

# The Noble Wild

## Chapter 1: Species

The largest part of the book by far, this chapter introduces over 65 new playable species and sub-species that players can use.

Most of the species available to players were created by adapting the abilities and traits of the natural animals from which they are drawn. The ability adjustments, with the exceptions of Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma, are calculated using the original stats for the animals. These scores are, for the most part, just as they are initially generated. Some noble species are a bit less intelligent than humans on average, and some are more or less appealing as well, and these differences are reflected in the attribute adjustments for the species. Most natural animals will have a slightly higher Wisdom scores than their noble counterparts, as they generally have more highly tuned instincts.

Many animals are too large and naturally powerful to be balanced player characters to start off with, and it was the designer's intention that all of the species presented could be played together in a balanced campaign. In order to address this, species with more than one hit die were split into levels, with Ability bonuses, and special abilities granted at each level. Some especially powerful species also have a level adjustment.

Species classes are explained in greater detail in the same chapter.

Size increases are handled with the use of Size Threshold, also explained in this chapter.

## Chapter 2: Classes

This chapter highlights the changes necessary to make the basic character classes appropriate for noble animal characters, as well as a new class, the Greater Familiar, available to both noble animal and humanoid characters. After the basic classes are several prestige classes tailor-made for noble animals.

In order to make the noble animal characters comparable to their humanoid counterparts, the concept of Defensive Attitudes is introduced in this chapter.

## Chapter 3: Skills

This chapter lists the new skills available to noble animal characters, as well as some new uses for old skills.

## Chapter 4: Feats

Several new feats, as well as some previously seen only in the Monster Manual, are presented here.

## Chapter 5: Deeds

This chapter introduces an entirely new concept to the game. Deeds are magical abilities that can be gained by performing specific heroic actions and then paying an experience point cost. They are available in "trees," with each tree having five deeds in it, each available after a certain level. In some ways, a deed tree can be seen as a miniature prestige class that can be taken without interrupting a character's advancement in whatever other class he wishes to follow.

## Chapter 6: Magic and Spells

This chapter highlights the fundamental differences between humanoid and animal magic, including the concept of Blood Components. In addition, over a dozen new spells are introduced, including a new type of spell, the Boon, which allows noble animal spell casters to bestow some of their own natural advantages upon others.

## Chapter 7: Magical Treasure

Noble animals have little use for traditional treasure, magical or otherwise. What they *can* use, however, are Boons; magical gifts and abilities that duplicate the abilities of conventional magic items. This chapter introduces created boons, as well as the concept of Ability Sacrifice.

## Chapter 8: Campaigns

This chapter gives guidelines on running a Noble Wild campaign, in three distinct campaign models, depending on the play style and preferences of your group. The Noble Wild can be run as it's own game, or as an add-in for any other campaign world.

## Appendix I: Animals

This section has the game rule information for the "natural" versions of every new noble animal species represented here.

## Appendix II: Modern d20 Campaigns

Some players and game masters may decide they like the idea of playing a Noble Wild game in a modern setting rather than the traditional fantasy one. This is a brief guide to converting your campaign to Modern d20.

# Chapter 1: Species



At the dawn of all things, the gods created the land and sea, the sky and void, and people and animals. Certain gods realized that the humanoid beings emerging into prominence on the world would become very important indeed. The gods didn't want the humanoids to flounder and fail, especially since many of the gods' own power came from these creatures' worship. But at the same time, they didn't want them to become too powerful. In order to aid the fledgling peoples, and to place some limits on them as well, the gods raised one of every species of animal that walked, crawled, swam, or flew to be the king of its kind. Each king, in addition to being a paragon of its kind, was given the gifts of reason and speech. Their intelligence was increased far above their natural brethren, and the capacity for magic lurked within them that would find a taste for it. These kings and their bloodlines would become the ruling classes of the animals, leading and protecting their species. But the most important gift given the noble beasts was a question: *Will you serve or challenge?*

The decision of whether to serve or challenge the humanoids was left to each noble animal answer on his own, although occasionally nearly an entire species would come down on the same side. Noble dogs almost universally chose to serve, forming a lasting partnership and bond of friendship with humans. Noble crocodiles tend to come down on the challenge side, though some have entered into the service of lizard-folk tribes. Where the nobility leads, the natural animals follow.

