**Ideas for the fauna & flora of Eldath:**

Thought it'd be cool to tossing some fantastic (or real but extinct) animals & plants into the game's world. Sapient non-human peoples like the Elder Races are canonically dead or gone, at least on the continent that the game focuses on, but the same doesn't have to be true of these critters. They could also show up as enemies in the private brawling areas where we've agreed the player can grind, just so you're not fighting humans all the time (think of how gladiators fought animals in Roman amphitheaters: though the Church of Errai, like the actual Christian church, would obviously have an objection to gladiators fighting each other, they'd probably have less of a problem with humans fighting animals for gold, fame or in the player's case, XP instead).

**Extinct real-life animals & plants that could still be around:**

(we're definitely going to have to come up with different names for most if not all of these, BTW)

**Woolly mammoth** – Herbivorous megafauna matching modern-day Asian (or more rarely, African) elephants in size with longer tusks and, as you can tell from the name, a long thick coat of hair. In Eldath they'd be found only in the cold tundra & forests of the far north - that's to say Sylve, Ingmaria, Morcarragh & the Northern Antae realms, any or all of whom could have used domesticated specimens as beasts of burden or war. Proposed Eldathi names: 'mammoth' is still fine. More information: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Woolly\_mammoth

**Chalicotherium** – Huge knuckle-dragging herbivores resembling the giant sloth that used their clawed hands & long reach (thanks to their very long arms, much longer than their legs) to grab at high branches with softer leaves. They historically went extinct in the Late Pliocene. They mostly lived in flat, open areas: in other words, in Eldath they'd be well-suited to living in the flat plains and savannas between Ellis and the Umari deserts. Proposed Eldathi names: Great Southern Sloth, False Sloth? More information: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chalicothere

**Smilodon** – The famous saber-toothed tiger, as tall as a modern lion and as long as a tiger while being more robustly built & heavier than either. Actually they aren't closely related to modern tigers, but the name's cool. They'd live in colder climates where there are plenty of other megafauna to prey on so they don't starve, meaning on Eldath you'd find them in the same neighborhood as the mammoth & Megaloceros. Proposed Eldathi names: just 'saber-toothed tiger' is still fine. More information: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Smilodon

**Hyaenodon** – A large carnivore that could grow to be up to 3 m in length, had jaws powerful enough to instantly break a large herbivore's neck and a very strong, dense skull. Despite the name, it's not actually related to the modern hyena. On Eldath they could be found in the flat plains and savannas south of the Neck, in the same neighborhood as the Chalicotherium. Proposed Eldathi names: Southern Hyena, Southern Spotted Cat or False Hyena. More information: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hyaenodon

**Cave bear** – Slightly bigger than most modern bears, these not-so-cuddly critters lived (as you can tell from the name) mostly in caves where they competed with early humans for living space: in Eldath, they could still be around in basically any mountain range, especially now that most people no longer live in caves. They seemed to prefer eating plants, but were not above eating meat when necessary and were pretty easy to piss off. Proposed names: we can just stick to 'cave bear'. More info: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cave\_bear

**Woolly rhinoceros** – A relative of the modern rhino that was 3-4 meters long and, as the name suggests, covered in a coat of hair. They could still be around in Northern Eldath, though since the world isn't in an Ice Age anymore some of their hair could have receded to expose the lower legs. Proposed Eldathi names: we can just stick to 'woolly rhinoceros'. More information: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Woolly\_rhinoceros

**European & cave lion** – Lions historically lived in parts of Europe until 12-11,000 years ago. On Eos we could have cave lions (best distinguished by their lack of a mane and ability to live in cool climates, but despite their name they probably didn't actually live in caves) in the plains or steppes of Meravia, Thurin & the Northern Antae realms save Grom (too far north, too much forest). Southern lions with manes could exist in the plains and savannas south of Ellis (former home of the Southern Antae) and the flatter eastern parts of Solamut.

