

**A WORD ON DROMAEOSAURIDS***(DROM-AY-OWE-SORE-IDS)*

The raptors are a group of predatory theropod dinosaurs that belong to the family dromaeosauridae, which means “running lizard.” Dromaeosaurids lived during the Cretaceous Period (145 to 65 million years ago), and ranged from rooster-sized (*Microraptor gui*) to nightmarish, one-ton monsters (*Utahraptor ostrommaysorum*). Although these swift, agile predators came in many shapes and sizes, they all shared some common characteristics.

Dromaeosaurids stood upright on their back legs, which were powerful and muscular, and could likely propel these dinosaurs to speeds rivaling the fastest predatory mammals today. They had long arms ending in three-fingered hands, which were dexterous enough to manipulate food or grasp prey. All dromaeosaurs had a long tail, stiffened with bony tendons, that likely acted as a stabilizer when the animal ran. The most striking feature of dromaeosaurids, however, was the long killing claw on the second toe. This sickle-like talon was held retracted off the ground, and was likely used in powerful kicks to disembowel prey.

There is some evidence that dromaeosaurids hunted in packs, primarily supported by groups of *Deinonychus* fossils discovered near the remains of large herbivores. Although a pack of these rapacious predatory dinosaurs is certainly an evocative image, not all paleontologists support the theory that dromaeosaurids hunted in this manner.

Another interesting feature of the dromaeosaurids is their bird-like appearance, and some paleontologists believe that they share a common ancestor with modern birds. There is even evidence that some dromaeosaurids had feathers.

Lastly, I would be remiss if I did not at least mention the most famous appearance of the dromaeosaurids — their starring role in the film *Jurassic Park*. It should be said, however, that the dinosaur featured in the film, *Velociraptor*, had very little in common with the real animal. The dinosaurs in *Jurassic Park* were far larger than the two-foot tall, forty pound *Velociraptor*, and were much closer in size to *Utahraptor*, which, coincidentally, was discovered not long after the film was released.

**AUTHOR’S NOTE**

Although I have tried to portray the dromaeosaurids in this release as accurately as possible, some allowances were made to make them stand out from other animals in the d20 system. This is most evident in the intelligence level attributed to the d20 version of these dinosaurs. I chose to go with a more “*Jurassic Park*” approach in

this area simply because it makes the animals a bit more fun, and gives DMs and players a lot more latitude when using these dinosaurs in their game.

The special attacks featured by each dromaeosaurid in this product are based on real theories of how these dinosaurs might have used the terrible claws on their back feet. Although each ability is listed in the write-up for an individual animal, these attacks are appropriate for all of the dinosaurs presented here, and for similar dinosaurs featured in other products. Below is a description of each new special attack and how it can be implemented.

**Leaping Slash (Ex):** As a standard action, a raptor can leap at a foe and make a normal melee attack to deliver a powerful slash with both its sickle-clawed feet. If this attack hits, it inflicts double standard talon damage plus 1.5 times the raptor’s Strength bonus. The range at which a raptor can target a creature with leaping slash is listed below.

| <i>Size</i> | <i>Range</i> |
|-------------|--------------|
| Tiny        | 5 ft.        |
| Small       | 10 ft.       |
| Medium      | 10 ft.       |
| Large       | 15 ft.       |
| Huge        | 15 ft.       |
| Gargantuan  | 20 ft.       |
| Colossal    | 20 ft.       |

**Kangaroo Kick (Ex):** As a standard action, a raptor with this ability can rear back on its tail and make a normal melee attack to deliver a powerful kick with both its sickle-clawed feet. If this attack hits, it inflicts double standard talon damage plus 1.5 times the raptor’s Strength bonus.

**Eviscerate (Ex)\*:** A raptor with this ability can eviscerate a grabbed opponent with a successful grapple check. An eviscerated creature suffers standard talon damage plus 1.5 times the raptor’s Strength bonus. In addition, the gaping wound continues to bleed profusely for 1d2 point of damage per round. The bleeding can be stopped with a DC 20 Heal check or with the application of a *cure* spell at least as potent as *cure moderate wounds*. Bleeding from multiple eviscerations does not stack.

\*Works best when paired with improved grab.