

TRAVELLER

STRANDED



SCIENCE FICTION ADVENTURE IN THE FAR FUTURE

TRAVELLER

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INTRODUCTION

Stranded is inspired by the *Classic Traveller* adventure *Marooned*, which formed half of *Classic Traveller Double Adventure 4: Marooned/Marooned Alone*. The second adventure was a modification of the first, intended for solo play. We have revisited *Marooned* in spirit but not attempted to replicate the original content. The central concept is the same, however. The Travellers are forced to travel overland from the site of a crash to a place of supposed safety, dealing with whatever obstacles they encounter along the way.

This adventure can be slotted into a campaign wherever the Referee wishes or used as a one-off standalone for a quick game. It could even be played as an adventure within an adventure. For example, the Travellers might run a simulation as training for an upcoming mission. For this reason the planet the Travellers crash on is not any specific one in the Charted Space universe. Any borderline habitable world can be substituted or the Travellers might have discovered an uncharted planet. For a standalone game this does not matter but if the adventure is to be used in an ongoing campaign it needs to be located. There is no reason for the adventure to stop when the Travellers arrive at their destination. They might face additional challenges getting offworld or discover that momentous events have taken place whilst they were slogging through swamps.

Stranded is not aimed at any particular type of Traveller, although practical skills such as Recon and Survival will certainly be useful. The challenges

encountered can be dealt with in any manner of ways. For example, whilst some Travellers will want to blast the living daylights out of threatening animals, a group with a more scientific bent might figure out how to lure or frighten them away, and could end up safely meandering through territory of creatures that might overwhelm a firepower-first band of Travellers.

Equipment and ammunition will be strictly limited, making direct attack a problem. Hopefully this will encourage the Travellers to think, plan and solve problems but if they want to just bull through they can of course try. There is nothing ‘unfair’ about creating a situation where the Travellers are outgunned by nature... and nothing ‘fair’ about it either. Nature simply does not care. Smart Travellers will realise they are beyond the Universal Charter of Sophont’s Rights or threat of legal action. They must make the best decisions they can and deal with the consequences.

This might be an interesting experience for the Travellers. Humans and other sophonts can come to think they are somehow above or outside nature, but can be cast back into the food chain at any moment. Take away the sophisticated tools, powerful weapons, fabulous shoes and the backup of a complex society and what advantages do mere humans have in the face of ‘nature, red in tooth and claw’? They have the same advantages they always did – intellect and cooperation. Travellers who recognise this will succeed. Those who do not may end their days as a meal for some primitive swamp-beast.



REFEE INFORMATION

Stranded takes place on the almost uninhabited world of Instuv, somewhere in the backwaters of space. The rest of the system and surrounding worlds are irrelevant to the adventure as the Travellers have no way of interacting with them.

INSTUV (E988200-4)

Instuv is a large, wet world with 1.09G surface gravity and a dense atmosphere. Mean surface temperature is a little lower than Earth's, creating unpleasantly cold and damp conditions even close to the equator. The world has extensive ice fields at the poles, reaching down almost as far as the tropics, and icebergs are common. The atmosphere can be turbulent, creating devastating storms or downpours that last for weeks at a time. Not surprisingly, the planetary population is very small and no attempt has been made to open up the world for exploitation.

Instuv is the sort of planet pushed to potential investors as 'ripe for ground-floor development' and avoided by everyone who understands the meaning of this jargon. The world might have huge natural resources but they remain undiscovered. Indeed, much of the surface has only been cursorily mapped from orbit. The world has life; that much is known for certain. It is green and, in some areas at least, lush. Virtually nothing is known offworld beyond that.

The planetary population is estimated to be around 300 but this figure is almost certainly incorrect. It is based on an estimate of the size and amount of housing at the settlement of Audamu, the only 'official' community on-planet. The surrounding area has small numbers of farmers, hunters and the like who trade their wares at the settlement and there are probably other minor communities elsewhere on the planet. Considering it is not even known if there is land under the ice in the northern and southern waters, an accurate census is far too much to ask for.

Instuv does not have a spaceport but the occasional ship lands at Audamu. Few return for a second visit as there is little to trade for and no money to buy offworld goods. Reprovisioning and a chance to walk around outside are the best a visiting crew can hope for, although at least some of the locals are hospitable. The

town's crafters can make items up to TL4 and might be able to repair more advanced equipment if shown how it works. There are few to no offworld or high-tech goods for sale; anyone who has something special will hang onto it if they can.

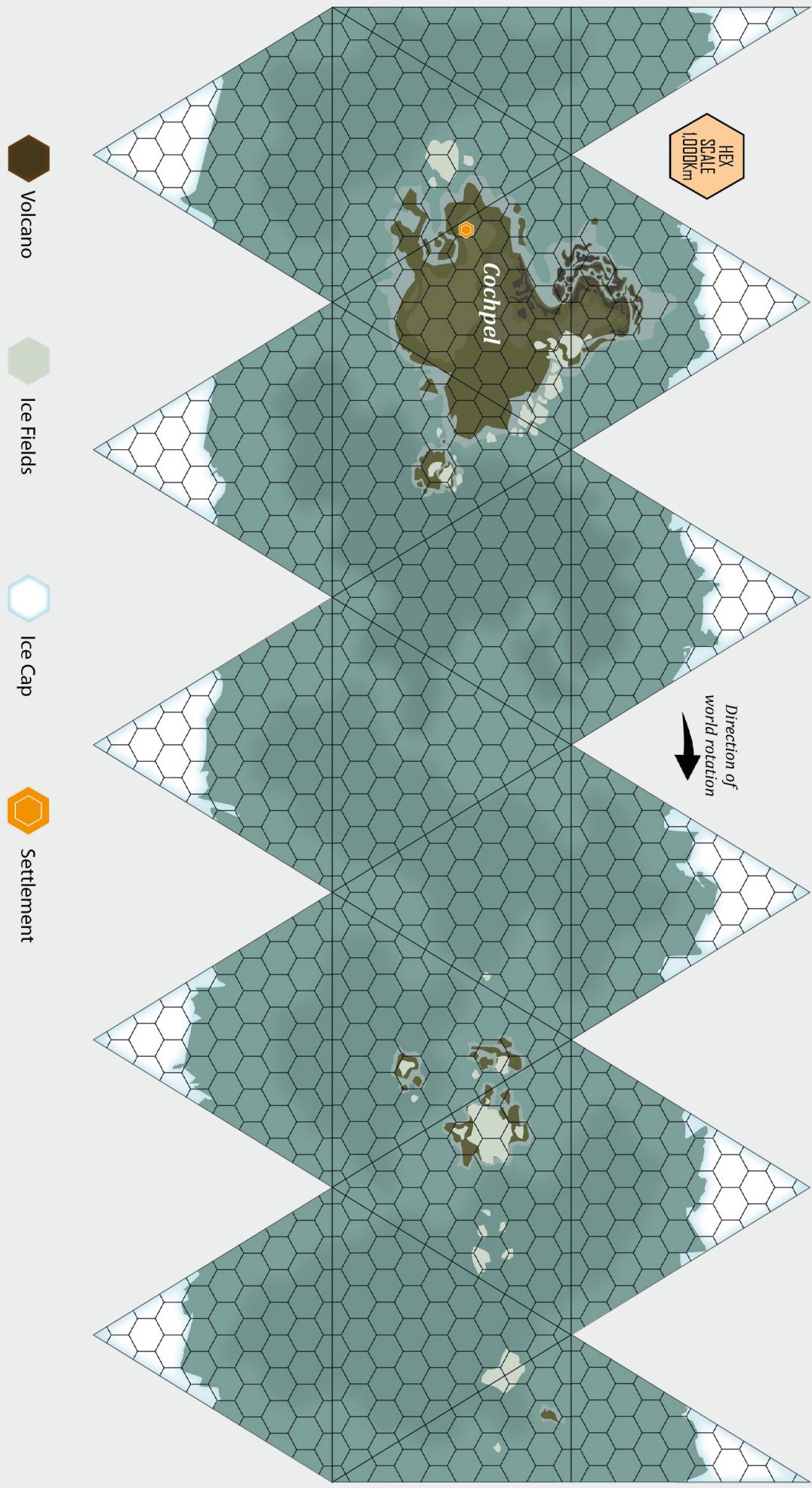
There is no world government and no formal body of law but Audamu has a number of respected citizens who decide on important matters. Whilst not illegal in the usual sense, acts like violence and thievery are unacceptable and punished on an ad-hoc basis. That could mean a beating, forfeiture of property, an agreement to perform work for the wronged party or the good of society as a whole, or exile. Short-term exile is survivable, forcing the miscreant to camp outside the settlement and ponder the error of their ways. Short-term exiles may or may not be awarded concessions such as access to medical assistance if needed. Permanent exile means being completely cut off from society and is essentially a death sentence. Return before the term of exile is up is resisted rather than punished – that is, the returning outlaw is assumed to be a threat and will face potentially lethal force. This can be seen as hair-splitting but it does mean that whilst nobody has the authority to condemn a violent offender to death, everybody has the right to shoot at them if they get too close to the town or someone's home.

