

# MULTIPLE ANIMAL COMPANIONS



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## & YOU

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## Acronyms Used

I will be using the following Acronyms throughout this guide.

AC – Animal Companion  
FCB – Favored Class Bonus  
PC – Player Character  
RAI – Rules as Intended  
RAW – Rules as Written

## Ranking System

I will be using the following ranking system.

**Blue** – This is the best option. I haven't found anything better.

**Green** – This option is good. But there are other options that are typically better.

**Orange** – This is an option. It's not optimal but its fine if you want it for other reasons.

**Red** – This is a bad option. It doesn't facilitate having multiple ACs. It might awesome for other reasons but it doesn't help us with the objective here.

# Introduction

I want to start by saying I enjoy playing pet classes. I like having multiple minions under my control, what's more I like for said minions to actually be effective. That being said, it's important to be responsible when it comes to having multiple minions. You should do everything you can to make your turn go by as quickly as possible. Pre-roll dice, pre-add things. If you're not sure if a particular situational bonus is valid then calculate everything both with and without it. Try to thoroughly understand any abilities your minions have. Does it have Grab? Then gain a thorough understanding of how grapple rules work, etc. This way, when you come to the table and it's time for you and your 4 animal companions to attack you can ask your DM a few questions (eg. "Does a 15 hit?" "Can it be flanked?"), then immediately rattle off how many times you hit and how much damage each hit did. Your DM will probably audit you the 1<sup>st</sup> time, but once they understand that you're not trying to cheat, but rather you're trying to make their job as a DM easier, they generally won't have an issue. Your fellow party members might be impressed but they won't be annoyed because your turns take forever.

Anyway, as I said, I love playing pet classes, but I've been rather disappointed that none of the guides seem to talk about how to have multiple, effective Animal Companions. What's worse, the archetypes that help facilitate such builds (eg. Packmaster Hunter), often get rated poorly. So, that's why I'm writing this guide. I'm going to focus on how to have 2 or more combat effective Animal Companions.

-Lord Kailas

# How is possible to have multiple effective Animal Companions?

Unlike familiars, you are allowed to have more than one animal companion. If for example, Class A gives you a bird companion and Class B gives you a horse then you have both a horse and a bird. Abilities that grant you an animal companion also stack if the animal companion you pick is an eligible choice for both. So, if Class A lets you have a bird or a horse and Class B lets you have a horse only. Then you can have a bird from Class A and a Horse from Class B or you can have a horse that gets everything from both. Normally though, this is the extent of control you have. There are five archetypes {Huntmaster(Cavalier), Pack Lord(Druid), Packmaster(Hunter), Beastmaster(Ranger) and JungleLord(Ranger)} that allow you to divvy out your levels however you wish. Whenever you gain a level that adds to your effective druid level you can either apply it to an existing animal companion or gain a brand new one at 1<sup>st</sup> level. So, if I had 4 levels in Class A (horses and birds) and 5 levels in Class B (horses only) and I had one of these archetypes, I could have any of the following (in addition to other combinations):

- 1 level 9 horse
- 1 level 4 bird and 1 level 5 horse
- 2 level 2 birds, 1 level 3 horse and 1 level 2 horse
- 1 level 2 bird, 1 level 4 horse and 1 level 3 horse

Another thing to keep in mind are the abilities attached with each progression. If Class A grants ability X and Class B grants ability Y, an AC will only get both abilities if it's a valid option for both classes. So, in our example above only the horses in the first and last scenarios would actually get both ability X and ability Y. While the birds never get ability Y. This is another reason why being able to split up the levels however you like is so powerful. It's also required if you want more than 1 of the same kind of AC.

However, as I'm sure you've noticed, I'm sacrificing quality over quantity and this is about as far as most guides go when it comes to evaluating these archetypes. What gets missed is that there are abilities that grant you an animal companion based on your **character level**, not your class level. Not only that but there are some classes that have multiple abilities that grant an animal companion based on your class level. By combining these multiple progressions together with one of the archetypes that allow you to split your levels, it's possible to have multiple animal companions that you have complete level control over. Without it, some of your animal companion levels run the risk of getting wasted.



# How does it work if I have multiple progressions that stack into a single AC?

The closest that exists of any sort of official word on how this works is the following developer post. It should be noted that since this post was made the oracle FCB referenced was severely nerfed as it used to be +1 every 2 levels instead of +1 every 6.

## From Developer Post

(<https://paizo.com/threads/rzs2q9f7&page=3?The-ARG-race-restriction-and-favored-class#141>)

### **Related Point: Can I have an 18th-level animal companion at level 12?**

*A character's effective druid level for determining the abilities of her animal companion (based on Table 3–8 on page 52 of the Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook) cannot increase her animal companion's Hit Dice above her actual character level + 1. An animal companion receives no additional abilities for its level unless it has the requisite number of Hit Dice; a character can increase her effective druid level further, though these effective levels do not grant any benefit until the character's actual level increases. For example, a 12th-level aasimar oracle with the nature mystery and the bonded mount revelation could theoretically have an "18th-level" animal companion; however, her animal companion would only be "16th-level" for all abilities because the animal could not have more than 13 Hit Dice.*

So, this means that it's possible to have an AC that has an effective level of 20+. In order to determine what happens at this point we can get direction from the following rules section.


## Scaling Powers

Hit dice, base attack bonuses, and saving throws continue to increase at the same rate beyond 20th level, as appropriate for the class in question. Note that no character can have more than 4 attacks based on its base attack bonus. Note also that, before long, the difference between good saving throws and poor saving throws becomes awkwardly large—the further you get from 20th level, the more noticeable this difference grows, and for high-level characters, bolstering their poor saving throws should become increasingly important. Class abilities that have a set, increasing rate, such as a barbarian's damage reduction, a fighter's bonus feats and weapon training, a paladin's smite evil, or a rogue's sneak attack continue to progress at the appropriate rate.

Using these principles, it's possible to create the following expanded animal companion advancement table.

## Expanded Animal Companion Advancement Table

Class Level	HD	BAB	Fort	Ref	Will	Skills	Feats	Natural Armor Bonus	Str/Dex Bonus	Bonus Tricks	Special
1st	2	1	3	3	0	2	1	0	0	1	Link, share spells
2nd	3	2	3	3	1	3	2	0	0	1	—
3rd	3	2	3	3	1	3	2	2	1	2	Evasion
4th	4	3	4	4	1	4	2	2	1	2	Ability score increase
5th	5	3	4	4	1	5	3	2	1	2	—
6th	6	4	5	5	2	6	3	4	2	3	Devotion
7th	6	4	5	5	2	6	3	4	2	3	—
8th	7	5	5	5	2	7	4	4	2	3	—
9th	8	6	6	6	2	8	4	6	3	4	Ability score Increase, Multiattack
10th	9	6	6	6	3	9	5	6	3	4	—
11th	9	6	6	6	3	9	5	6	3	4	—
12th	10	7	7	7	3	10	5	8	4	5	—
13th	11	8	7	7	3	11	6	8	4	5	—
14th	12	9	8	8	4	12	6	8	4	5	Ability score increase
15th	12	9	8	8	4	12	6	10	5	6	Improved evasion
16th	13	9	8	8	4	13	7	10	5	6	—
17th	14	10	9	9	4	14	7	10	5	6	—
18th	15	11	9	9	5	15	8	12	6	7	—
19th	15	11	9	9	5	15	8	12	6	7	—
20th	16	12	10	10	5	16	8	12	6	7	Ability score increase
21st	17	12	10	10	5	17	9	14	7	8	—
22nd	18	13	11	11	6	18	9	14	7	8	—
23rd	18	14	11	11	6	18	9	14	7	8	—
24th	19	14	11	11	6	19	10	16	8	9	—
25th	20	15	12	12	6	20	10	16	8	9	Ability score increase
26th	21	15	12	12	7	21	11	16	8	9	—
27th	21	16	12	12	7	21	11	18	9	10	—



## Are there any advantages to keeping my AC the same level as my character?

Actually, there are. There are a number of feats that can boost your AC's progression and most of these state that they will not boost your AC higher than your character level. Some of these feats even apply their benefits to all of your ACs not just one. This means that it's possible to have a large number of ACs at or very close to your level.

That being said, it's worth noting that normally ACs lag behind player characters for example at 16<sup>th</sup> level your AC only has 13 HD, meaning it's effectively 3 levels behind the PCs. So, if you want an AC that can keep up with the PCs at these levels, you'll need to push its effective level to be higher than your character level. This results in a lot fewer ACs but at least the ones you have will be quite potent.



# What are the different animal companion progressions?

What follows are tables that identify the different ways you can get an animal companion, if it is based on class or character level and what formula is used to determine your effective level.