**Megalodon** – The biggest and meanest shark known to history, which went extinct about 2.6 million years ago. These guys exclusively preyed on big marine animals such as whales, large dolphins and each other. They could be found as the apex predators in the eastern seas of Eldath & competitors of other animals in the western sea, and prominently appear on the coat of arms of the Republic of Brixia: fittingly, Brixia's nemesis Zena uses a whale on its coat of arms, mirroring the rivalry between the Megalodon & toothed whales. Proposed Eldathi names: Eastern Sea Titan, Carcharoth. More info: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Megalodon

**Archelon** – The biggest sea turtle to have ever existed. It was carnivorous and so would have subsisted on smaller fish, jellyfish & squids. It went extinct sometime after the Cretaceous Period. In Eldathi waters, it could be found pretty much anywhere in the southern hemisphere's seas. Proposed names: Sea Lord, Great Turtle. More information: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archelon

**Stupendemys** – The biggest turtle to have ever existed, larger than even the Archelon. Unlike Archelon, it was a river-dwelling herbivore that fed on aquatic plants and had trouble swimming against strong currents due to its sheer bulk. On Eldath it could be found in rivers and floodplains anywhere outside of especially cold areas, and might be especially populous in the river-heavy region of Meravia. Proposed names: River Lord, King of the Streams. More information: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stupendemys

**Sarcosuchus & Deinosuchus** – The two biggest crocodilyforms to have ever existed. Sarcosuchus was the longer of the two, but Deinosuchus had a more robust, alligator-like build & a stronger bite force. Sarcosuchus could be found in both coasts and rivers, Deinosuchus was only around in rivers and swamps. Both preyed on fish, crabs and large land animals up to and including dinosaurs. On Eldath the former could be found along temperate shores (so, Southern/Central Eldathi shores) while the latter could be present further inland, especially in Meravién, Dusklander and Thurinian rivers. Proposed Eldathi names: Great Gharial and River Horror, respectively. More information: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sarcosuchus, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deinosuchus

**Gastornis** – A huge flightless bird that went extinct in the Eocene. Ironically, despite its fearsome appearance and portrayal as a carnivore that preyed on small to medium-sized mammals in media, there's recent evidence suggesting it was actually a herbivore - a real-life example of a (relatively, presumably it can still use its beak & claws offensively if pissed off) gentle giant with the face of a thug. Proposed names: Terror Bird, Feathered Horror, Great Southern Runner. More information: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gastornis

**Haast's Eagle** – The largest eagle to have ever existed. Imagine the eagles from The Lord of the Rings, except you know, they can't talk. And are not very nice to people (or ground animals, really) in general. They'd have preferred warmer climates, so on Eldath they could be found around Ellis and as far down as the Umari-ruled southern coast of the continent. Proposed names: Harpagornis, Sky Lord. More info: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haast%27s\_eagle

**Ideas for fantasy critters & plants:**

**Hellbender** – A brightly-colored giant salamander with fireproof skin, lungs and extra bladder. An adult male specimen is approximately 6 m in length; females are only slightly shorter. A thermophilic bacteria lives in its lung system, resulting in the creature breathing out methane instead of carbon dioxide. When threatened it can expel a huge amount of oxygen and methane which, combined with its naturally extremely high body temperature & the heat of its natural habitat, basically = the hellbender breathing fire while a mucous lining protects its throat. At the same time, its extra internal bladder traps flammable gases created during the process of digestion, and when pressured the hellbender can release said gas to basically fart fire. These creatures are found only in the volcanoes of Brel, and that kingdom's royal family (as well as their predecessors, House Fin Falon of Lorval) keeps a stable of them as pets (often raised by an Efting prince or princess from childhood) and war-beasts.

**Eisenschwein** – A massive pig measuring at around 3 meters tall at the shoulders & 4-5 meters from head to tail with a dense 1-m-long skull, a mouth full of teeth including large canines and powerful molars, and a full coat of dark gray to brown hair including a black or brown mane. Fittingly, the 'iron boar' has an unusually high quantity of iron in its bones & flesh. Unlike normal domestic pigs they are universally extremely aggressive and territorial (though they can be tamed if raised from childhood by a single individual), surprisingly fast and though omnivorous, they clearly prefer to eat meat whether it's from carrion or live prey. They were brought to Eldath by the Thiarnari in the late 2nd/early 3rd Age and are the favored pets of the House of Murnau, whose Emperors and Empresses have consistently proven capable of taming these beasts and to this day use them as war-beasts in their armies and imperial executioners - by tying the unlucky prisoner to a post and letting their hogs go wild on him/her in front of the crowd.

