



THE SKINK AMBUSH

(PLAYER LEVEL: 5-6)

In this encounter, the players are traveling through a dense, ruin-strewn jungle when they find themselves ambushed by a patrol squad of skinks.

ENCOUNTER CONTEXT

The only context needed for this encounter is that the players are traveling through a dangerous jungle. They may or may not know about the presence of the skinks before this encounter, and if they don't, it can serve as a good introduction to how they fight.

LEAD UP

The players will enter from the lower left corner of the map, and their path will take them across the bridge. Have the skinks make Dexterity (Stealth) checks before the encounter to determine how well hidden they are. If they don't beat the Passive Perception of the players, the players will notice something lying in wait in the bushes once they can see across the river.

If the players are stealthily enough to not be detected by the skinks, the skinks won't be aware of their presence until they step into a clearing or try to cross the bridge, at which point, the players can't remain hidden.

Unless the skinks are attacked first, they will wait to strike until the players are partway across the bridge.

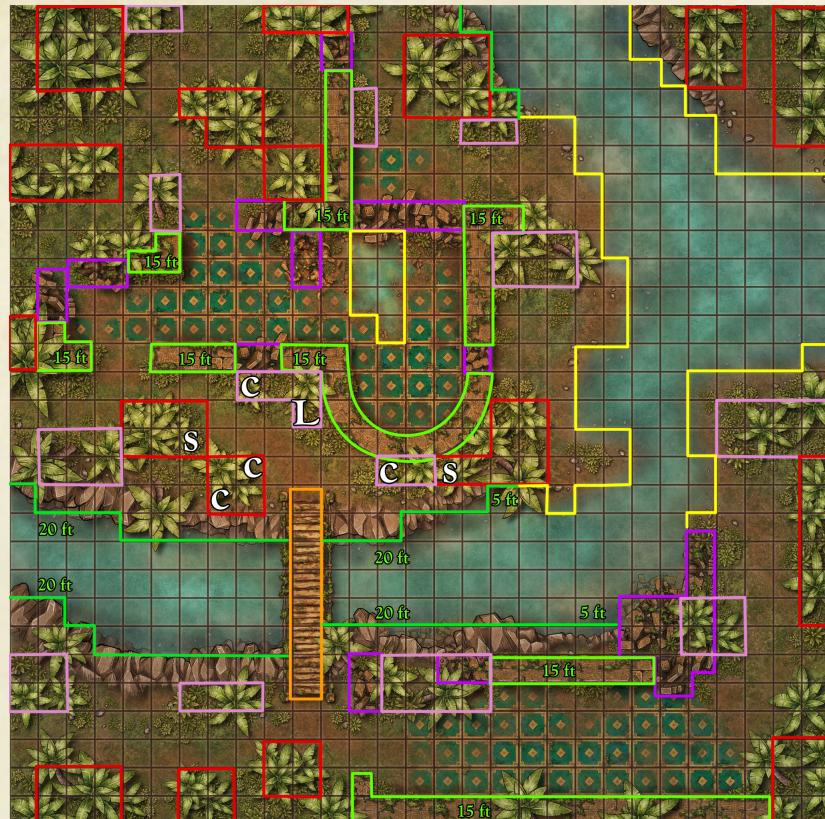
MAP DESCRIPTION

- Lighting.** The lighting will depend on the time of day, though if it's mid-day, much of the canopy away from the river will be dimly lit due to the heavy tree cover.
- The Bridge.** The structure is made of wood and rope and dealing 20 damage to any section will snap it. It has vulnerability to fire damage.
- Jungle Flora.** The lowe underbrush is used by the skinks for hiding. The trees they surround reach an average of 20 feet high and can be climbed using a DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check to get a better view of the area.
- River.** The River ranges from 10 to 15 feet deep at its center and slowly flows from right to left.
- Walls and Rubble.** All the walls are made of stone, and creatures without a climb speed can attempt to climb them by making a DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check. Some sections have fallen apart, leaving stone rubble.

