

# Player Pets:

Rearing Wild Animals and Training Domesticated Animals



Jensen Toperzer



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hat do you do when a player decides they want their character to own a pet? The simple solution is to have them play a Beastmaster ranger or an arcane spellcaster who can cast *find familiar*, but what if a character of a different class finds an animal they wish to keep as a pet? Perhaps they don't want the hassle of dipping into a class with a built-in pet, but still want some mechanical benefit to having an animal around. Maybe your player hasn't found such an animal, but they've expressed interest in their character having some sort of animal companion. These rules allow player characters of all classes to adopt pets of their very own, while ensuring that rangers' animal companions and spellcasters' familiars remain more potent options.

## Eligible Animals

Pets must be beasts of 1/4 challenge rating or lower and an intelligence of 3 or lower, with the exception of the **warhorse**. A creature must be trained before it can be effective in combat. A wild creature must be domesticated before it is trained. Finding the right place and person to purchase an animal from can be difficult; while the average human or elven city will have horses, cats, and dogs for sale, finding a pre-trained **giant lizard** or **flying snake** may be difficult in some campaign settings. That said, a town in a deep jungle or swamp may well have such creatures for sale, while an underground city may sell **giant fire beetles** to dungeon delvers. Similarly, in some far northern climates, there might be domesticated **elk** for sale, but this is rare.

## Care and Feeding

Each pet adds 1 sp/day per size category to lifestyle expenses. For example, a Tiny **rat** only costs 1 sp/day, while a Large **warhorse** requires 4 sp/day. An owner can hunt food for their animal, or the animal can be trained to hunt for itself, halving the cost. The remaining cost represents other types of care, such as medicine, shelter, and toys. When training a domesticated animal to perform actions on command, the base lifestyle cost doubles. Thus, if you were teaching your Tiny rat to take the Perform action (described below in the Non-Combat Actions section), it would cost an additional 1 sp/day as long as you were teaching your rat. This cost represents things like extra treats and supplies. Domesticating a wild animal increases the cost to 1 gp/day per size category. A Medium **wolf**, for instance, costs a full 3 gp/day to domesticate. This cost reflects the increased price of keeping the animal safely contained, and the comparatively larger amounts and more exotic types of food a wild animal requires.

## Domesticating an Animal

A wild animal must be reared from infancy to become domesticated. Sometimes, wild animals

can be found semi-domesticated by monsters, such as **wolves** with **goblins**, or **hyenas** with **gnolls**. These animals can be re-trained as adults to be loyal to a party member.

Domesticating a wild animal uses a variant of the optional loyalty rules for NPCs. An animal's loyalty score is on a scale from 0 to 20. An animal's maximum loyalty is equal to the Wisdom score of its owner. Wild animals start at loyalty 0. Animals trained by monsters start at loyalty 5.

To domesticate an animal, a player must make one Animal Handling check. The Animal Handling check has a DC of  $10 + \text{the animal's HD}$ . Success means that the animal's loyalty increases by one point. Failure means that loyalty does not increase; failure by more than five means that the animal's loyalty decreases by one point. Dealing damage to an animal, pushing an animal beyond its limits, frightening an animal, or failing to feed or care for an animal lowers an animal's loyalty by 1 point per day.

An animal that reaches loyalty 10 is domesticated and loyal to its trainer. The animal will now follow its owner to the best of its ability. It will not obey commands more complex than "follow," nor will it enter a dangerous situation of its own volition. If an animal is forced into a dangerous situation, it will cower until the danger passes. If the owner was the one who deliberately led the animal into the situation in question, the pet's loyalty score decreases by 1 point.

## Training an Animal

A pet owner can continue to build loyalty with an animal after it has been domesticated; this allows the animal to be trained. A trained animal can take actions when commanded. Most commands must be verbal, though hand signals can be used if the animal has line of sight to its owner.

Every point of loyalty beyond 10 allows you to teach an animal one additional action that it is physically capable of performing. If an animal becomes owned by someone with a Wisdom score lower than  $10 + \text{the number of skills the animal knows}$ , the animal does *not* forget any of its known actions.