**Hippocamp** – Literal 'sea-horses' that combine the upper bodies of horses with the lower bodies of a pelagic fish, typically cod or haddock. They're hairless and possess unsettling blank eyes as well as colorless, translucent skin. They are the result of Genie experimentation with animals in the First Age. Hippocampi are mostly found in the western and southwestern seas off Eldath, especially along the Meravién shore. The Meravién monarchs traditionally kept a stable of these creatures as pets in their own underwater palace.

**Unicorn** – A rare breed of horse known to always have a pure white coat, cloven hooves like a deer's, a single spiral horn (with females' horns being shorter and more curved compared to those of males) and the ability to heal any non-immediately-lethal wounds inflicted upon it, even ones that appear to be serious, within seconds or minutes. They're speculated to either be the result of Genie experimentation or a gift from Errai to Meravix, founder of the Meravian Kingdom. They are not aggressive so long as they are left alone, but getting too close to one's children or trespassing on its territory will cause it to go berserk and attempt to kill the intruder with its hooves & horn. They are especially common in Meravia, and several Meravién kings and paladins proved sufficiently competent to tame and ride unicorns into battle.

**Ent** – Sentient trees from the Evennan Forest who speak their own language and have their own 'kingdom-within-a-kingdom', a parallel society within the Kingdom of Sylve with its own hereditary ruler: the **balas**, who the Kings of Sylve have traditionally treated as a respected vassal. They live on special reserves in the deepest parts of the Evennan where no human may enter without the express permission of both the Balas and the King of Sylve, and in times of war they are oath-bound to support the Sylvan armies.

**Dread spider** – A giant spider infused with magical abilities that can grow to be up to 7 m long and 10 m wide, found exclusively in the mountains of southern and central Eldath. They are the result of Genie experimentation during the last desperate stages of their war with the ascendant early humans, and have gone feral long ago due to the death or disappearance of their masters. Dread Spider females are especially dangerous: they are larger and more intelligent than males, and in addition to being actually venomous (male Dread Spiders have no venom but possess stronger jaws than the females & can bite through iron armor) they are capable of projecting a magical illusion of any of their past victims with which they can trick any other human or animal they want to devour into coming closer.

**Ghost bear** – Monstrous bears that stand at roughly 3 m at the shoulder on all fours and nearly double an elephant’s height when standing on their hind legs, weigh between two-and-three-quarters to three tons and as their name suggests, possess the ability to turn invisible even while moving: they can still be spotted by a careful observer who looks for any suddenly blurred backgrounds or objects, listens to their footsteps or picks up their scent, but considering their raw power this isn’t likely to do said observer much good. Where they got such a power is a mystery for the ages: some say it’s a result of Genie experimentation, some priests argue it was imparted unto them by Errai when He created the world, still other clerics will claim they were once ordinary bears made this way by the last pagan Antae shamans in an attempt to purge the Erraian converts among their people – only to be surprised when Errai turned the creatures against them and had them devoured by their own creations. What is certain is that they are only found in the far north of Eldath and have been employed as war-beasts by the Antae nations, whose animal-handlers must bond with these mighty creatures from childhood to secure their loyalty and who can deploy them as powerful ambushers.

**Strigoi** – The strigoi are a breed of unusually intelligent elk found only in Evennan Forest that the Sylvans call home. They are notable for their enormous antlers, which can grow up to 4 meters from tip to tip, but those aren’t their most dangerous feature: male and female strigoi alike do not fear humans, usually preferring to stand their ground against even an armed human aggressor or several humans, and possess the ability to induce vivid hallucinations in hostile entities in addition to perfectly mimicking any human words or animal noises it hears. Despite the terror this induces, strigoi do not eat people’s flesh or souls (as popular superstition claims they do) and with the exception of the rare & genuinely aggressive white breed, only use their abilities in self-defense. They may even be benevolent, as the Sylvans claim they will present dying humans with hallucinations of loved ones or happier times so that they may die in peace – a story corroborated by adventurers who had near-death experiences in the presence of a striga. Every seven generations, the Sylvan royal House of Silvescu produces a member who is capable of bonding with a rare white strigoi and, once they have both fully grown, ride the mighty stag into battle, where it can confound his enemies with its powers.

