



## OWLS

**T**hese nocturnal birds of prey are often seen as symbols of wisdom and the ever-present perceptiveness of the wilds. Though, among some cultures, they are instead viewed as cursed omens of death and misfortune. Owls can be found swooping across snowy tundras or perched ominously on dead tree branches deep within dark forests, their everpresent hooting echoing through the night. By day, they are beautiful and sometimes even adorable hunting birds. But by night, their glowing eyes strike fear into the hearts of travelers, reminding them the wilds are always watching.

**Stealthy Hunters.** Most owls are less than two feet in length and have wingspans ranging from 1 to 6 feet across. As such, their primary prey tends to be small rodents and rabbits. Owls spot their quarry in the dead of night using superior dark vision and hearing. Their nocturnal prey often relies on hearing to detect predators. To counter this, owls have developed specialized feathers which allow them to fly slowly and stealthily, catching their unsuspecting meal by surprise.

**Wizarding Familiars.** The stealth and keen senses of the owl make it a popular familiar amongst magic users. Its associations with wisdom further its appeal amongst those with scholarly inclinations. Wizarding schools often make extensive use of owls in their symbology and as familiars used for information gathering and parcel delivery. Amongst magic users with a more sinister bent, owls can also serve as menacing familiars to spy on enemies and inspire fear and paranoia amongst superstitious commoners.



### OWL

*Tiny beast, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 12

**Hit Points** 2 (1d4)

**Speed** 10 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
3 (-4)	14 (+2)	10 (0)	2 (-4)	14 (+2)	3 (-4)

**Skills** Perception +4, Stealth +4

**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 14

**Challenge** 0 (10 XP)      **Proficiency Bonus** +2

**Fly.** The owl doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when it flies out of an enemy's reach.

**Keen Hearing and Sight.** The owl has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or sight.

#### Actions

**Talons.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 1 piercing damage.



## GREAT HORNED OWL

*Small beast, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 12

**Hit Points** 3 (1d6)

**Speed** 10 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	14 (+2)	10 (0)	2 (-4)	14 (+2)	3 (-4)

**Skills** Perception +4, Stealth +4

**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 14

**Challenge** 1/8 (25 XP)      **Proficiency Bonus** +2

**Flyby.** The owl doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when it flies out of an enemy's reach.

**Keen Hearing and Sight.** The owl has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or sight.

### Actions

**Multiattack.** The owl makes two attacks: one with its beak and one with its talons.

**Beak.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 1 piercing damage.

**Talons.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 2 (1d4) piercing damage

### WATERLOGGED OWLS

Unlike most other birds of prey, owls do not possess a waterproof undercoat. While short periods in the rain won't hinder them, if they become soaked in water, their fluffy feathers will absorb so much of it that they become too heavy and waterlogged to fly. Owls in this state are extremely vulnerable and must dry out before they can fly again. If you wish to incorporate this in your games, you can include a rule that owls soaked in water lose their fly speed until they dry off.

**Great Horned Owls.** The great horned owl is among the most far-ranging and dangerous of all its kind. These deadly birds of prey can measure over two feet in length and sport five-foot wingspans. Their talons can deliver crushing forces ten times what a typical human can produce, allowing them to kill most small prey instantly. This hunting prowess allows great horned owls to hunt a wide range of prey with impunity, and some have even been reported hunting animals as large and dangerous as foxes and bobcats.

**Giant Owls.** In some extremely wild and dangerous areas, man-sized owls hunt much larger prey than their mundane counterparts. These beasts are favored guardians and companions to many woodland races, and smaller peoples, such as forest gnomes, will even use them as flying steeds. When giant owls contact traveling humanoids, they will not hesitate to hunt them like any other animal. Villagers living near giant owl territory rarely travel alone or unarmed and always keep an eye to the treeline.

**Monstrous Owls.** Some owls obtain supernatural levels of size and intelligence. They may be part of a larger species of monstrous owls or may have once been typical owls that were transformed through magical means. In either case, their enhanced abilities make them deadly foes and powerful allies. These owls will often align themselves with other fey and intelligent woodland beings. Some are noble guardians, working with druidic circles to watch over and safeguard the wilds. Others are brutal killers, serving dark fey as spies and assassins while mercilessly hunting down any who trespass upon their wilds.



