



“Manananggal” © Brian Valeza, accessed at his ArtStation page [here](#)

[Monsters like the balbal are why I think folklore is such an invaluable resource for game design. A man-bat with a razor tongue that turns into a crocodile might be sent back for revisions by an editor for being not thematically consistent enough, but it is a real mythological entity. Case in point, most depictions on the Internet drop the flight and don't mention the affinity for crocodiles, making it a much more typical ghoul. Thanks to [@a-book-of-creatures](#) for their writeup of the balbal providing the bulk of the inspiration for this entry.

Incidentally, I will be featuring other artists besides Brian Valeza in this project. But his gallery is an excellent resource for images of monsters with little Internet footprint, and it was a major incentive for me to tackle this project.]

## **Balbal**

### **CR 5 CE Magical Beast**

*This creature looks something like a man-sized bat, with a ghoulishly humanoid face and clawed fingers on its wings. Its tongue lashes from its mouth, as long as a whip and razor sharp.*

Balbals are corpse-eaters that glide between villages to prey on their dead. They use their long claws to pry holes in roofs and break windows while a body lies in state, then shred the corpse with their razor-sharp tongue. In order to avoid detection, they replace the body with a magically altered stock of wood. In areas haunted by undeath, the lack of a proper burial may cause the spirits of their victims to animate as incorporeal undead, but by that point, the balbal is long since gone.

A balbal spends much of its time in the form of a crocodile. They can influence the behavior of crocodiles, and especially aggressive crocodile populations may be a sign of a local balbal. This affinity does not extend to other reptiles; balbals fear and hate venomous snakes especially. In countries where balbals are present, some people decorate their houses with snake motifs in an attempt to frighten off the monsters, or even keep such dangerous animals as pets.

A balbal has a wingspan of about eight feet and weighs 100 pounds. Their lifespans range into the forties or fifties if they are well fed and safe from adventurers and vengeful family members.

## **Balbal CR 5**

**XP 1,600**

CE Medium magical beast

**Init** +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, Perception +6, scent

**Defense**

**AC** 18, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+4 Dex, +4 natural)

**hp** 45 (6d10+12)

**Fort** +6, **Ref** +9, **Will** +4; +4 vs. illusions

**Defensive Abilities** hard to fool

**Offense**

**Speed** 20 ft., climb 20 ft., fly 60 ft. (average)

**Melee** tongue +9 (2d4+2 plus bleed), 2 claws +9 (1d4+2)

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

**Special Attacks** bleed (1d4)

**Statistics**

**Str** 15, **Dex** 19, **Con** 12, **Int** 8, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 12

**Base Atk** +5; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 21

**Feats** Stealthy, Toughness, Weapon Finesse

**Skills** Climb +10, Escape Artist +7, Fly +6, Perception +6, Stealth +10, Swim +5

**Languages** Common

**SQ** change shape (crocodile, *beast shape II*), corpse decoy, crocodile empathy +11

**Ecology**

**Environment** warm coastal and urban

**Organization** solitary, pair or wallow (1-2 plus 1-6 crocodiles)

**Treasure** none

**Special Abilities**

**Corpse Decoy (Su)** A balbal can sculpt a stock of wood into a shape akin to that of a humanoid corpse in a process that takes 1 minute. This false corpse can resemble a specific individual, and creatures interacting with the false corpse must succeed a DC 14 Will save to realize the deception. This is an illusion (glamer) effect. The save DC is Charisma based.

**Crocodile Empathy (Ex)** A balbal may improve the attitude of crocodiles. This functions as the wild empathy class ability of a druid equal to the balbal's HD, except that the balbal gains a +4 racial bonus on this roll and can only use it to influence crocodilians. At the GM's discretion, this ability may work with similar creatures such as dinosaurs, but it does not function with reptiles such as snakes, lizards or turtles.

**Hard to Fool (Ex)** A balbal gains a +4 racial bonus on all saving throws against illusion effects.

**Tongue (Ex)** A balbal's tongue is treated as a primary natural weapon that deals slashing and piercing damage and has 10 feet of reach.