**Behemoth** – The Behemoth is a four-legged creature with a rhinoceros-like body, a stocky elephant-like legs, an elongated, giraffe-like neck and a horse-like head. It lacks a horn on its nose like the ordinary rhinoceros (its closest relative), instead boasting a pair of goat-like horns growing from the back of its head & two downward-pointing tusks growing out of its lower jaw. Standing at 15-20 m in height and weighing 30-40 tons, it is the largest and heaviest terrestrial mammal known to exist as of 3A 1480. Though herbivorous, a Behemoth will fight with its tusks and feet when threatened and has thick enough skin to survive even multiple bullets. It is found in the plains and savannas south of Ellis (and outside of Eldath, in southwestern Esdath) and was once used in large numbers by the Ellisians as a war mount, with mixed results: it was extremely effective against conventional Umari and Southern Antae forces, but could be turned back by the liberal deployment of flaming war pigs by Thurin or flaming camels by the Umari. These days, Ellis' stable of Behemoths - 200 strong in its heyday - houses 3 of the great animals, all of which are quite old already and not half as fit to fight as they were in their prime.

The Umari consider Behemoths to be avatars of their dead supreme god, Bahamut, and thus sacred, which gave them serious problems in facing them at first before their priestesses created a theological argument to justify battling them (typically by lighting camels on fire & sending them in the Behemoth's direction to cause it to panic) in the 8th century: they claimed that Behemoths in Ellisian service had tragically been enslaved by the Umari people's enemy & thus fallen from grace, and that the Umari were honor-bound to liberate them by any and all means up to and including killing them. Today, the Umari keep their own, much larger stable of Behemoths as beasts of war, which they claim is completely fine because unlike Ellis they're using these creatures to further the will of Bahamut instead of opposing it.

**Leviathan** – The Leviathan is a massive toothed whale, with a maximum length of 80 m and weighing upwards of 360 tons. Almost needless to say, it's the biggest and baddest known mammal on Eos. To match its size, the Leviathan has the largest brain of any animal known in the world and are thus extremely intelligent, to the point where pods have been known to coordinate to annihilate whaling fleets while individual Leviathans have alternately tracked down whalers who wronged them specifically to kill them – and saved more benign individuals who aided them in the past from drowning or other dangerous marine creatures. Unlike its much smaller cousin the sperm whale, Leviathans have 4-to-5-foot long, sharp teeth on both of their jaws, not just the lower one. In addition, their heads and fin joints are covered in hard bone-like armor, which even newly-sharpened steel harpoons have difficulty penetrating, and the ‘helmet’ of male Leviathans even features a horn-like protrusion that can reach up to 4 meters in length, leading these creatures to be nicknamed the ‘Unicorns of the Sea’. Finally, as if their human-like intelligence, great size and heavy armor weren’t enough, the Leviathan is further blessed with the ability to focus its sonar (typically used to find prey and communicate with pod-mates, like other whales) into a narrow ‘beam’ to stun and disorient prey or opponents, giving this particular sea monster (not exactly the fastest of swimmers) time to catch up to and maul its target.

Leviathans are exclusively carnivorous and will prey on anything from schools of herrings to Megalodons, Krakens and blue & sperm whales. They are able to dive 3,000 m below the surface, and to hold their breath for almost two hours: when surfacing, they have also been known to wreck ships unlucky enough to get in their way. Leviathans are found along all of Eldath's shores but are especially numerous along the west coast, and have been adopted as the national animal of the Republic of Zena: fittingly, Zena's eastern nemesis Brixia bears a Megalodon on its arms, mirroring the Leviathan's rivalry with the great shark.

