under a Dark Star. Breeding efforts produce an animal of a different kind than its parents. The animal might be totally incongruous, like an ape born of wolves, or it might have a celestial or infernal template. Unless the party's husbandry operation occurs in absolute isolation, rumors may spring up among the locals claiming that the creature is a curse or the party may hear that all animals born that day are somehow strange or marked as evil, perhaps the result of an dark star that appeared in the night.

Mystery Eggs. The party found (or purchased) some large, mysterious eggs. They identified the eggs as viable, so decided to hatch them. Perhaps they believe the eggs belong to a griffon, giant lizard, good dragon, or other useful animal, either because they found them in such a creature's lair or because a merchant claimed the eggs to be of that type. When the eggs hatch, they turn out to be of an unexpected creature, maybe an intelligent and hostile one like an evil dragon, a thri-kreen, or a peryton. The parent of the eggs might also track down the party, adding to the fun.

Breeding Requirement. If the party tries to breed magical creatures and raise their young, those parent creatures might have special dietary needs in order to be fertile. For example, perhaps blink dogs don't overrun the Material Plane because they only mate after eating food unique to the Feywild. The party must track down these required foods or other materials in order to enhance their animals' chance of breeding true or to otherwise advance their husbandry efforts.

Losing Animals

Sometimes an animal is only a temporary member of the party. Sometimes it needs to be retired because it is too weak to continue adventuring with the party. Sometimes the creature is too strong, acquired in a way the Dungeon Master didn't intend.

In these cases, a standard exit, the animal's death, probably isn't practical because magic allows the dead to be brought back to life. Instead, these story elements can provide interesting ways for an animal to make its exit, one that is permanent. The best exits are those where the animal finds a happier place to be, salving the players' sense of loss.

Polymorphed. At some point, the animal is hit by a stray *dispel magic* spell or is reduced to 0 hit points, at which time it reverts to its true form. Once this "frog" becomes a "prince" again, he is likely to want to return to his family and life, despite still sensing some attachment to the party. If the original creature is not a sentient humanoid, it might instead be another animal, one better suited to the party's current level or needs.

Love at First Sight. The party encounters an animal of the same type as one in the party. The two animals seem to have an instant connection, and the party's animal wants nothing more than to go to that creature and live with it as a mated pair in this idyllic setting, which is somewhere away from civilization. If the party drags its animal away, the creature might run off to seek its intended mate. The other animal refuses or

TRIUMPH AND ADVERSITY

Without some purposeful animal-including events, animals can become obscured behind their stat blocks. These scenarios emphasize both triumph and adversity, the benefits and drawbacks that animals bring to the game.

Beneficial scenarios will give animals a chance to come out and participate as nonplayer characters outside of mere die-rolling. In particular, their special traits or modes of movement can be advantageous, reminding some players why having the animal along is a good thing.

Drawbacks are usually mild, but they force the players to develop coping strategies for when harsher versions arise. Without these, players may fail to think ahead, might bring the wrong equipment, or might explore no alternative places for animals to go when adventures will be particularly difficult or dangerous for them to navigate.

BENEFICIAL ROLES

These story ideas address non-combat roles that animals can take. (An animal's combat purposes tend to get sufficient screen time that additional story hooks aren't needed.)

Hooks and Ladders. While in a dungeon environment, the party encounters a cliff with a rope ladder rolled up and hooked to the clifftop or some other arrangement that makes the ladder unreachable from below. This is the moment for a flying companion to shine! A clever flyer could fly up and untie the twine or manipulate whatever other restraint holds the ladder in its coiled position. A flying familiar, with its telepathic connection to a smart character, can easily manage the task. Otherwise, the animal might need training in a trick like Fetch or the handler might need to make a Wisdom (Animal Handling) check to get the animal to perform this tricky task.

Cracks and Levers. In the giants' temple, the party is faced by massive stone doors with no exterior method to open them. A Tiny creature could pass through the crack between (or under) the doors and find the lever for their opening mechanism.

Tracking Prey. A scouting party has discovered the adventurers approaching the enemy fortress and engaged them in battle, but one has escaped to bring a warning. One of the party's animals is needed to quickly track down the fleeing foe before the alarm

evades acclimation and won't leave its home, so the only option might be to leave the party's animal behind. Only the hardest-hearted party would take extraordinary measures to bring the animal away from this peaceful retirement, perhaps giving it the *reluctant creature* template. If the party returns to visit the pair, they may have the opportunity to acquire one of the new offspring.

An Offer You Can't Refuse. A wealthy noble's child has recently lost his pet animal. By luck, one of the party's animals is a perfect duplicate in type and appearance. The noble's agent offers the party an exceptional amount of wealth in exchange for the animal, promising that the creature will receive the best care and attention an animal could want and live on the noble's grand estate.

Passing the Torch. A handler in a lower-level adventuring party needs the assistance of an animal companion of the type that needs an exit. The time might be right for the animal to find a home in a less-strenuous environment than the current party's high-level adventures provide.

can be raised. This might necessitate a quick chase, or the patrol might have been encountered while days away from the fortification.

Camp Guardian. An animal trained for guarding, or just a particularly alert and watchful creature like a canine, keeps showing signs of having detected intruders when the party camps. When the party can't find any threats, it must decide whether to take extreme measures, perhaps with only half the adventurers sleeping at one time. Alternately, the party can ignore the animal's intermittent growls. This might be a case of the animal alerting over something that is not a threat, or something might be stalking the party at a distance where the party cannot find it.

Feeding Animals

Animals need food and water like any other creatures. Dungeons & Dragons abstracts the feeding process; so long as a creature gets its daily prescribed weight of food and gallons of water, all is good. The following scenarios add a bit of nuance to the process, reminding players that their animals need attention from time to time.

Weed of Ill Omen. A grazing animal has consumed a plant that is toxic to it and the creature begins to show signs of illness. A character proficient with the Nature skill may recognize the weed just after the animal has consumed it, or perhaps another character may find the strange weed much later, after making an Intelligence check. If the weed type is identified, the party will need to be vigilant wherever they camp in this area to find safe grazing sites. If the weed goes unrecognized, all the grazing animals continue to gain the poisoned condition day after day, necessitating the use of party resources to cure them, or just having to deal with sick animals until the party leaves the area.

Parasites. The party's stores of animal feed turn up fouled, perhaps by mold or parasites. This won't matter if the party is in an area of plentiful grazing or hunting unless the party cannot let the animals wander about to fend for themselves. The party may have to turn back toward town or use spells to provide sustenance for their creatures.

Catnip. The party encounters an area rife with food that particularly interests one or more types of their animals. Perhaps there is a plant that the horses go mad for, seeking it out, and then behaving in a highly spirited manner once stuffed with it. Perhaps fat

beetles or scurrying mice are everywhere, prompting hunting creatures to keep leaping into the bushes to pursue prey. Controlling the creatures may require Wisdom (Animal Handling) checks or special equipment like blinkers (or even cages). The party might lose time recovering an animal that has gone off chasing some tempting morsel. On the bright side, the party doesn't need to use any of that animal type's feed stores while traveling in this area.

The Difficulties of Terrain

Most terrain difficulties simply cost an unprepared party some extra travel time to overcome. In the case of mounts, which save the party travel time, the difference may be so dramatic that the party loses more time than it saves.

The Cliff. An obstruction appears, one that humanoids can navigate, but that other landbound creatures cannot. The classic example is a cliff, or a steep slope covered in loose shale, one that horses can't pass themselves. Humanoids can climb the plentiful handholds or a rope in the case of a cliff, or they can leap from boulder to boulder to avoid creating a landslide of shale. The obstacle is one that animals can be pulled up and over with ropes and harnesses, if the party has them. Alternately, they must find another route, perhaps losing days of travel, or use magic to levitate the creatures or reform the terrain. In extreme scenarios, the land may offer repeated instances of this obstacle.

Tree Village. Like cliffs, some (usually indoor) features are not passable by creatures that lack hands. Ropes and ladders are prime examples. Perhaps the party encounters a primitive village built high in the trees, abandoned or otherwise. The buildings are reached by rope ladders and connected by rope bridges, so the party's horses must be left on the ground. Perhaps the village was built in the boughs because some terror stalks the ground when the sun begins to set, a threat that appears when the party is physically separated from their mounts. A generous Dungeon Master may allow the party to see the threat coming and react appropriately, but perhaps they must defend the horses while at range.

The Gods' Breath. While the party is on open ground, like rolling plains, a raging windstorm blows up. It can appear without warning, or it can grow out of other storm conditions. The storm is so forceful that

party members must lean into the wind to avoid falling over. Terrible gusts sweep Medium or smaller flying creatures away from the party; the higher the animal, the farther it is carried. A nature-wise character may recognize the coming threat in time to find a sheltered area or to clutch onto a flying creature. The party loses time hunkering down, waiting for the flying animal to return, or traveling the wrong direction to recover the animal.

Social Trouble

Adversity often shows itself in the form of social friction, when animals don't get along with other creatures.

Crowds are Dangerous. When characters must go into a crowded scenario, like walking a busy city street, and they decide to bring an animal along, trouble ensues. Whether wild or domestic, the proximity of so many other creatures will cause rising tension until the animal finally flees or attacks, causing property damage or injury. Perhaps the final stressor is a loud noise, like the axle of a nearby wagon breaking under its heavy load. The damage or injury may require the party to pay reparations or may invite trouble with the city watch.

Cats and Dogs. Some animals, by the differing nature of their species or their personalities, refuse to get along with one another. Some animals, particularly those with hierarchal tendencies, won't even get along with their own kind. The party must devote attention to keeping two of their animals separate while camping and traveling and may find that long-term adventuring with both animals is too difficult to do.

Animal License. While in a civilized area, even a small town, a member of the watch or other local authority demands to see the handler's license for one of the party's animals. A local ordinance requires a fee but, even if the party pays, the animal has to be quarantined for a few weeks of observation to make sure it isn't diseased. (Perhaps the town's crop is under threat from some animal-borne parasite.) The party has to wait around to get the animal back, bribe the right people, or break their companion out of "animal jail."

HARDCOVER ADVENTURES

This section examines the published hardcover adventures to find areas where animals can be acquired or interacted with.

Most of these simply highlight where viable animals appear in the campaign and include a few suggestions for making use of them. If the Dungeon Master thinks the players may be interested in one or more of these animals, rumors and clues as to their existence can be seeded into the campaign ahead of time. Prewarned, players are more likely to consider their options when they encounter the creatures, rather than reaching for their swords.

CURSE OF STRAHD

In Ravenloft, the Dark Powers make tools of animals, embodying them literally or figuratively. The gothic horror milieu casts animals as mysteriously dark and foreboding, like everything else. Wolves stalk the shadowy forest, just beyond the lights of the town. Ravens perch on the hangman's tree, staring silently. Bats swarm and scream, heralding the night. Animals in this setting are meant to raise tension and foreshadow unholy events with their mere presence.

Here are some of the more interesting chances to acquire animals or use them as story tools in this hardcover adventure. These mostly occur in and around Vallaki.

Barovian Witch Allies. Barovian witches, although able to use the *find familiar* spell, sometimes choose instead to align themselves with fiendish animals found wandering in the domain, cats, snakes, and toads with a fiendish *planar creature* template. One of these magical (and probably evil) animals may seek to befriend a party member after the animal's mistress is slain. To gain membership in the party (and to acquire the party as personal protectors), fiendish cats in particular may attempt to play upon the party's unwillingness to hurt cute animals.

Beucephalus, the Wonder Horse. Strahd von Zarovich keeps his beloved nightmare stabled in the crypts, deep inside Castle Ravenloft. If it looks like the party is at least a match for the ancient vampire, Beucephalus may opt to change his allegiance to assist the party, particularly if the party has an evil member in it and they encounter the nightmare while it is away from Strahd's influence. If this happens, it cements Strahd's hatred for the party.

Rictavio's Beast. As part of his plans for vengeance against the Vistani, Rictavio keeps a saber-toothed tiger (wearing half plate barding) in his carnival wagon. The animal is trained to be hostile to Vistani but is otherwise tame. If something happens to Rictavio, or if the animal is found or otherwise escapes, the characters may encounter this creature and have to kill or capture it.

Roc of Ages. A thousand-year-old roc lives on the top of Mount Ghakis, feeding on fish from the nearby lake. It is attracted to horses and mules as potential snacks if characters bring such creatures near the stone bridge on route to or from the Amber Temple. This ancient beast is almost certainly hostile (and hungry) when encountered, but a persistent character might be able to interact with it as an animal. The roc is one of the few creatures that flies above Strahd's influence and, although its memories are those of an animal's, it remembers a time before the Dark Powers came to Barovia.
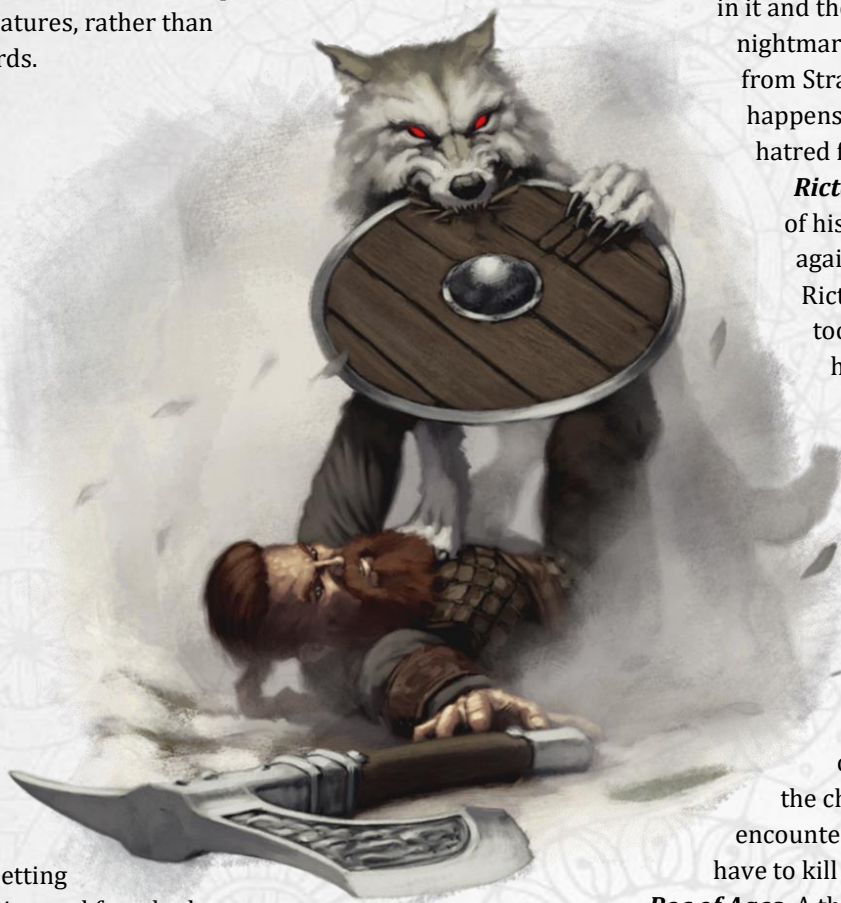
Sangzor the Goat. This beast is called Sangzor ("bloodhorn") by the local druids and berserkers. It is a very intelligent and thoroughly evil giant goat. Sangzor has a blessing from the Dark Powers that makes him resistant to nonmagical weapon attacks (see Supernatural Gifts). Although Sangzor is hostile and mean-spirited, he could become a willing (though stubborn) ally to the party. No explanation is given for Sangzor's presence here, leaving the Dungeon Master free to provide all manner of details to the goat's origin and purpose.

Unwitting Betrayal. The party's animals may provide a stark contrast to the native animals of this land. Where native beasts are implements of suspense, allied animals remain constant companions, reliable and true. However, even friendly animals can represent a risk. The unique forces in Ravenloft allow the Dungeon Master to use allied animals creatively to drive the story, to guide enemies to the party's location or to reveal information about the land to the players. Animal eyes can be secret portals for the lord of the domain to spy out of. Or perhaps the Dark Powers influence the party's animals to lead the group into dangerous areas of the land. Strahd himself might speak through an animal's mouth, challenging the party or inviting them to meet him in his castle.

Vallakovich Hounds. The burgomaster of Vallaki keeps a pair of black mastiffs. Where did these come from? Perhaps the Vallakovichs (or the town) has a large stable of hounds, carefully bred with pedigrees meticulously tracked. Exceptional specimen mastiffs might be acquired here, for a significant price, so long as the party is not hostile to the burgomaster or not causing trouble in town.

Wereraven Contacts. A party that befriends the Keepers of the Feather might use these contacts to acquire semi-tamed ravens. The Keepers probably cultivate normal ravens in and around Vallaki as cover for their own comings and goings in raven form. Some of the older of these normal ravens may know a few tricks.

Wolf Hunters. Szoldar Szoldarovich and Yevgeni Krushkin spend their days near Vallaki hunting wolves. Despite hating these beasts, Szoldar and Yevgeni might sometimes try to raise litters of wolf pups to serve as trackers and hunters alongside the two men. The party may encounter these two while they are in this process and, owing to the hunters'

hunger for coin, be able to purchase some or all of the juvenile wolves. Alternately, the party may find and befriend some juvenile wolves and have to hide them or protect them from the wolf hunters. Keeping the animals alive may come at the cost of the villagers' goodwill.

GHOSTS OF SALTMARSH

This collection of adventures represents one of the few times when players might be well served by amphibious animal companions. Purely aquatic creatures appear in these adventures but, because acquiring such creatures is not useful to surface dwellers, they are ignored in these pages.

The Sinister Secret of Saltmarsh. Animals abound in this adventure. Although presented strictly as antagonists, these encounters are great opportunities to acquire useful animal companions. The haunted house has four giant weasels in the garden, two giant poisonous snakes in the well, four giant centipedes in the kitchen, and six stirges in the attic. For more interesting options, the smuggler's ship has a pseudodragon named Bimz, one already accustomed to serving a master, and a noisy parrot named Cuppa, who may randomly spout secret codes and passphrases that local pirates and smugglers use.

Danger at Dunwater. In this scaly adventure, the Temple houses a pair of unique two-headed lizards called amphisbaenae, useful animals as guardians for their doubled set of senses. The Cave of the Giant Lizard has six giant lizards, just enough for a full party to train as sure-footed mounts for this swampy terrain. The Gate and Treasure Room houses five giant poisonous snakes, and two giant constrictor snakes live in the Lair of the Devourer. Speaking of the devourer, this legendary crocodile, Thousand Teeth, is making trouble for the lizardfolk. Capturing the animal is just as useful to the lizardfolk as killing it.

Salvage Operation. Consistent with its infestation by cultists of Lolth, the *Emperor of the Waves* houses giant spiders, giant wolf spiders, and a phase spider named Roil. Spider-loving handlers may have a chance to acquire them magically, but the fast timing of this part of the adventure and the fate of the *Emperor* means such alliances are probably short-lived.

The Final Enemy. The only animal in this adventure that is not water bound is Kysh's pet sea lion. Approaching the creature without the triton in tow

makes the sea lion's starting attitude hostile. Even if Kysh survives, he might leave the animal with the party when he returns home, if it takes a liking to them.

Tammeraut's Fate. The hermitage in this adventure boasts a few creatures that might be acquired: five giant rats roost in the midden and three giant coral snakes can be found in the scriptorium.

Marsh Town. Around the town of Saltmarsh, the party may encounter blood hawks, crocodiles, dire wolves, giant crabs, giant lizards, giant octopi, giant rats, giant toads, owlbears, pteranodons, poisonous snakes, rats, reef sharks, stirges, and wolves. The setting provides no lack of animals for starting characters to acquire.

Sinker. This shipwreck encounter, of a small fishing boat, provides an excellent opportunity to acquire an amphibious animal companion. Giant crabs are versatile, sturdy creatures that can breathe air and water. Because it is part of a special encounter, the Dungeon Master can seed the story with rumors of this giant crab's location, perhaps even upgrading it to a legendary creature.