Class   Archetype		Minimum Level	Progression Provided
<b>Alchemist</b>			
	Construct Rider	1 <sup>st</sup>	Class Level
	Winged Marauder	1 <sup>st</sup>	Class Level
<b>Barbarian</b>			
	Mad Dog	1 <sup>st</sup>	Class Level
	Mounted Fury	5 <sup>th</sup>	Class Level - 4
	Shoanti Burn Rider	4 <sup>th</sup>	Class Level - 3
<b>Bloodrager</b>			
	Bloodrider	5 <sup>th</sup>	Class Level - 4
<b>Brawler</b>			
	Wild Child	1 <sup>st</sup>	Class Level
<b>Cavalier</b>			
	Base (no archetype)	1 <sup>st</sup>	Class Level
<b>Druid</b>			
	Base (no archetype)	1 <sup>st</sup>	Class Level
<b>Hunter</b>			
	Base (no archetype)	1 <sup>st</sup>	Class Level
<b>Inquisitor</b>			
	Sacred Huntsmaster	1 <sup>st</sup>	Class Level
<b>Kineticist</b>			
	Cinderlands Adept	4 <sup>th</sup>	Class Level - 3
<b>Paladin</b>			
	Base (no archetype)	5 <sup>th</sup>	Class Level
<b>Ranger</b>			
	Base (no archetype)	4 <sup>th</sup>	Class Level - 3
	Beastmaster Horse Lord Jungle Lord	4 <sup>th</sup>	Class Level - 3 Class Level (12 <sup>th</sup> +)
	Falconer	1 <sup>st</sup>	Class Level
	Sable Company Marine	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Class Level - 1
<b>Samurai</b>			
	Base (no archetype)	1 <sup>st</sup>	Class Level
<b>Vigilante</b>			
	Mounted Fury	1 <sup>st</sup>	Class Level
<b>Warpriest</b>			

	Divine Commander	1 <sup>st</sup>	Class Level
<b>Prestige Classes</b>			
	Asavir	1 <sup>st</sup>	P. Class Level +2 (stacks and caps)
	Chernasardo Warden	2 <sup>nd</sup>	P. Class Level /2 (stacks)
	Dawnflower Anchorite	2 <sup>nd</sup>	P. Class Level (stacks)
	Diabolist (PZO9213)	1 <sup>st</sup>	P. Class Level (doesn't stack)
	Evangelist	2 <sup>nd</sup>	P. Class Level -1 (stacks)
	Green Faith Acolyte	1 <sup>st</sup>	P. Class Level /2 (stacks)
	Mammoth Rider	1 <sup>st</sup>	P. Class Level (stacks)
	Nature Warden	1 <sup>st</sup>	P. Class Level (stacks)
	Rage Prophet	1 <sup>st</sup>	P. Class Level (stacks)
	Sacred Sentinel	2 <sup>nd</sup>	P. Class Level (stacks)
	Stargazer	3 <sup>rd</sup>	P. Class Level (stacks)

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Bloodlines/Domains/Inquisitions/ Mysteries/Spirits	Minimum Level	Progression Provided
<b>Mutated Bloodlines (Sorcerer)</b>		
Sylvan	4 <sup>th</sup>	Class Level - 3
<b>Domains (Cleric, Druid, Inquisitor and others)</b>		
Animal	4 <sup>th</sup>	Class Level - 3
Scalykind	4 <sup>th</sup>	Class Level - 2
Scalykind (Saurian)	4 <sup>th</sup>	Class Level - 2
<b>Inquisitions (Cleric, Druid, Inquisitor and others)</b>		
Chivalry	1 <sup>st</sup>	Class Level
<b>Mysteries (Oracle and Inquisitor[Ravener Hunter])</b>		
Lunar	1 <sup>st</sup>	Class Level
Nature	1 <sup>st</sup>	Class Level
<b>Spirits (Shaman)</b>		
Mammoth	16 <sup>th</sup>	Class Level
Nature	16 <sup>th</sup>	Class Level

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Feats	Minimum Level	Based on	Progression Provided
<b>Full Progression</b>			
Horse Master	6 <sup>th</sup>	Character Level	CL
Animal Ally	4 <sup>th</sup>	Character Level	CL-3
Fiendish Obedience [Sentinel, Baphomet]	13 <sup>th</sup>	Character Level	CL-4
Eldritch Heritage [Sylvan]*	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Character Level	CL-5
<b>Progression Boosters</b>			
Boon Companion	1 <sup>st</sup>	Nothing	+4
Beast Rider	7 <sup>th</sup>	Nothing	+2
Huntmaster	1 <sup>st</sup>	Nothing	+1
Magical Enigma	1 <sup>st</sup>	Nothing	+1

\*It's worth noting that while this is possible via the feat exotic heritage, the author of exotic heritage has gone on record as saying the feat was not intended to be used this way. IOW it literally goes against the RAI. That being said, by the RAW it technically works and it results in the weakest progression (CL-5) of all the methods available. In any case you should get your DM to ok this combination before you bring it to the table.

## What races are best?

Because there are so many different ways to get animal companions they can be incorporated into a variety of builds. You could make a warrior that goes toe to toe with the enemy and their army of animal companions. You could make a divine or arcane caster that stands back and uses their animal companions as champions or a personal guard. You could even make an archer that rides around with their pack using a combination of melee and ranged tactics. That being said, when it comes to some aspects like races, some work better than others. Below I have ranked the different races in terms of how well they synergize with having multiple animal companions.

### Core Races

<b>Dwarf:</b>	There are no notable abilities.
<b>Elf:</b>	The only notable ability they have is a cavalier FCB.
<b>Gnome:</b>	They are a small race, which means that classes that give limited lists (like cavalier), tend to have better combat options if you are a small race. They get speak with animals as a once per day ability, meaning you can communicate directly with your ACs, in a limited capacity. They also get a FCB for Cavalier, Cleric, Druid, Hunter, and Ranger that supports or buffs your AC in a meaningful way.
<b>Half-Elf:</b>	On the surface they seem to only contribute by offering FCB for Cavalier, Druid and Ranger that buff your AC. However, they get skill focus for free, which can be used to qualify for the eldritch heritage feat line. They can also take the Racial Heritage/Planar Heritage feat, which grants access to other race specific feats, traits, and archetypes. Since they count as humans and elves they can also take the Human and/or Elf FCB.
<b>Half-Orc:</b>	The shaman enhancement trait allows them to add +2 to a physical stat every time they gain a new AC. Since they count as orcs they qualify for the orc only feat, beast rider. Additionally, they can take the Racial Heritage/Planar Heritage feat, which grants access to other race specific feats, traits, and archetypes. Finally, they get an AC based FCB for Cavalier, Hunter, and Ranger. Since they count as humans and orcs they can also take the Human and/or Orc FCB.
<b>Halfling:</b>	The caretaker trait allows them to add +2 to any stat of their choice every time they gain a new AC. This means all of your ACs can start with a 3 int so they aren't as limited when it comes to feats and skills. As a small race, halflings get a wider variety of options with classes that limit animal companions. They also get an AC based FCB for Cavalier, Druid, Hunter, and Shaman.
<b>Human:</b>	The eye for talent trait allows them to add +2 to any stat of their choice every time they gain a new AC. This means all of your ACs can start with a 3 int so they aren't as limited when it comes to feats and skills. They can also take the Racial Heritage/Planar Heritage feat, which grants access to other race specific feats, traits, and archetypes. They also get an AC based FCB for Hunter and Ranger.

## Other Races

<b>Aasimar:</b>	This option isn't as good as it could have been. While it does give you access to the Celestial Servant feat, because of the way it's worded the feat only applies to one of your ACs. Otherwise it doesn't have much to offer. A few of the variant abilities could be useful (racial bonus to handle animal and ride checks, speak with horses), but that's it. It has a FCB for oracle that can be used to boost your ACs progression.
<b>Adaro:</b>	There are no notable abilities.
<b>Android:</b>	There are no notable abilities.
<b>Aphorite:</b>	There are no notable abilities.
<b>Aquatic Elf:</b>	The only notable ability they have is are cavalier and druid AC boosting FCB.
<b>Astomoi:</b>	There are no notable abilities.
<b>Boggard:</b>	There are no notable abilities.
<b>Caligni:</b>	There are no notable abilities.
<b>Catfolk:</b>	This race gives an AC boosting FCB for druid and hunter. Of these only the hunter FCB (which gives 1/6 of a teamwork feat) would apply to more than one AC at a time.
<b>Cecaelia:</b>	There are no notable abilities.
<b>Changeling:</b>	There are no notable abilities.
<b>Deep One Hybrid:</b>	There are no notable abilities.
<b>Dhampir:</b>	Vampiric Empathy only allows you to speak with wolf ACs. It does give you access to the Vampiric Companion feat at 10 <sup>th</sup> level, but you must take the feat multiple times, once for each AC you wish to benefit from it.
<b>Drow:</b>	The only notable ability they have is an inquisitor FCB that grants extra teamwork feats which can potentially be shared with your ACs.
<b>Duergar:</b>	There are no notable abilities.
<b>Duskwalker:</b>	There are no notable abilities.
<b>Fetchling:</b>	The only notable abilities they have are druid and hunter AC boosting FCB.
<b>Ganzi:</b>	The only notable abilities they have is a hunter AC boosting FCB.
<b>Gathlain:</b>	They are a small race, which means that classes that give limited lists (like cavalier), tend to have better combat options if you are a small race. They also have druid, hunter, and ranger AC boosting FCB.
<b>Ghoran:</b>	The only notable abilities they have is a hunter FCB.
<b>Gillman:</b>	There are no notable abilities.
<b>Goblin:</b>	They are a small race, which means that classes that give limited lists (like cavalier), tend to have better combat options if you are a small race. They also get access to the feat Saddle Shrieker. The only notable FCB they have are druid and cavalier.
<b>Green Martian:</b>	There are no notable abilities.
<b>Grindylow:</b>	They are a small race, which means that classes that give limited lists (like cavalier), tend to have better combat options if you are a small race.