FLORA AND FAUNA

The majority of animals on Instuv are pseudo-reptilian; warm-blooded but in most other ways displaying reptilian characteristics. Egg-laying is common and almost every land creature is quadrupedal. Thick scaly skin is a common solution to the problem of staying warm but there are a few exceptions such as the Feathered Squealer. This irritatingly noisy little beast is covered in bright orange feathers, creating a splash of colour in an otherwise drab landscape. The Squealer may not be native to Instuv. Flying creatures are abundant but feathers are rare. Evolution on Instuv seems to have settled on scales as the solution to all possible problems. As a result the avians of Instuv look like a cross between scaly bats and pterosaurs. Water-dwelling air-breathers are also reptilian in appearance and even the fish – in freshwater at least – are drab and vaguely reptilian in shape.

INSTUV

UWR: E988200-4



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Flora tends towards scrubby bushes and what are locally termed 'cluster trees'. These grow from a central base and trunk, spreading branches which arc downwards until they contact the ground. A branch finding suitable soil becomes a secondary base, growing its own trunk and spreading more branches. The end result can be a cluster of anything up to 40 trunks with near-total branch coverage in between. Very little light reaches the ground, so there is little undergrowth. Between tree clusters are areas of thorny bushes which constantly war with the larger plants for nutrients.

COCHPEL

The continent of Cochpel might be considered a large island elsewhere in the cosmos but it is the largest single land mass on Instuv and more than likely home to the entire planetary population. The northern part of the continent, although colder than the south, is actually more habitable. This is due to the Corsecas, a chain of large volcanoes to the west of the island. Over millions of years this region of high volcanic activity has thrown up mountains which break the worst of the oceanic storms before they hit the coasts of Cochpel. Ash from constant eruptions falls on the northern part of the continent, creating unusually fertile soil.

The continent can be considered to be made up of five main zones, plus an additional smaller land mass located about 70 kilometres to the east. This is known as Encargan Island and is generally assumed to be uninhabited. The island is mostly covered in low-lying swamp, with a central chain of low mountains. It has never been fully mapped and it is entirely possible no-one has ever set foot there.

The only known inhabited area is the Western Coast region, characterised by low, swampy land and patchy coverage of cluster trees. Inland to the north-east of the Western Coast is the region simply referred to as Instuv Main. This is the most fertile and habitable part of the planet and would be chosen as the site for settlement if one was ever planned. East of Instuv Main is the Teknillo Mountain Chain, with one large spine-like range and several smaller spurs. The chain shelters the north-eastern coastal plain but little is known about conditions there.

East and south of the Teknillo Chain is a broad plain variously called 'the Flatlands' and 'the Eastern Plain', which drops southwards to the Great Fen. A narrow neck of land separates a region known as Rivo's Peninsula from the mainland.



COCHPEL



Islands of the Corsecas (1)

A chain of extinct, dormant and active volcanoes which spew out ash on a regular basis. The Corsecas act as a complex windbreak, at least most of the time. Occasionally a storm can be twisted into multiple weather events as it passes through among the sharp-sided islands and rising plumes of hot air. This can create unpredictable weather events to the east, on the mainland.

North-Western Mountains (2)

The North-Western Mountains are a continuation of the volcanic chain that created the Corsecas but are long extinct and rounded off by the action of wind and water. The region might be of interest to planetary scientists but is far too difficult to access for local exploration.

Central Uplands (3)

The Central Uplands cover much of the interior of the Instuv Main region. The land is generally drier here, except in the valley bottoms. Hillsides are characterised by bushes and low spiny creeper-like growth, with cluster trees found only on gentle slopes or low hilltops.

Teknillo Mountain Chain (4)

The Teknillo Mountain Chain was formed by the violent (in tectonic terms) collision of the eastern and western halves of the continent. A small sea once separated these masses, evidence of which is still visible in fossils and areas of young sedimentary rock. There are a few volcanoes in the chain, mainly near the northern tip.

Teknillo Pass Complex (5)

Several large mountain passes converge to create a relatively high-altitude pass complex. This area is sheltered and well-watered, although cold, and is probably the best site for a settlement if the world is ever developed.

Flatlands/Eastern Plain (6)

Very little is known about this region, other than its relative lack of high ground.

Rivo's Peninsula (7)

The southernmost tip of the continent receives more solar heat than anywhere else but is exposed to sea winds coming in from the west. As a result, it is prone to violent storms which make settlement a real problem.

The Great Fen (8)

The marshiest part of a marshy continent, the Great Fen has thus far defied exploration.

The Western Coast (9)

The Western Coast region is the only part of Instuv known to be inhabited. Low-lying and lacking shelter it is battered by frequent maritime storms. The damage these cause is mitigated by stands of cluster trees, which anchor the surrounding soil. As a result the landscape tends towards low rises topped by trees, with marshy lower areas in between.

AUDAMU

The town of Audamu is home to about 300 people, who represent the 'official' world population insofar as anyone has made a count. There are some outlying hamlets in the surrounding area but overall Audamu represents the only civilisation on Instuv. Starships could of course touchdown almost anywhere else but this is the only site with a marked safe landing area. It is little more than a flattened area on the reverse side of a ridge just inland from the town. The ridge provides shelter from gusty winds that might otherwise make landing tricky but other than a few painted rocks used as markers there are no facilities at all.

Audamu is surrounded by an earth berm topped by a palisade of cluster-tree logs. Thorny bushes front the berm, creating a significant obstacle for the local wildlife. Attacks are rare but not sufficiently so that the barrier can be neglected. Maintenance consists of clearing debris once in a while and planting bushes where they have grown thin. The berm also provides shelter from the incessant ocean wind. The majority of the townsfolk are subsistence farmers, crafters in supporting industries or fish along the coast in small boats on a nearby inlet.

Most citizens own a firearm, typically a carbine or shotgun suited to potting small game. A few more potent weapons are owned by those who make it a practice to drive dangerous wildlife away or who hunt for a living. Typically the rest of the town supports these hunters when they are working to the benefit of all; the rest of the time they trade what they shoot for what others have grown. The weapon of choice for such hunters is a double-barrelled shotgun/heavy rifle combination, which allows a shot to be ready for whatever breaks cover.

ADMINISTERING THE ADVENTURE

In *Stranded*, the journey is the adventure to a great extent. The Travellers will have to solve the problems they come across by whatever means present themselves. This could quite easily turn into *Starvation: The Adventure* if the Travellers are not mindful of their situation and whilst a Total Party Kill due to self-inflicted starvation might be a learning experience, the Referee should not permit the adventure to become an endless grind of finding enough to eat for one more day. Thus the Travellers' requirements for supplies and sustenance are abstracted to a significant degree. Subsistence should be a driving factor which makes the Travellers push on or take risks and so long as they make a credible effort the Referee is justified in being a little kind. However, if the Travellers simply refuse to get involved with all that nasty nature stuff they will eventually succumb and the adventure will be over.