Hoard of the Dragon Queen

The first of this two-part epic adventure appears in this book, pitting the party against cultists bent on releasing Tiamat from her prison in the Nine Hells.

Greenest in Flames. The party has the chance to acquire pets belonging to the enemies; the kobolds and cultists attacking the town of Greenest bring along useful ambush drake companions and giant lizard mounts.

Guard Drakes. At the raider camp, cultists employ guard drakes to watch their tents day and night. Likewise, the kobolds employ these creatures in their dragon hatchery. These creatures are trained to be hostile to strangers and resist any overtures of friendship; acquiring them may require magic.

Animal Abuse. This Trade Way event encourages players to come to the aid of a set of mistreated horses in their traveling group. The ill-tempered noble who owns them also wants to acquire some of the party's mounts and will pay a high price to get them. The party may be inclined to make a profit by trading for the (now fragile) horses the noble owns and a sack of gold, but they will be subjecting their old mounts to terrible treatment.

Spider Woods. Some handlers, be they drow or just arachnophiles, enjoy giant spiders for animal companions. Those characters are in luck, since giant spiders appear in quite a few hardcover adventures. In this one, a pair of these creatures can be found in one of the smaller forests dotting the Trade Way.

North of Waterdeep. This part of the journey takes the party through a swampy area north of Waterdeep and into Castle Naerytar. This region has crocodiles, giant centipedes, giant frogs, giant lizards, giant spiders, and other swampy creatures that may be randomly encountered. Seeing lizard folk make use of giant lizard mounts in this area might make the party regret using horses, which are ill suited for swamp travel.

Hunting Lodge. A pair of trolls that patrol around the lodge is accompanied by three ambush drakes, and six more of these animals can be found in the stables.

Each of these creatures is trained to track prey, hunting game and intruders alike.

Skyreach Castle. This flying fortress has two rider-trained wyverns in the stable, along with riding harnesses for both. The adventure provides a delightful set of rules for trying to put the riding harnesses on these creatures and trying to secure their cooperation as mounts. The castle has nothing else in the way of interesting animals, but for a pair of guard drakes in Rezmir's chamber.

Out of the Abyss

This story starts the party in the slave pens of the drow. The adventurers collect an army of NPCs along their way back to the surface, meaning that animal companions can create an extra burden for the Dungeon Master, already having to portray so many additional personalities. For the players, this is an ideal story to have animal companions in; a long trek through the Underdark can otherwise feel very isolating, even alongside regular NPCs.

Animal Fodder. The Underdark has its own thriving ecology, with unique flora and fauna providing sustenance for adventurers and animals alike. Creatures normally able to graze or hunt for themselves can do so without trouble, so long as they are used to the Underdark. Surface creatures must be provided regular animal feed or will need help finding food in these areas.

Giant Spiders. The drow slavers in the starting area, Velkynvelve, have half a dozen giant spiders. Some quick magical control, like an *animal friendship* spell, could allow the party to take one of these creatures with them. As the party's first animal companion, a giant spider also helps to remind the players where the story began and what they are fleeing from. More giant spiders can be found randomly along the party's route, particularly in the Silken Paths and in areas frequented by drow.

Steeders. Common mounts for the duergar, steeders can be acquired if the party visits Gracklstugh. The creatures bought here are rider-trained and may know other tricks. Importantly, this settlement allows the party to buy tack, saddles, and other animal-related equipment. Acquiring mounts and beasts of burden is important in this adventure because of the amount of travel involved and, being on the run, players

otherwise have no home base where they can leave extra (heavy) gear while they adventure.

More steeders can be purchased in the duergar enclave in Mantol-Derith.

The Spider King. Characters interested in an upgraded spider companion might try to acquire the legendary Spider King, a two-headed giant spider in Gracklstugh's Whorlstone Tunnels.

Cultists' Death Dog. The derro cultists in the Whorlstone Tunnels have a death dog captured in a cage. Because it comes with its own cage, this animal is easy to acclimate over time if the party can find a way to drag the cage along.

Cave Badgers. The svirfneblin of Blingdenstone raise a breed of giant badger that has tremorsense. The gnomes use these digging creatures as part of their workforce, but they might be convinced to part with one for a price, or gift one to an adventurer as a reward for some service.

The Beasts of Entémoch's Boons. The adventure suggests that the party can acquire and raise the three basilisk eggs discovered in this cavern west of Blingdenstone, providing a chart to measure their maturation over time from infant, to young, to adult. Enterprising and well-prepared adventurers may also acquire the mated pair of basilisks that guard these eggs, instead of killing them.

Giant Lizards. Characters that ally with the Emerald Enclave while in Gauntlgrym can gain the service of giant riding lizards. These creatures have the added Spider Climb special trait, making them the perfect mounts to use for exploring the Underdark.

More trained giant lizards can be taken from the troglodytes that ride them in the Wormwrithings, or from drow forces that ride out of Menzoberranzan.

Amarith's Zoo. This dwarven member of the Emerald Enclave keeps a variety of interesting creatures in her menagerie, including a rust monster and a fire snake. Depending on alliances and the party's persuasiveness, they might be able to talk Amarith out of one or two creatures to serve as companions. The Dungeon Master can add more creatures to this area, if desired. Because it is a zoo, exotic creatures up to size Medium might be found here, even surface animals.

Princes of the Apocalypse

This adventure takes place in a familiar area of the Sword Coast, the Dessarin Valley. There are plentiful roadways and waterways in the area, and many different areas for the party to travel to between dungeon delves. Mounts will come in handy, as will flying companions who can scout the trails ahead.

Several towns provide opportunities to resupply. These will have domestic animals available to buy, as well as feed and equipment for animals. If need be, these towns can provide stabling for mounts and some other (not-too-exotic) creatures. This is an important service for an adventure filled with so many large, time-consuming dungeons with so many levels to them.

Adding to the Temple. Throughout chapter 5, portals connect the Material Plane to the various Elemental Planes. This creates a myriad of opportunities for the Dungeon Master to add animals with various types of elemental *planar creature* templates that the party may encounter. These may appear as pets or guardians for various denizens of temple areas near said portals.

Eternal Flame Chimera Lair. Less intelligent than the hell hounds in the kennel, the chimera in area E30 may be easier to acquire as an animal companion. While it is loyal to the fire cult at large, creatures of this Intelligence rating (3) don't feel such loyalty to large groups that they couldn't be swayed by outsiders.

Eternal Flame Kennels. The kennel, area E19, holds four hell hounds. These cunning creatures are loyal to their mistress, Lyzzie, and hostile to everyone else. If the party wants to acquire these evil creatures as companions, they will need magical means, perhaps charming the animals to sway them away from their current loyalties.

Feathergale Spire. The Feathergale knights ride giant vultures and hippogriffs. If the party attacks Feathergale Spire, they will find a half dozen of these creatures occupying the stables, and more ridden by various knights. Although these rider-creatures are initially aggressive toward strangers, the party has an opportunity to calm these animals in their enclosures and use them for mounts or allies.

Into the Wilderness. A bandit lair near Red Larch contains a stolen wagon with iron cages, their contents once destined for the home of a noble in Waterdeep. The bandits killed (and perhaps ate some of) the giant boar in the cages, but the players might be able to return the creature to life using some of the new magic in this supplement. The cage now contains a captured black bear that the characters may befriend if they handle it correctly. The wagon cage may also be useful while acclimating the bear to the party's company, or for other efforts to acquire wild animals in the region.

Knights Quest. If the party engages in the manticore hunt on behalf of Thurl Merosska, they have a chance to deal with a manticore. This intelligent, evil creature is willing to make a bargain, particularly if it is surrounded by Feathergale knights, has lost a lot of hit points, or has depleted its supply of tail spikes. The manticore wants to return to its mate in area V9 of the Sighing Valley.

Owlbear Greetings. If the players are fans of the streamed D&D game, *Dice, Camera, Action!* with Dungeon Master Chris Perkins, they may have been looking for a chance to acquire an owlbear buddy of their very own. This creature at the Halls of the
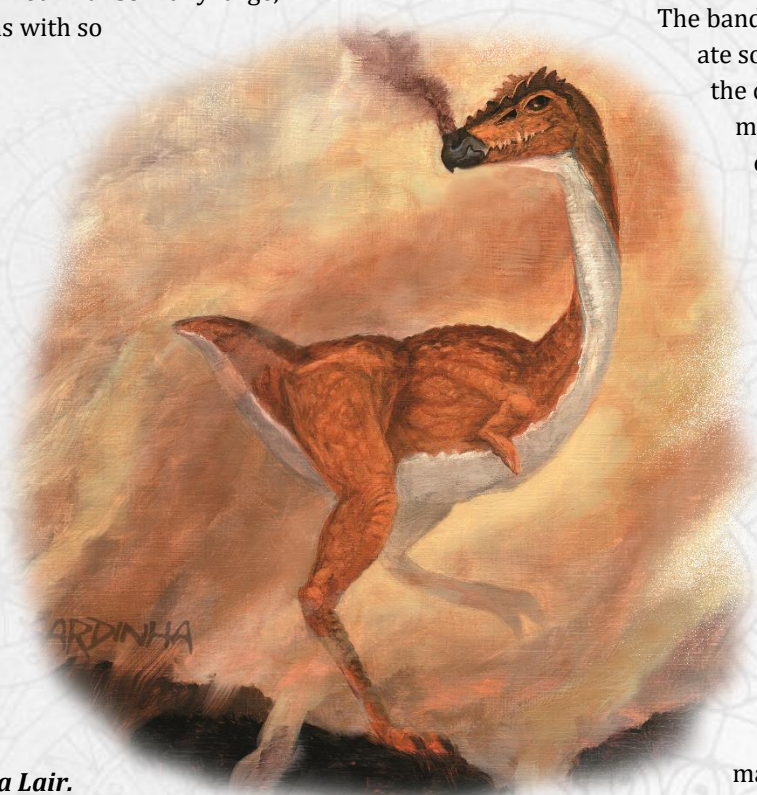
Haunting Axe is not hungry enough to attack on sight. Clever handlers may be able to acquire it.

Plunging Torrents. These caverns hold several interesting animals. The giant crabs in area P3 each represent a massive source of wealth if sold for food at a local market. Too heavy to carry away, these animals might be magically controlled to walk themselves out of these caverns. Likewise, the giant octopus in area P11 can be a great source of seafood to market, but it can also become an animal companion in the unlikely event that the party spends a lot of time in watery environs. The hydra in area P18 is smart enough to recognize individuals; it doesn't mind Gar Shatterkeel's presence, meaning that it can be acclimated to the presence of other individuals. Finally, three trained crocodiles guard the water portal in area P20.

Sighing Valley. Giant vultures and blood hawks make their homes here. Both of these useful birds make strong allies for handlers seeking animal companions. The roost in area V7 is also home to a pair of mated griffons that could be acclimated with some effort, although griffons don't mix well with horses or hippogriffs. The pair also has a nest with two viable eggs.

The Rise of Tiamat

This slim sequel to *Hoard of the Dragon Queen* has a draconic focus; the party will interact with dragons, dragon cultists, a dragon deity, and other dragon-related or Draconic-speaking creatures throughout.

Guard Drakes. Elite cultists bands operating from the Gray Peaks to the Sunset Mountains are each aided by a pack of three guard drakes. Seeking to find and sway allies, the cultists might part with one or more of the creatures as a gift. Alternately, if things turn hostile, magic might be used to prevent these loyal animals from fighting to the death, giving the party a chance to acquire some as companions. Additional guard drakes may be found in the Temple of Tiamat.

The Snow Bear. As a placed encounter while aboard the *Frostskimmer*, the crew spots a polar bear stalking a wounded hunter out on the ice. The party might be inclined to save the hunter; a keen party might be inclined to save the polar bear as well.

The Misty Forest. Seven giant spiders lair about a quarter mile from Chuth's lair, waiting to be slain or acquired by handlers interested in such creatures. Given the forest's tending by a druid caretaker, this area would be an excellent area for the Dungeon Master to seed any other animals intended for the party's use.

Nelvik the Pseudodragon. Archvillain Severin's pet pseudodragon stays out of the final fight and later attempts to befriend its master's killers. However, this animal only seeks this alliance in order to find an opportune moment for revenge. Only the kindest of characters have any chance to melt this evil creature's heart and avert betrayal.

Storm King's Thunder

This sprawling sandbox adventure gives creatures a chance to encounter any and every creature found in the entirety of the Sword Coast; the Dungeon Master has unlimited locations and opportunities to seed useful animals for the party. The encounters called out below are limited to the more interesting or detailed animals or animal-related locations.

Flying Mounts. Given the amount of traveling in this hardcover, the adventurers are sure to need horses for their quest, and they may soon advance to griffons, hippogriffs, or other flying mounts out of

necessity. Such mounts can prove difficult when trying to keep other animal companions. An animal like a tiger isn't going to get very far trying to ride a griffon alongside the party. Animal-loving parties may therefore be forced to forego flying mounts and travel by airship or teleportation.

In the fortified settlement that overlooks Silverymoon Pass, Lord Cavilos raises hippogriffs, which the knights of Hawk's Rest use as mounts to patrol the road as far out as Sundabar. Players looking for combat-trained flying mounts need look no further than the stables of this settlement, although prices will reflect the number of extra hippogriffs Lord Cavilos has on hand.

For characters who prefer griffons, these can be secured in Mirabar, Waterdeep, Fireshear, and the Castle of the Cloud Giants.

Boss Hark's Cave. In the introductory portion of the adventure, designed to jump the party from 1st level up to the adventure's true starting level, the goblin boss Hark keeps a menagerie of seven beloved giant rats. These pets make ideal starters for party members seeking animal companions.

Aerie. The cloud giant who lives in the Tower of Zephyros treats the four griffons that nest at the top as cats, meaning they are predisposed toward some limited interaction with other creatures, so long as their nests aren't threatened. The party probably has time to acclimate these creatures while the flying tower takes them to their destination. Along the way cultists might attack the tower, leaving their giant vulture mounts clinging to the outside. By dressing as cultists, the party may trick these creatures into cooperation; these birds are otherwise initially hostile to non-cult members.

Black Bears. Two bears, named Darlow and Tilbee, frequent the Harvesthome Abbey in Goldenfields. They are relatively accustomed to the presence of humanoids, and they follow abbey workers around hoping to get fed. The bears are rumored to be gifts from the Earth Mother, but the abbot is worried they'll eventually hurt someone so would be perfectly happy for the adventurers to take the beasts away.

Bear Cave. This cave, in the Canyon of the Stone Giants, is home to two cave bears and their cub. (These animals use the polar bear and black bear stat blocks, respectively.) These creatures are already accustomed to humanoids; they work alongside members of the Blue Bear tribe. If the parents are killed, the cub will follow the adventurers, demanding food.

Hulking Crabs. For characters interested in hulking crabs, a new creature unique in this hardcover adventure, a couple are available in the crab pens in the Maelstrom. (Less aspiring characters may be satisfied with one of the smaller giant crabs from the guard post.) A unique version of the hulking crab, one with colored nodules and hollow flutes of beautiful living coral growing out of its shell, can be found in the great hall. This living musical instrument may be a great companion for a bard or some other musical character.

Tales from the Yawning Portal

This hardback book collects some of the most famous adventures of previous editions. Its adventures have opportunities to acquire animals of various sorts.

The Sunless Citadel. The fortress level is the right place for 1st-level adventures to acquire level-appropriate companions; the ledge, crumbled courtyard, old approach, and "mama rat" areas have giant rats and a diseased giant rat. In the great hunter's abode (part of the lodge), more giant rats are available.

Belak's giant frog, in the gulthias tree area, also makes a useful animal to acquire. It's already used to the companionship of the druid and may know a trick or two.

The Forge of Fury. For characters interested in stirges, some can be found in the grand stair area of the Mountain Door, and more can be found in the Glitterhame, in the stirge colony and high cavern area.

Two dire wolves, named Vak and Thrag, are already accustomed to handling by Ulfe the ogre, in the great Ulfe area of the Mountain Door. These creatures may appreciate the gentler handling of player characters. The dire wolves try to flee if Ulfe falls first, which may remind the players that these creatures needn't be fought to the death.

The chief of the troglodytes in Glitterhame keeps a giant lizard as a pet. The creature may be trained for riding, combat, or in other tricks. A larger version of this creature, a giant subterranean lizard, is held captive nearby in the scaly lair area and may be acquired too. (Be cautious here; huge-size animal companions are difficult to incorporate into parties,

particularly for groups whose battles use miniatures on a grid.)

The bear pen in the orc tunnel area of the Glitterhame holds a black bear that isn't trained but has become acclimated to the troglodytes who feed it. The adventure already lists a Wisdom (Animal Handling) DC to calm the creature, basically setting up the party to take the bear along.

The Hidden Shrine of Tamoachan. The random encounters table for the ruins is essentially a menu of potential animal companions: baboons, bats, giant fire beetles, giant frogs, giant wolf spiders, panthers, poisonous snakes, and rats. Some of these can also be found in numbered areas.

The amphisbaena, in the chamber of the second sun area, uses the giant constrictor snake stat block as a stand-in. However, a more-recent publication, *Ghosts of Saltmarsh*, has true stats for amphisbaenae. Feel free to use whichever best suits your game.

White Plume Mountain. The terraced aquarium area has giant crayfish, giant scorpions, and sea lions, a menagerie of potential animal companions in one, compact area. The rest of the dungeon is remarkably light on animals.

Dead in Thay. Some sectors of the Doomvault may randomly put potential animal companions in the party's path; giant centipedes and giant spiders randomly move through the blood pens, cockatrices and a displacer beast inhabit the forests of slaughter, and giant crabs lounge in the predator pools.

The egg chamber and hatchling pens areas of the blood pens may hold eggs and live young of an assortment of animals, including basilisks, carrion crawlers, and wyverns.

In the forests of slaughter sector, the party may find the cockatrice roost and the gorgon lair, two areas where they can acquire very rare and dangerous animal companions. The displacer beast dens area has a pair of displacer beasts, one of the most highly sought animals to take as companions.

The spawn pools sector has six giant crabs in the sea hag lair area, useful animals to employ in this area. If the players can quickly take control of the creatures (perhaps through magic), they can exploit the giant crabs' amphibious nature to great effect in this watery zone.

Against the Giants. Many giants have pets, animals already accustomed to working with creatures of different sorts than themselves.

In the Steading of the Hill Giant Chief, two dire wolves can be found in a random encounter. Two cave bears are also present, one in the chamber of the chief's wife and another in the great hall. Giant lizards and carrion crawlers are wandering through the dungeon areas and can be found in specific areas. The lizards' lair area also holds giant crocodiles.

In the Glacial Rift of the Frost Giant Jarl, a band of yetis keeps two snow leopards as pets in the misty ice cave area. These use the stat blocks of tigers. The frost giant jarl keeps four polar bears as a hunting pack in the kennel cave area.

In the Hall of the Fire Giant King, Queen Frumpy keeps giant weasels and poisonous snakes as pets and guardians in the queen's chamber area. Hell hounds can be found in multiple areas; the place is overflowing with them. A chimera, loyal to the fire giants, resides in the chimera pen area. A pair of cloud giant visitors keep two guard-trained lions in their room in the guest chambers area. Finally, what igneous compound would be complete without giant
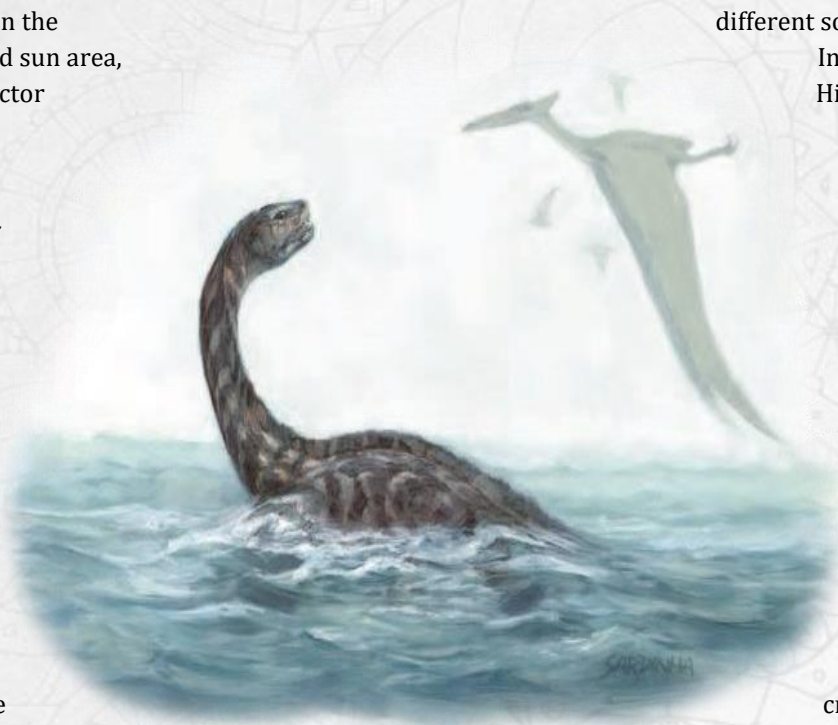
fire beetles, like the twelve found in the glowing cave area?