<b>Grippli:</b>	They are a small race, which means that classes that give limited lists (like cavalier), tend to have better combat options if you are a small race.
<b>Hobgoblin:</b>	There are no notable abilities.
<b>Ifrit:</b>	They can take the Racial Heritage/Planar Heritage feat, which grants access to other race specific feats, traits, and archetypes.
<b>Kasatha:</b>	There are no notable abilities.
<b>Kitsune:</b>	They can take the feat Human Guise, which allows them to take the Racial Heritage/Planar Heritage feat, which grants access to other race specific feats, traits, and archetypes.
<b>Kobold:</b>	They are a small race, which means that classes that give limited lists (like cavalier), tend to have better combat options if you are a small race.
<b>Kuru:</b>	There are no notable abilities.
<b>Lashunta:</b>	There are no notable abilities.
<b>Locathah:</b>	The only notable abilities they have are cavalier, druid, and ranger FCB.
<b>Merfolk:</b>	The only notable abilities they have are druid and ranger FCB.
<b>Monkey Goblin:</b>	They are a small race, which means that classes that give limited lists (like cavalier), tend to have better combat options if you are a small race. They also get access to the feat Saddle Shrieker which allows you to take a penalty to hit to give your mount a bonus to hit and damage and it scales with level. Since they are goblins they can take the same FCB for druids and cavaliers that goblins can.
<b>Munavri:</b>	There are no notable abilities.
<b>Nagaji:</b>	The only notable abilities they have are cavalier and ranger FCB.
<b>Naiad:</b>	There are no notable abilities.
<b>Orang-Pendak:</b>	They are a small race, which means that classes that give limited lists (like cavalier), tend to have better combat options if you are a small race. They also get a bonus to handle animal and empathy checks (apes & monkeys only). Unfortunately, they take a -2 penalty on most rolls when mounted.
<b>Orc:</b>	They qualify for the orc only feat, beast rider. They get an AC boosting FCB for Druid and Ranger.
<b>Oread:</b>	They can take the Racial Heritage/Planar Heritage feat, which grants access to other race specific feats, traits, and archetypes. They have a ranger AC boosting FCB.
<b>Ratfolk:</b>	They are a small race, which means that classes that give limited lists (like cavalier), tend to have better combat options if you are a small race. Ratfolk are the only race that gains the racial trait swarming. This means they have access to teamwork feats that can be shared with their ACs that no other race has access to. They have hunter and ranger AC boosting FCB.
<b>Reborn Samsaran:</b>	There are no notable abilities.
<b>Reptoid:</b>	There are no notable abilities.
<b>Rougarou:</b>	There are no notable abilities.
<b>Sahuagin:</b>	There are no notable abilities.

<b>Samsaran:</b>	The past life trait allows it to pilfer spells from other lists. This means that a primary spellcaster can gain access to AC related spells that wouldn't normally be on their class's list.
<b>Shabti:</b>	There are no notable abilities.
<b>Skinwalker:</b>	They get speak with animals, meaning you can communicate directly with your ACs, in a limited capacity. They can take the feat Human Guise, which allows them to take the Racial Heritage/Planar Heritage feat, which grants access to other race specific feats, traits, and archetypes. They have a bonus on handle animal and wild empathy checks.
<b>Strix:</b>	They have hunter and shaman AC boosting FCB.
<b>Suli:</b>	They can take the Racial Heritage/Planar Heritage feat, which grants access to other race specific feats, traits, and archetypes.
<b>Svirfneblin:</b>	They are a small race, which means that classes that give limited lists (like cavalier), tend to have better combat options if you are a small race. They also get an AC boosting FCB for Ranger, but because they are gnomes they can also take any of the AC boosting FCB that gnomes can take.
<b>Sylph:</b>	They can get speak with animals as a once per day ability, meaning you can communicate directly with your ACs, in a limited capacity. They can also take the Racial Heritage/Planar Heritage feat, which grants access to other race specific feats, traits, and archetypes.
<b>Syrinx:</b>	They can speak with birds at will, meaning if you have bird AC you can communicate directly with them.
<b>Tengu:</b>	They have hunter and spiritualist AC boosting FCB.
<b>Tiefling:</b>	They can take the Racial Heritage/Planar Heritage feat, which grants access to other race specific feats, traits, and archetypes.
<b>Triaxian:</b>	There are no notable abilities.
<b>Triton:</b>	There are no notable abilities.
<b>Trox:</b>	There are no notable abilities.
<b>Undine:</b>	They can take the Racial Heritage/Planar Heritage feat, which grants access to other race specific feats, traits, and archetypes.
<b>Vanara:</b>	There are no notable abilities.
<b>Vine Leshy:</b>	They are a small race, which means that classes that give limited lists (like cavalier), tend to have better combat options if you are a small race.
<b>Vishkanya:</b>	There are no notable abilities.
<b>Wayang:</b>	They are a small race, which means that classes that give limited lists (like cavalier), tend to have better combat options if you are a small race.
<b>Wyrwood:</b>	They are a small race, which means that classes that give limited lists (like cavalier), tend to have better combat options if you are a small race.
<b>Wyvaran:</b>	There are no notable abilities.
<b>Yaddithian</b>	There are no notable abilities.



## What classes are best?

Obviously, it depends heavily on what your end goal is. But for purposes of this guide we are looking at classes and archetypes under the lens of having more than one animal companion. Keep in mind just that because you want more than one AC you do not have to multiclass. In fact, it's possible to have several effective ACs without multiclassing at all. That being said there are some classes that grant substantial benefits as "dips". These dip classes and their benefits are discussed at the end. I will not be discussing every option that exists for every class only the options that either grant an animal companion and/or modify the animal companion the base class already grants you.

## Alchemist

While the alchemist class does not normally grant an animal companion there are archetypes that do give you one. This means that if you want more than one you will either need to multiclass and/or take a feat that offers independent progression of an animal companion.

### Construct Rider

While this archetype gives you an animal companion there are a lot of limitations. To start with you can only pick from a small list of ACs. Additionally, most of the class features are added as discoveries that have alchemist level pre-reqs. This means that even if you multiclass into another class that “stacks” with this one these advanced options may not be available to you. The primary feature of making your AC a construct is a mixed bag as it comes with as many advantages as it does disadvantages. This archetype forces you to give up your 4<sup>th</sup> level discovery, the mutagen ability and it effectively replaces brew potion with craft construct. You also get 1 fewer extract at each level.

### Sacrament Alchemist(Animal/Scalykind/Scalykind(Saurian))

This archetype alters your mutagen ability so that instead of the normal benefits it lets you gain the powers of a domain for 10 min./lvl. Theoretically, you could use this ability to gain an AC though an appropriate domain. Unfortunately, because the duration is so limited and this special mutagen can not be affected by discoveries it means that most of the time the bond will vanish, causing your AC to become weaker or even a normal animal while the mutagen isn't in effect.

### Winged Marauder

This archetype requires that you count as a goblin to take it. It gives you either a direbat or giant vulture as your only options. This means that if you're a non-goblin you will need to either be a small race or take the feat undersized mount if you wish to ride it. What's nice about this option is that everything is frontloaded. So any multiclassing you do only really affects your alchemist abilities. This archetype forces you to give up your mutagen ability.

## Barbarian

The barbarian class does not normally grant an AC but there are archetypes that do give you one. This means that if you want more than one you will either need to multiclass and/or take a feat that offers independent progression of an animal companion.

### *Mad Dog*

While this archetype places no limitations on what sort of AC you can get, it doesn't do much to augment your ACs either. You get the effect of the outflank feat without gaining the feat its self, meaning that not only does it not stack with outflank but it doesn't let you qualify for other feats that have outflank as a pre-req. Your ACs do gain improved drag but having more than one AC with this ability has limited usefulness. Throat cutter is a nice ability but it comes online so late in the build (14<sup>th</sup> level) that you're unlikely to see the ability if you do much the way of multiclassing. This archetype forces you to give up 5 rage powers, uncanny dodge/improved uncanny dodge and indomitable will. It also delays your rage ability and damage reduction by 3 levels.

