

Alphyn



Image © William O'Connor, from the book *Dracopedia: Bestiary*

[Heraldry is an under-utilized source of monsters, I feel. Interestingly, the first English language book of chess described bishops as alphyns, which inspired the angled stride ability]

Alphyn

This creature resembles a great shaggy hound the size of a man, and its neck is surrounded by a lion-like mane. Rather than canine paws, its forelegs end in the talons of a bird of prey. Its tufted tail winds and wraps around itself, stretching to great lengths.

Alphyns are noble creatures of the plains that pride themselves as impartial and fair arbiters of justice. Alphyns are nomadic creatures, wandering traditional routes over vast distances in search of food and conflicts to resolve. Some plains-dwelling people view alphyns as trusted and valuable members of the community, and organize annual holidays to celebrate their coming and have them mediate especially difficult disputes. Others see them as nosy busybodies and try to deflect or avoid their attention.

The hybrid appearance and dimensional powers of alphyns has been explained by some sages as the

result of their origins as blink dog/griffin hybrids, but alphyns themselves reject such claims. Their own legends tell of their long-ago arrival from another plane to serve weak-willed humanoids as shepherds of justice and fair doings. They get along well with the churches of lawful gods and may be convinced to set aside their perambulations for a time if offered the position of councilor within one of these hierarchies.

Alphyns are typically solitary creatures, viewing families and friends as ties they do not require. Only a few times during an alphyn's long life is it compelled to seek out another of its kind as a mate. Alphyn pups are raised by both parents until they can care for themselves, whereupon the entire family separates, never to see one another again.

An alphyn weighs about 150 pounds and stands three feet high at the shoulder. They are carnivorous, preferring to catch small game such as rabbits and voles. They do have a weakness for milk and beer, which they will take as payment for their arbitration.

Alphyn **CR 4**

XP 1,200

LN Medium magical beast

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, Perception +10, scent

Defenses

AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14 (+3 Dex, +4 natural)

hp 45 (6d10+12)

Fort +7, **Ref** +8, **Will** +5

Offense

Speed 50 ft.

Melee bite +8 (1d6+2), 2 claws +8 (1d4+2), tail slap +6 (1d3+1 plus trip)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (10 ft. with tail)

Special Attacks pounce

Spell-like Abilities CL 6th, concentration +8

Constant—*discern lies* (DC 16), *entropic shield*

Statistics

Str 15, **Dex** 17, **Con** 14, **Int** 11, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 21 (25 vs. trip)

Feats Alertness, Multiattack, Nimble Moves

Skills Acrobatics +7 (+15 jumping), Diplomacy +5, Intimidate +4, Perception +10, Sense Motive +8, Stealth +7

Languages Common, Halfling

SQ angled stride

Ecology

Environment temperate plains

Organization solitary or pair

Treasure standard

Special Abilities

Angled Stride (Su) An alphyn's footsteps warp space in odd ways. An alphyn can move diagonally as if each square took 5 feet of movement to cross, not 15 feet per two squares. An alphyn cannot use this ability when under the effects of *dimensional anchor* or within a *dimension lock* spell.