

ALBA CON MONSTERS

FOR DCC

By Daniel J. Bishop

Here is some free swag for your DCC game! Yes, this is a guy in Canada writing up beings familiar to denizens dwelling in Scotland and the surrounding waters....If you find any of these to be the worst rendition of these creatures ever, feel free to ignore them!

Permission is granted to include these monsters in anything published for DCC, provided that the original author is acknowledged. Knock yourselves out!

Oh, and these specific monsters were chosen for a reason.

AM FEAR LIATH MÒR

Am Fear Liath Mòr: Init +0; Atk blow +6 melee (1d10+6); AC 16; HD 8d8+8; hp 50; MV 50'; Act 1d24; SP fear aura, crit 20-24; SV Fort +8, Ref +4, Will +6; AL N.

The Big Gray Man is a giant who haunts the high reaches of the Cairngorms, and particularly Ben Macdui. When the summit and passes are shrouded in mist, Am Fear Liath Mòr may be heard walking along behind travellers with his enormous stride. Few have seen him, and fewer still have both seen him and lived to report on the experience.

Am Fear Liath Mòr stands 12 feet tall, with olive skin, long arms reaching from broad shoulders to his knees, and a fine covering of short grey fur during the colder months of the year. The giant radiates an aura of fear within a 120' radius. Living creatures within this range must succeed in a DC 10 Will save or flee by whatever means they can for 1d12 minutes. If forced to make a check, attack, or save while fleeing, they suffer a -1d penalty on the dice chain.

The Big Grey Man scores a critical hit on any roll of 20-24.

LOCH NESS MONSTER

Loch Ness Monster: Init +0; Atk bite +8 melee (2d6) or crush +4 melee (4d8); AC 18; HD 12d8+24; MV 20' or swim 80'; Act 1d20; SP capsize, half damage from bludgeoning weapons, death throes; SV Fort +12, Ref +0, Will +4; AL C.

Loch Ness is not the only water in Scotland (or beyond) with such a creature, but its monster might be the most famous of its type. The Loch Ness Monster is seldom seen by large groups of people, but those travelling around the Loch's waters when there are few about might catch a glimpse of the creature's long neck rising from the waters. There are even those who have seen it in the morning mists, moving across the land with its huge, humped and slug-like body upon four enormous flippers.

The Loch Ness Monster is large enough to capsize any boat smaller than a galley with a base 10% to 60% chance of success, depending upon the size of the vessel. Smaller craft are easier to capsize than larger, but even a one-man currach might survive several such attempts as its owner rows frantically toward the shore.

If slain, the Loch Ness Monster dissolves into cold water and mist, leaving nothing to prove that it had once existed.

BLUE MEN OF THE MINCH

Blue Men of the Minch: Init +3; Atk by weapon +3 melee (by weapon +3) or +0 by weapon ranged (by weapon +3); AC 10; HD 1d7; MV 30' or swim 50'; Act 1d20; SP aquatic, strong, storm creation, leaders; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +0; AL C.

Found in the North Minch – a stretch of water separating the northernmost Inner Hebrides from the northwest Scottish Highlands and the isles of Lewis and Harris in the Outer Hebrides from the Inner – the Blue Men would appear very much like mortals, were it not for their blue colour and aquatic habitat. Their faces are long and grey, and their arms are likewise long. They favour blue headwear, and some wear caps which seem almost to be wings when they leap from the water.

The Blue Men float just below the surface when resting, or swim with their torsos free of the sea when awake. They are able to leap and cavort in the ocean, porpoise-like, even in the roughest seas. The Blue Men also have cavern lairs deep beneath the Minch, where they sometimes sleep, and sometimes store the treasures of ships they wreck. Although they never come ashore, they may board a vessel to demand tribute.

The Blue Men are enormously strong, with the common lot of them having the equivalent of 18 Strength. They favour spears and javelins as weapons, being able to thrust or throw them from the waves, but their most deadly armament is their ability to create storms. Any Blue Man can cause the seas to become rougher, increasing the DC of any checks related to swimming or keeping a craft afloat by +2. Each additional Blue Man can make the sea correspondingly rougher, draw wind from the air, and bring rain from the sky (DCs increase by +2 for each additional Blue Man). More often than not, this results in ships capsized and mortals drowned. Slaying the Blue Men, chasing them away, or offering sufficient tribute for the Blue Men to relent are the only alternatives.

Blue Men have leaders, clan chieftains with an additional 1d3 HD. For each extra Hit Die, the Blue Man chieftain also gains a +1 to its melee attack rolls and damage. A Blue Man chieftain will often engage in verse, threatening a ship with its destruction. If the folk aboard can match the chieftain line by line, the Blue Men are defeated, and will allow the ship to continue its way unmolested.