Tomb of Annihilation

The majority of source material for Dungeons & Dragons supports a Eurocentric paradigm. In contrast, this hardcover adventure gives players the chance to see a different region, one lush with unusual fauna, like jaculis, tigers, and kamadans. Unless they bring their own, the party isn't likely to encounter any horses, mules, or many of the other domestic animals common to other regions. Different animals take these roles in Chult.

This land is rife with dinosaurs, the most powerful of all beasts. They can be bought and sold in markets. They are raced for sport, driven for agriculture, and ridden in battle. Druids in particular may be eager to encounter such creatures, adding new forms to their Wild Shape repertoires. Smaller dinosaurs can be acquired anywhere to use as beasts of burden or war mounts. The largest dinosaurs can be found deep in the jungles, terrifying locals and preying on their smaller cousins.

Awakened Lizard. In the Tomb of the Nine Gods (area 46), players who search this hall will find a lizard affected by the *awaken* spell. This creature has an Intelligence rating of 10 and speaks Druidic. It might be able to advise the party about the temple. Although the lizard wants to be returned to Omu, it might also be convinced to stay with the party. Since the player characters are not high enough level to cast *awaken* on their own yet, the lizard represents a unique opportunity for an intelligent animal ally. This creature has a lot of potential, but it will come across as mostly uninteresting unless the Dungeon Master provides a personality for it. The characteristics in appendix B are a good starting point.

Cute Beasties. Chult is home to cute animals as well as terrifying ones. The *almiraj*, unicorn-horned bunnies, make excellent familiars. Similarly, *flying monkeys* are curious, inquisitive creatures that can learn tricks and may also appear as familiars. Finally, *zorbos*, koala-like monstrosities, make cute pets for those who can abide their dour dispositions and fondness for human flesh. Each of these creatures can be encountered in the wild or purchased from merchants in Port Nyanzaru.

Ifan's Offerings. Ifan Talro'a, a merchant in the Port Nyanzaru market, deals in beasts and beast training. He will buy almost any creature the party can haul back to Port Nyanzaru but will try to pay as little as possible for it. Ifan is more interested in selling dinosaurs and other exotic animals to the characters. Page 26 shows a table of Ifan's sale prices for many of these creatures.

Merchant Princes' Villas. Each of the merchant princes in Port Nyanzaru has a private villa in the city. Like nobility everywhere, the "princes" may be willing to purchase exotic and dangerous creatures to use as status symbols. The party may also refer to the princes' stables to find exceptional specimens of local domestic creatures.

Random Encounters. The many random encounters on the tables in Appendix B represent the most likely way that the party will find animals to take as companions in Chult. Remember to assign a range of activities to animals found randomly; they shouldn't all be hostile or hunting for humanoid meat! Animals should also be found sleeping, foraging, playing, mating, and hiding. These unaggressive activities may remind players that some animals can be interacted with in non-hostile ways.

Snakes Everywhere. The jungles of Chult are filled with snakes. There are many opportunities to acquire snakes of various types, particularly the useful flying serpents. However, the jungles are also filled with yuan-ti, and the players will clash with these creatures several times before the adventure's conclusion. Snake animal companions represent a significant weakness for the party since yuan-ti can charm snakes at will, using an innate spell that lasts 24 hours. In addition to snake companions proving unreliable against yuan-ti in battle, they might also slip away at quieter times and alert their yuan-ti friends as to the party's location.

Waterdeep: Dragon Heist

The first hardback adventure to focus on urban environments, *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist* will challenge animal handlers in all the ways discussed in the "Adapting Animals" section of this supplement, in chapter 1. Large animals will spend most of the adventure stabled, disguised, or stuffed into the attic of Trollskull Manor. Small and Tiny creatures are preferred in the city; animals of the Lovable Lump

archetype are ideal minions to deal with public spaces and urban terrain.

Tavern Brawl. Speaking of Tiny creatures, the Troll and Friends portion of the tavern brawl scene in chapter 1 is a great opportunity to gather stirges to train. A troll attacks the Yawning Portal with a dozen stirges in tow, but nine are already stuffed with troll blood and retire back down the well to sleep off their meal, positioning them for easy acquisition later.

Corellon's Crown. The druid who runs the herbal shop in this three-story town house makes a great ally for animal handlers. She sells *potions of animal friendship*, ideal for acquiring animals with, and her shop makes a convenient place to bring animals for healing and succor.

Gralhund Villa. Before the player characters become aware of the Zhentarim connection, or even after, they might seek out this villa to board or train their horses, mastiffs, or hawks, or they might come here to buy such trained animals. Characters with the right connections or disposition may get along well with the residents here and could be offered discount prices or special purchasing opportunities. Perhaps they are offered flying snakes, the messenger animals preferred by the Zhentarim. This can make scenes in the villa more poignant if the party comes here

chasing the *Stone of Golorr*. A similar commercial scenario may develop at the Cassalanter Villa or another villa completely unrelated to the story.

The Heartbreaker. Jarlaxle keeps four highly trained giant spiders in the hold of this ship. With their colorful painted exoskeletons, these creatures are trained to guard the area by pretending to be inanimate statutes or decorations. Acclimating these creatures or taking them off the ship probably requires magical compulsion due to their loyalty; Jarlaxle personally raised them from hatchlings.

A couple of animal handler hirelings in area J20 watch over a smorgasbord of potential animal companions: 2 apes, 1 rhinoceros, 1 tiger, 1 allosaurus, 2 panthers, 1 owlbear, 4 giant fire beetles, 1 hippogriff, 1 axe beak, 2 death dogs, 1 giant vulture, and 1 polar bear. Already caged, these animals are ideally positioned to be acclimated if the party can secure the ship, or the party might try to buy an animal after they appear in the Sea Maidens Faire parade.

WATERDEEP: DUNGEON OF THE MAD MAGE

Animals acquired while within the dungeon are more monstrous than natural. Returning through the Yawning Portal with such creatures in tow is likely to cause an uproar at the very least, unprovoked attacks on the creatures at worst.

Although most levels have an animal or two that can be acquired by adventurers, a few of the most interesting animals and related scenes are noted here.

Descending through the Well. Characters entering Undermountain through the Yawning Portal tavern can easily bring animals of Medium size or smaller. While creatures as big as Large size could be lowered down the well by harnessing them to the rope, each in turn, such creatures cannot navigate through the crowded tavern to get to the well. For a price, the proprietor, Durnan, could be convinced to clear away the tables and make a path for a determined handler to bring a Large animal through.

Animal Sustenance. A mega dungeon is a difficult place to bring animal companions. Characters accustomed to

allowing such creatures to graze or hunt for themselves will find that very few levels of the dungeon provide animals with those opportunities. Instead, animal feed must be carried to sustain the animals, adding to the weight of the party's carried gear. Carnivorous animals might be able to feed on the flesh of fallen foes, but there are few chances to find meat that is wholesome or untainted. There are some levels that constitute exceptions; the various fungi growing on level 4, for example, provide sustenance for creatures of any kind.

Spider Town. Many of the levels of Undermountain are rife with drow, and thus with spiders of various kinds. Phase spiders can be found on level 3 (area 4b). Giant spiders can be found on level 2 (area 19d), level 3 (areas 5b, 6, and 20), level 4 (area 10), level 10 (area 30a, a unique set with wings), level 12 (area 18g), and in the Tanor'thal Refuge in area 36 of Skull Port. A handler who deals in such creatures will find a significant supply here and may want to return to these levels periodically to replaced slain spider allies.

Flyndol's Giant Rats. A lazy wererat on level 1 (area 35) prefers to surrender if it looks like he cannot escape a hostile party. In parlay, he might offer the party some of his ten giant rats, who do his bidding. Flyndol insists that these creatures are clever and highly trained. Either or both of these claims might be true, or they might not. If the party takes a giant rat or two and later loses them to the dangers of the dungeon, they may return here to Flyndol to acquire more.

Death Dogs. The five death dogs on level 13 (area 11a) are purported to be "domesticated." Whether this means trained and docile, or part of a truly domesticated subspecies, is up to the Dungeon Master. If the latter, these animals might be bred to produce a bloodline that is highly marketable as pets and guardians.

Hag's Crab. On level 3, the coven of sea hags in area 10c has a pet giant crab. The creature is tamed and obeys the commands of one of the hags. If the party slays the hags, the crab may follow them, hoping to get fed or adopted by a new handler.

Trash Eater. The otyugh on level 3 (area 17e) is friendly toward any goblinoids or creatures escorted by goblinoids, so long as they don't approach the creature's trash pile. Characters are not likely to be high enough level to acquire this creature as a companion. However, the creature may use its telepathy to arrange for the party to bring corpses from time to time in exchange for knowledge of the dungeon and its denizens. The otyugh is an excellent source of information and a great way to get rid of corpses and other garbage.

Wyllowwood. Level 5 of Undermountain is forested and stocked with a variety of animals, including *awakened* animals and trees. If the characters secure Wyllow's cooperation, this druid is well situated to take care of any animal companions that the characters must leave behind when they leave the dungeon or animals that are too weak take into the deeper levels of Undermountain. (See "Safekeeping" in chapter 1.)

Wooden Donkeys. While not truly animals, the constructs on level 6 (area 8a) have statistic similar to real donkeys. The description allows these wooden creatures to be ridden by Small and Medium characters alike, allowing adventurers to have mounts that are adapted to work in a dungeon environment. The wooden donkeys become inanimate when they aren't ridden, meaning they won't run off if left a short distance behind the party during exploration. They aren't versatile enough to be pure pack animals, since they must be ridden to be animate, but the Dungeon Master may alter the description so that the creatures are also animate when led by another creature.

Cave Bear Den. Two adult cave bears (as polar bears) and their two cubs (as black bears) can be found on level 7 (area 14). The cubs represent an example of using alternate stat blocks for animals at different stages of growth. If acquired and kept long enough, these creatures will eventually grow into adults, using the same stat blocks as their parents.

Giant Lizards. The lizard mounts on level 10 (areas 25a and 30a) are adapted to subterranean life and are already trained and equipped for riding. The Spider Climb special trait makes them particularly suited to the terrain of Undermountain. If their riders are slain, these animals wait around to be used by their next riders (perhaps snacking on their old riders' corpses while waiting). Additional giant lizards can be found on level 11 (area 14) and on level 12 (area 12d).

ANIMALS AS NPCS

DESIGNING ANIMALS IS THE WORK OF THE DUNGEON Master. Most of the time, the design process is no more complex than looking up an animal's stat block and presenting the creature in an unaltered state. However, for animals that take on important roles in the campaign, altering their stat blocks and curating their personalities and peculiarities will help these creatures come to life. The more prominent an animal's presence in the game, the more it benefits from being fully fleshed out.

Players may wish to read this information to familiarize themselves with its animal-related mechanics. They may also find the information useful when talking with the Dungeon Master about the types of animals they find interesting and worth acquiring. When players suggest encountering animals of certain kinds, or their characters seek out particular types of animals, knowing the information in this chapter can help players communicate their desires effectively.

CREATING CONCEPTS

The first step in creating an animal is creating a concept. This abstract notion includes the creature's type, function, personality, and purpose.

A strong concept is one that fits the game; it is one that finds itself naturally appearing in the context of the story and the world, and it is one that finds room for itself in the adventuring party without crowding other characters and other animal companions.

A concept guides an animal's creation process, influencing decisions made about it at every stage. Without a concept to guide creation, the resulting animal is likely to seem uninspiring and its components illogically ordered.

ANIMAL ARCHETYPES

Animal archetypes are loose concepts that group animals by their particular roles in the party. Knowing the animal's intended role, its archetype, is therefore a useful starting place when conceptualizing the animal.

Archetypes are particularly useful when an existing animal companion is being replaced. The best fitting animal will probably have the same archetype as the older one, even if choices from another category would have similar combat effectiveness or comparable utility-type traits.

ANIMAL DESIGN STEPS

These steps will walk the Dungeon Master through the animal creation process using the rules in this product.

Step 1: Check for Space. Determine if there is sufficient space in the party to add an NPC animal. Particularly take care if the animal will be one that joins in combat; the more participants throwing dice, the slower each combat encounter goes. Skip this step if a character has a class feature, feat, spell, or other effect allowing it to bond an animal companion.

Step 2: Create Concept. Decide what kind of animal you are creating. If filling a certain role, either to add that functionality to the party or to replace another animal, refer to the "Archetypes" subsection. Make the animal one that can be found in the party's present environment or explain why the animal is out of place.

Step 3: Choose Base Creature. Select a base creature for the animal, a qualifying creature from the *Monster Manual* or other source material.

If matching an archetype, choose a creature from its list of examples or select another creature that matches the archetype's description.

Choose a creature with a challenge rating as close to the highest CR that the party's animals may have (without going over it), according to the "Challenge Rating" section below.

Step 4: Apply Template. If the creature has any points of its challenge rating to spare, you can select a template with a CR adjustment that will make up the difference without going over the target CR.

Alternately, you might select a creature with its potential templates in mind; a higher-CR creature is acceptable if a negative template modifies its CR to meet the requirements.

Step 5: Design Personality. Choose a personality for the animal, including behavior quirks and unique markings or appearance.

Choose up to 1 personality trait, 1 physical oddity, and 1 behavioral oddity from the Characteristics section. If the animal has an Intelligence rating of 5 or higher, choose up to 1 ideal and up to 1 bond.

Step 6: Calculate Loyalty. If your game uses the optional loyalty rules, calculate creature's starting loyalty rating based on the character who you believe will become the animal's handler.

Step 7: Assign Story. Choose the method by which the animal will enter the game. This contemplates both the method of acquisition (see chapter 1), and any story-related particulars. The previous appendix has some sample story ideas for adding animals, some generic and some based on hardback adventures.

Players become accustomed to the functions that animals play in the game. It's like a warrior who has used a morningstar for many levels before finding a magic weapon; the warrior probably wants to find a magic morningstar, even though a battleaxe, flail, longsword, rapier, war pick, or warhammer would inflict the same amount of damage. The morning star is part of the warrior's concept, and while a magic rapier might be mechanically better, the player probably would have preferred to find something that fit's the warrior's concept more exactly.

So it can be when replacing animals. When a liked creature is replaced, most times the replacement will be better received if it shares the old animal's archetype, even if the new animal's special traits or combat bonuses would exceed those of the original animal. This is because players conceptualize their animal companions as being part of their own characters' concepts.

Archetypes are inexact; using them to replace old animals requires the Dungeon Master to apply some discretion, selecting carefully from within the categories. Many animals do not fit into any archetypes. (And purely aquatic creatures are left out of these examples entirely.) Some creatures transcend archetypes, or combine them, particularly in the case of powerful magical creatures like dragons.

LOVABLE LUMPS

Creatures in this category have no common shape among them, no unifying physical features or appearance. They are grouped for sharing two traits, being size Tiny and having challenge ratings below 1. These factors mean lumps are unable to contribute

very effectively in combat, and they cannot carry riders or bear other heavy burdens.

Lovable lumps are commonly acquired for companionship. They typically fit inside the clothing of a handler, making them eminently portable and, unlike other animals, easy to take into places animals would not be allowed. (This is an odd inversion of the Mounted Combat rules, making the character an uncontrolled mount for an animal stored in a pocket.)

While hidden away in a pocket or in the folds of a handler's robes, lumps can't normally be targeted by spells and attacks, and they typically have full cover from any effect. This is important, given their low hit points, the result of having only few, small hit dice and having low Constitution scores. Nearly any attack will kill a lump, subjecting it to the "Instant Death" rule in the *Player's Handbook*. Staying out of sight is therefore a lump's greatest defense.

Being Tiny allows lumps to serve as spies, perched in a tree branch, flying overhead, or scurrying behind furniture. A lump might be trained to find things in small spaces and either return to its handler or make an alerting noise upon detecting its target. Unique movement modes and traits that enhance the senses are particularly useful for such functions. Tricks and roles, discussed in chapter 2, may be needed to serve these purposes.

Like all animals, lovable lumps are more useful when enhanced by various character options. Lumps created with the *find familiar* spell, or that are enhanced by such spells as *awaken* or *bond companion*, particularly receive benefits that synergize well with their existing abilities.

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

Raptors

Raptors are fast flying creatures with combat capabilities that vary, typically based on their size. Only the largest raptors are suitable for riding or for carrying burdens.

Most raptors are hearty enough to risk moving a considerable distance from the party. Combined with fast movement and high flying, raptors can hunt or scout in a way that covers miles of territory while remaining relatively safe from ground-based threats. However, this tactic risks the raptor being isolated and cut off in the air by faster-flying enemies.

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

Flying over obstacles, as opposed to running around them, helps raptors cover distances faster. This can be useful for chasing down a weakened foe that is trying to flee battle, quickly reaching an injured ally to drop off a healing potion, or carrying a message to the army commander's pavilion high on a hill.

Flying also lends itself to a variety of utilitarian applications. Window latches, chandelier tie-offs, and other highly placed objects can be manipulated for tactical advantage. A clever raptor might fly to the top of the ramparts and unhook a grappling hook after the party has used the rope to descend.

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

Slinkers (and Lopers)

These creatures are natural hunters, often adept at stealth and deadly in fights. Slinkers and lopers are size Large, Medium, or Small. Big cats, ferocious canines, and even quick-footed dinosaurs fit into this archetype.

In battle, slinkers and lopers are very fast and can inflict terrible injuries. Their mobility allows them to flank enemies, leap over gaps and obstacles on the battlefield, and devastate enemies. Fast slinkers and lopers are naturally inclined to run down foes that flee from battle; stopping this behavior may require serious exertion by the handler.

Many slinkers are masters of ambush tactics, able to approach prey stealthily or lie in wait for prey while hidden by natural camouflage. Most are great climbers or leapers as well, preferring to surprise foes by pouncing on them from higher ground.

Some lopers are adept at hunting in packs, and their bites are more potent when attacking in tandem with their allies. They often make sounds in battle—yips, howls, hisses, and the like—to coordinate with the other hunters in their "packs."

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

Heavy Bulwarks

Members of this archetype become living barriers in combat, obstacles on the battlefield that stand between enemies and the party.

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

In combat, many bulwarks move directly up to the enemies to engage them. Quite a few have special attacks that require a prerequisite 20-foot charge to apply. A handful of bulwarks have special attacks that grapple foes, further contributing to these animals' ability to control the battlefield.

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

TRUSTED MOUNTS

Animals in this category are most commonly used for bearing burdens, either carrying party members as riders, carrying the party's luggage, or both.

Chapter 3 provides a detailed analysis of using creatures of this category as mounts in battle. Chapter 5 details purchase prices for such creatures, including adjustments for training and creature templates.

Many of the example creatures below appear in multiple categories; quite a few of these animals have excellent utility or combat versatility even without a rider.

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

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

PLACE AND FIT

This part of the concept ensures that each animal's place in the campaign is well considered.