## GIANT OWL

Medium beast, unaligned

**Armor Class** 12  
**Hit Points** 19 (3d8+6)  
**Speed** 10 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	2 (-4)	16 (+3)	3 (-4)

**Skills** Perception +5, Stealth +4  
**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 15  
**Challenge** 1/2 (100 XP)      **Proficiency Bonus** +2

**Flyby.** The owl doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when it flies out of an enemy's reach.

**Keen Hearing and Sight.** The owl has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or sight.

### Actions

**Beak** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 3 (1d4+1) piercing damage.

**Talons**. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (2d4+1) piercing damage.

## MONSTROUS OWL

Large monstrosity, any alignment

**Armor Class** 12  
**Hit Points** 37 (5d10+10)  
**Speed** 10 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	8 (-1)	16 (+3)	3 (-4)

**Skills** Perception +5, Stealth +4  
**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 15  
**Languages** Giant Owl, understands Common, Elvish, and Sylvan but can't speak them  
**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)      **Proficiency Bonus** +2

**Flyby.** The owl doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when it flies out of an enemy's reach.

**Keen Hearing and Sight.** The owl has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or sight.

### Actions

**Multiattack** The owl makes two attacks: one with its beak and one with its talons.

**Beak** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (1d10 + 3) piercing damage.

**Claw** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 12 (2d8 + 3) slashing damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 13). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the owl can't use its talons on another target.

# OWLBEARS

These beasts are monstrous amalgamations of giant owls and grizzly bears. Owlbears possess the stealthiness and deadly beak of a giant owl, the sheer size, power, and aggression of a grizzly bear, and the heightened senses of both. They are fiercely territorial hunters and will attack almost anything that crosses their path without provocation. However, through tremendous effort, some races can train owlbears as fierce guardians and terrifying battle mounts.

**Snowy Owlbears.** This subspecies of owlbear is native to arctic environments and appears to be a combination of snowy owl and polar bear. It behaves much like other owlbears, but its polar bear nature makes it somewhat larger and much heartier than its temperate cousins. The harshness of its environment also makes it a deadlier and more determined hunter. Snowy owlbears are unrelenting in their pursuit of prey, willing to climb treacherous mountains and swim through icy waters to secure their kills.



## OWLBEAR

*Large monstrosity, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 12 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 85 (9d10+36)

**Speed** 40 ft., climb 25 ft., swim 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)	5 (-3)	18 (+4)	6 (-2)

**Skills** Perception +6, Stealth +4

**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 16.

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)      **Proficiency Bonus** +2

**Keen Sense.** The owlbear has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks.

**Alert.** The owlbear has advantage on initiative rolls.

### Actions

**Multiattack** The bear makes two attacks: one with its beak and one with its claws.

**Beak** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 9 (1d10 + 4) piercing damage.

**Claw.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 13 (2d8 + 4) slashing damage.

### Bonus Actions

**Aggressive.** The owlbear can move up to its speed toward a hostile creature that it can see.

## SNOWY OWLBEAR

*Large monstrosity, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 14 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 136 (13d10+65)

**Speed** 40 ft., climb 25 ft., swim 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	14 (+2)	20 (+5)	6 (-2)	20 (+5)	10 (0)

**Skills** Perception +8, Stealth +5

**Damage Resistance** Cold

**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 18.

**Challenge** 6 (2,300 XP)      **Proficiency Bonus** +3

**Keen Sense.** The owlbear has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks.

**Alert.** The owlbear has advantage on initiative rolls.

### Actions

**Multiattack** The owlbear makes two attacks: one with its beak and one with its claws.

**Beak** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 15 (2d8 + 6) piercing damage.

**Claw.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 20 (4d6 + 6) slashing damage.

### Bonus Actions

**Aggressive.** The owlbear can move up to its speed toward a hostile creature that it can see.

## STRIX

All the omens and superstitions regarding owls are made manifest in the dreaded strix. These fiends are quite literally living curses shaped into the form of a dread owl with glowing malevolent eyes and wings that move in an almost incorporeal and dreamlike fashion. This leads some to believe they are creations of dark magic, used by wicked spell casters to hunt their victims. Others believe them to be fiends native to the underworld sent to reap the souls of the damned. Regardless of their origin or motivation, once a strix has marked someone for death, there is little hope of escaping its terrible curse.

