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“Lizard” © Ema Klucovska, accessed at her ArtStation [here](#)

[One of the things that I like about Dark Sun is that it’s full of mundane and slightly-not-mundane animals. Makes it feel like an alien world rather than just yet another high fantasy setting. What I don’t like is how many times in the first *Dark Sun Monstrous Compendium* it stresses that no animals on Athas are cute, or cuddly, or lovable. Firstly, it’s a very 90s Trying Too Hard to Be Edgy mode. Secondly, real humans in the real world find rodents, lizards and bugs to be cute. You’re telling me on a planet where those are the most common forms of life, everyone thinks they’re gross?

The original critic lizard is psionic, with *danger sense*. That power is supremely vague in 2e, with a feeling of GM fiat being very strong. The D&D 3.5 version of this ability gives an insight bonus to AC and saves against traps, which is much more concrete but clearly not the intention of the critic lizard’s sensitivity to dangerous situations. To make it more in line with Pathfinder’s occult rules, I translated it to reading emotional auras.]

### Critic Lizard

#### CR ¼ N Magical Beast

*This green lizard is the size of a large rat. A crest flickers up from its forehead, displaying a riot of changing colors.*

Critic lizards are desert reptiles with occult senses. They are useful as watchdogs, not because of their ferocity but because of their ability to detect emotions. A critic lizard that senses hostility or fear will flee and hide, and a canny observer can use critic lizards to track the passions, greed and devotion of others. They also are sufficiently paranoid to constantly check their food for poison, and react to venomous animals by fleeing.

Critic lizards are omnivores, eating fruits, flowers, insects and small vertebrates. If kept as pets, they much prefer to be fed than to forage on their own, and can grow fat and lazy if their keepers allow them to. Critic lizards are somewhat standoffish—they do not like to be picked up or pet except on their own terms, and will hide their crests if kept caged or chained. People living with critic lizards find them to be affectionate in their own way—if they are happy, they display colors that occultists read as reflecting trust and comfort.

A critic lizard can be taken as a familiar. A spellcaster with a critic lizard familiar gains a +3 bonus on Sense Motive checks.

#### Critic Lizard CR ¼

##### XP 100

N Tiny magical beast

**Init** +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, Perception +9

**Defense**

**AC** 14, touch 14, flat-footed 13 (+2 size, +1 Dex, +1 natural)

**hp** 3 (1d10-2)

**Fort** +0, **Ref** +3, **Will** +1

**Offense**

**Speed** 20 ft., climb 10 ft.

**Melee** bite +1 (1d3-2)

**Space** 2 ½ ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

**Spell-like Abilities** CL 1st, concentration +1

At will “detect poison

Statistics

**Str** 6, **Dex** 13, **Con** 6, **Int** 1, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 11

**Base Atk** +1; **CMB** +0; **CMD** 8 (12 vs. trip)

**Feats** Improved Initiative

**Skills** Climb +9, Perception +9, Stealth +9; **Racial Modifiers** uses Dex to Climb, +4 Perception

**SQ** display aura

Ecology

**Environment** warm deserts

**Organization** solitary

**Treasure** none

Special Abilities

**Display Aura (Su)** A critic lizard is automatically in tune with the emotions of creatures around it. The color of its crest displays the [emotion aura](#) of the creature with the most HD within 30 feet.