At the beginning of the adventure the Travellers are presented with a problem; they are stranded in a remote area and help is not coming. The only solution is to walk out and there is only one useful destination. On the way the Travellers will encounter two types of incident. The first are scripted; encounters and incidents set up beforehand. These can be moved into the Travellers' path by the Referee and presented when it seems appropriate. The second kind of incident is generated by the Travellers' actions. Each time they move into a new area, represented by a hex on the map, an incident or encounter may occur. The Travellers will have to deal with these as they arise. Similarly, if the Travellers decide to carry out some scheme, such as gathering materials to make a raft, they may have some mini-adventures along the way.

The Referee will probably wish to keep track of time, although the Travellers are not really under any pressure other than food supply and perhaps the change of seasons. If for some reason the Travellers decide to take up residence in the outback and just wait for rescue, the adventure changes only slightly. Instead of marching from place-to-place the Travellers will need to survive in situ, perhaps building themselves some nice little huts or finding a cave to dwell in. Eventually a ship will pass by and a rescue might be mounted but there is no way to know when this will occur.

If the Travellers do decide to wait for rescue, they may have to wait a long, long time. Instuv receives almost no interstellar traffic and whilst their ship has been posted missing there is a lot of space to search for it. There is no chance of a passing ship during the first 2D+14 days. Thereafter, the Referee should make a straight 2D check every 2D days. A starship passes through the system on results of 10+. The wreck will certainly be detected if it is still in orbit and spotted on 4+ on 2D if the passing ship comes down into the atmosphere. This does not necessarily mean anyone will investigate; the crew could simply report the sighting or plunder the wreckage without checking for survivors. Eventually, a search will be mounted and the Travellers may be found but there is a good chance of spending a standard year or more on-planet and no certainty of ever being rescued.



THE JOURNEY

Most of the adventure revolves around the journey undertaken by the Travellers. They will have to solve problems along the way and need to be mindful of how much they can carry. A Traveller can carry a load in kilograms equal to their STR + END plus any levels in Athletics (strength and/or endurance), assuming it is well distributed and they have something to carry it in. Travellers can carry up to twice their nominal load but are considered to be heavily loaded. They will suffer DM-2 on all actions including non-physical tasks such as observation and mapmaking due to fatigue and discomfort.

The Travellers might also be creative about carrying a load. For example, it would be possible to fashion a sled to drag additional items upon. A sled could in theory be pulled by any number of people providing there is sufficient cord and handles. A sled can also be abandoned at need, freeing everyone for fast emergency movement and taken up again after the crisis is past. If the Travellers are using a multi-person sled their speed is determined by the total STR + END of everyone pulling it weighed against the mass of the sled and everything aboard it. For example, two Travellers are pulling a sled, with a total of 27 STR and END between them. This is more than 6x their total (162) and less than 9x their total (243) so it counts as an extreme load and reduces their speed to 20% of normal marching pace. When their muscular outdoorsy colleague returns from scouting ahead and applies his total of 18 STR and END to the sled, the increase in pulling power is such that the sled load is considered heavy and speed increases to 40% of normal.

Penalties for carrying a heavy personal load and dragging a sled or bundle are combined. In theory an average Traveller can lurch along carrying about 30 kilograms of items on their person and dragging an additional 130 kilograms behind them but they would be moving at little more than 10% of normal speed and will quickly become exhausted. Balancing how much to carry against speed of advance is one of many decisions the Travellers will have to make.

Travelling in the Outback

Travelling is rather hard on Instuv. Low-lying ground is marshy and higher areas tend to be choked with bushes. Stands of cluster trees provide the easiest going but it is dark and claustrophobic under them. The Referee should keep in mind that nights are dark – really, really dark. The only artificial lights on the entire planet are in the settlements or whatever the Travellers have with them. Batteries are good in modern comms and similar electronics but they will run out if the Travellers insist on using them as light sources. The only real solution is to move, hunt and work during the day and hunker down at night. The Travellers might start out feeling superior to the local wildlife but pretty soon it will become apparent they are operating on the same level.

Going tends to be slow and beset by problems such as bad weather, mudslides or a need to backtrack several kilometres due to an unexpected obstacle. Hacking a path through bushes is an extremely tiring task that will reduce Travellers to a painfully slow pace. The vegetation can also conceal natural hazards and hostile

Load and Marching Speed

Level of Load	Example	Effect
Normal Load	Up to (STR + END + any ranks in Athletics)	Traveller moves at normal speed
Heavy Load	Up to 2x (STR + END + any ranks in Athletics)	Traveller moves at 60% speed, DM-2 on all checks
Loaded Sled	Up to 3x (STR + END + any ranks in Athletics)	Traveller moves at 80% speed, DM-2 on all checks
Heavily Loaded Sled	Up to 6x (STR + END + any ranks in Athletics)	Traveller moves at 40% speed, DM-4 on all checks
Extreme Loaded Sled	Up to 9x (STR + END + any ranks in Athletics)	Traveller moves at 20% speed, DM-8 on all checks

animal life. The Travellers can mitigate their suffering somewhat by planning ahead. A reasonable prediction of conditions in the next area they are about to enter is possible if a Traveller can pass an Average (8+) Survival check. The Effect can be applied to attempts to navigate or deal with obstacles. A longer-range prediction requires a better understanding of the local terrain. Detailed scouting or familiarity due to spending a few days in the area will help, or the Travellers could get to high ground and make observations. This permits an Average (8+) Navigation check, the Effect of which can be applied in the next D3+1 areas the Travellers enter or attempt to cross.

The Travellers will move from map hex to map hex, dealing with whatever they encounter. The base time to cross any given hex is determined by its dominant terrain type and modified by the load carried by the Travellers as well as other conditions that may apply. Base time assumes the Travellers are moving at a steady and sustainable pace, and leaving sufficient time to make camp for the night. The Travellers can choose to take longer in any given hex; perhaps they want to hunt or preserve food, observe local wildlife, rest or collect shiny pebbles. Extra time taken may or may not provide benefits depending on what the Travellers choose to do and how well they do it.

Note that blundering around in the wilderness can become frustrating after a while. The Referee is encouraged to use random encounters to keep the Travellers on their toes but if they have clearly had enough of the authentic outdoor experience, and are becoming rebellious, the Referee should impose the Crash Site incident (see page 24) and have a rescue ship happen by.

Food and Water

It is possible for the Travellers to run out of food and water during their trek but they are starting out with a fair amount of supplies and water is always available on such a wet planet. Providing the Travellers make use of their purification kits they should encounter no serious problems in that regard. Food may be more of a problem. A typical human needs about a kilogram of decent food per day to avoid beginning to starve. Compacted high-food-value rations provide an equivalent which weighs much less. Thus the daily food requirement for an active humanoid or similar Traveller is abstracted as 10 Food Units or FU.

One day's worth of preserved rations is by definition worth 10 FU. Each personal survival kit contains one day's worth (10 FU) of food bars, which are mostly pleasant, and a week's worth of much less appetising bulk preserved food. Thus each Traveller has 80 FU available at the very least. Additional food could be obtained by hunting and gathering, or from other survival kits. If the Travellers are diligent in making preparations before they set out they will have plenty of food but accidents do happen along the way. Rations are spilled or spoiled, or plundered by small creatures. In this case the Travellers may have to find more or go hungry.

It is possible to survive with no food or minimal food for a number of days equal to the Traveller's END before any real harm is suffered, providing sufficient water is available. During this period of pre-starvation the Traveller heals normally and is not greatly impaired, although they will be in considerable discomfort and may lack energy. Assuming the Traveller engages in modest levels of activity, starvation begins to take effect after their END in days. After this, the Traveller can function for another period equal to twice their END in days, during which they do not heal from injuries and are sufficiently impaired to suffer DM-2 on any physical actions.

Symptoms of severe starvation appear after this period and can lead to death. The highest of the Traveller's STR and END is reduced by one each day – determine randomly if they are equal. When one or the other reaches 0, the Traveller collapses and cannot take any further action. Their highest physical characteristic (this is likely to be DEX) is then reduced by one per day until all three physical characteristics reach zero. At that point the Traveller will die.