LOCATION AND ECOLOGY

An animal's concept is best when it matches the environment it is discovered in or used in. Animals from distant, exotic locations should be rare. Such creatures create story dissonance for a few reasons.

First, animals naturally stick to the areas where the climate suits them and where their food supply is abundant. An exotic creature would have to be purposefully transplanted; unless your game is rife with exotic animal markets, finding multiple exotic creatures for sale off the back of a trader's wagon seems unlikely.

Second, exotic creatures must contend with uncomfortable (even dangerous) differences in climate, particularly when moving from hot regions to cold ones, or vice versa. Many animals are not prepared to weather these changes in temperature and should never feel comfortable short of magical intervention.

Third, such animals may be wholly reliant upon handlers feeding them; it takes a long time to learn to hunt or forage where the local flora and fauna are wholly foreign from one's home environment.

Unless the players are willing to engage deeply with story elements about adaptation, or the campaign purposefully ignores such logistics, avoid using animals that don't fit the local ecosystem. Fortunately, most animals can be adapted conceptually. For example, a player wanting a giant lynx for a campaign set in a tropical climate might be just as happy with a jungle panther, using the same stat block. Likewise, a savannah-loving dire rhinoceros might be "reskinned" as a wooly rhinoceros for a temperate or frigid climate.

If you want an animal's concept to include a truly exotic origin, make that aspect a part of the story. One-off events like a teleportation malfunction or a liberated lab experiment lack world-building quality. Try broader, mundane systems of relocation using the real world as inspiration; perhaps a local trade network exists to satisfy local interest in that sort of exotic creature, using them for high-status pets, folk-lore remedies, or religious sacrifices.

CAMPAIGN SETTING

Alongside considerations of environment, consider also where the animal fits into your campaign world. Does the world have unique creatures whose use could help to distinguish it, better immersing the players in the unique worldscape? If so, try to use those creatures as often as possible.

For example, the Eberron campaign has magebred animals, domestic creatures bred with magical methods to produce outstanding quality and unnatural coloration. Whenever an animal in Eberron is encountered with the exceptional specimen template, make that creature an oddly-colored magebred animal if it can fit into such an origin.

Similarly, the Forgotten Realms campaign has native to it some rabbits with unicorn-like horns and some cats with wings. If a player wants a rabbit or a cat, make it an almiraj or a tressym to emphasize the unique features of this fantasy world.

DOMESTICITY

As part of its concept, determine whether the creature is a *domestic* one or not.

Domesticity is an official designation, one with game mechanics attached, but it lacks definition. The Animal Handling skill in the *Player's Handbook* applies special

rules to affecting what it calls "domestic" creatures, but it supplies no explanation for the term.

The designation is also important because non-domestic creatures (even tamed ones) may be troublesome in urban environments or formal settings. Here, each culture's expectations matter; riding lizards are ubiquitous to the humanoid races of the Underdark, but totally foreign and even frightening to most folk of the surface realms. The more suited a creature is for preying upon domestic livestock (or intelligent humanoids), the more likely it is to cause trouble and commotion in a city.

To add variety to a creature's concept, the Dungeon Master can decide that an otherwise domestic creature has gone feral, making it a non-domestic creature for all purposes. Likewise, an individual wild creature could be tamed, raised among humanoids, giving it the nature of a domestic animal.

Model Domestication

As players, our understanding of domestication begins with the animals in the real world. This subset of the beast creature type is probably what the Animal Handling skill refers to when it talks about domestic animals.

However, domestication in fantasy worlds is a fuzzier concept. Creatures that are almost identical to real-world animals, but with a minor variation or an additional magical feature, are probably domestic. This is true even of animals that lack the beast creature type.

For example, the rothé of the Forgotten Realms resembles a small, furry cow that is herded for food and wool by the denizens of various regions. That some rothés can cast the *dancing lights* spell innately has no effect on their status as domestic creatures.

New Domestic Creatures

The Dungeon Master may decide that additional creatures should be layered on top of normal options.

In the real world, all animals were wild at some point in history. As humans evolved, they domesticated various animals over the course of many generations, adapting them for food, labor, and companionship. In fantasy worlds, more creatures are likely to have been domesticated or have spawned related domestic species. This is because fantasy worlds have a much greater variety of creatures, and because fantasy races have different needs for domestic creatures based on their own inherent abilities, cultures, and magic. These two factors must be considered equally when creating new domestic species or domesticating existing ones.

Races and cultures are more likely to domesticate creatures when they have particular needs that docile animals can meet. For example, even simple magic (low-level spells) can replicate the labor, guarding, and hunting assistance that some animals provided to early humans in the real world. Without such requirements, a race or society would not domesticate animals which cannot meet other needs.

Only races with long-established, multi-generational societies can domesticate animals. This process is not the same as taming. An individual animal can be tamed, but its offspring will not be tame by nature. In contrast, domestication produces a genetic state, the result of generations of cohabitation and acclimation. A domestic species is morphologically altered from its wild ancestors, with innate behavioral differences.

Creatures are more likely to be domesticated if they can breed in captivity without elaborate courtship rituals, grow quickly to maturity relative to the race that domesticates them, graze or scavenge food scraps in urban environments, learn complex skills and conditioned behaviors, and interact peaceably with humanoids and other domestic animals. Suitable creatures aren't too easily spooked, aren't overly aggressive, and don't expect guidance in the form of social hierarchies or dominance displays.

MEASURING ANIMALS

This section explores limitations to animal companions. Without restricting the number and power of animals, the party is quickly unbalanced. This leads to the game slowing down as scenes drag out, in combat and otherwise.

SPACE IN THE PARTY

When designing an animal, the Dungeon Master should consider up front the sort of activities the animal will participate in or be useful in. Without deciding this aspect, the DM risks running into the "crowded table" problem.

When a game of DUNGEONS & DRAGONS has too many players at the table, it suffers from several complications. Combats drag out, no one gets enough time on center stage, and everyone wants to go in a different direction. Even with the right number of players, having extra characters in the party (including NPC animals) can create problems in a similar vein.

Just as Dungeon Masters must limit the number of players at their gaming tables, so too must they limit the number of NPCs in the party. The enjoyment players get from adopting more and more animal friends must be balanced against the extra work and time needed for DMs to cope with those animals and their activities, and against the play time that players must give up allowing those NPCs to take the stage. These two factors manifest in two areas of play, combat scenarios and utility-type challenges.

COMBAT ANIMALS

Animals designed to contribute in combat must be handled with care. When an animal has a turn in combat, that NPC is taking up time that actual players could be using to play their own characters in. Looking behind the curtain, these extra NPCs aren't doing much to help in battle; more combatants just means that the DM has to escalate encounters to keep them challenging for the whole party, animals included. No real advantage is gained by adding more fighting animals to the battlefield.

The Dungeon Master should not provide opportunities to acquire combat companions if the party already has too many (or has just enough). This category does not include creatures whose best contribution is an occasional Help action; it only contemplates creatures that are significant combatants in their own right.

A party's maximum number of combat animals varies based on the Dungeon Master's ability to handle such NPCs efficiently. An experienced DM might be able to handle combat animals equal to half the number of player characters. Exceeding that number is not recommended. Since some players are probably uninterested in acquiring animals, this maximum allowance probably satisfies the whole group's desires, unless a player wants multiple combat companions, like a pack of hounds or twin tigers.

Multiple combat animals "belonging" to a single player is something the Dungeon Master should hesitate to allow. It moves combat focus from that player to its animals. It is also a recipe for resentment at the table; even if the DM is in full control of the animal NPCs in combat, the time they take up collectively belongs to the handler's character; players are likely to perceive any delays as the fault of the character that owns multiple combat animals.

UTILITY ANIMALS

Animals have the potential to crowd player characters in their lanes. Players experience DUNGEONS & DRAGONS as a cooperative game with varied roles, where every character contributes something, often something quite unique. For example, you will rarely see a party that includes two rogues proficient with exactly the same set of skills.

Once players become attached to their roles, they expect their characters to contribute meaningfully when those scenarios arise; they expect to be the one the party turns to for certain ability checks, and they expect those checks to matter. In this way, players adopt lanes in which their characters may shine by providing a unique contribution to the party.

When an animal companion can perform in a player character's lane, perhaps doing so better than the player character could, that player's enjoyment of the game is diminished. If a player character's utility feature is overshadowed, it ceases to be useful and the player will think that acquiring it was a waste. Instead of the player getting center stage for that moment, the other players at the table turn to the animal NPC for help. Utilitarian animals are particularly intrusive of player characters' lanes if the animal is not "paid for" as part of another character's class feature.

For example, just as the player of a fighter whose focus is on dealing damage will not appreciate being overshadowed by an animal that deals more damage in combat, the player of a ranger whose focus is on tracking and wayfinding will not appreciate the party wizard adopting an animal companion that hunts and tracks more efficiently.

The Dungeon Master should not introduce any animals that will overshadow a player character's unique contributions to the table. Again, animals "paid for" with character options are extensions of those options; they are actually part of a character sheet and should not be considered as separate from the owning character. Alternately, if the DM anticipates such a conflict, the animal can be given quirks or deficiencies that make it unsuitable to perform in the player character's lane. For example, a hound that is trained to hunt and track might be unsuited to aid in foraging because it always eats the prey or runs off and buries it.

Character Options

The Dungeon Master should always facilitate the inclusion of animals that are "paid for" as character options. Such animals are produced or bound as the function of class features, feats, spells, and similar effects. Instead, any balancing losses must come from the animals that do not represent features on a character sheet, like those encountered incidentally or simply purchased at a market.

For example, if the party is crowded with animals, and the Beast Master loses its Ranger Companion animal, the Dungeon Master should not forbid the addition of a replacement, regardless of the party's size. To do so would be to erase part of the ranger's

character sheet (the Ranger Companion feature), not just forbidding the addition of a separate NPC.

Background Animals

If an animal is one that stays in the background, like a lovable lump that does very little, or a trusted steed that merely carries a character through travel scenarios, it will always find room in the party. Animals like a pet mouse or a nameless riding horse needn't be worried about since they never take up play time or displace player agency.

In the case of mounts that cannot act independently in combat, they are always unobtrusive. Even though they can be used in battle, the nature of controlled mounts means they merely enhance their rider's capabilities. Moreover, because the rider is in control, that player has to decide what the mount will do round-to-round instead of burdening the Dungeon Master with those decisions.

Challenge Rating

The challenge rating (CR) system is used here to measure and limit animal power, keeping them from being too potent (or too weak) in combat relative to the rest of the adventuring party. If animals are too potent, they eclipse the abilities of the player characters, who are supposed to be the heroes of the story. If too weak, the players spend too much time protecting, healing, and recalling their animal friends from death.

Although combat is not the only sort of challenge an animal can help the party overcome, combat offence and defense are the only aspects of an animal that CR measures. Balancing an animal according to its non-combat benefits is something the Dungeon Master must do ad-hoc, considering each creature in the context of any special functionality it provides that the party doesn't already possess.

Maximum Challenge Rating

A character can acquire and manage animals with individual challenge ratings that do not exceed half that handler's character level. For these CR calculations, ignore an animal's CR adjustments derived from the handler's character options, effects like spells, feats, or class features.

A character that tries to manage multiple companions should not gain any animals whose individual challenge ratings exceed one-quarter of that handler's character level. For these purposes, only count creatures whose challenge ratings are 1 or higher; weaker creatures have little impact on the game's challenges, particularly in the long term.

If a handler somehow acquires an animal exceeding these limitations, the animal has the *reluctant creature* template until the handler gains enough levels to qualify for it.

Because handlers can manage stronger animals as they gain character levels, they may wish to acquire new creatures with some frequency. To prevent the party from getting too large, new animals should replace existing ones, or existing animals should advance their challenge ratings using one of the methods discussed below.

New Animal Acquisition

Giving animal-handling characters new, stronger creatures as they gain levels is an easy way to keep animal companions relevant to the party. As new, stronger animals are acquired, the old ones lose their relevance as the party gains levels and its challenges grow, meaning that retirement is in order. Using this method to keep companion CRs as high as practicable, instead of modifying existing animals, allows the DM to make the fewest rules changes or use the fewest new rules.

Replacing old animals with stronger options logically tracks with the party's advancement. As the characters gain levels, they venture farther from civilization where the threats are more potent, but so too are the prospective animal companions who dwell in those regions. Additionally, as a matter of market realities, characters can afford more costly and potent creatures as they gain levels, simply buying stronger animal companions.

Appendix A provides a handful of ideas for opportunities to acquire new animals, and for retiring

old animals. The Dungeon Master may have to use more than one of these opportunities; sometimes players miss the chance to acquire a new animal or fail to perceive it as such. Sometimes they also hold onto old animals longer than the realities of the game system suggest that they should, waiting until just the perfect retirement scenario comes along.

Old Animal Advancement

This method of advancement enhances existing animals, growing their power to match the party's level. This increases animal companions' survivability and the reliability of their attacks and ability checks, keeping them in line with challenges the party faces.

The downside to this method is its logical limitations; each animal can only advance one or two points of CR without stretching believability. This means the Dungeon Master should use advancement sparingly and with predeclared foresight.

When the Dungeon Master wishes to advance an animal's CR, one simple method is to add a positive template to the creature or remove a negative template. (Templates are discussed in the next section.) Each template has a general CR adjustment assigned to it for such purposes. Foresight is an important aspect of this advancement, allowing these changes to seem believable from the outset.

For example, an animal might begin with the *juvenile creature* template, reducing its effective CR by 2 points. After the party gains four more character levels (presumably over an extended adventuring period), the animal grows up and removes the template, keeping its CR equal to or less than half the party's level. Removing this template requires the Dungeon Master to have given the party a young creature that can grow with them, anticipating this change.

Adding a template can also enhance an animal's CR. This, too, can be a result of growth. Perhaps the party's wolf is actually a dire wolf, and no one knew it was a juvenile until it grows much larger than it should. In this way, an animal might appear in three separate stages of growth, beginning with the *juvenile creature* template, then growing into its normal stat block, then adding a *dire animal* template.

Beyond growth, other templates might be added as a result of exposing the creature to magical or extraplanar forces. An animal that receives a deity's blessing might gain the *planar creature* template. An animal exposed to the magical maelstrom caused by the destruction of an artifact or the death of a deity might mutate or gain magical features, making it into a *legendary creature*.

Forces like these might instead alter animals in ways other than changing templates. An animal might become a different creature with a new stat block after undergoing a transformative phenomenon. A giant spider might become a phase spider, emerging from some sort of magical fallout, enhanced intellectually as well as physically. A black bear might be permanently enlarged, becoming a brown bear, keeping its former appearance in all ways but size.

Although they do not provide CR adjustments, the Dungeon Master can also give animals supernatural gifts through exposure to such potent forces or areas, or by the methods that any other NPC or player character might gain them. These can keep animals relevant at times when their CRs are falling behind. Standard supernatural gifts are provided in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, in the "Other Rewards" section of chapter 7. Some new blessings and charms are described in chapter 4 of this book. For even more potent increases, the DM can assign boons to animals, those bonus powers intended to reward player characters for exceeding 20th level.

Finally, the Dungeon Master can also design any number of other enhancements for animals using campaign-specific ideas, or simply adjust numbers upward from time to time using the challenge rating rules in the "Creating a Monster" section of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.
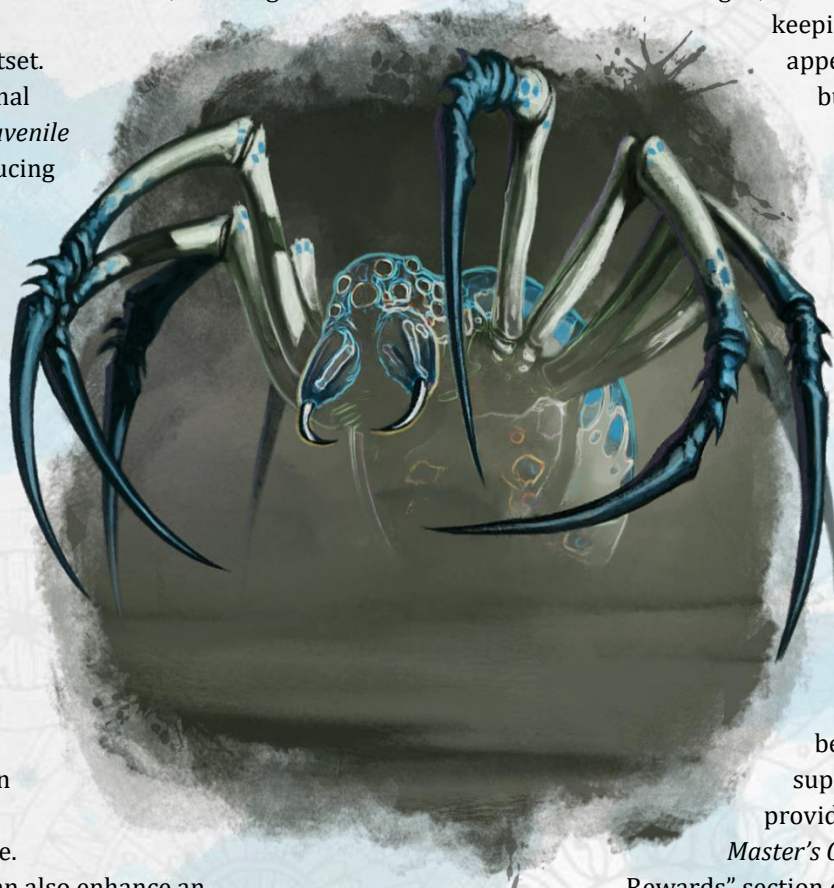
Personalizing Animals

Animals are much more than their stat blocks portray. Like player characters, each animal is unique in its own way. Players that enjoy having pets for roleplaying purposes particularly appreciate the nuances that separate animals from one another. The systems in this section help animals to achieve these differences from the moment of their creation.

Characteristics

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

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

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

Basic and Advanced Characteristics

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

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

Animal's Personality Traits

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

Animal's Behavior Oddity

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

ANIMAL'S PHYSICAL ODDITY

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

ANIMAL'S BOND

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

ANIMAL'S IDEAL

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

VARIANT: LOYALTY RATING

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

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

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

LOYALTY SCORE

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

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

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

In rare circumstances, an animal may have a loyalty score to the party or a group of handlers. This is more likely when the animal has pack instincts and it sees party members as belonging to the handler's pack. It also occurs when a creature has been trained by multiple handlers together. The Dungeon Master must be prepared to arbitrate any complications related to an animal having group loyalty scores, particularly if the animal must choose a preference when commanded to perform oppositional tasks by different masters.

GAINING LOYALTY

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

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

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

Companionship. Animals very willingly become loyal to the handlers who coexist with them, requiring no special outlays of effort to achieve. They form instinctive social bonds

and quickly come to consider even humanoids to be part of their packs or families. Roll to increase an animal's loyalty once for each 30-day period of shared proximity with the handler until the animal reaches its maximum rating with that handler.

Training. A handler who trains an animal in a trick or role has time to play with an animal and interact continuously, triggering a loyalty-gaining roll. Even if the creature has reached its maximum number of tricks, 6 downtime days spent devoted to socializing with the animal in relative isolation also constitutes a loyalty gaining event.

Losing Loyalty

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

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

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

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

Fortunately for their handlers, many animals will be completely oblivious to danger. For example, a horse ridden on a narrow mountain ledge knows only that getting close to the edge may precipitate a dangerous fall; it has no inkling that the roadway could also crumble away and that merely being on that ledge is dangerous. Moreover, unless the horse gets a good look over the side, it may not even understand that the drop could be a deadly one.

Most animals can be calmed in naturally frightening circumstances. A successful Wisdom (Animal Handling) check calms a domestic animal or trained mount, preventing it from suffering fear to a degree

that would impact loyalty. Some animals can be easily blinkered or hooded to obscure the danger, like horses and hawks, giving advantage on this check.