### *Mounted Fury*

There is very little to this archetype and so at first glance it may not seem all that great. You get an AC from a limited list and while the archetype provides buffs to your AC they only apply while you are riding them. This means that only one of your ACs can benefit from these buffs at a time. The main advantage of this archetype is that you don't get the AC until 5<sup>th</sup> level. This means that you can take the feat Animal Ally(via retraining at 4<sup>th</sup> level) to gain an additional AC progression without having to multiclass. You also lose very little taking this archetype only giving up fast movement (which shouldn't matter since you'll be mounted) and uncanny dodge/Improved uncanny dodge.

### *Shoanti Burn Rider*

This archetype gives you either a pony or horse as your only options. The archetype only buffs the AC you are riding and even then it's a minor buff. It's worth noting that your mount does not gain cinder sight which makes the ability less useful than it could be. Since you gain the AC at 4<sup>th</sup> level you don't qualify for the feat Animal Ally(via retraining at 4<sup>th</sup> level) without a 1 level dip into a class that doesn't give you an AC. This means that you can only take advantage of the delay in a limited manner. This archetype forces you to give up 4 rage powers, fast movement, uncanny dodge/improved uncanny dodge and trap sense.



## Bloodrager

Like the barbarian class, the bloodrager class does not normally grant an AC but there are archetypes that do give you one. This means that if you want more than one AC you will either need to multiclass and/or take a feat that offers independent progression of an AC.

### *Bloodrider*

There is very little to this archetype and so at first glance it may not seem all that great. You get an AC from a limited list and while the archetype provides buffs to your AC they only apply while you are riding them. This means that only one of your ACs can benefit from these buffs at a time. The main advantage of this archetype is that you don't get the AC until 5<sup>th</sup> level. This means that you can take the feat Animal Ally(via retraining at 4<sup>th</sup> level) to gain an additional AC progression without having to multiclass. You also lose very little taking this archetype only giving up fast movement (which shouldn't matter since you'll be mounted), uncanny dodge/Improved uncanny dodge and the bloodline feat gained at 9<sup>th</sup> level.

## Brawler

The brawler class does not normally grant an AC but there are archetypes that do give you one. This means that if you want more than one you will either need to multiclass and/or take a feat that offers independent progression of an animal companion.

### Wild Child

This archetype places no limitations on what sort of AC you can get. The benefits it grants to your AC are fairly costly for what you get. At low levels while you can use hunter tricks(as per the ranger skirmisher archetype) you must expend a use of martial flexibility to do so. At higher levels you start to learn the tricks directly. The biggest thing this archetype gives you is that your maneuver training class feature gets shared with your AC as well as a bonus trick to use the maneuver. Because these abilities grow with your levels in brawler it means that any multiclassing you do detracts from the benefits of this archetype. This archetype forces you to give up 7 bonus feats and close weapon mastery.

## Cavalier

The cavalier class normally provides you with an AC. As such you'll want to avoid any archetype that removes this class feature as that's counterproductive to what we're after. The cavalier class has access to a unique feat Horse Master. This feat allows your AC to progress based on your character level instead of your class level. This is huge if your build involves multi-classing. Unfortunately, you have to take 4 levels in cavalier in order to qualify for the feat and you can't actually take the feat until you are 6<sup>th</sup> level. If your build does not involve multiclassing this feat can be ignored as you'll gain no benefit from it.

### Beast Rider

This option would be fantastic as it allows the cavalier to pick from a large variety of mounts and even gives the option to pick an AC that is larger than normal. However, you lose the expert trainer class feature which is required to take the feat Horse Master. If you do not plan on multiclassing out of cavalier this is a solid option, otherwise you're pretty much forced to skip it.

### Fell Rider

This option lets you buff your mount and allows you to more easily overrun enemies. This means that any AC you are not riding does not gain these benefits. Additionally, you lose the expert trainer class feature which is required to take the feat Horse Master. Meaning this isn't even worth considering if you're multiclassing.

### First Mother's Fang

This is one of the best cavalier options you can pick. To start with while you are locked into a serpent mount, its an augmented version of the normal constrictor as its land speed is doubled and you are allowed to ride it out the gate regardless of your race. Also, the archetype is heavily front-loaded meaning that if you're doing the 4-level dip to get the feat horse master you still gain most of the benefits of this archetype. It not only gives you combat expertise for free, but it lets you take feats that require combat expertise regardless of your intelligence score. This means you can use the bonus feat it gives you at second level to grab the teamwork feat pack flanking. The only part that may be an issue is that because the mount you get is a non-standard constrictor the DM may not allow classes to stack with it that allow you to pick a normal constrictor. But even this isn't that big of a deal as horse master would let the snake advance based on your character level regardless of any other classes you take. If you are not planning on multiclassing it's still a fairly solid option. The biggest loss is that you do not get a cavalier order, instead you get some combat feats and vigilante social talents.

### *Hooded Knight*

This option doesn't give a lot for what it takes away. While your AC does gain the feytouched template it only applies to the AC you are riding, so only one at a time. Additionally, you give up the teamwork feats you would normally gain (via tactician) in exchange for some minor buffs and abilities. This is terrible when you consider that you can share your teamwork feats with your ACs. It is eligible for multi-class builds since you don't lose the expert trainer class feature.

### *Huntmaster*

This option isn't as good as it could have been. It lets you directly have multiple ACs, but you are limited to birds and dogs only. Because it only modifies expert trainer and does not remove it, it means that you still qualify for the feat horse master. Tactician however now only affects your ACs making it less useful. At higher levels your ACs get some pretty nice abilities making it worthwhile if you're not planning on multi-classing. Also, all of your ACs benefit from your challenge making this a fairly potent ability.

### *Ocean Rider*

This option lets you gain an aquatic mount which is not normally an option. However, you lose the expert trainer class feature which is required to take the feat Horse Master. Meaning this isn't even worth considering if you're multiclassing.

### *Qadiran Horselord*

This archetype gives you either a pony or horse as your only options. The archetype gives minor buffs to your AC and gives you buffs only when you're mounted. While not terrible it doesn't easily lend itself to a build involving multiple ACs. You do lose tactician meaning you miss out on the free teamwork feat that could later be shared with your ACs.

### *Saurian Champion*

This archetype lets you have a dinosaur mount. However, it weakens pretty much every other aspect of your character (you lose your order, tactician and banner). The biggest issue is that most of the benefits gained by this archetype can be gained other ways (namely the mammoth rider prestige class). While there are worse ways to go this option isn't great.

### *Standard Bearer*

For the most part this archetype lets you swap your banner ability with your mount ability (gaining the mount at 5<sup>th</sup> level and the banner at 1<sup>st</sup>). Weirdly this means you get expert trainer before gaining a mount. The result of this though is that you can take the feat Animal Ally (via retraining at 4<sup>th</sup> level) to gain an additional AC progression without having to multiclass, what's more when you do gain your mount its progression still equals your class level. You can also do

this if you multi-class, however you would need to take 5 levels in cavalier instead of just 4 as horse master doesn't do anything if cavalier isn't actually granting you an AC.

### *Vermin Tamer*

This option lets you select from mounts that are not normally options. Additionally, you get the feat Undersized Mount if the AC you pick would normally be too small. However, you lose the expert trainer class feature which is required to take the feat Horse Master. Meaning this isn't even worth considering if you're multiclassing.

### *Wave Rider*

This option lets you start with a hippocampus. While this is fantastic in aquatic settings its low ground speed makes it a terrible option for land-based adventuring. Once you're high enough level to take the feat monstrous mount, the benefits of this archetype don't outweigh the penalties.



## Cleric

The cleric class cannot gain any ACs through archetypes, but it can gain an AC through its domains. Because a cleric can pick two domains it's possible to gain multiple AC progressions through its domains alone. This is helpful because as a caster class you will want to keep multiclassing to a minimum.

### *Animal/Scalykind/Scalykind(Saurian) Domains*

This domain grants you an AC at 4<sup>th</sup> level. Unfortunately, this means that it is incompatible with the feat Animal Ally(retraining at 4<sup>th</sup> level) unless you take a level in something else that does not give you an AC. This however delays your spell casting which is not ideal. There are no deities that grant both the Animal domain and Scalykind domain meaning if you want both you'll have to take the separatist cleric archetype (though this will delay gaining the 2<sup>nd</sup> AC progression until 6<sup>th</sup> level). It is worth noting that while the animal domain's progression equals class level minus 3, Scalykind is only class level minus 2. Meaning that if you worship a deity that gives the animal domain, the level hit to Scalykind isn't as bad.

### *Chivalry Inquisition*

Clerics are allowed to take inquisitions in place of a domain and the chivalry inquisition gives you a mount at 1<sup>st</sup> level. The downside is that inquisitions don't grant bonus spells and since it's not a domain it's not an eligible choice as a secondary domain for the Ecclesitheurge archetype without DM approval.

## Druid

The druid class normally provides you with an AC. As such you'll want to avoid any archetype that removes this class feature as that's counterproductive to what we're after. Additionally, because druids are primarily spellcasters you will want to keep multiclassing to a minimum, making some options impractical.