This assumes no or minimal food, an intake of 0–1 FU per day. If some food is available the Traveller may be able to survive longer. The Traveller must make a Formidable (14+) END check every day with a positive DM equal to the amount of FU consumed that day. If successful, there is no reduction of STR or END that day.

Recovering from starvation depends on at what stage the Traveller begins to eat properly again. If the Traveller gains access to sufficient food (10 or more FU per day) at any time before they begin to lose points from STR and END, each day of eating normally erases one day of starvation. A medically tailored diet or consumption of high-quality foods

increases this to two or even three days. For example, a Traveller who has had no food for 11 days decides to gorge on high-protein foods upon their return to civilisation. After two days of this they have erased four days from their 'starvation clock' but have not rebuilt their body's reserves. If the food supply is cut off, the Traveller is treated as already having suffered seven days of starvation.

It is possible to eke out available supplies, for example by eating just enough food one day and starving the next but this does not 'reset the clock' – the only way to do that is to rebuild the Traveller's reserves by eating a good diet for a number of days equal to the time the Traveller was on the brink of starvation. Days when the Traveller is able to eat enough do not rebuild their reserves but they do prevent things from getting worse.

If a Traveller has suffered a reduction to STR, DEX or END due to starvation, the effects will be very visible and reversing them requires a lengthy process. One point is recovered to each damaged characteristic per week of good diet. This period can be reduced by a number of days equal to the Effect of a Difficult (10+) Medic check.

A typical person can last seven days without ill effects, 14 more with moderate ill effects and then begins to deteriorate. They will collapse after 13 more days, then linger in semi-conscious misery for eight more. Time from beginning to end is 42 days. This may seem like a long time but real-world incidents produce similar results.

If the Travellers want to forage, each who spends a whole day trying to trap or kill small game and gathering edible plants will obtain 1D FU plus the Effect of a Routine (6+) Survival check. Negative Effect reduces the amount obtained but cannot take it below 0. Hunting larger creatures must be roleplayed out and the attempt resolved using weapon skills or other skills relevant to the method used. A Razormouth yields 2D FU plus the Effect of a Routine (6+) Survival check. A Plateface yields 4D+12 FU Effect of a Routine (6+) Survival check. This all presupposes the Travellers know what they can and cannot eat. Any Traveller with Survival skill can advise the others and a scientist might be able to figure it out. Otherwise, foraging is a hit and miss business. The Survival check difficulty goes up to Very Difficult (12+) if the Travellers are just guessing, reducing by one difficulty level every two days as they gradually figure out what is edible. Stomach aches, vomiting and self-poisoning should be imposed by the Referee as part of this learning process.

Events and Encounters

Each day, the Referee should check for an encounter or event. The chance of something happening depends on the terrain being crossed. The exact time of day when the incident occurs may be indicated by its nature. For example, a terrain feature will probably be encountered when the Travellers are on the move. Exceptions are always possible – deep chasms in the ground do not sneak up on people but it is possible that careless Travellers might not notice something that should be really rather obvious. Animal encounters are more likely to be met on the move but Travellers might suffer an intrusion into their camp at night if this fits with the nature of the creature. Not all encounters need to be direct interactions. For example, an encounter with animals might simply be hearing movement of something large nearby. Terrain or event results that occur when the group is camped can be ignored, assumed to be nearby and set to occur just after the group gets going in the morning, or applied in a 'suddenly you realise that you've made camp right on the edge of a bog' manner if appropriate.

There is usually a chance to avoid an encounter, listed under the encounter's description. Where there is a way to avoid an encounter, the Referee should normally allow only one attempt, so the party's leader or scout, or just whoever happens to be at the front, normally has a chance to see if the encounter is avoided. However, it may be that a well-read biologist slogging along at the rear might have a better solution. Ideally, all Travellers will have a chance to show off their skills, inventiveness or desperation at some point.

TERRAIN TYPES

Hexes on the map are 10 kilometres across and require varying times to cross them depending on how heavily encumbered the group is, as well as the type of terrain in the hex. Once off the glacier the Travellers will encounter five main types of terrain in their march: Marshy, Hilly, Overgrown, River and Lake – the latter assumes the Travellers are moving along its banks. Base movement speed for a party marching overland with no more than a standard load is 30 kilometres during eight hours of marching, assuming open terrain which is not common. It is not really feasible to march more than eight hours and movement at night, even with artificial light, is not a good idea.

Marshy Terrain

Marsh is very common on Instuv, especially in low-lying areas. It is characterised by small watercourses and low vegetation which makes it difficult to find a dry path. Base movement speed is 15 kilometres per day. The chance of an encounter or event is 7+.

Hilly Terrain

Hilly terrain is found mainly in the uplands. It is characterised by scrubby vegetation on the slopes and cluster trees on the hilltops. Base movement speed is 20 kilometres per day. The chance of an encounter or event is 9+.

Overgrown Terrain

Overgrown terrain can be mixed with hilly or marshy hexes. Whilst drier than most areas, this translates to rampant vegetation which can at times form impenetrable barriers. Base movement speed is 10 km per day. The chance of an encounter or event is 8+.

River Terrain

Larger watercourses can block passage unless the Travellers can find some way to cross. Moving along the banks is no easier than moving through marshy terrain but if the Travellers were to make themselves a raft they could travel downstream at 40 kilometres per day or upstream at 20 kilometres per day. The chance of an encounter or event is 7+ if moving on the banks or 9+ if using some kind of watercraft.

Lake Terrain

Lake shores are considered to be Marshy terrain but movement on the water is at a rate of 30 kilometres per day. The chance of an encounter or event is 7+ if moving on the banks or 10+ if using some kind of watercraft.

Encounters and Events

When an encounter or event is indicated by the daily check, the Referee should consult the Terrain Encounters and Events table to determine its nature. If a General Event is indicated, use the General Event table. Some of these encounters can obviously occur only once, whilst others might be encountered multiple times. If a once-only event is indicated, the Referee can modify or ignore it, or use the next one up or down the table.

Terrain Encounters and Events

2D	Marshy	Hilly	Overgrown	River	Lake
2	Open Water	Sinkhole	Swamp!	Rapids	Floating Vegetation
3	Natural Death-Trap	Family Group of Razormouths (3–10)	Family Group of Razormouths (3–10)	Flooding	Flooding
4	Pond Life	Difficult Traverse	Lone Adult Razormouth	Difficult Traverse	Pond Life
5	Dry Land!	Lone Adult Razormouth	Platefaces	Deep Water	Deep Water
6	Crocneck	Platefaces	Not As Clear As We Thought	Deep Water	Deep Water
7	General Event	General Event	General Event	General Event	General Event
8	Marsh-Hunter	Ground Scavengers	Ground Scavengers	Marsh-Hunter	Marsh-Hunter
9	Marsh Gas	Not As Clear As We Thought	Family Group of Razormouths (3–10)	Recent Kill	River-Hunter
10	Flooding	Large Group of Razormouths (10–20)	Barrier of Thorns	Crocneck	Crocneck
11	Swampy Oasis	Cave	Impassable Terrain	Currents and Eddies	Wrecked Boat
12	Lone Adult Razormouth	Ambush!	Ambush!	River-Hunter	River-Hunter

General Events

2D	Incident/Event
2	Outpost
3	Someone Lived Here?
4	Chasm
5	Lost!
6	Impassible Terrain
7	Downpour!
8	A Large Carcass
9	Sinkhole
10	Sight of Slaughter
11	Carpet of Critters
12	A Peculiar Find

ENCOUNTER AND EVENT DESCRIPTIONS

The terrain on Instuv is sufficiently harsh that backtracking through a particular hex (or even deliberately searching for a previous encounter site) is not guaranteed to locate a previous site. It is up to the Referee to decide whether to reapply a previous encounter, roll a new one, or both.

A Large Carcass

The carcass of a very large creature is discovered, a Plateface or a River-Hunter. It has been killed by a pack of predators, possibly Razormouths, which may or may not be lurking nearby.

