



“Banehound” by YW Tang, © Wizards of the Coast. Accessed at Original Magic Art Store [here](#)

[The original zhackal just looked like a mundane jackal, so I wanted to make it rather more monstrous. “Too many eyes” is a tumblr favorite trope for monsters, so I figured that was a good direction. The 3e conversion of the zhackal in Dungeon Magazine stripped away their hive mind, but I went in the opposite direction, giving them more powers to use the more of them are in a pack.]

Zhackal

CR ½ NE Magical Beast

This creature looks like a small dog, gray in color, except that its teeth are too large and it has too many eyes.

Although at first glance a zhackal may appear to be a mundane desert predator, they are anything but. Zhackals share a psychic hive mind with members of their own pack, and feed on emotions of pain, despair and fear rather than on mere meat. They obtain these by following in the wake of larger monsters, scavenging for emotional scraps from both sides of the conflict, and then prolonging the agonies of the fallen. A zhackal finds the most savory emotions come from those who know they are dying, and use *mindlink* to convey images of failure and injury into the brains of the unconscious.

A single zhackal is cowardly, and almost always flees from conflict. A pack of zhackals is a menace, using their psychic magic to ravage the psyches of their enemies. They usually split duties between hunts, with some members of the pack entering melee to harry the wounded and deal physical damage while others remain behind and use their magic. This is a matter of pecking order—the highest ranking zhackals keep themselves safe, and send lower ranking ones in to risk injury or death. If enemies seem capable of resisting their psychic magic, the whole pack retreats.

Zhackal **CR ½**

XP 200

NE Small magical beast

Init +1 (+5 in hive mind); **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., Perception +1 (+5 in hive mind), scent

Defense

AC 13, touch 12, flat-footed 12 (+1 size, +1 Dex, +1 natural)

hp 6 (1d10+1)

Fort +3, **Ref** +3, **Will** +3

Offense

Speed 50 ft.

Melee bite +2 (1d6)

Psychic Magic CL 1st, concentration +2

5 PE—*doom* (1 PE, DC 12), *ego whip I* (2 PE, DC 13), *mindlink* (1 PE, DC 12), *stabilize* (1 PE)

Special Attacks psychic gestalt

Statistics

Str 10, **Dex** 13, **Con** 13, **Int** 6, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +1; **CMB** +0; **CMD** 11 (15 vs. trip)

Feats Great Fortitude

Skills Perception +1 (+5 in hive mind), Stealth +9

Languages telepathy 60 ft (other zhackals only)

SQ hive mind

Ecology

Environment warm land

Organization pack (2-12)

Treasure none

Special Abilities

Hive Mind (Ex) As long as a zhackal is within telepathic range of at least one other allied zhackal, it gains a +4 racial bonus on initiative checks and Perception checks. If at least one zhackal disbelieves an illusion, all zhackals within its telepathic range are also considered to disbelieve that illusion. If one zhackal is aware of combatants, all other pack mates within the range of its telepathy are also aware of those combatants.

Psychic Gestalt (Su) A zhackal's caster level for its psychic magic is equal to the number of conscious allied zhackals within range of its telepathy (maximum CL 10th). All allied zhackals within this range share the same pool of PE, adding their current PE together, and may draw from it as they choose. As more zhackals come into a pack, they gain access to additional spells that they may use with their psychic magic

4 zhackals—*invisibility* (2 PE), *mind thrust II* (2 PE, DC 13)

6 zhackals—*anticipate thoughts* (3 PE, DC 14), *inflict pain* (3 PE, DC 14)

8 zhackals—*crushing despair* (4 PE, DC 15), *fear* (4 PE, DC 15)