### *Animal Domain*

While druids can take the animal domain, you gain this domain in exchange for your animal companion meaning that at most you are just delaying your animal companion's progression in exchange for some other abilities. This domain grants you an AC at 4<sup>th</sup> level. Unfortunately, this means that it is incompatible with the feat Animal Ally(retraining at 4<sup>th</sup> level) unless you take a level in something else that does not give you an AC. This however delays your spell casting which is not ideal.

### *Fungal Pilgrim*

This gives your AC the fungal creature template. However, you give up wild shape making this a poor exchange.

### *Goliath Druid*

This gives you a dinosaur or megafauna AC that you can always cast enlarge person on (even if they lack the share spells trait). The nice thing about this archetype is that all you give up is flexibility. If you were planning on getting a dinosaur or megafauna anyway then this isn't an issue.

### *Nature Priest*

This archetype would allow you to pick Scalykind domain or even the chivalry inquisition. However, because you still only get one domain there is little advantage over just having the normal druid animal companion.

### *Pack Lord*

This archetype lets you directly have multiple animal companions. At essentially no cost (you lose the additional use of wildshape at 6<sup>th</sup> level). Unfortunately, because it alters your nature bond it means that you can not take any other druid archetypes in this list without DM approval.

## Season Keeper

This archetype lets you infuse your AC each day granting it additional abilities. These abilities increase as you gain levels. While most of the abilities gained are highly situational the 3<sup>rd</sup> level spirit of summer ability is quite nice as it makes all of your healing spells grant fast healing 2 in addition to their normal effect. You lose trackless step, venom immunity and timeless body. Overall, what you gain is probably slightly better than what you give up.

## Sunrider

This archetype forces you to pick a horse or pony as your AC. While it gives you benefits while mounted it does not convey any additional benefits to your mount. Instead of being able to wildshape you can give allied mounts traits as if they were animal companions. This could be good if you have a fully mounted group, but I can't help but imagine that if the group is fully mounted many of these abilities could end up being redundant. The same issue happens if you have multiple animal companions. Half of what they would gain would be abilities they already have by virtue of being ACs.

## Supernaturalist

This archetype allows you to pick a plant animal companion (as per the treesinger druid archetype), without having to meet any sort of racial requirements. You do however trade away many of your nature based abilities (including wildshape) for psychic abilities. This would be rated higher except if you just want the ability to pick a plant companion you can do so by taking the feat curious companion.

## Treesinger

This archetype allows you to pick a plant animal companion, which is not normally an option. However, you must either be an elf or a vine leshy in order to take this archetype. It does make it so that your wildshape now only allows you to assume plant forms.

## Hunter

The hunter class normally provides you with an AC. As such you'll want to avoid any archetype that removes this class feature as that's counterproductive to what we're after. Additionally, the base hunter class provides some of the biggest buffs to your ACs. Allowing you to share all of your teamwork feats with them, giving you a bonus teamwork feat every 3 levels and granting permanent buffs via Animal Focus. For this reason, careful consideration must be taken with any archetype that trades these abilities away.

### Chameleon Adept

This archetype gets rid of your free shared teamwork feats to give you a limited use ability for your animal companions to use alter self and eventually wildshape. Otherwise it trades most of your ACs combat utility for non-combat utility. Depending on the campaign this could be quite useful but overall this will be a downgrade, especially at lower levels.

### Divine Hunter

While it clearly goes against the RAI of this archetype, you can directly gain an additional AC progression using this archetype by selecting the Scalykind domain or Scalykind(Saurian) subdomain. However, you do lose your teamwork feats in exchange for a template based on your alignment.

### Feykiller

This archetype swaps out some of the more useful offensive animal focuses for less useful defensive/utility animal focuses. This wouldn't be so bad if it weren't largely incompatible with most other archetypes you might consider taking.

### Flood Flourisher

This archetype trades out the teamwork feats you would normally get for an assortment of other feats that get shared with your AC. This would be quite nice except half the abilities only function when you are in water. If you're in an aquatic campaign this is great, otherwise what you're gaining probably isn't worth what you lose.

### Packmaster

This archetype directly allows you to have multiple ACs without making you give up anything. The replacement abilities work exactly the same if you only have one AC and just give methods to make the abilities work in a balanced manner with multiple ACs. The only downside to this archetype is that it is an archetype instead of simply being an alternative ruleset. Which means that taking it bars you from other archetypes you might consider. The one point of contention with this archetype is that because Pack Bond states that it replaces animal companion (instead

of modify) it creates some ambiguity about how the ability works. By RAW it doesn't let you teach the AC hunter tricks, but also by RAW you can't replace an AC or even gain one to begin with. These details are all spelled out in the ability that has supposedly been replaced. As such it seems the intention of this ability is that it should modify not replace the animal companion ability normally gained by hunters.

### *Patient Ambusher*

This archetype gives up your teamwork feats and your ability to raise your ACs for free in exchange for the ability to find, disarm and create traps.

### *Pelagic Hunter*

This archetype allows you to gain an aquatic AC and replaces your normal animal focus abilities with a reasonable replacement set of underwater themed abilities. If the campaign is heavily aquatic this is probably quite nice, otherwise it's an easy pass.

### *Plant Master*

This archetype allows you to gain a plant AC and replaces your normal animal focus abilities with a reasonable replacement set of plant themed abilities. I would rate this higher except if you want a plant companion you can have one by taking the feat curious companion and while the plant themed focus abilities are interesting. They don't strike me as better, just different.

### *Primal Companion Hunter*

This archetype allows you to trade out the permanent bonuses granted by animal focus in exchange for temporary evolutions. This isn't as good as it first looks. To start with a hunter can normally apply animal focus to themselves, this ability can only be used on yourself when all of your ACs are dead, which is hopefully never. Additionally, when used on your ACs animal focus normally lasts until you change it. Now, instead it's a limited 1 min/lvl ability. Also, the evolutions you pick are fixed. You cannot dynamically add abilities until 8<sup>th</sup> level, and even then only once per day. Also, keep in mind when activated it only applies to one of your ACs. You would need to activate it multiple times (and thus use up the duration faster) in order to have more than 1 AC benefit from this ability.

### *Scarab Stalker*

This archetype is just a desert theme that swaps out some of your animal foci and woodland stride abilities for desert versions. Not better or worse just different.



## *Totem-Bonded*

This archetype lets your AC increase in size when it reaches an effective level of 7. Your animal focus ability is exchanged for something similar that depends on your AC. Though you can only activate it with one AC at a time and its bonuses wouldn't stack, you would be able to select different bonuses allowing you to burn though the ability faster for a greater benefit. What's nice is that while active you can communicate with your AC directly and you can push it to perform tricks it doesn't know (which includes all of the hunter's tricks) as a free action.

## *Urban Hunter*

This archetype makes your AC seem like a non-threatening domesticated animal and generally trades away abilities in order to make your AC draw less attention while you're in a city. If you're playing an intrigue type game this is probably very helpful. Otherwise, you're giving up power in exchange for subterfuge that may be wasted in other games.

## *Verminous Hunter*

This archetype allows you to gain a vermin AC and replaces your normal animal focus abilities with a reasonable replacement set of vermin themed abilities. I would rate this higher except if you want a vermin companion you can have one by taking the feat curious companion and while the vermin themed focus abilities are interesting. They don't strike me as better, just different.

## Inquisitor

Inquisitors do not naturally gain an AC. However, they are able to gain them through archetypes and inquisitions.

### *Animal/Scalykind/Scalykind(Saurian) Domains*

While inquisitors can take these domains, the abilities granted are weaker than what you could get taking an inquisition. It's worth noting that these domain grants you an AC at 4<sup>th</sup> level. This means that it is incompatible with the feat Animal Ally(retraining at 4<sup>th</sup> level) unless you take a level in something else that does not give you an AC. This however delays your other abilities which is not ideal.

### *Chivalry Inquisition*

The chivalry inquisition gives you a mount at 1<sup>st</sup> level and can be taken by any archetype that doesn't trade away your domain.

### *Sacred Huntsmaster*

This archetype basically turns you into a hunter by giving you their best abilities. You trade your judgements for an AC, Animal Focus and a Free Raise Dead you can use on ACs. You trade solo tactics for hunter tactics, letting you automatically share your teamwork feats with your ACs.

### *Ravener Hunter*

This archetype trades away your domain ability for an oracle mystery from a specific list. This list includes both the lunar and nature mysteries each of which can grant you an AC. By the RAW this archetype isn't compatible with Sacred Huntsmaster because both alter solo tactics. However, they don't alter solo tactics in a way that is incompatible and so it would be possible with DM approval.

## Kineticist

The kineticist class does not normally grant an AC but there are archetypes that do give you one. This means that if you want more than one you will either need to multiclass and/or take a feat that offers independent progression of an animal companion.

### *Cinderlands Adept*

This archetype gives you either a pony or horse as your only options. The archetype only buffs the AC you are riding and even then it's a minor buff. Since you gain the AC at 4<sup>th</sup> level you don't qualify for the feat Animal Ally(via retraining at 4<sup>th</sup> level) without a 1 level dip into a class that doesn't give you an AC. This means that you can only take advantage of the delay in a limited manner.