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

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

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

Effects of Loyalty

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

To keep the animal, the handler must confine it somehow. Increasing the animal's loyalty is simply a matter of keeping the animal, feeding it, and providing it with proximate companionship until enough time passes for the animal's natural inclinations toward social bonding to take over. In game terms, this means re-acclimating the animal, a process that takes more time given the creature's state of captivity. Once re-

acclimated, the animal returns to 1 loyalty and can be interacted with as normal. At the Dungeon Master's discretion, spells can help handler and animal interact during this time, easing the period of tension.

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

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

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

ANIMAL TEMPLATES

Creatures can have templates based on their natural abilities, age, or depredations suffered in life. Such templates include *exceptional specimen*, *juvenile specimen*, *reluctant creature*, and *fragile specimen*. Other templates apply as a reflection of the animal's origins and, rarely, as byproducts of exposure to powerful magics.

Each template comes with a challenge rating adjustment. These modifications do not strictly comport with the guidelines on page 274 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. (They should not, by themselves, alter an animal's proficiency bonus.) A Dungeon Master wishing for more precision can, after applying a template, make a few further adjustments to a creature's defensive and offensive numbers to produce the desired challenge rating, using the mechanisms on that page to make each template fully realize its intended degree of modification.

> ### CHALLENGE RATINGS BELOW 1
>
> When an adjustment would reduce a creature's challenge rating below CR 1, each single point of further reduction produces a CR 1/2, then CR 1/4, then CR 1/8, then CR 0. Further points of reduction are ignored. When adjusting upward from a CR below 1, use the same progression in reverse.

FRAGILE SPECIMEN
Challenge Rating Adjustment: −1

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

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

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

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

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

JUVENILE SPECIMEN
Challenge Rating Adjustment: −1

This animal is a juvenile member of its species (or a "miniature" or "teacup" breed of the creature that will never grow any larger). The lower Intelligence rating of a juvenile impacts the creature's potential for training and the way it interacts with a handler.

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

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

Juveniles are often trained in preparation for their eventual maturity. A juvenile specimen is young enough to learn the combat-trained role but is too young to benefit from it. To apply the combat-trained benefits, the creature must finish its prerequisite training time and must mature to adulthood (removing this template). The Dungeon Master determines the time it takes for the creature to mature.

Reluctant Creature

Challenge Rating Adjustment: n/a

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

A creature with this template has the reluctant special trait:

Reluctant. Although it can be trained, this animal will not willingly use its tricks or role functions under stressful circumstances like combat. Additionally, any Wisdom (Animal Handling) checks to affect the creature are made with disadvantage.

This template is one that can be removed from an animal after considerable time. There is no formula to remove the template; it often comes down to the creature's very personal idiosyncrasies. Sometimes, a previously cooperative creature can gain this template after a dramatic event that causes strife; perhaps the animal believes the handler has stolen its cubs or perhaps (if the optional loyalty rules are used) the animal's loyalty score drops to 0.

This template can also be used to enforce the challenge rating requirements discussed in the previous section; if the characters manage to acquire an animal that the Dungeon Master did not intend for them to get, one whose CR violates the guidelines above, this template may apply until the characters reach a sufficient level to gain the animal's respect.

Exceptional Specimen

Challenge Rating Adjustment: +0

Animals of all types may be exceptional specimens. These are naturally heartier, smarter, and abler versions of their types, making them better suited to an adventuring life. This template represents a natural state for animals, referring to creatures with remarkable attributes that are still within the range of normal.

This template can only apply to creatures born with it. It is normally limited to those of the beast type, although the Dungeon Master may apply this template to other creatures in unusual circumstances.

Most exceptional specimens are purchased. They tend not to be available in common markets but can be found in the kennels of breeding experts, the stables of the local nobility, or in other specialized markets near large cities.

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

melee attacks inflicts one die of additional damage of the same type. The size of the damage die is the same as the creature's hit die size. For example, a horse from the Shadowfell has resistance to necrotic damage and inflicts 1d10 additional necrotic damage with a successful attack of its hooves.

A *planar creature* may replace its resistance with a passive or defensive benefit like camouflage (+10 bonus to Dexterity (Stealth) checks), wings (fly speed equal to its normal speed), or some other benefit the Dungeon Master designs. The Monster Feature table on pages 280-281 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* can provide inspiration for these effects. A *planar creature* may also (or instead) replace its damage bonus with an aggressive charm like *natural weapon enhancement* (+1 magical bonus to attack and damage rolls) or some other offensive trait.

Undead Creature

Challenge Rating Adjustment: +1

A creature with the *undead creature* template is a corporeal, unliving version of itself, like a zombie.

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

The undead creature gains either a bonus of necrotic damage to one of its natural attacks, or it gains the Undead Fortitude special trait. The bonus is one die of necrotic damage, the size of which equals the size of the creature's hit dice. The special trait is as follows:

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

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

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

Exceptional specimens gain 2 hit dice, a +1 bonus to Intelligence (to a maximum of 4 Intelligence), and a +2 bonus to Charisma and to Wisdom.

Planar Creature

Challenge Rating Adjustment: +1

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

For example, a stag from the Plane of Fire may have smoky breath and dark red fur. A hound from Elysium may have angelic feathered wings. An owl from the Feywild may have vermillion eyes and shiny feathers in the colors of a peacock's plumage.

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

By default, a *planar creature* gains 2 additional hit dice. It has resistance to damage of one type normally associated with its home plane and one of its innate

Dire Animal

Challenge Rating Adjustment: +2

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

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

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

Dire animals also gain 3 additional hit dice, a +4 bonus to Strength, a +2 bonus to Constitution, and +1 bonus to Armor Class due to enhanced natural armor. Additionally, the size of all damage dice for the animal's natural attacks increase by one size (see hit die size progression, above).

Legendary Creature

Challenge Rating Adjustment: +2

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

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

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

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

Portraying Animals

When player characters acquire animals for their long-term use and companionship, those creatures become members of the party. These are important NPCs and it falls to the Dungeon Master to portray them, to provide their motives and actions, as well as their unique and defining features.

Placing Animals

The ability of player characters to acclimate and train animals naturally requires the Dungeon Master to take special care in the placement of such creatures in the game world.

Animals as Antagonists

Once players start to acclimate and train animals as companions, they may begin to see every creature as a potential friend. This can dramatically shift the nature of encounters that the Dungeon Master believes will entail combat, and the DM should be ready for this.

Animal-collecting behavior can take up valuable game time and shift the focus of a game away from its intended story. Trying to feed and befriend a random encounter's hungry wolves can be a slow process, particularly because it forces the Dungeon Master to portray animal intentions and personality at unexpected times. Additionally, the party may end up with unexpected NPC animals, creating logistical problems or shifting the game's focus to caring for the creatures rather than continuing the quest.

The Dungeon Master must therefore take special care when using animals as antagonists and should expect that players may see such creatures as real characters, more than mere tools used to foster a sense of danger or tension in the game. This may lead the DM to avoid sending animals against the party, perhaps rerolling the type of random encounter that comes up when the party tries to rest. Avoiding the possibility of an acquisition scenario is the easiest way to address a potential game slowdown.

When the Dungeon Master does use animals as antagonists, a quick determination should be made at the outset as to whether such creatures can be acquired by the party. If the DM determines that they cannot be acquired, a reason should be thought up and baked into the encounter. Coming up with a reason after the fact can come across like an excuse; a fast-

talking DM's reasoning may appear illogical, like a fiat designed to foil the players' agency.

For example, the wolves that attack the party's camp might be so starved as to be unmoved by mundane attempts to calm them; a successful Wisdom (Animal Handling) check will only reveal that the animals' hunger has driven them past the point of being calmed. By revealing the reason up front, the players won't be surprised by their inability to befriend these animals and won't waste too much time in the attempt.

ANIMALS AS POTENTIAL COMPANIONS

Potential companions come in two types when placed, those that the Dungeon Master expects the players to acquire, and those the Dungeon Master is willing to allow the players to acquire. The former type of creature is designed to fill a need (or desire) within the party, while the latter is probably a hostile encounter with creatures whose acquisition merely would not upset the balance of the party.

In the case of purposefully seeded opportunities to acquire a companion, the Dungeon Master may wish to lay some groundwork, particularly if the creature is one the players my perceive as an antagonist to be fought. Local villagers might pass rumors about the creature, giving the players a chance to think over the possibilities ahead of time. Or the party might observe the animal performing some behavior that suggests possible acclimation, like foraging in a useful manner or killing some dangerous creature of a type that the party has previously fought. The most compelling groundwork comes from observing the creature in the role of an animal companion; perhaps it serves the enemy knight as a mount or a guardian, or it is caged in the dungeon of her castle.

If the Dungeon Master wants the party to acquire an animal, the most compelling features to portray are the animal's intelligence and social behaviors. Players who like animals as pets feel a stronger connection to creatures that are cute or smart; these factors form fast psychological connections in players' minds. At the same time, players who like animals as mere tools to enhance their character sheets will see intelligence and social behaviors as reflective of an animal's usefulness. Regardless of player type, these factors universally signal a potential connection.

The most effective way to portray social behaviors is to mimic those of real-world domestic pets, like dogs and cats. Most players have sufficient interactions with such pets as to understand their social cues. The Dungeon Master can quickly shift a potential combat into an acquisition scenario by having the animal give an "inquisitive" tilt of the head as the players approach. Tail wagging, turning in circles, rolling over, and extending a front leg are all social behaviors that players may recognize from their positive interaction with dogs. Purring, offering small animal carcasses to the party, and lying down in a patch of sunlight are behaviors that may trigger the players' memories of interacting with cats. This domestic pet behavior tells players that an animal can be acquired, particularly if it shows some degree of trust or acceptance of the party.

Social behaviors are probably not present in a hostile encounter with animals. Players that turn an animal attack into an acquisition scenario need no real

prompting to collect animal companions, whether the Dungeon Master intends the acquisition or not. However, if the Dungeon Masters states that the animal is not hostile at the outset, or the animal cannot threaten the party because it is stuck in a trap or a cage, the scene is set for an acquisition.

Removing Animals

In addition to placing animals adeptly, the Dungeon Master should be prepared to remove them gracefully. Particularly after allowing an acquisition scenario that was not designed as an encounter of that type, there may be a need to remove animals from the party. Perhaps the creature is too potent, overshadowing one or more player characters in combat or in skill scenarios. Perhaps the animal is ill-suited to adventuring and needs too much attention and protection. Whatever the case, the Dungeon Master should be prepared with a few techniques to help troublesome animal companions make their exits.

Some story ideas for removing animals are provided in appendix A, but the Dungeon Master should probably generate a few others, perhaps some that are uniquely suited to the game world. The best exit scenarios involve two factors.

First, the players should recognize that the animal is causing a problem. In most cases, this will be apparent by the difficulties that the animal engenders in play. However, some difficulties affect only the Dungeon Master, making the work of running the game harder. When the players fail to recognize the problem, the Dungeon Master should address it directly to the players, rather than relying upon in-game events to get the point across. Until the players realize that the animal is causing a problem with running the game, they are likely to resist any exit scenario.

Second, the animal's exit should be one that is beneficial to the creature. If the animal dies, runs away, or leaves in some manner representative of adversity, the players will see this as a challenge to be overcome. They will carry the creature's body along to have it raised from death at the next town, or will track down the animal to recapture it, using magic if necessary. Instead, the animal should find a peaceful and idyllic home, perhaps a secluded glade where the animal can live in peace with plentiful food and others of its kind. Alternately, the animal can be left at the party's headquarters or with a druid ally in the woods; the animal's exit only needs to remove it from the party; it needn't be a permanent exit from the story.

Default Behaviors

Portraying animals properly requires some knowledge of their default behaviors. Animals have instinctive reactions to circumstances and stimuli, some of which are undesirable to their handlers. Animal training is not just about getting animals to perform activities in the moment; it also prevents some natural behaviors and makes animals companionable.

When an animal is not trained to act a particular way in a particular circumstance, it will default to the behaviors discussed below. Even when trained, the animal may resort to default behavior on occasion. If told to stay in place, the animal will only do so until it knows the handler has stopped paying attention to it or, in the handler's absence, for as long as the Dungeon Master believes the animal's attention span will allow. (Attention spans vary between species and even between individual members of the same species.) Default behaviors are specific to the animals that perform them; the following are generalized examples. These apply to the most common animal types, particularly to horses used for riding, and to dogs and hawks used for hunting. The Dungeon Master should design behaviors specific to the party's more-exotic creatures.

In each of the following circumstances, the Dungeon Master should also alter behavior to suit each animal's characteristics and may decide that trained tricks or successful Wisdom (Animal Handling) checks can control or suppress a creature's behavior.

During Leisure Time

This activity is one where the animal handler is not engaged in dramatic activity. It is a time of long-term traveling or of rest, without danger and without direct instructions to guide the animal's behavior.

Most animals seek food during this time. Horses will graze, predators will hunt, and domestic animals will beg party members for scraps. When restrained, animals may still try to pursue this activity, testing their confinements unless fed. When food or hunting opportunities aren't available, or when the animal is well fed, it will become idle or will sleep.

During a travel sequence, rider-trained creatures serve as mounts and behave as mounts do. They are kept on task by constant contact with, and occasional instruction from, their riders. If not constantly directed, a mount will follow a trusted or familiar creature in front of it. Absent such a leader, the mount will stay on the road or continue in the same direction until its attention wanders or it finds an opportunity to eat.

The guard-trained role particularly affects an animal's leisure behavior, converting the animal's behavior into a useful asset for the handler. Such a creature defaults to a mode of alertness during leisure time, being trained to watch for strangers, patrol an enclosed area, or guard a specific person when its handler cannot. This role also moderates an animal's attention span, conditioning it to stay attentive or to maintain higher degrees of alertness even when its attention fluctuates.

In Combat

The loud sounds of combat, the fast, violent motions of its participants, and the smell of blood are all alarming to animals. Natural animals therefore try to flee from combat, with rare exceptions. The exceptions are not usually the sort that adventurers care about; any threat to a party is probably sufficiently intimidating that even a hungry bear will retreat from it. However, some untrained animals, particularly predators, will fight to protect their young or their pack, or try to kill

an enemy for food when truly starving. An animal may stick around if it is trained with an aggressive trick like Attack, Defend, or Harry.

A mount that is rider trained (but not combat-trained) regresses to its default behavior in combat if allowed to. Each round, the rider must make a Wisdom (Animal Handling) check with a DC of 10, or a DC of 15 if the mount is injured. If the check fails, or if the animal is otherwise left to its own decisions, the mount does what its nature dictates on its turn.

If suddenly unguided, most animals flee combat. A combat-trained mount might stay near a fallen rider if it is not directly threatened. An animal with a high loyalty score might try to protect a handler, even if not trained to do so. (While this is uncommon of skittish creatures like horses, predators like wolves are sufficiently aggressive to fight instinctively.) A giant lizard might snap up a fallen corpse to consume later as it flees the battle. These behaviors are all determined by the Dungeon Master.

Near Danger

This circumstance is like combat, except that what animals consider dangerous varies. For example, a hawk does not fear a fast-flowing river or a cliff's edge. A solitary creature might fear crowds or the noises of the city. Nearly every animal fears a fire larger than a campfire, particularly large wildfires.

Animals will flee from frightening circumstances unless trained not to. Most such training still requires the active input of the handler to overcome instinctive fears. Aggressive or predatory animals may attack the sources of their fear (or bystanders) instead of fleeing.

When Mounted

Most creatures that are not rider-trained will buck, roll, or otherwise attempt to dislodge a rider as default behavior. They will continue to do so as their highest priority until exhausted. A more docile animal might simply lay down or roll over to dislodge a rider. Chapter 3 provides optional rules for staying on a bucking mand and more details on how animals may try to avoid being ridden.

Highly Intelligent Animals

Creatures with Intelligence ratings of 5 and 6 blend the default behaviors of similar animals and of smarter creatures. For example, a displacer beast may act like a cat in many scenarios, but this behavior is moderated

by its understanding of complex circumstances and by its personal agendas and motivations.

Creatures with Intelligence scores of 7 or higher are sentient beings that have no default behaviors. They respond to situations and stimuli in ways similar to intelligent humanoids. Managing such creatures is no different than managing humanoid NPCs.

Managing Animal Rules

Once an animal has become a member of the party, the Dungeon Master should moderate the creature's interactions with the rules in a way that reinforces its concept as a unique NPC.

Moderating Training

When players want to train animals, it falls to the Dungeon Master to limit animals to learning tricks and roles they can reasonably perform given their mental and physical faculties. A Dungeon Master should not shy from forbidding a trick to a particular animal or making a blanket rule that a trick that would be performed automatically requires a Wisdom (Animal Handling) check as a prerequisite each time a particular animal tries to perform it.

Moderating Survival

If players have invested time and effort to acquire animals, the Dungeon Master should be mindful to give those creatures all the survivable benefits allowed by the rules. A DM who does otherwise fails to create the game experience the players are seeking. Providing appropriate survival benefits contemplates three factors.

First, the DM should treat animals as "special nonplayer characters," allowing them to fall

> ### Monsters and Death
>
> "Most DMs have a monster die the instant it drops to 0 hit points, rather than having it fall unconscious and make death saving throws. Mighty villains and **special nonplayer characters** are common exceptions; the DM might have them fall unconscious and follow the same rules [for death saving throws] as player characters." (Player's Handbook, page 198. Emphasis added.)

unconscious at 0 hit points instead of dying. Animal companions will reach 0 hit points with some regularity and player characters should be offered the opportunity to try to save them through rounds of death saving throws. See the Monsters and Death sidebar on this page.

Unfortunately, many animal companions are Tiny beasts, having only a few hit points. These animals aren't likely to fall to 0 hit points without also suffering enough damage to invoke the "Instant Death" rule on page 198 of the *Player's Handbook*. Therefore, allowing animals death saving throws at 0 hit points isn't always affective; sometimes additional steps are necessary.

The second factor to keeping animal companions alive applies to the targeting choices made by antagonists in battle. Animals should only be targeted rationally by rational foes, and instinctively by instinct-driven foes. Both of these things amount to prioritizing animals below more obvious threats, like the player characters, unless happenstance removes such alternatives. Animals should only be targeted by
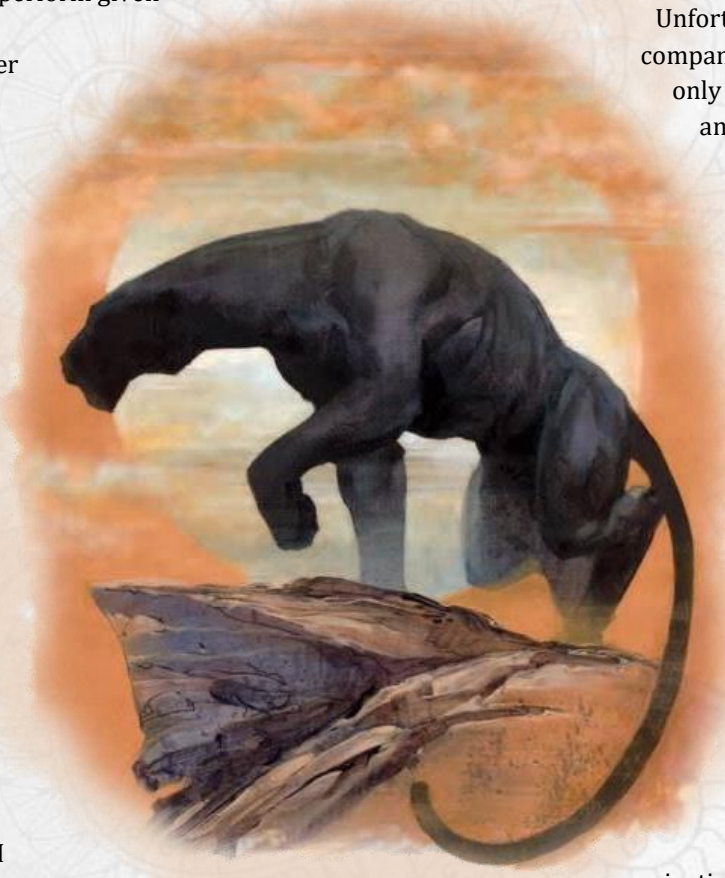
antagonists when they take significant roles in combat, or when no other viable targets present themselves.

