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[The ocean strider was evidence that the 3e *Monster Manual II* didn't really know what to do with high level monsters. It's supposedly a CR 18, but it has an AC of 19 and 165 hit points. It's much physically weaker than the orca it looks like, despite being the same size. And its only real offensive power comes from spells, of which it gets a ton. Like, *elemental swarm* and *horrid wilting* five times a day. I basically rebuilt this from the ground up, aiming for the neighborhood of the original's hit points, but adjusting the ability scores up and the spellcasting down. I also gave it more of a hook as to *why* it's so territorial, which the book sort of glosses over.]

Ocean Strider **CR 13 CN Fey**

Walking along the surface of the water is a humanoid with rounded features and black and white skin. It carries an enormous blade, and appears to have sharp teeth.

Ocean striders, sometimes called sea shepherds, are proud and territorial fey with the features of orcas. They consider themselves the herdsmen of the whales, protecting them from other hunters and harvesting them for food. Different ocean striders prefer different species of whales, some remaining in a single territory their whole lives, others moving from polar to tropical waters with every migration.

Ocean striders remain near the surface for most of their lives, guarding the vulnerable calves of deep-diving species of whales while they feed in the darker waters. They can either swim or stand

on the surface with ease, and it is in this latter position that they usually interact with humanoids on boats. They view sailors as potential threats to their livestock and livelihood, although they are somewhat more trusting of aquatic humanoids. They are not inherently averse to selling or trading their whales for meat, whalebone or oil, but woe betide the whaling ship that over-harvests any whale stocks, or that tries to hunt an ocean strider's whales without their permission.

Ocean striders are fearsome combatants in protection of their whale pods. They favor oversized falchions as weapons, but their teeth and fists can strike hard as well. Ocean striders usually use hit and run tactics, trying to sink ships first and foremost to keep enemies distracted with the environment instead of dealing damage. They rarely fight to the death, preferring to flee and harass their enemies at a distance with inclement weather and summoned monsters.

Ocean Strider Boons and Banes (CL 20th, level 9th, DC 25)

Ocean striders are usually stingy with their boons, reserving them as tokens of friendship with those who do a great service for the sea shepherds. Their banes are used much more liberally, however, with the ocean strider bestowing it on creatures that surrender to them as a reminder of the sea's power and as a warning to stay away from the ocean.

Boon: You can polymorph into an orca, as per *beast shape III*, at CL 20th. You may use this ability three times before the boon is expended, and the boon is permanent until used.

Bane: Whenever you are on or in a body of water, attacks made with natural weapons against you deal bleed damage equal to the weapon die rolled. Bleed from multiple sources does not stack. Stopping this bleed effect with magical healing fails unless the caster succeeds a DC 25 caster level check. This bane is permanent until removed.

Ocean Strider CR 13

XP 25,600

CN Huge fey

Init +6; **Senses** blindsight 60 ft., low-light vision, Perception +33

Aura frightful presence (60 ft., Will DC 26)

Defense

AC 27, touch 15, flat-footed 24 (-2 size, +2 Dex, +12 natural, +4 deflection, +1 dodge)

hp 190 (20d6+100)

Fort +11, **Ref** +14, **Will** +18

DR 10/magic and cold iron; **Resist** cold 10; **SR** 24

Defensive Abilities *freedom of movement*

Offense

Speed 40 ft., swim 60 ft., water walking

Melee masterwork falchion +20/+15 (2d8+16/15-20), bite +14 (2d6+5) or bite +19 (2d6+11), 2 slams +19 (1d6+11)

Special Attacks capsize

Spell-like Abilities CL 13th, concentration +19

Constant—*freedom of movement*, *shield of faith*, *speak with animals*

At will—*control water* (DC 20), *control winds* (DC 21), *fog cloud*

3/day—*cone of cold* (DC 21), *summon nature's ally VII* (creatures with a swim speed only)

1/day—*control weather*, *horrid wilting* (DC 24)

Statistics

Str 32, **Dex** 15, **Con** 20, **Int** 16, **Wis** 23, **Cha** 23

Base Atk +10; **CMB** +23; **CMD** 40

Feats Alertness, Blind-fight, Cleave, Combat Expertise, Dodge, Improved Critical (falchion), Improved Initiative, Mobility, Power Attack, Spring Attack

Skills Diplomacy +29, Intimidate +29, Knowledge (geography, local, nature) +26, Perception +33, Sense Motive +33, Stealth +17, Swim +19, Survival +29

Languages Aquan, Common, Sylvan, *Speak with animals*

SQ hold breath, wild empathy +26

Ecology

Environment any aquatic

Organization solitary or moot (2-6)

Treasure standard (Huge masterwork falchion, other treasure)

Special Abilities

Frightful Presence (Ex) The frightful presence of an ocean strider does not affect creatures of the animal type.

Water Walking (Su) An ocean strider is perpetually under the effects of a *water walk* spell as a supernatural ability. It may swim below the surface of the water if it wishes.

Wild Empathy (Ex) An ocean strider gains the wild empathy class ability of a 20th level druid.