COMBAT

The players will face 4 skink cohorts led by a skink chieftain. They will fight so long as they have the upper hand and are able to keep the players from overwhelming them. They will try to maintain this advantage by utilizing the terrain around them to make any approach difficult as they attempt to keep the players poisoned with javelins. Beyond this, they will fight using the general skink tactics detailed later in this document.

ENCOUNTER MAP: JUNGLE RIVER RUINS



MAP LEGEND

- C:** Skink Cohort Start Location
- L:** Skink Chieftain Start Location
- S:** Skink Skirmisher Start Location (Higher Difficulty Only)
- Red:** Underbrush (Rough Terrain, Half Cover, & Heavy Obscurement)
- Purple:** Rubble (Rough Terrain)
- Pink:** Foliage (Light Obscurement the Skinks Can Use to Hide)
- Orange:** Bridge
- Yellow:** Waterline

AFTERMATH

The skinks will try to flee once the fight is no longer going their way. Any who escape will rally a larger lizardmen force to crush the players.

If the players flee, the skinks may pursue them if they appear to have an overwhelming advantage. But it is more likely that they will rally a larger lizardmen forces before attempting to do so.

LOOT

You can use the loot tables found later in this document to determine what valuables the players can find from the skinks. If the players slay the chieftain and you wish to give them a bigger reward, you can have him drop a ceremonial bone mask worth 50 gp.

The players can also recover the poisoned javelins, though they can each only apply poison to a creature once.

XP AWARD: 3,500XP

The degree of success the players have in defeating the skinks can affect their XP reward. You can use the following potential outcomes as guidelines to modify how much XP you award your players.

- **150% XP:** All the skinks were defeated, and none were able to alert other lizardmen in the area.
- **100% XP:** Most of the skinks were defeated, but one or two were able to escape and alert other lizardmen to the players' presence.
- **50% XP:** The players slew the chieftain or all the cohorts but fled the remaining skinks.
- **10% XP:** The players fled with the chieftain and one or more cohorts still alive.

ADJUSTING THE DIFFICULTY

The encounter assumes you are playing with 4 players in the suggested level range. If the players' levels are outside the suggested level range, or you have a different group size, you can adjust the encounter's difficulty accordingly.

Easier Encounter (Level 3-4) Remove the skink chieftain. Change the XP Award to 800 XP.

Harder Encounter (Level 7-9) Add the skink skirmishers. Increase the XP award to 5,000 XP.

ADVENTURE FOLLOW UPS

If you wish to connect this encounter to a larger adventure, the following hooks can help provide some inspiration:

d4

Adventure Hook

- 1 The players are on a mission to retrieve valuable jungle relics, and this ambush forewarns the type of resistance they are likely to face.

- 2 The players are attempting to escape the jungle after completing a quest but now find themselves hunted by skink patrols.

- 3 The players are attempting to cross through the jungle through the most direct means possible, but this ambush indicates they've stumbled into lizardman territory.

- 4 The skinks have mistaken the players for other invaders and now try to exact vengeance on the wrong group.



ENCOUNTER STAT BLOCKS

SKINK COHORT

Medium humanoid (skink), lawful neutral

Armor Class 17 (shield and natural armor)

Hit Points 13 (3d8)

Speed 35 ft, swim 30 ft, climb 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (0)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)

Skills Animal Handling +4, Nature +3, Perception +4, Stealth +4, Survival +4,

Senses darkvision 30 ft, passive Perception 14

Languages Draconic

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +2

Cold Blooded. The skink has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

Evasion. When the Skink makes a Dexterity saving throw to reduce the damage of an effect by half, it instead takes no damage on a success and only half damage on a failure.

Hold Breath. The skink can hold its breath for 1 hour.