Sometimes animals cannot be protected by innocuousness. When an animal plays a significant role in combat, particularly when it inflicts a grievous injury or an annoying condition, it should not be ignored simply to spare the players' feelings. Likewise, a creature may fall within a spell's area of effect, even if it is not being targeted. In such cases, an animal's injury or death should not be avoided by constraining an antagonist's targeting decisions.

Along the same lines, avoid targeting animals as proxies for the player characters to forecast the danger of a trap or signal an encounter's lethality. Don't treat animals as "coalmine canaries" to elicit an emotional reaction with their deaths or injury, or to create tension in the story. These efforts are often transparent and will produce undesirable reactions from the players.

The third factor for survivability addresses animal advancement. As the characters gain levels, the Dungeon Master should provide timely opportunities to replace party animals with stronger versions or enhance those animals to keep up with the challenges they face. This is discussed more in a previous section.

Players in Control

As NPCs, animals of all kinds fall under the Dungeon Master's direction and control. However, the game provides many opportunities for players to control the animals their characters handle.

Roleplaying and Rules

When it comes to portraying animals, the work falls into two categories: the roleplaying of the creature's behavior and social interactions, and the handling of the animals' combat decisions and die rolls.

The roleplaying of animals is something the Dungeon Master should not pass off to players. Although some skilled players might be adept at portraying their animals, providing an engaging roleplaying experience for the other players in the game,

doing so defeats the companionship purposes of having an animal. Players who like animals want to build their relationships with the animals they personally collect, and it's hard to have a relationship with yourself. If a player is ever to manage the roleplaying of an animal, it should not be the player whose character owns or handles that animal.

Having players manage the activities of their animals in combat and other die-rolling scenarios is a much easier prospect. In many cases, the animal will automatically perform in a way that the player's character commands. For example, the rules for mounted combat do not give most animals the leeway to act independently of the rider's will (absent unusual circumstances that warrant the DM's interference). Similarly, many tricks are performed automatically or as a result of the handler's die roll, without reference to the animal's own decision-making. These scenarios suggest that decisions about animals' actions (and rolls for their actions) are best handled by players.

Only rarely should the Dungeon Master step in to dictate the actions of an animal contrary to the controlling player's desires. In those scenarios when the animal has leeway to act independently, the Dungeon Master should ensure that it acts consistently with its personality, training, and attention span. For example, given a trick to perform, and little supervision, the Dungeon Master may decide that circumstances are right for the animal to go off-script. Commanded to attack a target, the animal might do so for its first turn or two, but then turn its attention to an enemy that recently wounded the animal, or one it perceives to be a rival or prey.

Appendix C

APPENDIX C

SAMPLE ANIMALS

THIS DUNGEON MASTER APPENDIX LISTS SEVERAL dozen sample animals created with the guidelines of the previous appendix. The animals cover a range of challenge ratings and are separated by archetype (although many could qualify for multiple archetypes).

SAMPLES BY ARCHETYPE

These animals are ready to drop into a game, as they are or with modification. Characteristics, training, appearance, and historical context are provided for each creature.

Where a creature's statistics would be altered by training or a template, those adjustments have been included in the stat blocks provided.

LOVABLE LUMPS

These Tiny creatures aren't much help in battle, but they provide valuable companionship and a few utilitarian benefits.

HAZEL (CR 0)

This owl once belonged to a famous thief, the Ferrous Fox, known for stealing jewelry out of secured manor houses within large cities. Hazel learned several important tricks while working for the Fox. Hazel is very keen-eyed and is trained to keep watch while a lock is being picked, to seek out valuables (jewelry) in a building's interior, and to fetch these for her handler.

Hazel is a mottled brown screech owl with yellow-green eyes and stocky legs. Her trilling hoot is longer and more distinctive than that of others screech owls.

The Fox released his pet animals before he retired to a wealthy community on a secluded island. Hazel may be encountered in the wild. If the party is traveling, she might drop gifts of dead field mice to them night after night when they camp. Alternately, she may perch on tents or horse saddles while the party is getting ready to break camp, waiting for a scrap of food to be thrown to her.

HAZEL
Tiny beast, unaligned

Armor Class 11
Hit Points 1 (1d4 - 1)
Speed 5 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
3 (-4)	13 (+1)	8 (-1)	2 (-4)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +3
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages —
Challenge 0 (10 xp)

Flyby. Hazel doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when she flies out of an enemy's reach.

Keen Hearing and Sight. Hazel has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or sight.

Actions

Talons. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 slashing damage.

Base Creature: Owl ᴹᴹ
Template: None
Roles and Tricks: Alert, Fetch, Guard, Hide, Scout, Seek (jewelry)

Personality Trait: *I have a job to do and am impatient with those who don't keep up (and don't keep quiet).*
Behavioral Oddity: Coffin Sleeper. Hazel prefers to sleep in enclosed spaces; if she can't find a box to sleep in, she will drag someone's cloak over herself or otherwise try to shut herself within something.
Physical Oddity: Stunted. Hazel is particularly small for a screech owl of her age, with squat legs and a squashed-looking face.

PIG-PIG (CR 0)

This ball of pink pork belonged to a litter of shoats that was trained to sniff out rare plants in natural areas. He is capable of finding dozens of different types of herbs that range in use from spices to medicinal aids. (If not accompanied by a trained herbalist, he is likely to consume the plants.)

Pig-Pig looks like a normal domestic piglet, with pink skin and a curly tail. He is a tiny bit rotund for his size, making his walk something akin to a waddling hustle. When not using his prodigious sniffer, Pig-Pig is accustomed to riding about in a satchel worn over someone's shoulder. If forced to walk at other times, he makes intermittent squeals of complaint and may headbutt his handler's ankle until picked up.

Pig-Pig probably comes to the party from a merchant, one who sells trained animals on behalf of several trainers in the area. Alternately, a character who purchases herbalism supplies may receive a tip on where to buy a pig that can aid in collecting wild herbs. Pig-Pig will be sold to the party with his own traveling satchel, which he likes to poke his head out of while riding in.

PIG-PIG

Tiny beast, unaligned

Armor Class 11
Hit Points 3 (1d4 + 1)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
5 (-3)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	2 (-4)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)

Skills Perception +2, Survival +2
Senses passive Perception 12
Languages —
Challenge 0 (10 xp)

Keen Smell. Pig-pig has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Actions

Bite. *Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 1) piercing damage.

Base Creature: Unique creature (see stat bloc)
Template: None
Roles and Tricks: Alert, Heel, Perform, Seek (herbs), Track, Use Skill (Survival)

Personality Trait: *I want constant attention from, or at least physical contact with, my handler.*
Behavioral Oddity: Showman. When left without attention for too long, Pig-Pig will perform little tricks to draw attention to himself, like rolling over.
Physical Oddity: Prehensile. Pig-Pig has an extra-long tail, which is hard to notice since it curls so tightly.

LAVENDER (CR 1/8)

Lavender was orphaned as a young spriteling. Soon after, all her many siblings got killed off by an area-affecting spell that young lavender, being an exceptional specimen, was barely strong enough to endure. To survive, she followed the adventurers who were responsible and fed on their horses while they slept. She is fortunate that they never posted watches and carried no ranged weapons, so were unable to stop her feasting. She took this failure to kill her as acceptance of her presence and soon came to like helping those (and other) flightless humanoids.

Although hungry by nature, Lavender takes care not to feed on those she considers part of her flock. She is slightly larger than other stirges, with a round belly and a very short proboscis. Her thick fur has a distinctive purplish hue, from which her name is derived.

Lavender may join the party while they are in the wilderness. She joins the fight and attacks their foes, then flies off before the party can turn against her. After doing this several times, the party might get the idea that she likes them.

Base Creature: Stirge ᴹᴹ
Template: *Exceptional specimen*
Roles and Tricks: Act (Blood Drain), Attack, Behave, Fetch, Go Home, Heel, Hide, Perform, Scout

Personality Trait: *I like to be near people and add my buzzing hum to the sounds they make.*
Behavioral Oddity: Bat Sleeper. As the party travels, Lavender suspends herself upside down, like a bat, from things people are wearing or carrying.
Physical Oddity: Missing Feature. Lavender's proboscis is short and jagged, the result of an injury.

LAVENDER

Tiny beast, unaligned

Armor Class 14
Hit Points 7 (3d4)
Speed 10 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
4 (-3)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	3 (-4)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages —
Challenge 1/8 (25 xp)

Actions

Blood Drain. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage, and Lavender attaches to the target. While attached, the stirge doesn't attack. Instead, at the start of each of her turns, the target loses 5 (1d4 + 3) hit points due to blood loss.

Lavender can detach herself by spending 5 feet of her movement. She does so after she drains 10 hit points of blood from the target or the target dies. A creature, including the target, can use its action to detach her.

CLEVER (CR 1/4)

This little ball of feathers looks a bit like a wingless turkey, with sharp claws and a maw of deadly fangs. Smarter than most animals, Clever may try to assert pack dominance over the least-talkative party members, which she expresses by fanning her plumage at them and gobbling up their rations during mealtimes.

Clever's feathers are brown with gray and green tips; this plumage serves as a fine mottled camouflage. She can spread her long tail feathers over herself for extra concealment. While hunting, Clever walks on her powerful talons in a slow, smooth movement, keeping her head low and her steps quiet. When not hunting, her movement is more akin to a rabbit's, with plenty of hops and inquisitive head bobbing.

This creature is probably native to a region with dense foliage, like a jungle. Because of Clever's aggressive, predatory nature, a normal encounter with her is likely to lead to a fight. She might be encountered in distress, either fighting off enemies or stuck in a trap, either of which might would endear Clever to the party if its members save her from the threat. Alternately, a merchant or animal-fighting arena might be looking to sell off this vicious creature.

Base Creature: Velociraptor [VGM]
Template: None
Roles and Tricks: Attack, Behave, Concentrate, Defend, Desist, Fetch, Guard, Harry, Heel, Hide, Stalk, Use Skill (Stealth)

Personality Trait: *I am aggressive in the face of all threats or adversity, throwing myself at challenges without concern for personal safety.*
Behavioral Oddity: Indiscriminate Hunger. When a creature falls in battle, friend or foe, Clever runs up to it then looks to her handler for permission to start eating.
Physical Oddity: Long Tail. Clever's long tail feathers are double her body's length. She can spread these feathers like a peacock's plumage.

CLEVER

Tiny beast, unaligned

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)
Hit Points 10 (3d4 + 3)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	4 (-3)	12 (+1)	6 (-2)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +4
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages —
Challenge 1/4 (25 xp)

Pack Tactics. Clever has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of her allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 5 (1d6+2) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4+2) slashing damage.

Sweetie Bear (CR 1/2)

A ferocious defender in a pint-size package, this little badger seems to have no fear of larger creatures. Sweetie Bear is extremely aggressive in combat and, despite his tiny jaws, he can shrug off a lot of injuries.

Sweetie Bear has black-striped markings typical of a badger, except that the portions of his fur that should be white are instead a very pale yellow.

Sweetie Bear might be acquired from a druid who trained him, but only if the party befriended the druid or otherwise seems worthy to take this creature off of the druid's hands.

Base Creature: Badger ᴹᴹ
Template: *Legendary creature*
Roles and Tricks: Guard-trained; Alert, Attack, Behave, Concentrate, Defend, Desist, Fetch, Guard, Harry, Stalk, Scout, Seek, Stay, Track, Use Skill (Perception)

Sweetie Bear

Tiny beast, neutral

Armor Class 12 (natural armor)
Hit Points 33 (6d4 + 18)
Speed 50 ft., burrow 5 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)	5 (-3)	12 (+1)	5 (-3)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +4
Senses darkvision 30 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages —
Challenge 1/2 (100 xp)

Boon of Speed. Sweetie Bear can use a bonus action to take the Dash or Disengage action. Once he does this, he cannot do so again until he completes a short rest.

Keen Smell. Sweetie Bear has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Legendary Resistance (2/Day). If Sweetie Bear fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 (1d4 - 1) piercing damage.

Personality Trait: *I am incredibly aggressive toward anything that looks dangerous or that I don't understand.*
Behavioral Oddity: Herbivore. Sweetie Bear likes to eat plants, particularly berries and nuts, and if allowed to wander in the woods, his fur will be matted with berry juice when he returns.
Physical Oddity: Colorful. Sweetie Bear has pale yellow fur amidst his black stripes.

RAPTORS

These creatures are dangerous flyers, with traits suited for striking from the sky, often using hit-and-run tactics.

Histopher Ribbon (CR 1/8)

This clever flying snake was trained by a cabal of yuan-ti purebloods who were more interested in drinking and debauchery than any of the sinister plans held by their yuan-ti superiors. Although this group eventually came to a bad end, their pet flying snake escaped to carry on his own life.

Histopher is blue in color like a macaw, including the scales of his body as well as the feathers of his wings. He has a ridge of fluff and feathers down his spine, beginning in a high feather crest on his head.

Histopher Ribbon may be encountered in the wild in warm climates (he is accustomed to hot jungle regions). He is probably on his way to deliver a message scroll somewhere, or he has perhaps been injured in the attempt to do so.

Base Creature: Flying Snake ᴹᴹ
Template: None
Roles and Tricks: Behave, Discriminate (Attack, Harry), Fetch, Go Home

Personality Trait: *I am deeply loyal to anyone who feeds me, or to the last person who fed me.*
Behavioral Oddity: Mellow. Histopher has become accustomed to consuming alcohol on the regular, but not to the point of drunkenness. This preference is a holdover from his time with the yuan-ti, who were notoriously resistant to intoxication.
Physical Oddity: Parrot Plumage. Histopher is brighter in coloration than other flying snakes. He takes great care to keep his plumage clean.

HISTOPHER RIBBON

Tiny beast, unaligned

Armor Class 14
Hit Points 5 (2d4)
Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
4 (-3)	18 (+4)	11 (+0)	2 (-4)	12 (+1)	5 (-3)

Senses blindsight 10 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages —
Challenge 1/8 (25 xp)

Flyby. Histopher doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when he flies out of an enemy's reach.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target, *Hit:* 1 piercing damage plus 7 (3d4) poison damage.

NUGGET

Large beast, unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 39 (6d10 + 6)
Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	2 (-4)	9 (-1)	5 (-3)

Skills Perception +1
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages —
Challenge 1 (200 xp)

Flyby. Nugget doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when she flies out of an enemy's reach.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) piercing damage

NUGGET (CR 1)

Nugget belongs to a breed of large flying dinosaurs domesticated by dragonborn tribes for use as hunters and occasionally as mounts. She was raised and groomed to be a gift, used to cement a political alliance in a land far from her home.

Nugget has brown scales in various shades. These match the barren, rocky terrain Nugget was raised in. She hunts with her long, sharp beak, snatching up prey and bringing it to her handler. She often delights in these successes, becoming very animated for several minutes afterward.

Nugget may be found as a pet for a dragonborn tribe. She might already have been given as a gift and is thus in the hands of a noble or one of the noble's household. As part of a random encounter, the party may discover Nugget trying to defend her terminally injured handler from whatever threat the random encounter produces.

Base Creature: Pteranodon ᴹᴹ
Template: *Dire animal*
Roles and Tricks: Hunter-trained; Defend, Desist, Harry, Heel, Seek, Track

Personality Trait: *I am savagely aggressive, relentless and violent in pursuit of any task given to me.*
Behavioral Oddity: Hang Time. Nugget likes to stay in the sky as long as possible. She flies all day, resting on thermal updrafts while circling high overhead.
Physical Oddity: Smiler. Nugget's beak curves slightly at just the right place to make it look like she's always smiling.

TURTLEDOVE (CR 3)

This undead creature has the body of a lion and the head, wings, and forelegs of an eagle. Once the much-beloved mount of a heroic warrior, Turtledove and its rider were attacked while far from their allies. After they fell to the earth, Turtledove was unable to revive its rider, and eventually starved to death watching over her corpse. However, its sense of loyalty survived, driving Turtledove to maintain its vigil even after death. As an undead creature, Turtledove no longer requires air, food, drink, or sleep, and it no longer ages.

Turtledove's fur is thin and patchy, and its tail is entirely hairless. Turtledove's feathers are also falling out, particularly in the wings where some bones might

be visible; the rest of the body is wrapped with enough old bandaging to conceal much of the decay.

Turtledove might be discovered in the deep wilderness, standing guard over the grave of its fallen master, just waiting for someone to come along and end its vigil. It prefers not to be ridden unless it establishes a strong bond with a new handler. Turtledove might instead be caged in the lair of some spellcaster, making cute animal noises from the shadows. Getting a good look at Turtledove might be a shock; best to have the animal make a good impression before its true nature is revealed.

Base Creature: Griffon ᴹᴹ
Template: *Undead creature*
Roles and Tricks: Combat-trained, rider-trained; Act (Slam), Attack, Concentrate, Defend, Desist, Wear Armor

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TURTLEDOVE

Large undead, unaligned

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 39 (7d10 + 21)
Speed 30 ft., fly 80 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	2 (-4)	13 (+1)	8 (-1)

Skills Perception +5
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities poisoned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages —
Challenge 3 (700 xp)

Keen Sight. Turtledove has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

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

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage

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Personality Trait: *I am fearless and single-minded in pursuit of my mission, whatever that might be.*
Behavioral Oddity: Watchful. Turtledove is always watching, always vigilant for threats.
Physical Oddity: Whistler. Turtledove's beak is worn and decayed, with several holes in it that make a whistling sound when it dives with its beak open.

BITER (CR 5)

Biter is an unusual type of chimera, a rare mutation from within a normal bloodline of these monstrosities. She is just old enough to know she doesn't fit in with her kind and recently struck out on her own because of this. Biter's personality is both fickle, a product of her three brains, and independent, making it difficult for anyone but a dedicated handler to manage her.

This monstrous creature has the wings of a dragon, the front legs of a leopard, and the rear legs of a ram. She has three heads; a silver-scaled dragon's head, a

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BITER

Medium monstrosity, chaotic good

Armor Class 14
Hit Points 114 (6d8 + 48)
Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	11 (+0)	17 (+3)	2 (-4)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

Skills Perception +8
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 18
Languages understands Draconic but can't speak
Challenge 5 (1,800 xp)

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d4 + 4) piercing damage.

Horns. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d10 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d4 + 4) slashing damage.

Cold Breath (Recharge 5-6). The dragon head exhales an icy blast in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 22 (5d8) cold damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

gray-mottled snow leopard's head, and a white ram's head with thick, curved horns.

The party might free Biter from magical subjugation or imprisonment, giving the players the idea that this animal is useful and is accustomed to being controlled. If encountered in the wild, a character proficient with the Arcana skill might notice that this chimera is visually different than others of its kind, particularly in that its dragon head is metallic rather than chromatic, a clue as to its different alignment.

Base Creature: Chimera ᴹᴹ
Template: *Juvenile creature*
Roles and Tricks: Combat-trained; Act (Slam), Attack, Concentrate, Defend, Desist, Wear Armor

Personality Trait: *I am faithful to a fault; when I give my loyalty, it is for life… and beyond.*
Behavioral Oddity: Biter. This creature is often testing how strong things are… by biting them. Wagon wheels, doorknobs, tree branches, and other items occasionally suffer "testing."
Physical Oddity: Missing Feature. Biter has no tail, whether by some mutation or a simple mishap.

Spike (CR 7)

This draconic creature comes from the Shadowfell, where shadow wyverns are common. Spike snuck into the Material Plane, following some shadar-kai who were riding older shadow wyverns, and who had refused to bring Spike because he was too young.

Spike's scales are not simply black, they are the color of deepest night, magically dark, allowing him to hide perfectly in shadows.

Spike is lonely since he lost track of the other creatures from his plane. He wants to have friends, although he will play it cool and aloof the whole time.