Because of their greater intelligence and ability, noble animals are almost always the leaders of their group, pack, herd, flock, or pod. Not every group of animals will have a noble among them. In fact, they are extremely rare, and only one noble (or mated pair) is ever found in any group, except for that noble's young.

With the exceptions of cats, dogs, horses, and some species of birds, noble animals are almost never found among their domesticated cousins. In fact, the domestic breeds of many animals are so diluted in bloodline that no nobles exist for them. This is why there are no noble cows or domestic sheep (although wild sheep are present). Hybridization is also not a practice embraced by noble animals, since they only rarely will breed true, so mules are also not represented. Ligers are an entirely different story, and there may be a single, lonely king of ligers lounging in some sultan's court.

Noble animals most often breed with non-noble members of their own species. The first two offspring of any such union will always be nobles, and all additional children will be normal. This happens no matter how many young natural members of the species would normally have, so a noble elephant would have a single noble elephant child, and possibly a second a few years later, while a noble rat might have a litter of over a dozen, only two of which would be noble.

Noble animals seem to age at a different rate than

their natural cousins as well. Their growth often has little to do with their age, but rather with experience. A noble wolf who lives a life of shelter and safety, never facing any real challenges, may remain a pup for years. While a noble elephant who finds himself thrust into a maelstrom of adventure and danger may be full grown after only two years. Most noble animals achieve some degree of maturity after half a year's growth, unless their species normally matures faster. For example, a noble rat will be full grown in a matter of weeks, while a noble deer will be a very precocious yearling at six months old.

Despite their rarity, noble animals seem fated to always come into contact with each other, sometimes as allies, sometimes as foes.

While their fates tend to be inextricably linked with the various humanoid races, the noble animals still find many of the things the two-legged creatures do to be baffling. Representational art, for example, is lost on even the most intelligent animal unless he has some experience of the concept. To a tiger, a beautiful landscape painting of a field of flowers next to an ancient temple appears to be a brightly colored piece of cloth. A dove makes no distinction between a statue of a great hero and any other large rock. And writing? While nobles in frequent contact with humanoids will be able to recognize writing, it is a rare beast indeed that ever learns how to read it, let alone write it.

There are laws among the noble animal societies, just as there are among humanoids. These laws have never been written, of course, but every noble knows them. The first is this: *You shall serve or you shall challenge.* The second law, sometimes more observed in the breaking than the keeping, is this: *You shall not prey upon your fellow nobles, no matter their species.* The final law followed by all noble animals is this: *At the dawning of the warming season, the highest of each*

# The Noble Wild

ity bonus to Armor Class against attacks from creatures it cannot see.

- **Bonus Feat:** Alertness.
- +4 racial bonus to Spot and Listen checks. These bonuses are lost if the bat's blindsense is negated.
- **Mammal.**
- **Automatic Languages:** Bat and High Fauna. **Bonus Languages:** Camel, Canine, Common, Crocodilian, Elephant, Equine, Feline, Herdspeak, Hyena, Lizard, Monitor, Raptor, Rodent, Serpent, Simian, Songbird, Ursine, and Woodland.
- **Favored Class:** Wizard.
- **Social Group:** Colony.

## Noble Bear

Symbols of strength and healing to many humanoid cultures, bears enjoy a position of both respect and menace in the noble animal community. Everyone is glad of a bear healer showing up to lend assistance, and at the same time terrified that they might do something to offend such a great beast.

Noble bears of either variety are usually content to leave well enough alone, but they are fiercely protective of any creature they consider to be their responsibility, whether that creature is their young or a guest in their territory. While the smaller black bear will often need to contend with other large predators, or even packs of wolves, the brown bear is almost always the undisputed master of his domain.

Despite their obvious strength and the influence they wield over other animals, both noble and natural, most bears will tend towards a humble outlook. This is one of the reasons they are regarded so highly. Black bears have a somewhat adversarial relationship with wolves, cougars, and other predatory species. Brown bears fear no beast or man; an entire pack of wolves would usually be necessary to threaten even a natural brown bear, let alone a noble one. Smaller woodland creatures will approach bears for assistance, but carefully.