AOS SÍ

Aos Sí: Init +3; Atk by weapon +3 melee (by weapon) or spell; AC 13; HD 1d8; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP invisibility, spells, natural magic, iron vulnerability, divine magic vulnerability; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +4; AL C.

Ancient creatures from Elfland, who dwell in an invisible world near the Lands We Know, on the Blessed Isles across the Western Sea, or in faerie mounds among the spirits of the dead, the Aos Sí resemble elves of great, but ethereal beauty. They are able to partially withdraw into Elfland at will, becoming invisible when doing so (+4 to AC). Each is able to cast a harmful spell thrice per day, with the following effects:

1d7 Effect

- 1 Will DC 14 or be blinded for 1d3 hours. At the end of this time, Will DC 16 or be blinded for 1d4 days. At the end of this time, Will DC 18, or blindness is permanent.
- 2 Elf shot. 1d3 damage and DC 10 Fort save every hour to avoid an additional 1d3 damage as the tiny flint arrowhead worms its way toward the victim's heart. Three successful saves (which can have failures among them) cause the elf shot to be pushed out of the initial wound and the effect to end. This, however, also causes 1d3 damage.
- 3 Withering. The character takes 1d3 temporary Strength and Stamina damage and must succeed in a DC 5 Fortitude save or the damage is permanent.
- 4 Cursed. Will DC 15 or permanently lose 1d5 Luck.
- 5 Dancing. The character begins to dance and cavort, causing a -1d penalty on the dice chain for all attack rolls and skill checks (or -2d if the character attempts anything requiring finesse; the judge may rule some skills, such as forgery, impossible to use). After each minute of dancing, the character must succeed in a DC 10 Fort save or take 1d3 points of temporary Stamina damage. After this, the character may attempt a DC 15 Will save to stop dancing. The victim dances until they pass the Will save, or until Stamina damage kills them. If a victim manages to stop dancing while alive, 10 minute's rest restores all Stamina loss from dancing.
- 6 Change of visage. The character's statistics remain the same, but their appearance changes. This is an illusion, wearing off in 1d7 days. Roll 1d7: (1) gender reverses; (2) species and gender the same, but no one recognizes them; (3) head of a beast or animal; (4) goblin, orc, or similar creature; (5) aged 1d30 years, (6) age reduced by 1d24 years, or (7) all features appear blank. DC 14 Will save negates.
- 7 Rapid aging. The character ages 1d3 years the first round, 2d4 years the second round, 3d5 years the third round, and so on, increasing the number of dice and the size of the die (using the dice chain) until the victim dies or succeeds in a DC 16 Will save.

The Aos Sí are masters of natural magic, and can perform minor magical feats related to weather, seasons, or nature without requiring a spell check. They can make flowers bloom, leaves turn golden, clouds block the sun, and so on. Individual members of the Aos Sí may represent specific natural elements, creatures, plants, or cycles, and may have unique powers as a result thereof.

All Aos Sí are vulnerable to iron, being unable to bear its touch and taking twice normal damage from weapons made of iron and steel. The Aos Sí are also vulnerable to the divine magic of Lawful gods, having a -1d penalty to the dice chain to resist their spells, being Turned by Lawful clerics at +1d on the dice chain, and being unable to abide the ringing of Church bells, from which they flee.

This but scratches the surface of the Aos Sí, who call elves kindred, and who have abducted human babes to add their stronger blood to their failing kindred. One day, if the powers of Law prevail, the Aos Sí may fade from the world, and the world be diminished as a result. Until then, the folk of the land regard the Aos Sí with equal parts wonder and terror.

CAT SÌTH

Cat sìth: Init +6; Atk bite +3 melee (1d4) or claw +4 melee (1d3); AC 15; HD 2d8; MV 40'; Act 1d20; SP steal soul, curse cattle, iron vulnerability; SV Fort +1, Ref +6, Will +0; AL C.

Should you encounter a great black cat with a white splash upon its chest, while wandering through the Highlands, beware, for it may be the cat sìth come to steal your soul. When the cat sìth encounters an unburied corpse, it attempts to pass over the body. This draws out the soul, feeding the cat sìth and healing it of 1d6 damage (if injured). It can do the same to a character reduced to 0 hp, removing any chance of magical healing or recovering the body, and is thus especially feared.