**Elver** – The elver is a large, gray-white sea serpent that is found in colder waters, up around northern Eldath. The largest adult specimens have been measured to never exceed 10 m in length, but even the smallest juvenile elvers have an extremely venomous bite: just the pain is severe enough to induce heart-stopping shock within seconds, and if that doesn't work, it will cause cardiovascular collapse in a human within two minutes at most, and up to five in creatures as large as a blue whale. They live in familial packs of up to 20 creatures and have been known to bring down even Leviathans and Megalodons in sufficient numbers. The Thiareike of the far north are known to sometimes tame these sea monsters and have them escort their ships or attack vessels & sailors belonging to their enemies.

**Kraken** - Krakens are giant sea monsters resembling a cross of octopus, squid & nautilus/ammonite that can grow to be 60 m and are found along the southern & southwestern coasts of Eldath. They are known to possess spikes alternating with serrated suction-cups on the undersides of their many tentacles and to have a rock-hard, spiral-patterned shell protecting most of its body. Krakens subsist on massive quantities of molluscs, fish & plankton, and are usually harmless to humans – until and unless either they are absolutely starving or one threatens them/gives the impression of threatening them, in which case they will lash out with their ink and spiked tentacles & will pursue the human even if s/he withdraws. Due to their sheer size and the weight of their shells, they're quite a bit slower than other squids and octopi, which combined with their tendency to pursue aggressors until either they're dead or said aggressor's dead makes them easy to reach for fishermen who prize their meat (actually defeating a Kraken is rather more difficult, even for experienced hunters). The Dusklanders and Ellisians especially treasure Kraken meat: Ellisians & most Dusklanders fry them (the former don't coat them in batter while the latter do), while the Lerets of western Solamut boil them and the Bedyets of northeastern Solamut use their ink in cooking other foods, especially rice. The size of a fully grown Kraken means it could feed a town for months, if they can preserve its flesh.

**Man o' war** - Men o' war are giant jellyfish with a bell diameter of up to 12 m and a thousand tentacles that can grow up to 80 m in length, matching even the mighty Leviathan's length from head to tail. As one might be able to guess, they are extremely poisonous and can kill even a Leviathan or an entire school of Elvers within a minute and a half. They are found only along the northern shores of Eldath, and are considered delicacies in Brel (where they are shredded into thin noodles and slathered in their own heavily-diluted toxins for an extremely spicy taste), Morcarragh (where they are salted & deep-fried in lard) and among the Thiareike (who drink their diluted poison, something far more powerful than even rectified spirits and capable of inducing hallucinations lurid enough to literally frighten people to death, in their teens as one of several rites of passage)

**Snapvine** - The snapvine is a hardy, carnivorous plant that can grow to be up to 7 m long & tall, and exclusively grow on former battlefields where juveniles can most easily feed on corpses. It resembles an oversized Venus flytrap, though its long and needle-like teeth point inward rather than outward. Snapvines are primarily scavengers but will also prey on live animals up to and including passing humans that get within its reach, who it will shred with its teeth before swallowing & digesting. According to one legend, the first snapvine was conjured up by a Genie sorcerer-king to avenge the slaughter of his family at the hands of a rival in the First Age; another claims they were first born thanks to the dying curse of a Sylvan magus who was betrayed and murdered by his comrades in the early Second Age. Either way, they originated in the outer Evennan Forest but can now be found growing on any battlefield where there is sufficient precipitation for them to survive, and have become especially common in the war-torn swamps of Thurin's western Grensgebied.

**Green vampire** - Green vampires are yew-like trees with unusually flexible branches, found only in Sylve's Evennan Forest. They might be sentient, but even if they are they cannot speak like ents nor do they understand any language except violence: a green vampire feeds by grabbing an animal or even a human with its flexible branches, then mauling them & letting their blood spill onto its roots until they die of exsanguination, even if it is already full (it doesn't need surviving prey coming back to kill it or inform others of its existence, after all). A green vampire cannot die unless it runs out of prey to bleed. Legend has it that the first green vampires were created by the souls of Genies who fought to exterminate Sylvan humans & those of their kind who mated with said humans in the Second Age, and were so filled with hate that they bound themselves to trees so they could live even longer & kill yet more humans and 'impure' Genie. This has in no way stopped Sylvans from braving their branches to chop them down & use their wood for arrows: all such 'vampiric arrows' are invariably toxic, and there is no known cure to prevent whatever unlucky sod got hit with one from dying within 24 hours - but, if s/he dies on good soil, a new green vampire will inevitably grow from the place where s/he breathed their last unless it is covered in stones & exorcised by an Erraian priest or priestess of good character.