### Noble Bear Common Species Traits

- +2 Dexterity, +2 Constitution.
- **Small.**
- **Size Threshold:** 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Hit Dice.
- **Base Speed:** 30 feet.
- **Natural Weapons:** 2 claws (1d3), and 1 bite (1d4).
- Low-light Vision (Ex).
- **Scent (Ex).**
- +4 racial bonus to Swim checks.
- **Mammal.**
- **Automatic Languages:** High Fauna and Ursine. **Bonus Languages:** Bat, Camel, Canine, Common, Crocodilian, Elephant, Equine, Feline, Herdspeak, Hyena, Lizard, Monitor, Raptor, Rodent, Serpent, Simian, Songbird, and Woodland.
- **Level Adjustment:** +2.

### Sub-Species: Noble Black Bear

#### Noble Black Bear Species Traits



# Chapter 4: Feats



Various feats especially appropriate for various noble animal characters appear in the following section. Some of them are listed as monster feats in the core books, but are reprinted here to give noble animal characters access to them.

## Ability Focus [General]

One of your special attacks is more difficult for an opponent to avoid.

**Prerequisite:** Special attack.

**Benefit:** Add +2 to the DC for all saving throws against the special attack on which you focus.

**Special:** You can gain this feat multiple times. Its effects do not stack. Each time you take the feat it applies to a different special attack.

## Adaptive Camouflage [Species]

Your skin can change color to blend in with your surroundings.

**Prerequisite:** Lizard, frog, or toad.

**Benefit:** You gain a +10 camouflage bonus to Hide checks.

## Aggressive Attitude [General]

You can gain a defensive benefit by adopting an aggressive and watchful attitude.

**Benefit:** You can choose the Aggressive Attitude as either your starting or triggered Attitude for the day.

## Awesome Blow [General, Fighter]

**Prerequisites:** Str 25, Power Attack, Improved Bull Rush, size Large or larger.

**Benefit:** As a standard action, you may choose to subtract 4 from your melee attack roll and deliver an awesome blow. If you hit a corporeal opponent smaller than yourself with an awesome blow, your opponent must succeed on a Reflex save (DC = damage dealt) or be knocked flying 10 feet in a direction of your choice and fall prone. You can only push the opponent in a straight line, and the opponent can't move closer to you than the square it started in. If an obstacle prevents the completion of the opponent's move, the opponent and the obstacle each take 1d6 points of damage, and the opponent stops in the space adjacent to the obstacle.

A fighter may select Awesome Blow as one of his fighter bonus feats.

## Bestow Gift [Boon Creation]

You can grant magical abilities similar in function to

magic rings.

**Prerequisite:** Caster level 12th.

**Benefit:** You can bestow any gift whose prerequisites you meet. Bestowing a gift takes one day for each 1,000 gp in its base price. To determine the XP cost of a gift, take the market price of the corresponding ring and divide by 25. To determine the ability sacrifice necessary, divide the market price by 20,000, rounding up. The recipient of the gift must stay within your presence for this entire time it is being created.

Some magical gifts incur extra costs in blood components or XP, as noted in their descriptions. You must pay such a cost to bestow such a gift.

For purposes of boon creation, any effect that can be granted by a ring can be given as a gift.

## Brachiation [Species]

You can move through the upper limbs of trees and similar environments with great ease.

**Prerequisites:** Ape, monkey, or other arboreal creature (squirrel, etc.)

**Benefit:** You can move through the upper canopies of jungles and forests with the same ease you move along the ground. You can use your Base Speed to move through any heavily forested area without touching the ground by leaping and swinging from tree to tree. You can also use this among the rafters of a building, or even stalactites on a cavern ceiling.

## Call Stampede [Species]

You can call on your fellow beasts to flatten everything in sight.