## Occultist

The occultist class does not normally grant an AC but there are archetypes that do give you one. This means that if you want more than one you will either need to multiclass and/or take a feat that offers independent progression of an animal companion.

### *Reliquarian (Animal/Scalykind/Scalykind(Saurian) Domains)*

This archetype trades away one of your implement powers in exchange for a domain. It's worth noting that these domains grant you an AC at 4<sup>th</sup> level. This means that it is incompatible with the feat Animal Ally(retraining at 4<sup>th</sup> level) unless you take a level in something else that does not give you an AC. This however delays your other abilities which is not ideal.

### *Reliquarian (Chivalry Inquisition)*

This archetype trades away one of your implement powers in exchange for a domain. While this does mean that you can take an inquisition instead of a domain, this is a bad choice. One of the things this archetype does is it adds the domain spells to your spell list and spells known. Inquisitions do not have spells associated with them meaning you lose 6 spells known by picking an inquisition.

## Oracle

Oracles do not naturally gain an AC. However, they are able to gain them through mysteries.

### *Lunar/Nature Mystery*

These mysteries allow an oracle each offer an option that grants an AC. These ACs when gained have a progression equal to your oracle level. It's worth noting that while these CAN be taken at first level you do not have to take them at first level. This means that you can take the feat Animal Ally to gain multiple ACs without having to multiclass out of oracle. Instead, you merely pick the option that grants you an AC (normally or with the feat extra revelation) after taking Animal Ally. You don't even miss out on progression doing this since the ACs progression is always equal to your oracle level regardless when the ability is picked up.



## Paladin

The paladin class normally provides you with an AC. As such you'll want to avoid any archetype that removes this class feature as that's counterproductive to what we're after. The paladin's mount is unique in that it specifically starts with an intelligence score of 6. This means that it starts off being able to take any feat it is physically capable of using. At higher levels it automatically gains the celestial template and spell resistance. It's worth noting these abilities are gained based on the Mount's effective level, not your paladin level meaning you don't miss out on these benefits should you choose to multiclass. That being said luckily there's very little reason to multi-class. You don't normally gain your paladin mount until 5<sup>th</sup> level. This means that you can take the feat Animal Ally(via retraining at 4<sup>th</sup> level) to gain an additional AC progression without having to multiclass.

### *Empyreal Knight*

This archetype causes your mount to gain the celestial template 3 levels earlier and grants it winged flight at higher levels.

### *Kraken Slayer*

This archetype allows you to gain an aquatic mount. If the campaign is heavily aquatic this is probably quite nice, otherwise it's an easy pass.

### *Oathbound (Oath against the Wyrms)*

This archetype allows your mount to gain the same immunities you gain from your auras. However, your auras now no longer affect your other allies at all.

### *Oathbound (Oath of Vengeance)*

This archetype allows the paladin to expend a use of smite evil to grant the bonus damage to their allies within 10 feet. This can be considerable since your multiple ACs would be considered allies.

### *Pearl Seeker*

This archetype lets you get a hippocampus. While this is fantastic in aquatic settings its low ground speed makes it a terrible option for land-based adventuring. Once you're high enough level to take the feat monstrous mount, the benefits of this archetype probably don't outweigh the penalties.

### *Sacred Servant*

This archetype gives you a domain, meaning you can gain an AC via the Animal or Scalykind domains. Unfortunately, you no longer get a mount as your sacred bond. Additionally, this domain is at your level-3 so you end up giving up a powerful mount for a substantially weaker AC.

### *Scion of Talmador*

This archetype replaces your divine bond with a giant eagle AC. I would rate this higher except there are easy methods to expand your normal AC options without having to give up the buffs normally provided by the paladin class's divine bond class feature.

## Ranger

The ranger class normally provides you with an AC. As such you'll want to avoid any archetype that removes this class feature as that's counterproductive to what we're after. You don't normally gain your AC until 4<sup>th</sup> level. This means that you can't take the feat Animal Ally (via retraining at 4<sup>th</sup> level) to gain an additional AC progression without multiclassing into a class that doesn't grant an AC. Additionally, your overall progression is normally your ranger level -3 meaning the AC you get is naturally weaker than the one provided by other classes.

### Beastmaster

This archetype lets you directly have multiple animal companions. At essentially no cost (you lose your 6<sup>th</sup> level combat feat and camouflage). Unfortunately, because it alters your hunter's bond it means that you cannot take any other ranger archetypes in this list without DM approval. At 12+ your AC progression equals your ranger level instead of it being your ranger level-3.

### Dungeon Rover

This archetype allows you to gain a vermin AC and replaces your normal abilities with a replacement set of vermin themed abilities. I would rate this higher except if you want a vermin companion you can have one by taking the feat curious companion and while the vermin themed abilities are interesting. They don't strike me as better, just different.

### Falconer

This archetype allows you to pick up an AC at first level, though it does not become full strength until 4<sup>th</sup> level. While the archetype limits you to only selecting birds this isn't a problem since there are ways to expand your available AC options.

### Horse Lord

This archetype is essentially the same as the beastmaster archetype except you must choose the mounted combat style, you must choose your AC from a limited list, and instead of losing your 6<sup>th</sup> level combat feat, you give up hide in plain sight (at 17<sup>th</sup> level) for a once per day ability to give your AC a bunch of temporary hp. At 12+ your AC progression equals your ranger level instead of it being your ranger level-3.

### Jungle Lord

This archetype lets you have multiple ACs, but only up to 4. At 12+ your AC progression equals your ranger level instead of it being your ranger level-3. While on the face of things it seems like it's just as good as beastmaster, unlike that archetype jungle lord changes your weapon and armor proficiencies and replaces your Favored Enemy with a version of the Hunter's Animal

focus, which you can only use on yourself not your ACs. Depending on your build these may be welcome replacements but then again maybe not.

### *Raven Master*

This archetype only allows you to select a bird as an AC. However, the AC gains additional abilities as it levels. Such as being able to take on a statuette form allowing it to gain all of the advantages and none of the disadvantageous of a figurine companion.

### *Realm Wanderer*

This archetype allows you to apply the Fiendish template to your AC. However, the AC takes a penalty to its attack rolls equal to 1/5 (min. of 1) of your ranger level. This archetype would be more appealing if it allowed you to gain an AC before 4<sup>th</sup> level or if it didn't have the penalty to hit.

### *Sable Company Marine*

This archetype allows you to gain a hippogriff AC at 2<sup>nd</sup> level with it's effective level equal to your ranger level -1. This makes hippogriffs a valid choice for any other abilities that grant you an AC.



## Samurai

The samurai class normally provides you with an AC. As such you'll want to avoid any archetype that removes this class feature as that's counterproductive to what we're after. None of the archetypes or orders have any meaningful impact on the mount class feature with regard to having multiple mounts.



## Shaman

The shaman class cannot gain any ACs through archetypes, but it can gain an AC through its spirits.

### *Mammoth, Nature*

The true spirit abilities of these options allow the spirit guide to turn into an AC. Unfortunately, because these abilities are not gained until 16<sup>th</sup> level it makes this option only slightly better than leveling in a class that doesn't grant an AC at all. On the plus side its progression equals your shaman level when you do finally get it.

## Sorcerer

While the sorcerer class does not normally grant an animal companion there are archetypes that do give you one. This means that if you want more than one you will either need to multiclass and/or take a feat that offers independent progression of an animal companion.

### *Wildblooded (Sylvan)*

This option replaces your bloodline arcana and your 1<sup>st</sup> level bloodline ability with an AC equal to your sorcerer level -3 (min. of 1). It's worth noting that you actually gain this AC at 1<sup>st</sup> level unlike in spite of the slowed progression. This makes it a much weaker option than other classes that give you an AC at 1<sup>st</sup> level.

## Spiritualist

While the spiritualist class does not normally grant an animal companion there are archetypes that do give you one. This means that if you want more than one you will either need to multiclass and/or take a feat that offers independent progression of an animal companion.

### *Priest of the fallen (Animal/Scalykind/Scalykind(Saurian))*

This archetype allows you to gain any 2 cleric domains at 17<sup>th</sup> level. This means that even though no deity grants both the animal and scalykind domains you can still pick them. This allows you to immediately gain 2 AC progressions. I would rate this ability higher were it not gained at such a late level.

### *Totem Spiritualist*

This archetype turns your phantom into an AC that has the special abilities of a phantom instead of the ones normally gained by an AC. Unfortunately, because it is still treated as a phantom it otherwise does not stack with other ACs you might gain.

## Vigilante

While the vigilante class does not normally grant an animal companion there are archetypes that do give you one. This means that if you want more than one you will either need to multiclass and/or take a feat that offers independent progression of an animal companion.