A Peculiar Find

In the middle of the wilderness, on a scarcely-inhabited planet, the Travellers come across a short section of roadway. It is clearly very old – centuries or more – and leads in a random direction determined by rolling 1D and counting around clockwise from North. If the Travellers follow the road they may treat the hex as clear terrain, with no encounter. The road is very wide, like a major highway on a mid-tech world. Its surface composition looks to be fused, suggesting it was built using fusion power. The road eventually peters out into rough terrain.

If asked about roads in the region, most locals know nothing about any, although there were various colonial expeditions in the distant past. It is possible that a colonial expedition built a road before the funding dried up, causing whatever they were doing to be abandoned.

A Swampy Oasis

In the middle of this awful swamp lies a little marshy island paradise. Edible fruit grows on low bushes and there is enough vegetation to build a decent shelter. However, all is not necessarily idyllic. There is a 50% chance that the island is safe and more or less as it seems. The Travellers will even be safe from animal attacks there – there will be no encounters if the Travellers rest up for a day or more. However, if the island is not determined as safe then the Referee should roll D3 Marsh encounters and apply them all at once in as twisted and just plain nasty a manner as possible.

Ambush!

The group is attacked by a family group of Razormouths lying in wait. Any Traveller who makes an Average (8+) Recon check has one round to act before the ambush is sprung. Those who fail are caught by surprise and suffer a negative DM on their Initiative checks equal to any negative Effect.

Barrier of Thorns

The vegetation gets thicker and tougher, until eventually it becomes obvious that it is impossible to go on. Hacking a path through could take weeks! The group will have to backtrack to the previous hex and choose another direction. Getting into and back out of this hex takes the same time as crossing it.

Carpet of Critters

Ahead the ground teems with multi-legged creatures which pour across the group's path in a seemingly endless torrent. These creatures act rather like army ants on Terra and will devour anyone caught in their path. The group could withdraw to a safe distance and wait until the carpet moves past (1D hours) or backtrack to the last hex.

Cave

A rocky slope nearby shows signs of a natural cave that would provide good shelter. Roll 1D:

- 1: The cave is lair to a large rogue Razormouth. It may be present or out hunting.
- 2–5: The cave is not deep and unremarkable except for being a place where it does not rain.
- 6: The cave contains a fissure leading to an extensive (and totally unexplored) cavern system. It is unlikely that there will be anything of interest within except to planetologists or perhaps prospectors but there is always a chance.

Chasm

A deep chasm opens up in front of the group, dozens of metres wide. Finding a way around doubles the time required to cross this hex.

Croconeck

A group of 1D animals, resembling long-necked crocodiles, is spotted nibbling at waterside vegetation. They are harmless plant-eaters but the Travellers may not know that.

Currents and Eddies

The water here is unusually turbulent. This is no hazard unless the Travellers are in a raft or boat but some of the eddies look a bit sinister, as if some large creature was lurking in the water. If the Travellers are in a watercraft they must make an Average (8+) Seafarer check to avoid being carried into an area of shallows and becoming stuck.

Deep Water

This area is crossed by many small watercourses and ponds. While crossing one, the lead Traveller discovers that it is in fact very deep. It turns out that several seemingly innocuous bodies of water in the area are very deep. Searching for a way around will double the time to cross this hex. If the Travellers want to swim across they will have to find a way to transport their equipment and might have an encounter with something predatory.

Difficult Traverse

The way ahead is blocked by an area of unstable and dangerous rocks. The group can backtrack to the last hex, taking as long as crossing this hex, or make the traverse. Crossing the dangerous area requires an Average (8+) Athletics check. Failure results in a fall. If this occurs the Traveller will suffer the equivalent of a fall of 1D metres on to a particularly harsh and jagged surface. They wind up winded at the bottom of a scree slope amid a pile of debris. Getting back up may present a problem.



Downpour

Rain on Instuv is frequent and heavy but this is much worse than usual. River terrain is impassable in any direction for one day after a Downpour and there is a one in six chance that the current hex becomes subject to a Flooding result. The Travellers will have great difficulty in moving in a Downpour; they should seek shelter and wait it out. If forced to move or if they foolishly insist, then the Referee should impose D3 immediate Marsh terrain encounters.

Dry Land!

A small island can be seen ahead. It has light vegetation suitable for making a shelter and is high enough above the water level to provide escape from a flood if the Travellers are fleeing one. The island is safe enough, although if there is a flood other creatures may also seek its safety

Family Group of Razormouths

A family group of Razormouths (1D+4) is encountered. Roll 1D:

1: The Razormouth group is moving fast and stumbles into the Travellers with little warning. A tense standoff ensues. The Referee should adjudicate attempts to startle or drive off the Razormouths. Travellers who attempt to flee will trigger a 'predator' reaction and automatically be attacked.

2–3: The Razormouths are on the move and are well fed. They will attempt to avoid contact unless the Travellers are obviously weak and vulnerable.

4: The Razormouths are hunting. They do not want to attack a large and powerful group and will try to avoid contact.

5: The Razormouths are devouring a kill and will fight to drive off the Travellers if necessary but will not pursue or seek conflict.

6: The Razormouths are hungry and begin to stalk the Travellers.

To avoid this encounter, the Razormouths must be detected and identified before contact. A successful Recon check will allow the Travellers to realise that something is 'out there'. If at least one Traveller detects the Razormouths, the Travellers may be able to hide or withdraw if they act quickly and make appropriate checks. If the Travellers are detected or fail to slip away, at least they will not be surprised.

Floating Vegetation

Large clumps of vegetation have created a natural raft that cannot support a human's weight but resembles dry land to an unfortunately high degree. If the Travellers are in a watercraft they will have to backtrack, taking 2D hours, to find a way around or else must return to the previous hex and go another way. If on foot there is a 4 in 6 chance the first time this phenomenon is encountered that a Traveller will step onto the raft and fall through. Each time the encounter occurs, the chance to become a victim is reduced by one. There is always a minimum one in six chance that someone will make a mistake and become trapped. The entangling vegetation makes it impossible to swim or even struggle much, necessitating a rescue. Sadistic Referees may decide to have harmless but angry small biting animals living in the natural raft, just to add to the experience. Even without this there is a chance that the Traveller will drown.

To escape unaided, requires a lot of effort and a Difficult (10+) Athletics check. Travellers attempting a rescue must make a Routine (6+) Athletics check or become additional victims. Each Traveller assisting the escape applies DM+1, plus their STR or DEX modifier if it is positive. No more than four Travellers can directly help any one victim.

Flooding

The local water level is rising and soon the area will be impassable. The group need to get out of the hex before this happens and will have to race the rising water to high ground. The Referee should roll 1D for the direction the Travellers need to flee in, counting clockwise from North. The Travellers will suffer D3 automatic encounters in the course of their flight before reaching the next hex, exhausted, at the end of the day. The area will remain in a flooded condition for D3 days thereafter. Flooded areas are not passable without making a hazardous swim unless the Travellers have or can improvise a watercraft of some sort.

Ground Scavengers

A large group (5–20) of what look like small winged lizards are flitting about a nearby carcass. They are harmless to anyone who is capable of movement, but might give a nasty nip with their toothed beaks if someone grabbed one. Once this encounter has occurred, smart Travellers may realise that these creatures are sometimes seen when Razormouths and other predators are close by. The group

may automatically avoid its next encounter with Razormouths. If this encounter occurs more than once, a further encounter may be avoided for each time the Ground Scavengers are spotted.

Impassible Terrain

The going gets tougher and tougher, until eventually it becomes obvious that it is impossible to go on. The group will have to backtrack to the last hex they left and choose another direction. Getting into and back out of this hex takes the same time as crossing it.

Large Group of Razormouths

A large group of Razormouths (2D+8) is encountered. Roll 1D:

- 1–2:** The Razormouths are chasing a wounded Plateface, which is coming straight at the Travellers in a desperate, lurching run.
- 3–4:** The Razormouths are devouring a Plateface, which may or may not be dead.
- 5–6:** The Razormouths are hunting and have detected the group. They will stalk and attack if a chance presents itself.