## Non-Combat Actions

These are some examples of actions and tricks a pet can learn. A pet cannot be commanded to act in combat unless it has been trained in combat actions.

- **Guard.** The pet watches an area and performs an action specified by their owner if someone enters the area, such as alerting its owner or attacking. If the intruder attempts to sneak in, compare their Dexterity (Stealth) check against the animal's passive Wisdom (Perception) score to determine if they are detected.
- **Harness.** This pet can be harnessed to a cart or plow, allowing it to carry larger objects or work on a farm.
- **Hide.** The pet takes the Hide action.
- **Hunt.** The pet makes a DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) check. If it succeeds, it finds small game native to the region, and brings its prey back to its owner.
- **Intimidate.** The animal makes a DC 10 Charisma (Intimidation) check. If it succeeds, the pet's owner gains advantage on all Intimidation checks they make this round.
- **Light Source.** The pet carries a light source for the party. The pet can be commanded to walk 10 feet in ahead of or behind its owner. If the pet is naturally bioluminescent, it does not need to carry a light source.
- **Messenger.** The pet can carry a message or object to a destination or recipient. The pet must be familiar with either the recipient or the destination in order to deliver the message.
- **Mount.** The pet can be ridden if it is at least one size category larger than its rider.
- **Perform.** The pet may aid an owner's Performance check by making a DC 10 Charisma check. If the pet succeeds, the owner gains advantage on that Performance check.
- **Search.** If the pet succeeds at a DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check, the pet's owner gains advantage on a Perception or

Investigation check to find secret doors, traps, corpses, unusual features (a strange sound, smell, etc.) or food.

- **Track.** The pet makes a DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) check. On a success, it grants advantage to its owner's Survival check to track an individual or creature.

A Ranger's animal companion, Paladin's mount, or spellcaster's familiar can automatically do anything on this list that it is physically capable of doing.

## Combat Actions

Pets with combat training obey your commands as best they can. They take their turns on your initiative. A pet can be commanded to move without using an action, but all other commands require an action on your part. You may use your action to command your pet to Attack, Dash, Disengage, Dodge, or Help, if it has learned those combat actions. Each combat action learned counts towards the maximum actions a pet can learn. Pets without combat training will cower or hide until combat is over. If a player character is riding their pet, the pet cannot take the Attack action.

## Example Pets & Abilities

This is a table of example pets. Many other animals could exist in your campaign that fit these requirements, such as small **monkeys**, **dinosaurs**, **ostriches**, and the like. You may also choose to make exceptions for more powerful animals such as **elephants**, **griffons**, **hippogriffs**, **pegasi**, or **dragon wyrmlings**.

Each animal is listed with their size and challenge rating. Animals that can be purchased have prices. Each animal has a list of suggested actions that animal can learn, based on the animal

type. Not all trained animals know all the actions in their action lists when purchased. For example, a riding dog would probably know how to act as a mount, but might not know how to perform. Known actions can be determined by where the animal is purchased, or randomly generated. A GM can determine that a given animal can learn an action not listed.

Animals that can't be trained simply cannot learn instructions, by their very nature. They can still be successfully domesticated.

Can Be Purchased Trained				
Animal	Size	CR	Average Price	Possible Known Actions
Hawk	Tiny	0	25 gp	Hunt, Perform, Messenger Attack, Dash, Disengage, Dodge,
Camel	Large	1/8	50 gp	Mount, Harness, Perform, Intimidate, Light Source (must be tied to the animal somehow) Attack, Dash, Disengage, Dodge
Mastiff	Medium	1/8	25 gp	Guard, Hunt, Perform, Search, Track, Light Source, Harness, Mount, Messenger, Hide, Intimidate, Light Source (can be carried in mouth or tied to the body) Attack, Dash, Disengage, Dodge, Help
Mule	Medium	1/8	8 gp	Harness, Mount, Perform, Light Source (must be tied to the animal) Attack, Dash, Disengage, Dodge
Pony	Medium	1/8	30 gp	Harness, Mount, Perform, Light Source (must be tied to the animal) Attack, Dash, Disengage, Dodge
Flying Snake	Tiny	1/8	25 gp	Messenger, Perform, Hunt, Hide
Draft Horse	Large	1/4	50 gp	Harness, Mount, Perform, Light Source (must be tied to the animal) Attack, Disengage, Dodge, Dash
Giant Lizard	Large	1/4	75 gp	Harness, Mount, Hunt Attack, Disengage, Dodge, Dash
Riding Horse	Large	1/4	75 gp	Harness, Mount, Perform Attack, Disengage, Dodge, Dash
Warhorse	Large	1/2	400 gp	Harness Mount, Perform, Intimidate Attack (can attack while mounted), Disengage, Dodge, Dash