### *Mounted Fury*

This archetype grants you an AC instead of gaining a vigilante specialization. Similar to the hunter class the mounted fury gets bonus teamwork feats that are automatically shared with its ACs. However, when the vigilante is riding an AC they count as a single creature for purposes of teamwork feats, effectively making them disappear when mounted. The rest of the abilities it gives you are bonuses that are only gained when mounted. Luckily, with more than one AC the mounted fury and its mount can still benefit from all of its class features at the same time.

## Warpriest

While the warpriest class does not normally grant an animal companion there are archetypes that do give you one. This means that if you want more than one you will either need to multiclass and/or take a feat that offers independent progression of an animal companion.

### *Divine Commander*

This archetype gives you an AC in exchange for your blessings. They gain a free teamwork feats at 3<sup>rd</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> level (though this is not automatically shared with the AC) and at 6<sup>th</sup> level their mount gains a template or two based on the warpriest's alignment. Because this AC is gained at 1<sup>st</sup> level and many of it's abilities are based on the warpriest's level it can be challenging to get more than one full progression AC without delaying your abilities.



## Prestige Classes

There are some prestige classes which can grant an animal companion. However, keep in mind that these classes generally do not advance any of your base classes meaning that if the base class gave you multiple AC progressions, the prestige class likely will not.

### *Asavir*

This prestige class gives you a horse animal companion equal to your level +2. It also grants some additional buffs to your mount. I would rate this higher except that it imposes some severe limitations. It limits you to a horse mount and it caps your horse's level such that it cannot exceed your character level. If you were already planning on having a horse that didn't exceed your character level then this is fine. Otherwise it's not as good as it could have been.

### *Chernasardo Warden*

This prestige class has the aligned class feature, which allows you to pick a single class and advance it gaining everything you would normally get. Unfortunately, it only grants this at every even level meaning that it will cause your advancement to lag.

### *Dawnflower Anchorite*

This prestige class has the credence class feature, which allows you to pick a single class feature and that allows levels in this prestige class to stack with levels that grant the class feature for purposes of determining it for a single class that grants you the class feature. While you don't gain this until 2<sup>nd</sup> level it retroactively applies for all levels of the prestige class. Unfortunately, it only counts once even if you have multiple classes that grant you the class feature as it can only be taken once and only stacks with a single class.

### *Diabolist (PZO9213)*

This prestige class comes from "Pathfinder Chronicles: Princes of Darkness, Book of the Damned Vol. I". Another prestige class by the same name was presented in a later book. In any case, this gives you an imp that acts like an animal companion and uses a modified version of the animal progression table. There is no indication that this companion stacks with other classes that grant an animal companion. Additionally, since Imp is not a normal option for an animal companion it means that there is no way to have other progressions stack with this class. This means that by default your animal companion can only gain 10 levels though boon companion would allow it to gain another 4 levels. It would make for an interesting choice if there was a way to stack it with other progressions.

## *Evangelist*

This prestige class has the aligned class feature, which allows you to pick a single class and advance it gaining everything you would normally get. It actually grants this at every level starting from 2<sup>nd</sup> meaning it will only delay you a single class level. While the class does not directly grant an animal companion or enhance them, there are obediences that can. You are however, limited to only the obedience abilities listed under evangelist and taking levels in this class prevents you from mixing and matching abilities via feats.

## *Green Faith Acolyte*

Levels in this prestige class count as ½ a druid level for purposes of your animal companion. This makes the class less appealing than it could have been.

## *Mammoth Rider*

This prestige class greatly enhances your animal companion's combat abilities. To start with it retro-actively alters all of your animal companion choices to a list that includes some of the best options out there. Because it alters the base list of all progressions you have it means that now all of your progressions stack regardless how disparate they were. Additionally, it automatically increases the size of your animal companion to huge. It also automatically gains bonuses to str and con at regular intervals (starting at 1<sup>st</sup>). This means that the class is both useful as a 1 level dip and can be great for all 10 levels depending on what your base class gives you.

## *Nature Warden*

This prestige class fully stacks with all other classes without restrictions. It also additional abilities to your animal companion, including everything the warden themselves gain (though not until 5<sup>th</sup> level). This class is heavily focused on casters and favored terrains meaning that if your character doesn't fall into those categories it is probably less useful.

## *Rage Prophet*

This prestige class has the savage seer class feature, which allows it to stack with levels in oracle for purposes of mysteries. This means it will stack with and advance the animal companion gained via the nature or lunar mysteries.



### *Sacred Sentinel*

This prestige class has the renewed bonds class feature, which allows you to pick a single class feature that is a “bond” and that allows levels in this prestige class to stack with levels that grant the class feature for purposes of determining it for a single class that grants you the class feature. While you don’t gain this until 2<sup>nd</sup> level it retroactively applies for all levels of the prestige class.

### *Stargazer*

This prestige class allows advancement of all domains for clerics. This means that if you are a cleric with multiple domains that grant animal companions it will advance all of them or at least it would. Unfortunately, you must worship Pulura in order to take this prestige class and Pulura does not normally grant a domain that gives an animal companion. This means that at most you would only have 1 domain that grants an animal companion via the separatist archetype.

## How does multiclassing fit in?

As you read though the classes you've probably noticed me mention multiclassing and are probably wondering why you would want to multiclass. There are really only two reasons you should multiclass.

### *To gain an ability/option your primary class doesn't give you*

This makes sense, you mainly plan on taking levels in class A, but you really want the ability Class B gives you. Maybe you need 1 level in class B maybe you need 4. When it comes to these sort of level dips you want to get the thing from class B asap and then go back to class A. That way it minimizes the impact of your build overall. For classes that aren't full casters this isn't quite so bad. But for full casters you really don't want to do more than 1 level dip like this if you can help it. Otherwise you'll lag behind in spells which is the most powerful aspect of your class, no matter how awesome your ACs might be.

### *To delay your AC progression*

It might seem counter-intuitive that you would ever want to delay your progression. The main reason to do this is the feat Animal Ally. It can't be taken until 4<sup>th</sup> level (and only then if you retrain) and while it gives you an AC one of the pre-requisites is that you can't already have one. This means if you gain an AC at or before 4<sup>th</sup> level you never qualify for this feat. The feat even states that if you gain an AC after taking the feat, it stacks. So, it's a valid way to get multiple ACs. Some classes/archetypes don't give you your AC until 5<sup>th</sup> level making this an easy way to pick up an extra AC with its own progression. More often though, the class/archetype gives you an AC at 4<sup>th</sup> level, which, because feats are chosen AFTER you pick your class it just doesn't work. So, you need 1 level, just 1 level in order to take advantage of this feat.

## So, what are good multiclassing options?

It really depends on what you're after. These can be broken into a couple of different categories.

### *Splitting AC levels*

As I stated at the beginning, if you want multiple of the same AC then you MUST have at least 1 level in one of the following classes. Thankfully many of these don't place a lot of limitations on what you can pick as an AC and so they stack with anything else you might have.

Class	Archetype	Reasoning
Cavalier	Huntmaster	Can only pick dogs or birds as ACs, but gives full BAB and a free teamwork feat
Druid	Pack Lord	Few limitations on AC choice, imposes druidic limitations and you gain 1 level of a casting class you'll likely never advance.
Hunter	Packmaster	Few limitations on AC choice, gives Animal Focus as a bonus
Ranger	Beastmaster	Can only pick from a limited list of ACs, gives full BAB, but requires a 4 level dip.
Ranger	Jungle Lord	Can only pick from a limited list of ACs, gives full BAB, but requires a 4 level dip and only allows you to have up to 4 ACs.

### *One level to delay AC progression*

If you need 1 level to delay things but want to get something good for your trouble, the following are all reasonable options.

Class	Option	Reasoning
Oracle	Lunar/Nature Mystery	Level can be "bought back" with the feat extra revelation, no BAB, you gain 1 level of a casting class you'll likely never advance
Monk	Sohei	Can gain the feat Mounted Skirmisher as a bonus feat, effectively gives you pounce and flurry, no BAB except when flurrying
Fighter	None	Free bonus combat feat and full BAB



## Extra AC with character level based progression

Cavalier's have access to the feat Horse Master which makes it so that your mount progresses based on your character level instead of your class level. However, it requires a class ability (expert trainer) which is not gained by cavaliers until 4<sup>th</sup> level. The feat its self can't be taken until 6<sup>th</sup> level or higher because it requires 6 ranks in the ride skill. This means that you can get an AC based on your character level with a 4 level dip in cavalier. The following are the least painful methods of doing this "dip".

Class	Option	Reasoning
Cavalier	First Mother's Fang	Gives 2 free exotic WP, gives an advanced AC, Gives Combat Expertise for free, Gives a bonus combat feat which can be used to pick up Pack Flanking. All in exchange for abilities that weren't going to progress anyway.
Cavalier	Huntmaster	Gives the ability to split your progression, meaning if your base class doesn't do this huntmaster will both grant you this ability and give you an AC progression based on your character level.

## Additional AC Options

Some classes/archetypes/feats heavily restrict what you can pick as an AC. While there are some feats that give additional options there are classes that do as well.