**Prerequisites:** Elephant, Equine, Herdbeast, Moose, Rhinoceros; 5<sup>th</sup> level; Charisma 13+.

**Benefit:** You can let out a thundering below once a week that calls the nearest herd of any herd animals to stampede through your location, nearly destroying everything in sight. The herd arrives in 3d10 minutes. Roll a d4 to determine from which direction the stampede arrives. The ground will begin to shake and the rumble will be heard for several turns before the stampede arrives. The herd cuts a swath of destruction starting from the edge of the map and continuing to the opposite edge. This tide of destruction is 20 feet wide

# The Noble Wild

## Description

Heroes gather, hoping to put right some ancient wrong. Villains plot, and send their minions out into the world to execute their plans. On the surface, a Walking With Humans campaign is exactly like any other fantasy adventure campaign. The difference lies in the fact that, along side the human, elven, and dwarven heroes; there are also dogs, birds, even snakes who have taken up the call as well.

This campaign model is best if you wish to run mixed parties of humanoids and noble animals. The noble animal characters will simply be other members of the party with different capabilities than their humanoid companions. And isn't that what an adventuring party is supposed to be, anyway?

In this campaign, the learned and gifted among the two legged folk know of the existence of noble animals, and may even count some of them among their friends. The world at large still does not know, but in a world populated by magical creatures, a talking rabbit is not going to shock very many people.

Most of the noble animal player characters in this type of campaign will have chosen the "Serve" side of the Serve or Challenge question, but that doesn't make them slaves, any more than a soldier or a policeman are slaves in the modern world.

Many of the same adventures usable for humanoid parties can be used with very little adjustment for a mixed humanoid and animal party. What adjustments need to be made, for the most part, are in the realms of opposition, npcs, and treasure.

The GM of such a campaign should take a look at any villain or group of villains (especially the humanoid ones) and decide; would this encounter be improved or damaged if the opponents were noble animals? You don't want to turn every single bad-guy in your campaign into a malevolent cat, so make sure to keep some sort of balance. A good rule of thumb would be to have the same ratio of noble animal to humanoid villains as you have of noble animal to humanoid heroes. Non-humanoid monsters, like dragons, griffons, and the like, don't need to be adjusted, since they are alien to both portions of the party.

Likewise, instead of having the heroes trudge through the forest to find the hut of a mysterious hermit who has vital information about the foe they will soon face, perhaps they could instead trudge through the forest to find the burrow of a wise old badger who can tell them

what they need to know.

Treasure is a bit different. It really isn't necessary to swap out normal treasure for boons. All you need to do is make sure that the heroes face a few noble animal opponents with Boons that can be transferred to victorious heroes. Having the bones of an ancient noble rat crushed in amongst a dragon's horde can be an excellent way for the noble animal characters in the party to have something to divide up while the humans and dwarves are fighting over rings and swords. Another option may be to allow some creatures of the Magical Beast type access to Boons, so that the noble animals in the party will also have some stake in the encounter (this may also increase the challenge rating of a given encounter, so do so only after careful consideration).

A Walking With Humans campaign has great potential to become something very special, or it can become very silly. Don't shy away from the occasional silly scene: who doesn't need to suppress a smile at the thought of a rat rogue getting the drop on an ogre and taking him down? But try to balance it out with honest drama and peril. A campaign with all that *and* humor will be one that is remembered for years.

## Adventure Seeds

- 🐾 A dying elk begs a party of humanoid adventurers to save his herd from a band of wolf-riding goblins.
- 🐾 A vast treasure of gold and jewels (and ivory) is hidden somewhere in the elephant's graveyard, but the elephant's will never tell anyone where it is.
- 🐾 A horde of undead prehistoric creatures plagues the land. It seems the root cause is a raven necromancer, building himself an army.
- 🐾 The dragon Truxiikx is enraged over the death of his mate. He is killing everything in his path, human or animal.

## At the Forest's Edge

The killer watched, crouched in shadow, unseen and unheard. He needn't have bothered masking his scent, Taltu reflected, since the goblins' noses were pathetic instruments indeed, almost as useless as humans'. Certainly not to the level of feline perfection that his was.

The small black cat had trailed this band of stunted green creatures for two days now. His mission, given to him by an old dog named "Mr. Fluffy," was to find