Base Creature: Wyvern ᴹᴹ
Template: *Planar creature* (Shadowfell)
Roles and Tricks: Combat-trained; Act (Slam), Attack, Behave, Concentrate, Defend, Desist, Disarm, Comprehend (Common), Harry, Hide, Scout, Stalk, Use Skill (Stealth), Wear Armor, Yield

Personality Trait: *I am cooler than others of my kind, and I'm just smart enough to be edgy about it.*
Behavioral Oddity: Sneaker. Spike likes to sneak up on enemies and allies alike and spy; you might be on

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SPIKE
Large dragon, unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 136 (16d10 + 48)
Speed 20 ft., fly 80 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	5 (-3)	13 (+1)	6 (-2)

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +4 (or +14)
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages Common
Challenge 7 (2,900 xp)

Shadow Meld. Spike gains a +10 bonus to Dexterity (Stealth) checks to remain unseen in darkness.

Slam. If Spike moves at least 20 feet straight toward a Medium or smaller target and then hits it with a claw attack on the same turn, the target must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or also be knocked prone. If the target is knocked prone, Spike can use a stinger attack against that target as a bonus action.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) slashing damage.

Stinger. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage plus 5 (1d10) necrotic damage. The target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 24 (7d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

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watch one night and be startled to realize he's behind a tree, watching you.
Physical Oddity: Misshapen. Instead of normal fangs, Spike's maw has narrow, needle-sharp teeth, layered in redundant rows.
Bond: I am always on the lookout for my lost twin, who is simultaneously my greatest friend and my greatest rival.
Ideal: Nosiness. I like to know what everyone is doing, but I don't want my interest to be noticed.

SLINKERS AND LOPERS

These nonflying creatures are agile hunters that rely upon speed, stealth, and occasional pack tactics.

PINKY (CR 1/8)

When he and his siblings ran afoul some adventurers in their forest home, Pinky made a run for it rather than fighting. Although an able combatant, this giant rat was smart enough to know that the odds were against them. To this day, Pinky has survived on being just a bit brighter than the creatures around him.

Pinky is a well-groomed giant rat with an extra-long pink tail. He has learned to imitate the posture and socializing of domestic animals, which has proven a valuable strategy for securing food and safety from humanoids. He likes to wear clothes, should the chance arise to do so.

Pinky could be found at the fringes of small village. The residents might have stories about Pinky, and he might have made friends with some of the residents by keeping snakes and smaller vermin away from crops. Perhaps one of the village children made a vest or collar for Pinky, which he keeps as clean as possible.

PINKY

Small beast, unaligned

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 14 (4d6)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (-2)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)	3 (-4)	12 (+1)	6 (-2)

Skills Stealth +4
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages —
Challenge 1/8 (25 xp)

Keen Smell. Pinky has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Pack Tactics. Pinky has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of his allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Base Creature: Giant rat [MM]
Template: *Exceptional specimen*
Roles and Tricks: Attack, Behave, Defend, Fetch, Hide, Perform, Scout, Use Item (clothes), Use Skill (Stealth)

Personality Trait: *I am always curious to learn how others act and pick up useful skills.*
Behavioral Oddity: Copycat. Pinky likes to imitate the rote behaviors of humanoids and other animals.
Physical Oddity: Long Tail. Pinky has exceptional control of his long tail; it is almost prehensile.

WEBSTER (CR 1)

Of all the dangerous beasts in fantasy worlds, giant spiders are among the most common. Smarter than normal vermin, these creatures can form attachments with handlers and learn to serve as pets and guardians. They are a particular favorite of the drow. In Webster's case, its training by a goblin druid enhanced the creature's combat prowess and produced a versatile hunting companion.

Webster's hairy body is dark brown with paler blond stripes. It has long, spiny legs, which it can use to propel itself in a jumping body slam to disorient opponents and prey. Webster is accustomed to wearing a riding harness and saddle.

While few societies outside of the drow have a market for spiders like this, this creature, or a variant of it, can be encountered anywhere, in nearly any environment. Most official hardcover adventures list one or more encounters with giant spiders. For a handler interested in a giant spider companion, the sources are endless.

Base Creature: Giant spider [MM]
Template: None
Roles and Tricks: Combat-trained, rider-trained; Act (Body Slam), Attack, Concentrate, Defend, Desist, Wear Armor

Personality Trait: *I am always creepy, hanging about and randomly moving my mandibles.*
Behavioral Oddity: Ball Sleeper. Webster rests by bunching into a corpse-like ball, preferably in a confined space.
Physical Oddity: Scars. Webster has a series of scars on its thorax, evidence of battles against armed adventurers.

WEBSTER

Large beast, unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 26 (4d10 + 4)
Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	2 (-4)	11 (+0)	4 (-3)

Skills Stealth +7
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages —
Challenge 1 (200 xp)

Body Slam. If Webster moves at least 20 feet straight toward a Medium or smaller target and hits it with a bite attack on the same turn, it can forego inflicting its poison damage and opt for a knockdown. The target must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone in addition to the bite's damage. If the target is knocked prone, Webster can use a (normal) bite attack against that target as a bonus action.

Spider Climb. Webster can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Web Sense. While in contact with a web, Webster knows the exact location of any other creature in contact with the same web.

Web Walker. Webster ignores movement restrictions caused by webbing.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw, taking 9 (2d8) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. If the poison damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, the target is stable but poisoned for 1 hour, even after regaining hit points, and is paralyzed while poisoned in this way.

Web (Recharge 5-6). *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 30/60 ft., one creature. *Hit:* The target is restrained by webbing. As an action, the restrained target can make a DC 12 Strength check, bursting the webbing on a success. The webbing can also be attacked and destroyed (AC 10; hp 5; vulnerability to fire damage; immunity to bludgeoning, poison, and psychic damage).

STICKS (CR 3)

The dire wolf is an iconic loper, one popular among rangers and other heroes who have strong connections with the wilderness. Wherever this particular dire wolf goes, her legend follows her. She was once known for organizing unrelated wolves and dire wolves, asserting dominance across large geographical areas and organizing multi-pack hunts that terrorized animal and humanoid alike. Now, her home encroached upon once too often by civilization, this legendary creature has given up on going deeper into the wilderness and is looking for a new way of life.

Sticks is a large, powerful dire wolf with the antlers of an elk and a ridge of bony protrusions down her spine. Her eyes are yellow, and her fur is light gray. In battle, she will briefly stand erect on her hind legs before plunging forward with a charge of her antlers.

If the party is attacked by hungry wolves in the wilderness, Sticks may show up and drive the animals away, hoping to save the lives of her fellow wolves. Sticks might also be encountered in battle with winter wolves or worgs; these cruel, wolf-like races are Sticks' bitter enemies, and she has clashed with them more than once before. In either case, the party may be impressed with the creature's help in combat. Alternately, a druid in the party or a cleric with the Nature Domain might perceive Sticks to be an embodiment of nature's divinity and seek to make an alliance on that basis.

Base Creature: Dire wolf ᴹᴹ
Template: *Legendary creature*
Roles and Tricks: Alert, Attack, Behave, Comprehend (Winter Wolf, Worg), Concentrate, Disarm, Guard, Hide, Language, Scout, Stalk, Subdue, Track, Use Skill (Athletics, Insight, Intimidation, Survival)

Personality Trait: *I am the alpha of this pack; even if I follow a handler, I do so only to learn new things and to form alliances with these two-legged hunters.*
Behavioral Oddity: Wagger. Sticks shows affection by thumping creatures with her wagging tail.
Physical Oddity: Rack. Sticks got her name from her rack of antlers, a very unusual feature for her kind.
Bond: More than protection, I provide my kind with organization, showing them a better way to live.
Ideal: Society. I believe we are stronger together, standing higher on the food chain.

STICKS

Large beast, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)
Hit Points 95 (10d10 + 40)
Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	15 (+2)	19 (+4)	6 (-2)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)

Skills Athletics +7, Insight +3, Perception +3, Stealth +4, Survival +3
Damage Resistances cold
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages Winter Wolf, Worg
Challenge 3 (700 xp)

Keen Hearing and Smell. Sticks has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

Pack Tactics. Sticks has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of her allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Legendary Resistance (2/Day). If Sticks fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

Actions

Bite or Antlers. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

PRINCESS (CR 4)

This basilisk was raised from an egg by kobold handlers who trained her to serve as a guardian for their underground stronghold. Although she is trained not to use her Petrifying Gaze without instruction to do so, Princess typically wears exotic blinkers that contain smoked glass lenses over her eyes. Princess's training also includes regurgitating her valuable stomach fluids when induced and allowing her fangs to be milked of venom.

Princess has spikes along her spine from head to tail, characteristic of all basilisks, but the spikes on her head form a vaguely circular pattern resembling a crown. Her eyes glow a brilliant green.

PRINCESS

Medium monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 65 (10d8 + 20)
Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	8 (-1)	15 (+2)	2 (-4)	8 (-1)	7 (-2)

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9
Damage Resistances poison
Languages —
Challenge 4 (1,100 xp)

Exotic Blinkers. While wearing this equipment, Princess cannot use her Petrifying Gaze. She also has disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight. An adjacent handler can use an action to open the blinkers, moving aside the shaded lenses, or to close the blinkers again.

Petrifying Gaze. If a creature starts its turn within 30 ft. of Princess and the two of them can see each other, the basilisk can force the creature to make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw if Princess isn't incapacitated. On a failed save, the creature magically begins to turn to stone and is restrained. It must repeat the saving throw at the end of its next turn. On a success, the effect ends. On a failure, the creature is petrified until freed by the *greater restoration* spell or other magic.

A creature that isn't surprised can avert its eyes to avoid the saving throw at the start of its turn. If it does so, it can't see Princess until the start of its next turn, when it can avert its eyes again. If it looks at her in the meantime, it must immediately make the save.

If Princess sees her own reflection within 30 ft. of herself in bright light, she mistakes herself for a rival and targets herself with her gaze.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) piercing damage plus 10 (3d6) poison damage.

Basilisks are solitary creatures. Princess might therefore be encountered in the company of a kobold handler who is in the process of relocating her because

she is now full-grown and is seen as a rival to her former brood mates. If encountered alone (perhaps because she ate her handler), Princess will be wearing tack and harness, along with her exotic blinkers, signs of her use as an animal companion.

Although the *Monster Manual* description of basilisks says they are commonly trained as guardians or companions, it is unlikely that the characters will understand the extent of Princess's training without some serious investigation or the use of magic.

Base Creature: Basilisk ᴹᴹ
Template: *Planar creature* (Feywild)
Roles and Tricks: Act (Petrifying Gaze), Attack, Behave, Concentrate, Guard, Yield

Personality Trait: *I get fussy when I am not acknowledged for correctly performing tricks or if I go long enough without attention.*
Behavioral Oddity: Guardian. If the party is idle, princess seeks to explore and patrol every room of a structure or cave complex she is in, whether she is on guard or not.
Physical Oddity: Crown of Flowers. Princess's head spikes have a growth of intertwining vines that flower in different colors depending on the season.

Amanda (CR 5)

Amanda is a miniature giant crocodile, a creature stunted by the harsh, hellish bog it was spawned in. Amanda was summoned to the Material Plane in a complex ritual gone awry, after which she escaped into a local swamp area and has lived ever since, terrorizing the local crocodilian population.

Given her "miniature" status, Amanda is the same size as a normal crocodile. She otherwise resembles a crocodile except that when she opens her mouth, she releases a swirl of acrid black smoke.

Amanda might be encountered somewhere in the wild, particularly in a bog or other swampy region. She might appear to the party while serving as a messenger for some fiendish power; perhaps arriving to deliver a message to a warlock who has the Fiend as an otherworldly patron. Then she simply never leaves.

Base Creature: Giant crocodile ᴹᴹ
Template: *Juvenile specimen* (miniature), *planar creature* (The Nine Hells: Minauros)
Roles and Tricks: Attack, Harry, Hide

AMANDA
Large beast, unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 52 (7d10 + 14)
Speed 30 ft., swim 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	9 (-1)	15 (+2)	1 (-5)	10 (+0)	7 (-2)

Skills Stealth +5
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages —
Challenge 5 (1,800 xp)

Hold Breath. Amanda can hold her breath for 30 minutes.

Regeneration. Amanda regains 5 hit points at the start of her turn. If she takes necrotic or radiant damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of her next turn. If Amanda starts her turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate, she stops regenerating until she heals at least 1 hit point. During this time, she makes death saves as normal.

Actions

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (3d8 + 3) piercing damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 14). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and Amanda can't bite another target.

Frightful Roar. Each creature of Amanda's choice that is within 120 feet of her and can hear her must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to Amanda's Frightful Roar for the next 24 hours.

Tail. Melee Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target not grappled by Amanda. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Personality Trait: *I am a scourge to my enemies; I never show mercy or back down.*

Behavioral Oddity: Juggernaut. Amanda will bite or shoulder aside anything that gets in her way instead of going around.

Physical Oddity: Scar. Amanda has a long, hook-shaped scar on her shoulder.

HEAVY BULWARKS

These creatures dominate the battlefield with their placement, standing strong between their handlers and the foes. Most heavy bulwarks wear barding to maximize their defensive abilities or have their own natural armor.

LOLLIHOP (CR 1/2)

Lollihop was trained by his former sea elf handlers to serve as part of a ranging force capable of exploring surface regions. As part of these duties, Lollihop was trained to defend his allies and disarm enemies of their weapons.

This giant toad's bumpy, spotty hide is several shades of green and brown. He wears a fitted vest of barding made of a mysterious metal that resembles fish scales. This iridescent alloy seems immune to the rusting depredations of water.

Lollihop might be encountered in a coastal region, near a port or large river crossing, or in an underwater location. If he is on his own, that means Lollihop got separated from his ranging group or is perhaps its only surviving member. Otherwise, a group of sea elves and trained amphibious creatures might be encountered together. They could offer the party the assistance (or purchase) of this toad for some shared purpose or mission.

Base Creature: Giant toad
Template: *Juvenile creature*
Roles and Tricks: Defend, Disarm, Wear Armor

Personality Trait: *My purpose is to defend others; I don't like to go anywhere by myself.*

Behavioral Oddity: Practice. Lollihop likes to practice his Disarm trick by picking up random things with his tongue and dropping them in other locations; any loose objects left around the camp are likely to end up some distance away from where they were placed.

LOLLIHOP
Medium beast, unaligned

Armor Class 15 (scale mail barding)
Hit Points 16 (3d10)
Speed 20 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)	1 (-5)	10 (+0)	3 (-4)

Skills Stealth +1 (disadvantage)
Senses darkvision 30 ft., passive Perception 10
Languages —
Challenge 1/2 (100 xp)

Amphibious. Lollihop can breathe air and water.

Long Tongue. Lollihop can attempt his Disarm trick while at a range of 10 ft.

Standing Leap. Lollihop's long jump is up to 20 ft. and his high jump is up to 10 ft., with or without a running start.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d8) piercing damage plus 3 (1d6) poison damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 11). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and Lollihop can't bite another target.

Swallow. Lollihop makes one bite attack against a Small or Tiny target it is grappling. If the attack hits, the target is swallowed, and the grapple ends. The swallowed target is blinded and restrained, it has total cover against attacks and other effects outside the toad, and it takes 7 (3d4) acid damage at the start of each of Lollihop's turns. The toad can have only one target swallowed at a time.

If Lollihop is reduced to 0 hit points, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained by him and can escape using 5 feet of movement, exiting prone.

Physical Oddity: Big Tail. Lollihop still has a long tail in this late stage of growth, transitioning from giant tadpole into giant toad.

WILLFUL (CR 3)

This massive bull comes from the Elemental Plane of Fire. Willful answers the magical summons of a sorcerer on the Material Plane who uses a drop of

WILLFUL

Large beast, unaligned

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)
Hit Points 57 (6d10 + 24)
Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	10 (+0)	19 (+4)	2 (-4)	12 (+1)	5 (-3)

Skills Perception +3
Senses passive Perception 13
Languages —
Challenge 3 (700 xp)

Fiery Impact. If Willful moves at least 20 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a gore attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 9 (2d8) fire damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Actions

Gore. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) piercing damage.

Terrifying Approach (Recharge 5-6). When Willful takes a Dash action, all creatures of his choice within 30 ft. of him at the end of his turn's final movement must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature that fails its saving throw by 5 or more is also panicked while frightened this way; a panicked creature must take the Dash action and move away from Willful by the safest available route on each of its turns, unless there is nowhere to move. If an affected creature ends its turn in a location where it doesn't have line of sight to Willful, the creature can make a Wisdom saving throw. On a successful save, the effect ends for that creature. If a creature's saving throw is successful, the creature is immune to Willful's Terrifying Approach for the next 24 hours.

royal blood to bind the creature to an embattled ruler. Willful's purpose is to wanders the ruler's lands, serving as an extension of his master's dominion and dragging terror in his wake.

Willful's fur is a deep russet color. His eyes are red and animated like flickering fire. His breath is a bellow of smoke, and when Willful gets angry, fire wreathes his massive horns.

The ritual that summons Willful to this plane might be found in an ancient manuscript. It requires the expenditure of costly material components and a drop of royal blood, although the blood of a character with the noble background may suffice. Willful has the charmed condition relevant to the person whose blood is used in the ritual. Alternately, Willful may be encountered on this plane doing the bidding of some other master; acquiring Willful this way first requires that his master be killed (or his master's charm be dispelled).

Base Creature: Aurochs ^{VGM}
Template: Planar creature (Elemental Fire)
Roles and Tricks: Attack, Concentrate, Defend, Heel, Seek (unicorns), Use Skill (Perception)

Personality Trait: *I am a nightmare, chained by hatred.*
Behavioral Oddity: Restless. Willful is constantly moving. Even while "inactive," he stalks about, circles, or paces back and forth.
Physical Oddity: Red Eyes. Willful's eyes glow red, shedding dim light in a 5-foot radius around him.

STAMPY (CR 4)

Like many of her kind, Stampy was raised in captivity and trained for labor in an environment where predators are common. In addition to carrying heavy loads, Stampy's training includes fending off the attacks of land-bound predators that may stalk her or her handlers.

This elephant is accustomed to bearing a howdah of riders when she isn't performing other labor. In battle, Stampy wears a protective coat of chain mail links. Her thick, gray hide is scarred from long-clawed predators, or from the spears of ivory hunters or enemy soldiers.

Stampy may be found in a limited range of warm habitats, including savannahs, forests, deserts, and marshes. She is representative of elephants that can be purchased with additional useful training. Owing to her loyalty and usefulness, she is not likely to be found wandering without minders or handlers.

Base Creature: Elephant ^{MM}
Template: None
Roles and Tricks: Rider-trained; Behave, Concentrate, Defend, Desist, Shove, Stay, Use Skill (Athletics), Wear Armor, Work

STAMPY

Huge beast, unaligned

Armor Class 16 (chain mail barding)
Hit Points 76 (8d12 + 24)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	9 (-1)	17 (+3)	3 (-4)	11 (+0)	6 (-2)

Skills Athletics +8, Stealth -1 (disadvantage)
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages —
Challenge 4 (1,100 xp)

Actions

Gore. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 19 (3d8 + 6) piercing damage.

Stomp. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one prone creature. *Hit:* 22 (3d10 + 6) bludgeoning damage.

Personality Trait: *I am serene and resigned to my labor, both in mundane work and in battle.*

Behavioral Oddity: Skittish. Stampy is afraid of Tiny-sized rodents like badgers, rats, and weasels.

Physical Oddity: Scars. Stampy's hide shows the ravages of working in predator-filled environments, and of operating alongside soldiers and adventurers.

ROTFANG (CR 6)

Rotfang lived a happy life in a cavernous dungeon, disposing of waste thrown into its lair. That is, until one fateful day when adventurers came. They slew the cultists who had been supplying Rotfang's food. Although the creature did not mind eating the cultists' corpses too, the creature eventually starved to death. Having been raised on a steady diet of bodies used as evil sacrifices, Rotfang eventually rose from the dead, suffused with necromantic energy.