The cat sìth is not a great fighter, and can be driven off by a determined defence. It can also be distracted from its prey by catnip, music, or spectacles of physical might, such as a wrestling contest. Some of the cat sìth are of faerie origin, others demonic, and still others are witches stuck in the shape of a cat after transforming for a ninth and final time. Regardless of their origin, all cat sìth fear and loathe iron, and take +1d damage on the dice chain from weapons made of iron and steel.

In rural areas, the peasantry leave bowls of milk out for the cat sìth on Samhain, for on the night alone the cat sìth may curse cattle to run dry for a full year. The only way to break such a curse, short of magic, is to slay the creature responsible for it.

OILLIPHÉIST

Oilliphéist: Init +0; Atk bite +8 melee (3d6 plus swallow whole) or crush +0 melee (6d8); AC 20; HD 12d8+12; MV 40' or swim 60'; Act 2d20; SP swallow whole, disgorge; SV Fort +10, Ref -5, Will +5; AL C.

The oilliphéist is a horrible giant worm, which lives in rivers, lochs, and seas, driven only by its terrible hunger. Some of these creatures are hairy; others are slimy and smooth-skinned. All are ravenous, and will strip the country around their lairs bare if not stopped. A full-grown creature, such as that described above, is large enough to eat six whole cows in a single meal.

If an oilliphéist succeeds in a bite attack, its victim must succeed in a DC 12 Reflex save or be swallowed whole. Creatures which are swallowed whole take an automatic 1d6 points of damage each round from digestive enzymes, but can attack the creature from within. 20 points of damage causes the monster to disgorge its prey, which takes 3d6 damage from being spat violently away (treat as falling damage), and must succeed in a Fort save (DC = damage taken) or be stunned and unable to act for 1d6 rounds.

There are legends of minstrels swallowed by these monsters, who, by continuing to play, so annoyed the oilliphéist that they, too, were disgorged. Playing for 1d6+2 rounds, while taking no other actions, might do the trick, if the judge is kind. Certainly the creature is intelligent enough that some have even been known to have arguments with them, and the oilliphéist is sometimes a willing participant in such conversations.

Arguably, the oilliphéist is found more often in Ireland than in Scotland, but on the other hand, here you have a guy living in Canada giving you monster write-ups for local beasties. The oilliphéist is less presumptuous than the author!

NUCKELAVEE

Nuckelavee: Init +2; Atk bite +4 melee (3d4+3) or claw +6 melee (2d6+3) or hooves +0 melee (4d6+3); AC 15; HD 5d8+5; MV 50' or swim 60'; Act 3d20; SP pestilent breath, sticky hide, fresh water vulnerability; SV Fort +8, Ref +5, Will +9; AL C.

Perhaps the most hideous and evil of the creatures described herein, the nuckelavee is a sea demon from the Orkneys, held in place during summer months by the Mither o' the Sea during the summer, but it may be encountered anywhere on the isles – and most often along the beach – at other times of the year.

The nuckelavee appears like a horse with an enormous head and one burning red eye. From the creature's back rises a legless human-like torso, with arms long enough to drag the ground and a great head that rolls around as though there were no bones in its neck. The horse's legs have fin-like appendages, but neither humanoid parts nor equine have skin. Instead, black blood can be seen coursing through yellow veins over and through throbbing naked muscle. The humanoid head has a pig-like snout; the equine head has a mouth like an orca's.

This creature is wholly malevolent, and it will kill whoever it can, dragging them back to feast upon beneath the waves. Any within 30' of the creature are affected by its breath, which causes an immediate pestilence. Victims must succeed in a DC 15 Fort save or be enervated, taking 1d5 points of temporary Strength damage. A second DC 15 Fort save is required to avoid a plague which causes 1d3 points of temporary Strength, Agility, and Stamina damage each day until cured. This plague can only be cured by magic (or, perhaps, the procurement of some secret herb or ingredient, if the judge is kind) and is horribly contagious – any who comes within 30' of one so stricken must also make a DC 15 Fort save or be stricken by the plague.

The nuckelavee attacks by biting with its equine head, or slicing with its long claws. In a pinch, it can also use its hooves, which do considerable damage but which are easier to avoid. Any creature touching the nuckelavee with bare flesh is stuck fast, and must make a DC 15 Strength check to pull free. When this occurs, the horrid monster is most likely to head immediately for the sea, to drown the affected victim and consume them.

As a creature of the sea, the nuckelavee cannot abide fresh water. It will not cross a stream or loch, and thus can be escaped if fresh water is available. It will not even emerge from the sea if it is raining. Should it be caught on shore in the rain, the nuckelavee takes 1d6 damage each round it is exposed. If forced into fresh water, it takes twice this damage.

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