Class	Option	Reasoning
Mammoth Rider	Prestige Class	You have to be 10 <sup>th</sup> level before you can take this class but the 1 <sup>st</sup> level has major benefits. In addition to expanding what you can pick as an AC. It also makes whatever AC you pick Huge, giving it improved stats and reach. The class also has a full progression BAB.
Ranger	Sable Company Marine	This requires a 2 level dip but it grants you the feat monstrous mount allowing you to pick a hippogriff as an AC.

## Are there any good feats/traits?

Like the level dips it really depends on what you're after. I have broken feats/traits down into various categories. Some feats appear in multiple lists because they provide multiple benefits.

### *Extra AC with character level based progression*

Gaining an AC through a feat is the most straightforward way to have more than 1 AC. Since it doesn't matter what other options you've selected and it isn't negatively impacted by multiclassing. The main thing to pay attention to is what limitations (if any) the feat imposes on your choice. Since the feat will only stack if the animal you've picked via the feat is a valid choice for any other abilities that are granting you an AC and vice versa.

Feat	Limitations
Animal Ally	Can't be taken before 4 <sup>th</sup> level, requires that you don't already have an AC
Eldritch Heritage [Sylvan]*	None. Requires DM approval as this use goes against the RAI
Fiendish Obedience [Sentinel, Baphomet]	Requires worship of a specific deity and alignment must be LE. AC cannot realistically be gained before 13 <sup>th</sup> level.
Horse Master	Requires a minimum of 4 levels in cavalier

### *AC progression booster*

Some progressions don't give you your full character level and/or class level. These feats can help you shore up those holes. However, with the exception of Magical Enigma they will not allow you to exceed your character level making these feats less useful if you are pursuing a progression that exceeds this limit.

Feat	Limitations
Beast Rider	Must count as an orc or half-orc. Must be 7 <sup>th</sup> level and have an AC. The benefits apply to all ACs but only if they are of a type granted by this feat.
Boon Companion	Must have an AC and the benefits only apply to a single AC. Can be selected more than once, but must apply to a different AC each time.
Huntmaster	Must count as human, must have an AC. Benefits apply to all ACs of a type chosen from a limited list when the feat is taken.
Magical Enigma	Only applies to ACs gained through bloodlines, revelations or spirits and must have at least 1 level in a class that grants the bloodline, revelation or spirit ability.

## Additional AC Options

Some classes/archetypes/feats heavily restrict what you can pick as an AC. These feats expand your options for all class features that meet the feat's pre-reqs. This means that multiple otherwise incompatible progressions can be merged together, by picking an option granted by one of these feats.

Feat	Limitations and Benefits
Beast Rider	Must count as an Orc or Half-orc. Must be 7 <sup>th</sup> level and must have an AC or Mount. Lets you pick from a limited list of ACs.
Beast Speaker	Must be 7 <sup>th</sup> level, must have an AC that's 7 <sup>th</sup> level. Lets you pick from a limited list of special ACs.
Companion Figurine	Must own a figurine of wondrous power. Lets you choose your figurine to be an AC.
Curious Companion	Must have an AC. Lets you pick any plant companion and any vermin companion as an AC.
Genie-Touched Companion	Must have 13 cha., must have an AC. This allows you to pick a horse with additional abilities.
Monstrous Mount	Must have a mount. Lets you pick from a specific list of special ACs provided you meet additional prerequisites, as specified by the choice.
Ooze Companion	Must have Wild empathy and an AC. This allows you to select an ooze companion from a limited list, based on your level that can only learn limited tricks.
Sable Company Marine	Must be 6 <sup>th</sup> level, must have 4 levels in ranger. You can select a hippogriff as an AC, which gets +2 on its saves vs fear when near you.
Skaveling Companion	Must be 7 <sup>th</sup> level in a class that grants an AC and must count as an urdefhan. You can select a Skaveling Bat as an AC.
Vermin Companion	Must have Wild empathy and an AC. This allows you to select an AC from a limited list of special vermin companions, based on your level.

## AC Augmenters

Some feats/traits apply archetypes or otherwise enhance your AC in some way.

Trait	Limitations	Benefit
Beastkin	Social trait	Lets you use speak with animals at will with a single chosen animal type.
Blackthorn Rancher	Region trait	Each AC gains +3 hitpoints
Rider's Bond	Combat trait, horses only	Each horse AC from a class ability gains 2 bonus tricks
Thoroughbred	Race trait (Human-Keleshite), horses only	Each horse AC from a class ability gains 1 bonus trick and +5 base speed
Mount Traits	Varies as per specific trait	Taking one of these counts as a trait and by the RAW it grants its benefit to only a single AC.
Vermin Driver	Racial trait, vermin only	Lets vermin you train know 3 tricks while keeping the mindless trait. The mindless trait prevents the AC from learning skills or feats making this a poor trade. This trait does nothing for vermin that already have an int of 1+.

Feat	Limitations	Benefit
Andoren Falconry	Must have Cha 13, Animal Affinity Class feature and must have an AC	Bird of Prey ACs you have each gain a single bonus from a list of options.
Celestial Servant	Must count as an Aasimar, applies to only a single AC.	AC gains celestial template
Corpse Companion	Must count as a ghoul, must have an AC	Your AC becomes undead. Can only apply to one AC at a time.
Evolved Companion	Must have a Cha 13 and must have an AC	Your AC gains a single 1-point evolution (excluding reach and pounce). Can be taken multiple times. All evolutions only apply to the last AC you acquired.
Favored Animal Focus	Must have an AC and must have the Animal Focus class feature.	Increases the benefits of a chosen Animal Focus by 1 step.
Spirit's Gift	Must have an AC.	Grants a once per day ability based on the spirit chosen. Can choose a different spirit each day.
Stalker's Focus	Must be level 3, must not have the Animal Focus class feature	Choose an Animal Focus, you and your ACs can gain that focus 1/day for 1 minute. Using your Character level to determine it's benefits.

Totem Beast	Must have a Wis 13, must have an AC.	AC permanently gains an Animal Focus that levels with the AC. DM call if this applies to 1 AC or all AC.
Pack Tactics	Must have Int 13 and must have an AC.	Your AC counts as having all of your teamwork feats for purposes of others benefiting from those feats. AC does not gain any benefit themselves. DM call if this applies to 1 AC or all ACs.
Vampiric Companion	Must count as a Dhampir or Vampire, must be non-good and must be 10 <sup>th</sup> level in a class that grants you an AC. Only applies to a single AC, can be taken multiple times to apply to multiple ACs.	AC becomes undead, gains fast healing 5 and an additional ability if you are a vampire, based on what type of vampire you are.



# What about Animal Companion Archetypes?

Normally when evaluating animal companion archetypes you would only consider how it interacts with the character. You don't typically consider how it would interact with other archetypes or even another AC with the same archetype. Some classes (namely cavalier) do not give their AC the share spells class feature. As a result, they can not apply any archetype that replaces this class feature.

The following table's sections are as follows

**Archetype:** The animal companion archetype

**Replaces Share Spells:** If the archetype replaces the share spells class feature

**Synergizes With:** If an archetype is listed, this archetype synergizes with another AC that possess the archetype listed. If a teamwork feat is listed, this archetype is enhanced if the AC and one or more allies have the listed feat.

**Reasoning:** What aspects of the archetype synergize with what's been listed.

Archetype	Replaces Share Spells?	Synergizes with	Reasoning
Aberrant Companion	Yes	none	no notable synergy exists
Accursed Companion	No	none	no notable synergy exists
Ambusher	Yes	Bodyguard (archetype) + Lookout(feat); Monk(Sohei) + Lookout(feat)	Can always act during surprise round and all enemies are treated as flat-footed against the ambusher during surprise rounds. Ambusher deals extra damage during the surprise round
Apex Species	Yes	none	no notable synergy exists
Augmented Companion	Yes	Augmented Companion (archetype)	Both animal companions can be healed by the same channel energy that heals constructs.
Auspice	Yes	none	no notable synergy exists
Bodyguard	Yes	Bodyguard (archetype) + Lookout(feat); Monk(Sohei) + Lookout(feat)	Both animal companions always act during the surprise round and always get both a move and standard action during the surprise round.
Bully	Yes	none	no notable synergy exists
Charger	No	none	no notable synergy exists
Daredevil	Yes	none	no notable synergy exists
Deathtouched Companion	Yes	Deathtouched (archetype)	Both animal companions can be healed by the same negative channel energy to heal undead.
Draconic Companion	Yes	none	no notable synergy exists
Elemental Companion	No	none	no notable synergy exists
Feytouched	Yes	none	no notable synergy exists
Precocious Companion	No	none	no notable synergy exists
Racer	Yes	Racer (archetype)	Both animal companions can sprint (charge) against the same enemy



Totem Guide	No	Totem Guide (archetype) + same animal type	Both animal companions can talk with each other directly.
Tracker	Yes	none	no notable synergy exists
Unexpected Intellectual	Yes	none	no notable synergy exists
Verdant companion	Yes	none	no notable synergy exists
Wrecker	Yes	none	no notable synergy exists