**The Dread Curse.** Strixes are cursed omens of death given physical form, and they seek to spread their curse to others. When a strix marks someone for death, it will stalk its victim, sometimes for nights on end. This stalking involves waking up the victims with terrifying calls in the night and watching them through darkened windows with shining eyes. When their prey's mounting dread reaches its peak, the strix will strike, its talons imparting a fatal curse. The doomed individual then has twenty-four hours to live before their soul is violently ripped from their body by the curse. The only way to break the curse is to hunt down the strix and nail it to a wooden door, dead or alive, using an iron nail.

**Servants of Dark Powers.** Strixes often act in the service of dark masters. Hags and witches may summon a strix to enact vengeance upon someone who has crossed them, underworld fiends may send strixes to collect souls they've won through dark dealings, and dark wizards may summon strixes to use as twisted familiars. Regardless of its master or mission, the strix will act with a single-minded malevolent determination to carry out its dark purpose.

## CURSED STRIX

*Small fiend, neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 13

**Hit Points** 27 (6d6+6)

**Speed** 10 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	10(0)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)

**Skills** Perception +6 Stealth +5

**Senses** darkvision 120 ft. passive Perception 16

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)      **Proficiency Bonus** +2

**Flyby.** The strix doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when it flies out of an enemy's reach.

**Keen Hearing and Sight.** The strix has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or sight.

**Living Curse** A creature within 5 feet of the strix may cast *remove curse* on it to instantly kill it.

### Actions

**Beak.** Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

**Talons.** Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (2d4 + 2) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 14 Charisma saving throw or be cursed by the strix. The cursed creature dies in the next 24 hours unless the curse is removed. The creature is aware of the curse and its effects. The curse can be removed by nailing the strix to a wooden door, dead or alive, with an iron nail. The curse also ends if the strix curses another creature with its talons.

# OWLS IN YOUR ADVENTURES

The following tables provide you with some ways you can incorporate different types of owls, owlbears, or strixes into your adventures.