To avoid this encounter, the Razormouths must be detected and identified before contact.

Lone Adult Razormouth

The group has attracted the attention of a single adult Razormouth. There is a 50% chance that this is a scout for a family group. If so, treat as result 6 on the Family Group of Razormouths encounter. The scout will lead its companions into a good attack position. If it is not a scout, it is a rogue acting alone. It is hungry and will stalk the group looking for a chance to attack.

Lost!

Somehow the Travellers have become badly lost and are not where they should be. The Referee should roll 1D for direction, counting round from North, and 1D for distance. The Travellers find themselves in this new hex and an automatic encounter for that terrain type is applied.

Marsh-Hunter

A dog-sized scaly creature is spotted swimming nearby. Normally it would not attack anything so large as a human but it will follow the group for several hours unless driven off. If given an opportunity (for example, if someone falls in the water and cannot swim), or if a Traveller is injured and bleeding, the creature will attack.

Marsh Gas

Bubbles on the surface of the water and a foul smell in the air indicates the presence of marsh gas. This is not a serious hazard unless the Travellers have naked flames or engage in gunfire. If so, there is a two in six chance of igniting a pocket of gas, which is treated as a 3D Fire weapon attack.

Natural Death-Trap

As the Travellers struggle through ankle-deep water and thick vegetation, one of their number 'discovers' a natural death-trap in the form of a patch of quicksand just below the surface of the water. Any Traveller stepping into the patch finds themselves immediately up to their waist and quickly sinking deeper. There is nothing within reach to grab and pull oneself out of the bog.

A Traveller trying to remain afloat must make an Average (8+) Athletics and an Average (8+) Survival check each round. If the Traveller succeeds in either, they do not sink that round but make no progress towards escape. If the Traveller succeeds in both, they remove the one failure; a Traveller up to their waist who succeeds will escape the bog and find more substantial ground to stand on.

If the Traveller has a floatation device available, or some way to spread out their weight, they gain DM+2 to the chance to escape. Thus Travellers who are for some reason carrying a wide wooden board or a basketball should be able to escape without difficulty. Others may struggle.

A Traveller who fails both checks will sink slowly:

Upon falling in: Traveller up to waist

After 1 failure: Traveller up to chest (no damage)

After 2 failures: Traveller up to neck (no damage)

After 3 failures: Traveller under water and begins to drown.

Anyone trying to rescue a trapped Traveller must be careful to avoid falling into the bog. An Average (8+) Athletics or Survival check will suffice if the Traveller is moving deliberately and carefully. If a rescuer simply lunges forward to grab the sinking friend, the difficulty increases to Very Difficult (12+).

A sinking Traveller can automatically be rescued by any two other people provided they do not fall in. If just one Traveller is performing the rescue, they can drag the victim out if they make an Average (8+) Athletics (strength) check. Once this encounter has occurred once, it may in future be avoided by making a successful Navigation, Recon or Survival check.

Not as Clear as We Thought

The terrain becomes rougher and more overgrown as the group proceeds. Eventually it becomes obvious that appearances were deceptive and this is most definitely not an easy route Roll 1D to determine the actual terrain type:

- 1: Hilly
- 2–4: Overgrown
- 5–6: Marsh

Roll an immediate encounter on the appropriate terrain type and apply the result. This hex is treated as the new terrain type from now on.

Open Water

The marsh ahead becomes a small lake. It is not passable without a boat. The group will have to backtrack to the last hex and go around.

Outpost

Up ahead lies a small, circular, stone building with a roof of turf. It has a crude wooden door and stout walls, with firewood stockpiled within. There are signs that people have used this shelter in the past few months. This is one of a handful of small shelters built by the locals to use as a base for their occasional forays into the wilderness. Sometimes patrols come out to drive off large Razormouth packs or just to check that no huge packs have moved into the area. These structures provide a safe haven during these patrols.

Platefaces

The Travellers spot a small group (1D) of large grazing animals. They have a vague similarity to a Terran rhinoceros, with large twin horns on the head and a tough scaly hide, but are essentially harmless unless they step on a Traveller by accident. The Platefaces will flee from loud noises (even shouting will suffice) and only fight to protect young or if cornered. There is a one in six chance that a family group of Razormouths is nearby stalking the grazers.

Pond Life

There are many small ponds and minor watercourses in this area, making the march a squelchy and tiring business but not imposing any serious obstacles. As the Travellers cross yet another shallow body of water, a random Traveller is bitten by some kind of fast-moving swimming creature not unlike an eel. The bite is not very serious: just 1D damage. While the creature is not poisonous, the chance of infection is considerable in a swampy environment. Each day after the bite, make an Average (8+) END check with DM+2 if proper medical treatment is quickly given and precautions against infection are taken. Once the roll is made, the infection has been fought off by the Traveller's immune system. Each day it is failed the Traveller will lose -1 END, which cannot be regained by locally available medical treatment. Lost END is regained once proper medical treatment and living conditions are re-established.

Rapids

The watercourse runs over a series of rapids. If the Travellers are on foot this is a chance to cross through shallow water, although it could be hazardous. If in a watercraft the Travellers will need to either portage around or make a dangerous attempt to run the rapids. The Referee should decide how dangerous this is and in all likelihood the Travellers will lose food or equipment.

Recent Kill

The half-eaten carcass of a large animal lies on the ground up ahead. A pack of flying Ground Scavengers is nibbling at it. There is no sign of what made the kill, although the carcass is very fresh. There is a one in three chance that a family group of Razormouths is hiding nearby, ready to attack the group which they think has come to steal their kill.

River-Hunter

A large predator lurks in the nearby waters. Much like a crocodile, it can make short but very fast lunges up the riverbanks to attack its prey. The predator may attack any Traveller who ventures close to the water.

Sinkhole

Ahead a wide rocky area is riven by a deep fissure, which turns out to be a sinkhole descending into the ground for dozens of metres before opening out into a cave system. Nearby watercourses may plunge into the hole and create a waterfall. The sinkhole is a curiosity rather than a danger unless the group is very inattentive. Detouring around it adds 25% to the crossing time for the hex.

Site of Slaughter

Ahead among the rocks and vegetation lie the corpses of one or more (it is hard to tell) Platefaces. They have been savagely slaughtered, torn up and partially eaten by some kind of predator, then fed upon by smaller creatures. Whatever did this was either large or had both numbers and great savagery on its side. This encounter is disturbing but harmless unless the group decide to harvest meat from the kills. If so, the Referee will have to determine if it has had time to go bad. The predators were Razormouths, of course. The Travellers will probably realise this if they have already seen Razormouths, although they may worry that there is something else out there as well.

Someone Lived Here?

The group stumbles on an old and very decayed shelter built from local materials. It is still sound enough to provide a good camp site. There are signs that the shelter was lived in for a long time, perhaps by a hunter or trapper, or some kind of mad hermit who liked it out here in the wilderness. If the group makes camp here there is a chance of finding the mauled bones of the occupant within a few hundred metres of the shelter.

Swamp!

A Swamp! encounter is very bad news indeed. The ground has become marshy due to massive rainfall somewhere nearby, or else the group has unknowingly wandered into a swamp. Roll an immediate Marshy terrain encounter and treat the hex as Marsh hereafter. It may take the Travellers some time to get out. Backtracking will make no difference – the trail is more or less lost. To avoid this encounter, a Survival

check is necessary. Success allows the Travellers to backtrack to the last hex they left and choose another route. Further attempts to cross this hex will find a swamp unless sufficient time has passed to allow the waters to recede.

Tough Going

The vegetation here is unusually thick and tough, and easy to get lost in. It is possible to force a passage but there is a chance of being significantly delayed. Make an Average (8+) Survival skill check to avoid undue delay. If the check is failed, the group loses an entire day struggling through the undergrowth. There will be an automatic encounter the next day.