Rotfang's rocklike skin, normally quite sturdy, is lately showing signs of chips and flaking. This three-legged chonker smells like decay; whether because of its undead nature or because it loves eating rubbish.

Rotfang might follow a dangerous party at a distance, cleaning up after the corpses they leave behind. It might be weeks before they notice its

ROTFANG

Large undead, neutral

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 114 (12d10 + 48)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	11 (+0)	19 (+4)	6 (-2)	13 (+1)	6 (-2)

Saving Throws Constitution +7
Skills Athletics +6, Perception +4, Survival +4
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages Otyugh
Challenge 6 (2,300 xp)

Limited Telepathy. Rotfang can magically transmit simple messages and images to any creature within 120 ft. of it that can understand a language. This form of telepathy doesn't allow the receiving creature to telepathically respond.

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

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d8 + 3) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw against disease or become poisoned until the disease is cured. Every 24 hours that elapse, the target must repeat the saving throw, reducing its hit point maximum by 5 (1d10) on a failure. The disease is cured on a success. The target dies if the disease reduces its hit point maximum to 0. This reduction lasts until the disease is cured.

Tentacle. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage plus 4 (1d8) piercing damage. If the target is Medium or smaller, it is grappled (escape DC 13) and restrained until the grapple ends. Rotfang has two tentacles, each of which can grapple one target at a time.

Tentacle Slam. Rotfang slams creatures grappled by it into each other or a solid surface. Each creature must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or take 10 (2d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage and be stunned until the end of Rotfang's next turn. On a successful save, the target takes half the damage and isn't stunned.

presence, at which point it can use its telepathy to present itself as friendly, expressing familiarity with individuals in the party and flattering them at their ability to leave a trail of delicious corpses.

Base Creature: Otyugh ᴹᴹ
Template: *Undead creature*
Roles and Tricks: Attack, Behave, Comprehend (Common, Draconic), Concentrate, Defend, Desist, Disarm, Fetch, Guard, Harry, Heel, Hide, Shove, Subdue, Use Skill (Athletics, Perception, Stealth)

Personality Trait: *I am implacable, regardless of circumstances or threats.*
Behavioral Oddity: Annoying. Rotfang watches people eat, waiting to take care of scraps and waste.
Physical Oddity: Tree-Toed. Rotfang's toe-like claws are spaced around the circumference of each of her feet, like tree roots, rather than being on the front.
Bond: I have no need to kill anything; everyone gets eaten too early in life.
Ideal: Fragrance. I love the smells of baking bread, the earth after a rainfall, or a bed of wildflowers; these scents (and garbage) are what I live for.

Pretzel (CR 7)

Pretzel was bred and trained by magical means, which was a necessity given the amount of effort needed to train all five brains.

This juvenile has an unusual pattern of subtle colors. Each of its long-necked heads has a different tinge overlaying its green scales: purple, yellow, blue, orange, and red. In the right light, this sheen is visible on Pretzel's body too, forming an unusual pattern of spots, stripes, and whorls.

Pretzel might be encountered in any location where a hydra can find enough food. It is cooperative if not currently hungry and is willing to make friends.

Base Creature: Hydra ᴹᴹ
Template: *Juvenile creature*
Roles and Tricks: Behave, Guard, Harry

Personality Trait: *I need constant reassurance to know I am doing what I am supposed to do.*
Behavioral Oddity: Symmetrical. While on guard duty, Pretzel aims its heads in different directions, necks straight, like a five-pointed compass star.
Physical Oddity: Clumsy. Pretzel's heads often get in one another's way. It can really only use one at a

PRETZEL
Large monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 76 (8d10 + 32)
Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)	1 (-5)	8 (-1)	7 (-2)

Skills Perception +5
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15
Languages —
Challenge 7 (2,900 xp)

Hold Breath. Pretzel can hold its breath for 1 hour.

Multiple Heads. Pretzel has five heads. While it has more than one head, Pretzel has advantage on saving throws against being blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, stunned, and knocked unconscious.

Whenever Pretzel takes 25 or more damage in a single turn, one of its heads dies. If all its heads die, Pretzel's heads stop re-growing until it heals at least 1 hit point. During this time, Pretzel makes death saves as normal.

At the end of its turn, Pretzel regrows two heads for each of its heads that died since its last turn, unless it has taken fire damage since its last turn. Pretzel regains 10 hit points for each head regrown in this way.

Reactive Heads. For each head Pretzel has beyond one, it gets an extra reaction that it can use only for opportunity attacks.

Wakeful. While Pretzel sleeps, at least one of its heads is awake.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

time for any complex task. When it tests this limitation, its necks might get tied in a knot.

LOYAL MOUNTS

Although these creatures fit into the loyal mounts archetype, some match more than one archetype.

Sablefoot (CR 1/8)

In her youth, this aging horse won performative competitions ("dressage") where she was scored for both acrobatic movement and grooming. Now, long past her prime, this quirky mount prefers a high trot to any normal movement and performs every turn with a flourish of her tail. This dramatic movement may surprise an unaccustomed rider and it draws a lot of attention from those nearby.

When a rider dismounts from Sablefoot, she always bends her front legs and dips her head to perform a low bow toward the rider. The Dungeon Master may provide other acrobatic flourishes to Sablefoot's behavior, the remnants of performance routines learned long ago. Unfortunately, Sablefoot only does these things for herself now; getting her to perform on command is a difficult task.

Sablefoot may be placed in a campaign for low-level characters, perhaps at a discount rate at a local market. Alternately, she might be a gift from an ally who values Sablefoot based on her past fame.

SABLEFOOT

Large beast, unaligned

Armor Class 9
Hit Points 11 (2d10)
Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	8 (-1)	11 (+0)	2 (-4)	10 (+0)	5 (-3)

Senses passive Perception 10
Languages —
Challenge 1/8 (25 xp)

Unreliable. Apply disadvantage to any Wisdom (Animal Handling) checks made to control this mount in battle or to get it to perform tricks or difficult maneuvers.

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

Actions

Hooves. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (2d4 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

Base Creature: Riding horse ᴹᴹ
Template: *Fragile creature.* [Special: Sablefoot gains the *reluctant creature* template while she is not properly groomed.]
Roles and Tricks: Performance-trained; rider-trained; Fetch, Heel, Perform, Stay, Use Skill (Acrobatics)

Personality Trait: *I'm always performing, wherever I go and whatever I do, it's for the crowd.*
Behavioral Oddity: Dancer. Sablefoot focuses on dressage-like movements to the exclusion of all else. It is very difficult for a handler to get this horse to move normally.
Physical Oddity: Lustrous. Sablefoot's mane and tail remain long and beautiful, despite her showing other signs of advanced age.

Haizum (CR 1)

This ageless winged warhorse is native to Mount Celestia. It came to the Material Plane long ago at the behest of a good-aligned deity to aid adventurers in their holy quests.

Haizum is a pure white horse with large wings of white feathers. It cannot make use of equine saddles and barding; it needs exotic versions that are specifically crafted to facilitate the creature's wings.

Haizum may join a party in a number of different ways. It is not a sentient creature like a true pegasus, so it doesn't judge the worthiness of a particular handler. However, as a tool of some good deity, Haizum might come into the possession of good-aligned adventurers through a series of unlikely coincidences, as though guided by fate. He might be found with his own saddle and barding.

Base Creature: Warhorse ᴹᴹ
Template: *Planar creature* (Mount Celestia)
Roles and Tricks: Combat-trained, rider-trained; Act (Trampling Charge), Attack, Concentrate, Defend, Desist, Wear Armor

Personality Trait: *I will work for my handler, tirelessly, to the point of exhaustion and beyond.*
Behavioral Oddity: Wrathful. Haizum acts fearless of, and behaves aggressively toward, creatures that have hurt it or its rider.
Physical Oddity: Bright Eyes. Haizum's eyes are golden orbs with no discernable pupils.

Haizum

Large beast, unaligned

Armor Class 11
Hit Points 32 (5d10 + 5)
Speed 60 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	2 (-4)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)

Senses passive Perception 13
Skills Perception +3
Languages —
Challenge 1 (200 xp)

Celestial Wings. Haizum has a fly speed equal to its normal speed.

Blessed Hooves. Haizum's hooves count as magical weapons. The creature has a +1 magical bonus to attack rolls and damage rolls with its hooves.

Trampling Charge. If Haizum moves at least 20 ft. straight toward a creature and then hits it with a hooves attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, Haizum can make another attack with its hooves against the target as a bonus action.

Actions

Hooves. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

Shadow Floof (CR 3)

This displacer beast was taken from its parents as a kitten and trained to be a potent ally in combat. It can carry a rider or fight independently, stalking or flanking foes, often attacking from surprise. Shadow Floof is cunning in combat and considers battle and tactics to be games it particularly enjoys. It knows far more tricks than a mundane animal could learn and uses them to great effect. Because it was raised in isolation from others of its kind, this creature does not have a displacer beast's default alignment, but Shadow Floof's nature means it has a few cruel tendencies. The animal shows little empathy for other creatures and is likely to toy with foes, hoping they will flee so they can be chased down.

Shadow Floof is an impossibly fluffy, longhair displacer beast. It has a single white stripe down the middle of its face, a stark contrast to its midnight-black fur. When Shadow Floof sleeps, it likes to do so on top of things, often hanging partly off of them as though poured onto such uneven surfaces with limbs, tentacles, and tongue lolling.

Because Shadow Floof was raised around intelligent humanoids and is accustomed to living with them, this

Shadow Floof

Large monstrosity, lawful neutral

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 93 (11d10 + 33)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	17 (+3)	17 (+3)	6 (-2)	13 (+1)	8 (-1)

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13
Skills Perception +3
Languages —
Challenge 3 (700 xp)

Avoidance. If Shadow Floof is subjected to an effect that allows it to make saving throw to take only half damage, it instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if it fails.

Displacement. Shadow Floof projects a magical illusion that makes it appear to be standing near its actual location, causing attack rolls against it to have disadvantage. If Shadow Floof is hit by an attack, this trait is disrupted until the end of the creature's next turn. This trait is also disrupted while Shadow Floof is incapacitated or has a speed of 0.

Clothesline. If Shadow Floof moves at least 20 feet straight toward a Medium or smaller target and then hits it with a tentacle attack on the same turn, the target must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or also be knocked prone. If the target is knocked prone, Shadow Floof can use another tentacle attack against that target again as a bonus action.

Actions

Tentacle. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage plus 3 (1d6) piercing damage.

creature is unlikely to be encountered alone in the wild; it is probably encountered in the company of humanoid allies. The animal is smart enough that it won't be sold unless it is willing to work with the purchasing character or party. Shadow Floof is more likely to join a party whose quest aligns with the displacer beast's personal goals, letting an old "owner" negotiate a "service fee" on the animal's behalf, instead of a purchase price (of which, Shadow Floof expects to get most of the proceeds).

Base Creature: Displacer beast ᴹᴹ
Template: None
Roles and Tricks: Combat-trained, rider-trained; Act (Clothesline), Attack, Behave, Concentrate, Defend, Desist, Disarm, Discriminate, Fetch, Guard, Harry, Hide, Scout, Seek, Stalk, Track, Use Skill (Perception), Wear Armor

Personality Trait: *I am casually aloof, uninterested in socializing… until I demand attention.*
Behavioral Oddity: Lazy. When not stressed, particularly after Shadow Floof has eaten, it wants to sleep. Absent some danger, the displacer beast can be hard to wake or to get moving.
Physical Oddity: Marked. Shadow Floof has a prominent white blaze on its forehead. Displacer beasts normally have purely black fur.
Bond: I am a consummate competitor and devoted to the notion of testing and comparing my abilities against other, similar creatures.
Ideal: Leisure. I work hard and I expect to rest hard. Relaxing is my ideal existence, and I refuse to be roused until my requisite rest time has passed.

Wooly (CR 5)

This very young mammoth died over a decade ago, in a faraway place, but his body was recently acquired by a local cult, meaning he is probably far from his native environment. Wooly was then raised from the dead as part of a mysterious experiment.

This animal is trained to be ridden with an exotic saddle. Wooly is also trained to hold a lantern with his trunk, raising it and aiming it to dispel darkness as a humanoid carrier would, particularly to illuminate his direction of travel. When combat occurs, Wooly will gently drop the lantern on his first turn.

Wooly is about the size of a horse. He looks very much like a young elephant, but has long, shaggy fur.

His fur tends to get matted with dirt and twigs if he has no one to brush him. Although he has a large-handled brush of his own, which he is trained to hold with his trunk and use on himself, his back half cannot be groomed without assistance.

The party may acquire Wooly directly from secret members of the cult who are tired of having to feed him. Alternately, Wooly may have had any number of owners between the cult and the party, each quickly discovering Wooly's eating requirements the hard way and selling him. A handler who purchases Wooly will acquire his exotic combat saddle and a large brush suitable for grooming his coarse fur.

Base Creature: Mammoth ᴹᴹ
Template: *Juvenile creature.* [Special: Wooly can eventually advance CR by losing this template.]
Roles and Tricks: Rider-trained; Act (Trampling Charge), Attack, Concentrate, Use Item (Lantern), Wear Armor, Work.

WOOLY

Large monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)
Hit Points 63 (6d10 + 24)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+5)	9 (-1)	19 (+4)	2 (-4)	9 (-1)	6 (-2)

Senses passive Perception 9
Languages —
Challenge 5 (1,800 xp)

Trampling Charge. If Wooly moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a gore attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 16 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, Wooly can make one stomp attack against it as a bonus action.

Actions

Gore. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 19 (4d6 + 5) piercing damage.

Stomp. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one prone creature. *Hit:* 23 (4d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage.

Personality Trait: *I am constantly aware of my surroundings; whenever I get a chance to stop somewhere, I explore every inch of the area, sniffing things out with my trunk.*

Behavioral Oddity: Generous. If anyone is around when Wooly is eating, Wooly picks up his own fodder with his trunk and tries to feed it to those people.

Physical Oddity: Misshapen. Wooly's droopy ears are noticeably larger than a normal mammoth's ears would be at this age.

Sven (CR 7)

This legendary sea lion was born on a rocky, deserted island where an ancient magical artifact was taken for destruction. The artifact left behind a magical residue, remnants of its own power and sentience. This infected Sven and warped his growth into the legendary creature he is today.

Monstrous sea lions are green and dun colored, but Sven is not. His scales are white with a pearly sheen. Additionally, everything about Sven's posture and features speaks to his nobility and wisdom. At least Sven is convinced of this, a side effect of the destroyed artifact's ego, which now influences Sven.

Sven is a social creature and may join the party when they encounter him in any aquatic or seaside adventure. Sven is smarter than his fellow monstrous sea lions, and he finds little kinship with them; he prefers the company of smarter humanoids. Sven will signal his peaceful intent by showing himself to the party from time to time, trumpeting a greeting to them, and occasionally leaving fish for them, the inverse of a normal acclimation process.

Base Creature: Sea lion ᵀʸᴾ (This is the monstrosity from *Tales of the Yawning Portal*, not the beast from *Ghosts of Saltmarsh*)

Template: *Legendary creature*

Roles and Tricks: Combat-trained, rider-trained; Act (Slam), Act (Swimming Leap), Attack, Concentrate, Defend, Desist, Disarm, Fetch, Guard, Harry, Scout, Stalk, Shove, Track, Use Skill (Athletics), Wear Armor

Personality Trait: *My nobility shines through in everything I do. Even when I just stand about, I do that with the poise and grace befitting my nobility.*

SVEN

Large monstrosity, neutral good

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 189 (18d10 + 90)
Speed 40 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	17 (+3)	20 (+5)	6 (-2)	13 (+1)	8 (-1)

Skills Athletics +8, Perception +4, Stealth +5
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages —
Challenge 7 (2,900 xp)

Amphibious. Sven can breathe air and water.

Keen Smell. Sven has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Legendary Movement. Sven gains a normal speed equivalent to his swim speed.

Legendary Resistance (2/Day). If Sven fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Pack Tactics. Sven has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of Sven's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Slam. If Sven moves at least 20 feet straight toward a Medium or smaller target and then hits it with a claw attack on the same turn, the target must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or also be knocked prone. If the target is knocked prone, Sven can use a bite or claw attack against that target again as a bonus action.

Swimming Leap. With a 10-foot swimming start, Sven can long jump out of or across the water up to 25 feet.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d8 + 6) piercing damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d8 + 6) piercing damage

Behavioral Oddity: Water Slapper. Whenever possible, Sven greets other creatures by using his tail to splash water onto them.

Physical Oddity: Pearlescent. Unlike others of his kind, Sven is pure white with a pearlescent sheen that enhances his legendary appearance.

Bond: I seek to suppress hostility in my vicinity, my allies and are wise and noble enough to temper aggression with discretion.

Ideal: Peace. I work to provide peace to my fellow creatures, even if I must be violent to do so.

Erfonair (CR 9)

This massive creature was once a mount belonging to an elite fighting force that guarded the city of Mithrendain, an eladrin citadel standing deep in the Feywild. These soldiers stood vigilant against potential uprisings by the fomorian kings and their foul minions from the Underdark.

Erfonair is a scaled dinosaur. Its scales are shaped like jagged rhomboid leaves and they change colors to match the seasons as leaves do. The creature wears a huge exotic military saddle and huge exotic splint barding fitted for a tyrannosaurus rex.

Erfonair may appear in a campaign, found in a secluded temple in the Feywild as a creature bound in a state of magical slumber, still equipped and preserved for the day he will be called upon to serve again. (He could not be stored or stabled within Mithrendain itself because of the creature's aggressive nature.) Alternately, the creature may appear as the mount of an eladrin or another native of the Feywild, acquired as one of the spoils of battle, though this will be difficult given the creature's aggressive nature.

Base Creature: Tyrannosaurus rex ᴹᴹ
Template: *Planar creature* (Feywild)
Roles and Tricks: Combat-trained, rider-trained; Act (Slam), Attack, Concentrate, Defend, Desist, Wear Armor

Personality Trait: *I fight for my allies, regardless of the threat.*
Behavioral Oddity: Crooner. While idle, Erfonair tends to sing to himself with a low, crooning whine.
Physical Oddity: Scar. Erfonair has a long, terrible scar reaching from its left cheek down its neck to its left shoulder.

ERFONAIR

Huge beast, unaligned

Armor Class 17 (splint barding)
Hit Points 184 (16d12 + 80)
Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
27 (+8)	12 (+1)	20 (+5)	2 (-4)	13 (+1)	9 (-1)

Senses passive Perception 14
Skills Perception +4
Challenge 9 (5,000 xp)

Slam. If Erfonair moves at least 20 feet straight toward a Large or smaller target and then hits it with a tail attack on the same turn, the target must succeed on a DC 18 Strength saving throw or also be knocked prone. If the target is knocked prone, Erfonair can use a bite or tail attack against that target as a bonus action.

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 34 (4d12 + 8) piercing damage plus 6 (1d12) poison damage. If the target is a Medium or smaller creature, Erfonair can automatically grapple it (escape DC 18). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the tyrannosaurus can't bite another target.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 21 (3d8 + 8) bludgeoning damage.

TAME NEW FRIENDS AND

TRAIN YOUR OWN ALLIES

Players! Are you wondering where your furry companions are? Are you tired of riding a horse with no name? Do you want ferocious pets and fabulous animal allies? If so, this is the book for you! The *Comprehensive Animal Handling Manual* teaches you how to acquire animals, train them from a long list of tricks and roles, and handle them in a variety of scenarios. These pages also host new character options, from the Beast Whisperer Roguish Archetype and upgrades to the warlock's Pact of the Chain feature, to new feats, spells, and magic items, plus ways for animals to use old magic items. It also has a chapter of equipment for animal use and prices for buying and selling animals and monsters.

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For use with the fifth edition
Player's Handbook Ⓡ, *Monster Manual* Ⓡ,
and *Dungeon Master's Guide* Ⓡ

Best when used with these additional
supplements: *Volo's Guide to Monsters* Ⓡ
Storm King's Thunder Ⓡ, and
Mordenkainen's Tome of Foes Ⓡ

Wraith
Wright

GUILD