## OWL ADVENTURES

d8

### Plot Hook

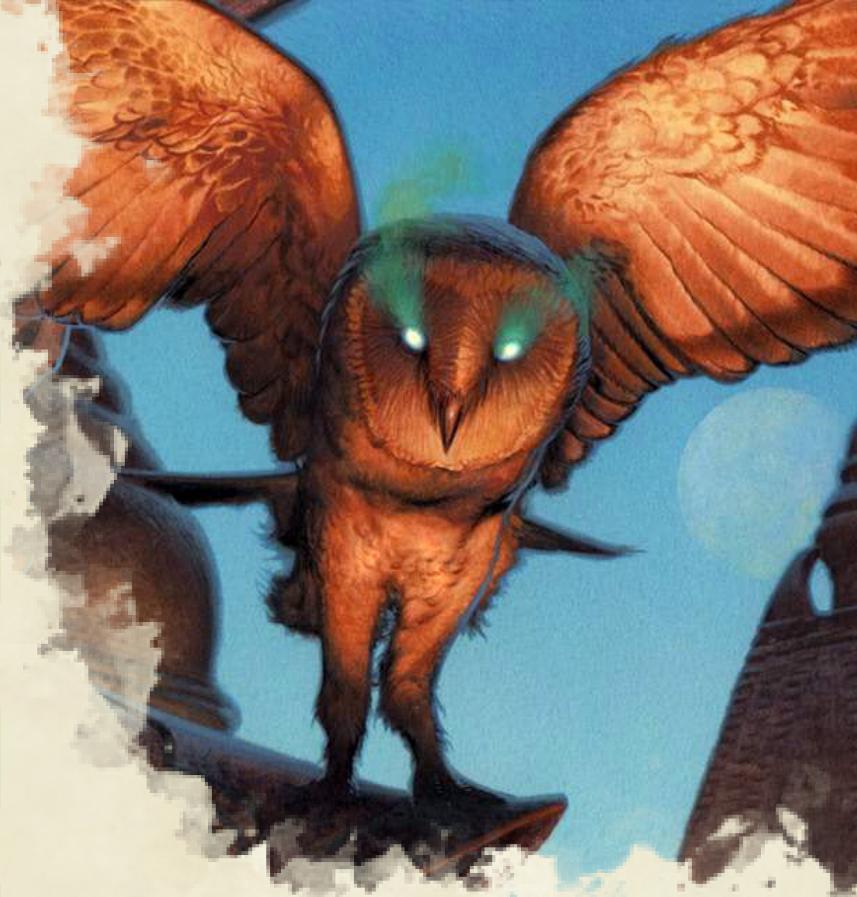
- 1 The players must capture a messenger **owl** delivering vital information to an enemy.
- 2 A cabal of wizards is using a flock of **owl** familiars as a spy network.
- 3 A suspicious clan of wood elves is sending aggressive **great horned owls** to harass a nearby human settlement, hoping to drive them away.
- 4 A noble's pet **great horned owl** has gotten loose and is attacking villagers. There is a reward for anyone who can bring it back alive.
- 5 A local farmer hasn't been heard from in days, and the hooting of a **giant owl** is regularly heard from his otherwise deserted barn.
- 6 A gang of **giant owl** riding ranger halflings is coercing tolls from any who pass through their woods.
- 7 Villagers must leave out livestock for a **monstrous owl** living nearby. If they fail to do so, it preys on them.
- 8 A group of wicked druids is terrorizing the land from the backs of **monstrous owls**. An opposing druid enclave has offered the players the use of their own **monstrous owl** allies as steeds to combat this threat.

## OWLBEAR ADVENTURES

d6

### Plot Hook

- 1 The players are delivering supplies to a remote outpost, only to find it ravaged by an **owlbear** attack.
- 2 A researcher wants an **owlbear** captured alive for study into the origins of its species.
- 3 A **pixie** wants the players to play a game of hide and seek with her pet **owlbear**, Mr. Fluffybuns.
- 4 A circus show goes horribly awry when the performers' **owlbear** breaks loose and attacks the audience.  
  
While traveling through the tundra, the players find a wounded **spy** who claims a relentless **snowy owlbear** is hunting him.
- 5 In the far north, a clan of **duergar** has successfully integrated **snowy owlbears** into their military. Now nearby settlements find themselves beset by armored **snowy owlbear** cavalry.



## STRIX ADVENTURES

d6

### Plot Hook

- 1 Someone recently attacked by a **strix** comes to the players begging for help in ending the curse before it's too late.
- 2 The players encounter someone who claims to have escaped the underworld. Unfortunately, he seems to have been followed by a **strix** who is intent on returning him to the afterlife.
- 3 A witch killed by an angry mob uttered a vengeful curse with her dying breath. Now, one by one, the mob's members are being hunted down by a **strix**.
- 4 A **night hag** living beneath a town demands extravagant gifts for her various yearly parties and holiday events. Her pet **strix** hunts those who fail to live up to her expectations.
- 5 After the players slay an evil **mage**, they are stalked by his vengeful **strix** familiar, who waits for the perfect opportunity to strike.
- 6 A group of cultists attempted a dark ritual to contact the underworld in an abandoned city building. The ritual appeared to fail, and all those involved died 24 hours later of mysterious causes. There have been attempts to renovate the building, but anyone who enters it soon finds themselves hunted by a **strix** wherever they go.

## ART CREDIT

- Augury Owl - Jim Nelson, Wizards of the Coast
- Ringwarden Owl - Titus Lunter, Wizards of the Coast
- Vega, the Watcher - Paul Scott Canavan, Wizards of the Coast

- Owlbear - Ilse Gort, Wizards of the Coast
- Baleful Strix - Nils Hamm, Wizards of the Coast
- Palace Familiar - Kev Walker, Wizards of the Coast