Watercourse

A deep watercourse runs through the undergrowth here. It is narrow enough to improvise a bridge of sorts from nearby plant materials or the group could swim. Making a bridge requires 1D hours for anyone with suitable skills. Swimming is not difficult, requiring only a normal Athletics check. However, there is a one in six chance that each Traveller making the swim will suffer the effects of a Pond Life encounter.

Wrecked Boat

The Travellers come across a large canoe-like boat capable of holding six people washed up on the beach. It has a crude hydrocarbon-burning outboard motor with some fuel left and has apparently been attacked by some kind of large creature. There are bloodstains on the boat and a sizable bite taken out of it. The boat is made for (and indeed by) humans and could be repaired with simple tools and half a day. Any supplies in it are long lost.



ABANDON SHIP!

The trader *Mathvein* was just over six days into a jump between frontier systems when she met with disaster. In the middle of ship's night, the Travellers awakened to a feeling that something was badly wrong. The wrench of a misjump emergence was followed almost instantly by a juddering and failure of the internal gravity system. The ship was clearly tumbling out of control, cabin doors automatically sealed and would not open, and the crew did not respond to communications. After a few moments of this the Abandon Ship alarm began to blare. Attempts to find out what was happening proved ineffectual and with depressurisation warnings sounding throughout the ship there was only one course of action – grab what was within reach and scramble into an escape pod.

The Travellers' next few minutes were characterised by the roaring of atmospheric entry, followed by the jarring of parachute deployment and finally contact with the ground. The pod's internal readouts showed a breathable atmosphere and bearable temperature conditions outside but the decision to open the hatch was a difficult one. As it swung aside, each Traveller felt the inrush of cold, damp air. Their pod was lying at an angle on the surface of an ice sheet, apparently a mountain glacier. The Travellers had with them whatever they were wearing to sleep, any small items they managed to grab as they boarded the pod and the contents of its survival kit. Any weapons the Traveller possessed were stowed out of reach, as they were travelling as passengers. Their possessions might have survived but for now they are inaccessible.

TAKING STOCK

Breaking out the survival kit and putting on warm clothing is an immediate necessity. After that, the Travellers can take stock. They are on the surface of a planet, which the pod's very limited database says is called Instuv. Basic information on the planet is available, equivalent to the writeup in the Referee's Information section. The Travellers have access to a

basic map which can be transferred to their personal comm or similar device. The map shows the local continent and the location of the only known settlement.

The map from the escape pods is not very detailed, largely because there are no detailed maps to be had. The map will be available as long as the Travellers retain at least one device that has power – so long as they think to download it. If the Travellers restrict their use of electronic devices to a few minutes when they are needed, the batteries in their personal comms will last 30+4D days. This will be drastically reduced by constant use of lights and radios. Once the batteries are all dead the Travellers will have to rely on their memories unless they have transcribed the map in some manner.

Associated data paints a bleak picture: there is no communications infrastructure. Personal comms will work whilst they have power but their range is limited to a few kilometres and there is no network to tie into; all the information the Travellers have is what is stored on their personal devices. The likelihood of rescue is minimal – the locals are unlikely to mount an expedition into the outback just in case they can find possible survivors. There is food and water in the survival kits, and shelter in the form of the pods, but it may be weeks or months before another ship passes through the system and even then the Travellers might not be detected. It should be obvious that the only course of action is to head for the settlement, some 250 kilometres away.

It appears that there will be four main segments to the journey, assuming the Travellers head more or less directly for the settlement. The first stage will be crossing the glacier where they have landed and descending to the plains below. The Travellers will then have to cross an area of lowlands before entering the central upland region. Finally they will descend onto the coastal plain and make the final transit to the settlement where, sooner or later, they will be able to get a ship offworld.



POD CRASH SITE

MOUNTAIN

SWAMP

GLACIER

SETTLEMENT

RESOURCES

A degree of preparation might be wise before the Travellers set out. Escape pods are designed to function as a shelter and are reasonably well insulated. The Travellers could live in their pods for quite some time, although they have no cooking or sanitary facilities. Perhaps the best option might be to use the pods as shelter for a couple of days whilst the Travellers prepare themselves. Their pods are dispersed across the surface of the glacier, separated by up to 10 kilometres of ice sheet, so just getting everyone together might be a challenge. The comm systems in each pod are good enough to communicate with one another so long as their fuel cells hold out. The Travellers will note that two other pods came down nearby but neither answers any attempt at communication.

Each Traveller has a basic survival kit and some additional equipment in their escape pod, and they may be able to fashion some additional items.

READILY AVAILABLE EQUIPMENT

The items readily available to each Traveller are detailed below.

Crewsuit

Each escape pod contains a light vacc suit suitable for use as shipboard utility wear. It is designed to protect the user in the event of depressurisation, assuming the soft 'bubble' helmet and gloves can be quickly donned. A crewsuit is not intended for prolonged use in vacuum and will not allow the user to operate underwater. It does have a one-hour air bottle and short-term power unit for the communicator, heater/cooler unit and any additional electronics that may be in use. Battery life is measured in hours but the suit will continue to provide weatherproof protection when power runs out.

Field Clothing Kit, Personal

A small bundle of clothing, designed on a one-size-fits-nobody basis. It includes generic underwear supposedly wearable by most humanoid-ish people, stretchy trousers and tunic, with a sleeveless quilted jacket to go over the top. A bush hat, stretchy gloves and a sort of blanket/body wrap are also included. There are no boots but an ingenious set of infinitely resizable sandals and over-socks ensure that anyone with feet to cover has something to cover them with.

CLOTHING WEIGHTS

No weight is given for clothing items as their weight is by definition distributed about the body if worn. The Travellers can be assumed to carry a couple of spare clothing items without penalty, but those who want to take with them every sock, spare button and commemorative ribbon will have to carry these relatively bulky items.

Survival Blade (0.5kg)

A large, heavy-bladed cutting implement designed for hacking a path through undergrowth or undertaking basic construction of shelters and the like. The handle is hollow and contains a compass, wire, needles and other small survival items. Most notably there are fire-starting capsules which, when twisted together, will burn hotly for a short time.

Emergency Survival Kit, Personal (2.5kg)

A small personal emergency kit that can hang uncomfortably from a belt or be worn on the back using its own straps. The kit contains tools and supplies geared to survival in a wilderness area for a period of days or longer. There is sufficient room in the kitbag for a few additional items:

- 2 Pairs of waterproof sock/mittens
- 1 Waterproof poncho which can serve as a shelter or a blanket
- 1 Soft head-wrap which can cover the face and neck or be left loose
- 1 Fire-starting kit
- 1 Pack of chemical heat tablets
- 1 Pack of water purification tablets
- 1 Set of water filters
- 1 Canteen
- 1 Small 'survival knife'. The scabbard converts it into a set of pliers/clippers
- 1 Day supply of food bars of a palatable and nutritious sort
- 1 Week supply of unpleasant dried and preserved rations
- 12 Chemical lightsticks
- 1 Clockwork flashlight
- 1 Whistle
- 1 Small hand mirror
- 1 Minimal medical pack containing bandages, antiseptic wipes and painkillers

Water Purification Kit (0.5kg)

A small container (which fits in a pocket) which can be unfolded to make a funnel. This is somewhat aggravating and fiddly to use but it is better than nothing. The kit contains a set of filters and purification tablets as well as paper-strip chemical detectors that will warn of some contaminants. The kit also contains half a dozen filter straws which allow direct drinking from a pool.

MAKING READY

By the time the Travellers have broken out the survival kits, they should be able to improvise reasonable weather protection. Some may be using the soft boots from their crewsuits, others the sandals and some may have even discovered that the sandals fit over the boots, sort of, giving better hard-ground protection at the price of discomfort and generally looking a bit silly. The Travellers will be able to dress themselves reasonably warmly and have food for a few days. However, there are no weapons other than hatchets and machetes. The pods will keep the Travellers warm and dry for a few days but their power will run out sooner or later.