**Can Be Purchased Domesticated (generally do not have training when purchased)**

Name	Size	CR	Average Price	Can Be Trained?
Frog	Tiny	0	1 cp	No
Giant Fire Beetle	Small	0	1 gp	Light Source
Goat	Medium	0	1 gp	Perform, Attack, Dash, Disengage, Dodge
Lizard	Tiny	0	1 cp	No
Rat	Tiny	0	0 (Free!)	Messenger, Guard, Hide, Perform, Search, Track
Weasel	Tiny	0	1 sp	Messenger, Hide, Perform
Raven	Tiny	0	1 sp	Messenger (can speak simple phrases of one language), Perform
Cat	Tiny	1/8	1 sp	Hide, Perform, Hunt, Attack, Dash, Disengage, Dodge
Giant Rat	Small	1/8	2 cp	Messenger, Guard, Hide, Perform, Search, Track, Hunt, Attack, Dash, Disengage, Dodge
Giant Weasel	Medium	1/8	1 gp	Perform, Guard, Hunt, Mount, Attack, Dash, Disengage, Dodge
Giant Frog	Medium	1/4	1 gp	Perform, Guard, Harness, Intimidate



## Never Found Domesticated

Name	CR	Can be trained?
Badger	0	Attack, Dash, Disengage, Dodge
Bat	0	Messenger
Constrictor Snake	0	Intimidate
Crab	0	No
Deer	0	Hide, Attack, Dash, Disengage, Dodge
Eagle	0	Hunt, Perform, Messenger, Intimidate Attack, Dash, Disengage, Dodge
Hyena	0	Intimidate, Attack, Dash, Disengage, Dodge
Jackal	0	Attack, Dash, Disengage, Dodge
Octopus	0	Perform, Hide, Attack, Dash, Disengage, Dodge Owner must be able to issue commands underwater
Owl	0	Hunt, Messenger, Hide, Attack, Dash, Disengage, Dodge
Sea Horse	0	No
Scorpion	0	No
Spider	0	No
Vulture	0	Hunt, Messenger, Intimidate, Attack, Dash, Disengage, Dodge
Poisonous Snake	(1/8)	Intimidate
Blood Hawk	(1/8)	Hunt, Messenger, Intimidate, Attack, Dash, Disengage, Dodge
Axe Beak	(1/4)	Harness, Mount, Intimidate, Attack, Dash, Disengage, Dodge
Giant Badger	(1/4)	Intimidate, Attack, Dash, Disengage, Dodge
Giant Bat	(1/4)	Mount, Attack, Dash, Disengage, Dodge
Boar	(1/4)	Intimidate, Attack, Dash, Disengage, Dodge
Elk	(1/4)	Harness, Mount, Attack, Dash, Disengage, Dodge
Giant Centipede	(1/4)	Intimidate
Giant Crab	(1/4)	Intimidate
Giant Poisonous Snake	(1/4)	Intimidate
Giant Wolf Spider	(1/4)	Mount, Intimidate, Attack, Dash, Disengage, Dodge
Panther	(1/4)	Hide, Hunt, Perform, Track, Intimidate, Attack, Dash, Disengage, Dodge
Wolf	(1/4)	Hunt, Perform, Track, Search, Messenger, Intimidate Attack, Dash, Disengage, Dodge

*Author - Jensen Toperzer*

*Editor - James Haeck*

*Artists - Jen Tracy, Savage Mojo*

*Layout - Justin Buell*