Jungle Toxins. At the end of the turn, each creature hit by one or more weapons that inflict Jungle Toxins must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 hour. A creature that has been hit by two or more attacks from weapons with Jungle Toxins this turn makes the saving throw with disadvantage. The target repeats the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on a success or taking 5 (2d4) poison damage on a failure.

Mask of the Jungle. The Skink has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide using foliage and may do so even if it is only lightly obscured while hiding this way

Actions

Javelin. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage, and the target is inflicted with Jungle Toxins.

SKINK SKIRMISHER

Medium humanoid (skink), lawful neutral

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 13 (3d8)

Speed 35 ft, swim 30 ft, climb 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (0)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)

Skills Animal Handling +4, Nature +3, Perception +4, Stealth +4, Survival +4

Senses darkvision 30 ft, passive Perception 14

Languages Draconic

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +2

Blowgun Expert. The skink ignores the Loading property of blowguns and ranged attacks it makes with them ignore half-cover and three-quarters cover. Additionally, the skink can change the weapon damage of blowguns it's wielding to a d4 in place of the normal damage.

Cold Blooded. The skink has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

Evasion. When the skink makes a Dexterity saving throw to reduce the damage of an effect by half, it instead takes no damage on a success and only half damage on a failure.

Hold Breath. The skink can hold its breath for 1 hour.

Jungle Toxins. At the end of the turn, each creature hit by one or more weapons that inflict Jungle Toxins must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 hour. A creature that has been hit by two or more attacks from weapons with Jungle Toxins this turn makes the saving throw with disadvantage. The target repeats the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on a success or taking 5 (2d4) poison damage on a failure.

Mask of the Jungle. The Skink has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide using foliage and may do so even if it is only lightly obscured while hiding this way

Actions

Multiaction. The skink makes two Blowgun attacks.

Blowgun. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 25/100 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage, and the target is inflicted with Jungle Toxins.

Short Sword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) slashing damage, and the target is inflicted with Jungle Toxins.

Bonus Actions

Vanish. The skink takes the Hide action.

SKINK CHIEFTAIN

Medium humanoid (skink), unaligned

Armor Class 18 (natural armor and shield)

Hit Points 49 (11d8)

Speed 35 ft, swim 30 ft, climb 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (0)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Int +4, Wis +5, Cha +4

Skills Animal Handling +5, Perception +5, Nature +4, Stealth +5, Survival +5

Senses darkvision 30 ft, passive Perception 15

Languages Draconic

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +2

Cold Blooded. The skink has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

Evasion. When the skink makes a Dexterity saving throw to reduce the damage of an effect by half, it instead takes no damage on a success and only half damage on a failure.

Hold Breath. The skink can hold its breath for 1 hour.

Jungle Toxins. At the end of the turn, each creature hit by one or more weapons that inflict Jungle Toxins must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 hour.

SKINK TACTICS

Skinks generally keep their distance from the enemies, using their superior land, climb, and swim speeds to stay out of melee range. They generally work to debuff foes, and combo well with more powerful creatures who attack head on.

JUNGLE TOXINS

Skinks rely on this ability for their own defense, as poisoned players will have a harder time hitting them with attacks or spotting them while they're hidden. As such, they will try to poison as many enemies as possible.

MASK OF THE JUNGLE

This ability is vital for skinks initiating combat as they will never start a fight without the backup of more powerful creatures unless they can do so from an ambush.

SKINK COHORTS

These skinks have the fewest options for weaving in and out of combat, and so will rely on poisoning targets from a distance before engaging in melee. They will not close the gap with enemies who aren't poisoned or in some way disabled.

A creature that has been hit by two or more attacks from weapons with Jungle Toxins this turn makes the saving throw with disadvantage.

The target repeats the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on a success or taking 5 (2d4) poison damage on a failure.

Mask of the Jungle. The Skink has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide using foliage and may do so even if it is only lightly obscured while hiding this way

Stalking Cohort. While the skink is not incapacitated, whenever it or another ally within 30 feet of it hits a poisoned creature with a weapon attack that has advantage, the attack deals an extra 3 (1d6) of the weapon's damage on hit.