**Dragon** - A giant creature, typically between 20 to 60 m in length and 10 to 25 m in height, that resembles a four-legged lizard with wings. There are four such subspecies: red, blue, white and black dragons. Despite their reptilian appearance, most dragons are actually warm-blooded and have extremely high internal body temperatures, with the exception of the cold-blooded white dragon. All but the white dragons host the same unique hyperthermophilic bacteria found in the lung systems of hellbenders, meaning that they too breathe out methane instead of CO2, though the exact method by which they breathe fire differs slightly between each dragon subspecies. Red and blue dragons have mucous-lined throats that allow them to safely mix oxygen & methane before releasing it and lighting it on fire without scorching themselves, while black dragons develop a piezoelectric crystal in a special socket in their throat while young & instinctively pressure said socket to generate a spark to light their breath on fire. White dragons, which do not breathe methane, instead weaponize carbon dioxide: it doesn't exhale all of the CO2 its lungs convert oxygen into, instead liquefying & storing some of it in a special pressurized sac connected to its respiratory system, and also consume huge amounts of chalk to generate more CO2. When needed, the white dragon releases the pressure on its 'ice sac' and expels the rapidly-cooling CO2 at the same time, resulting in an 'ice breath' not unlike modern-day CO2 fire extinguishers (though obviously far more powerful).

Dragons are famously intelligent, with all four types capable of mimicking human speech when sufficiently trained and white & black dragons even wielding magical powers: white dragons can manipulate the temperature around them to either warm themselves up (since they are after all cold-blooded) or further cool the air around their mouth when expelling their ice breath, while black dragons can manipulate electric currents and generate electric fields at will. In ancient times they were employed as mounts by the dragon riders of Morcarragh, each of whom had to forge an individual bond with their chosen dragon before the beast would allow them to mount, but the order was suppressed & dragons hunted down by the Morcarraghim after the Order meddled one too many times in politics & found itself on the losing end of a civil war. These days small numbers of dragons can still be found in the highest peaks and deepest caves of Eldath, mostly in Morcarragh though there have been sightings as far as Solamut and Thurin.

**Ovlathi** - The remains of the Ovlathi race, monstrous humanoids who were originally manufactured by a Genie lord of old from his own garbage to serve as unthinking foot-soldiers in a war with one of his rivals but who later gained true sentience & revolted against their creator. They rapidly multiplied, spread across the surface of Eldath and warred extensively with both the Genies & humanity: in the case of the latter they attempted to enslave the Anselmen (proto-Morcarraghim), the last free humans on Eldath in the late First Age, but were eventually defeated & sustained upwards of 90% casualties as both their former Genie overlords and the ascendant humans massacred them wherever they were found, driving them deep underground. These days, the Ovlathi still survive despite severe social regression and millennia of mutations to cope with their underground surroundings & high rates of inbreeding: their brown-green skin has turned pale and milky, their eyes have completely disappeared in favor of heightened hearing & smelling, and while their legs have shrunk to vestigial stubs no larger than the average man's hand their arms have grown much longer and more muscular.

The modern Ovlathi live in simple family groups, typically consisting of only the parents & their 3-8 children. They are known to use simple weapons, no more advanced than bones and stones tied to sticks with catgut to form clubs & spears or crude slingshots, to hunt animals ranging from rats to large insects and even cave bears. They're also known to be extremely aggressive towards anyone not in their family group who trespasses on their territory, including human explorers. For their part, humans consider Ovlathi to be 'worse than even the basest beast', and in the more militaristic Northern Realms such as Brel or Thurin squires are expected to march off into the deepest caves in their respective kingdoms & bring back the heads of as many Ovlathi as they can kill in a week as their last test to prove that they're worthy of knighthood.