Actions

Multiattack. The skink makes two attacks.

Coordinating Javelin. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage, the target is inflicted with Jungle Toxins, and another skink within 30 feet of it can make a weapon attack as a reaction against the creature.

Bonus Actions

Vanish. The skink takes the Hide action.

SKINK SKIRMISHER

Because these skinks have blowguns and the ability to hide every turn using their vanish ability, they will never engage in melee combat unless cornered.

SKINK CHIEFTAIN

These skinks lead their kind in battle. They have a few noteworthy abilities:

COORDINATING JAVELIN

Chieftains will use this ability to help other skinks quickly land a second javelin strike against a chosen target, thereby increasing the likelihood of it failing its saving throw against the Jungle Toxins.

STALKING COHORT

This ability allows groups of skinks to focus fire poisoned targets. The skinks can pop out from hiding, launch volleys of ranged attacks, and then disappear again, quickly whittling down poisoned players.

SKINK LOOT

Because skinks are humanoids, most of the valuable goods that can be looted from them are the remains of the equipment they were using or valuables they were carrying or hiding nearby. Most dropped or hidden valuables can be found using **Intelligence (Investigation)** or **Wisdom (Perception)** checks. Alternatively, you can roll for the loot randomly using a flat modifier.

SKINK LOOT TABLES

The following tables describe the number of items and value of those items the players are able to loot depending on the result of their check or the results of your roll. If they're making checks, you can have them make a separate check for each creature they're looting or use one check for multiple creatures at once to save time.

SKINK COHORT LOOT TABLE

Looting Check Result or 1d20 + 3	Loot
1-4	1 5sp Item
5-6	1d6(3) 5sp Items
7-12	1d4(2) 1gp Items
13-20	1d6(3) 1gp Items
21+	1d4(2) 2gp Items

SKINK SKIRMISHER LOOT TABLE

Looting Check Result or 1d20 + 3	Loot
1-5	1d4(2) 5sp Items
6-9	1d4(2) 1gp Items
7-16	1d6(3) 1gp Items
17-20	1 5gp Item
21+	1 10gp Item

SKINK CHIEFTAIN LOOT TABLE

Looting Check Result or 1d20 + 3	Loot
1-5	1d4(2) 1gp Items
6-8	1d6(3) 1gp Items
9-15	1d6(3) 5gp Items
16-21	1d4(2) 10gp Items
22+	1d6(3) 10gp Items

EXAMPLE SKINK LOOT NAMES

You can give the different types of items unique names based on their material and value to help differentiate them from one another. The following tables provide some example names.

EXAMPLE COMMON SKINK ITEM NAMES

1d4	5sp Item	1gp Item	2gp Item
1 (Bone)	Cracked Bone Charm	Bone Charm	Intricate Bone Charm
2 (Jewelry)	Damaged Quartz Bracelet	Quartz Bracelet	Masterwork Quartz Bracelet
3 (Hide)	Tattered Scales	Intact Scales	Pristine Scales
4 (Metal)	Damaged Blade Fragment	Blade Fragment	Pristine Blade Fragment

EXAMPLE UNCOMMON SKINK ITEM NAMES

1d4	5gp Item	10gp Item	20gp Item
1 (Bone)	Cracked Dino Bone	Dino Bone	Pristine Dino Bone
2 (Jewelry)	Damaged Malachite Amulet	Malachite Amulet	Masterwork Malachite Amulet
3 (Hide)	Damaged Armored Scales	Armored Scales	Pristine Armored Scales
4 (Metal)	Damaged Lizard Blade	Lizard Blade	Masterwork Lizard Blade

ART CREDIT

- Encounter Map - Joseph Snouwaert
- Haeckel Ceylon Jungle River - W. Koehler
- Jungle from Panama Canal - Paul Harrison

CHANGE LOG

1.0.0

- Document release