During these early operations the Travellers will learn a few things. One lesson is that everything takes longer and is harder than they expect, and mistakes can be costly. The other primary lesson will be in managing encumbrance, which is about more than just weight. Two kilograms of fine gravel presents a major challenge without a bag or box, despite it not weighing all that much, so the Travellers will need to consider what they want to take with them and how they intend to carry it. They may also decide to do some work using the escape pods. Pseudo-silk and cords from the escape pod parachutes have multiple applications as bags, shelters and clothing, whilst components could be dismounted and used in a variety of ways.

The escape pods have heaters which could be invaluable as long as their power lasts. Each pod has a fuel cell which could – with difficulty – be dismounted. Each weighs six kilograms and gives 2D days of operation which could be eeked out by only running systems for a few hours or even minutes per day. A single fuel cell could be used to recharge comms or run a dismounted information display and communicator. The heater system from an escape pod might be run overnight in a tent or shelter, providing sufficient warmth to make the night less miserable, or might even be adapted into a primitive cooking device. Lights would also be useful and could be dismounted from the pods using whatever tools are available. Creative Travellers might be able to make their journey a lot easier with some preparatory work.



THE MARCH BEGINS

The first phase of the adventure takes place on the surface of the glacier. It does not have a name, so the Travellers can choose one if they are so inclined. The glacier runs down a wide valley and spills out onto the plain about 10 kilometres southwest of where the Travellers' escape pods came down. These are scattered and there are two other signals indicating pods. Investigating those might be carried out by some of the Travellers whilst others work on setting up for the trek overland. The Referee should give the Travellers time to find their feet, as it were, but if they decide to stay put and wait for rescue the situation needs to be spelled out to them – they are stuck on a remote planet which receives virtually no interstellar traffic. The chance of rescue is almost zero if they stay put but there might be other options if the Travellers can reach the world's only settlement. That means a walk of about 250 kilometres through difficult country. How they prepare for this journey may determine whether they make it.

The glacier is very cold and swept by harsh winds. It is generally drier than the surrounding lowlands, since water tends to freeze, but this often translates to hail instead of liquid rain. Travellers who have obtained well-insulated clothing are able to operate unhindered but they will encounter two foot-related problems. The first is a tendency to slip wherever the ice is even slightly melted or covered in standing water. Hard-frozen ice is nothing like as slippery. The other problem is cold. The Travellers will feel like their souls are being leached out through their feet unless they can obtain good arctic boots or improvise something. Foot wraps are clumsy and undignified, imposing DM-1 on any check requiring agility, but they can prevent serious damage to the Travellers' feet. It is likely that the Travellers will be slogging about with their footwear wrapped in layers of cloth, which quickly becomes soaked. This alone is a good reason to get off the glacier.

ON THE GLACIER

The Travellers might well start out by just sitting in their warm escape pods chatting over the radio or maybe playing multiplayer games on their comms, but at some point they are going to have to start work. If they want anything from the pods it will have to be dismounted using the available tools. That is not likely to be much and the Referee should reward those who get into the spirit of the adventure rather than sulking about the lack of room service and computerised assistance. That is to say, someone who roleplays extracting a power cell using a survival knife and a rock should be treated more leniently than someone who just rolls the dice and announces the result. High skill levels will help, of course, but this adventure is about low-tech problem-solving rather than skill checks.

All manner of useful items can be harvested from the pods if the Travellers are clever. Power cells, communicators and the like are obvious but a clever Traveller could smash off a segment of the inner wall to use as the basis for a sled. Combined with parachute cord and pseudo-silk this would enable the Travellers to transport more equipment and food, or maybe a casualty. It might also be possible to make clothing or shelter items out of the parachutes; pseudo-silk is tough and weatherproof. Boot wraps are yet another possibility, or carrying bags. The upholstery of the escape pods is hardly impressive but can provide raw materials, as can segments of the structure and fittings. If a Traveller wants to assemble a collection of 'might be handy' items they should certainly be accommodated but those who envisage fabricating complex tools and machines will be disappointed.

In addition to scavenging the escape pods, the Travellers may wish to investigate the other signals. Each is 2D kilometres away in a random direction, requiring a slog across the glacier and possibly having to spend a night at the target site. Crossing a glacier in the dark is a recipe for disaster. The effort should be worth it, however.

Crash Site 1

Site 1 has a standard escape pod lying on its side. Its emergency transponder is active but there is no reply to any communications. The reason for this is obvious – there is no-one inside. It would appear that someone started to stash items in the pod but never got back to it before it auto-launched. In addition to the standard survival kit, there are some loose items:

Clothing: Several sets of shipboard coveralls and some going-portside outfits are tangled up in the pod's footwell. There is only one pair of outdoor shoes, which are essentially big-brand trainers whose quality does not match the price tag.

Weapons: There are two shipboard snub revolvers and a 5mm carbine. An unopened box of 50 snub pistol rounds is buried somewhere in the clothing. The carbine uses a 10-round detachable magazine. One is in place and one is loose somewhere. Both are fully loaded. An opened ammunition box is present but the Travellers will have to scratch around for the ammunition it used to contain. Diligent picking through every nook and cranny results in 26 more rounds of ammunition. The carbine also has a 1.5–4x optical sight which could be used as a basic telescope.

Medical Kit, Field: A basic kit for the use of a paramedic or military medic in the field, this medikit is encased in a small backpack and contains a very limited selection of surgical tools plus drugs and basic diagnostic aids in addition to more mundane supplies such as bandages and splints. There are multiple emergency injectors to deal with severe allergic reactions, suggesting that someone aboard the ship had an allergy. It probably no longer matters.

The guns in this pod are the only firearms available to the Travellers other than the dismal survival rifles at site 2. The ammunition they retrieve is all they have. Anyone who takes a gun – and there might be some differences of opinion about who should – will have to figure out how to carry it and must keep careful track of ammunition. The Referee should be strict about this, as low ammunition is a problem the Travellers will have to work around. This in turn may drive the adventure and force the Travellers to come up with clever solutions to otherwise simple problems.

Crash Site 2

This is not an escape pod but a standard shipboard or vehicular emergency kit. It contains a lot of very useful items, although the Travellers will need to carefully decide what they are taking with them when they begin the march.

Emergency Kit, Vehicle: The standard vehicular emergency kit is carried aboard escape pods for most starships and in vehicles intended to operate on the frontiers of civilisation. Each kit is intended to cover the needs of six people stranded for two weeks. Its design makes the assumption that there is more or less breathable air and water that can be purified.

The kit is large and bulky, consisting of several semi-rigid bags held in a larger container by clips. It is designed to permit any or all of the sub-units to be removed and taken away. Each sub-unit is in backpack form, although the size of each varies considerably. The main container could be repurposed as a sled if the Travellers have not already made one.

The kit contains six personal bundles, each comprising the following:

- 1 Emergency kit, survival (the same as the ones in the pods) in its own self-contained pack
- 1 Field kit, individual
- 1 Set of basic arctic clothing
- 1 Sleeping bag, supposedly waterproof
- 1 Respirator plus extra filters

In addition the kit contains the following:

- 1 Emergency light/signalling kit containing a dozen distress flares
- 3 Two-person emergency tent/shelters
- 1 Field medical kit
- 1 Set of disposable chemical testers for indicating water and food safety
- 1 Water purification still
- 6 10-litre water storage containers with filters
- 6 Field ration packs, each containing preserved rations for one person for 10 days.
- 1 4mm survival rifle plus 100 rounds of ammunition (usually half shot and half ball)
- 1 Hatchet
- 1 'Emergency tool' which can be used as a hammer, a lever, a digging tool, a hand-cranked jack for forcing doors apart and even a rather clumsy short spear

Field Kit, Personal: A basic field operations and survival kit containing a bush hat, trousers, shirt and a warm jerkin, a waterproof poncho/blanket, water bottle, belt pack with fire-starting equipment and a day's (almost inedible) iron rations and a machete. The kit also includes half a dozen chemical lightsticks.

OFF THE GLACIER

If the Travellers take time to investigate the other signals they will start out with a good amount of equipment and plenty of food. If they do not, they will have to make do with what they have. Either way, they will not get off Instuv by standing around on a glacier. The initial march down the glacier poses few problems other than cold but if the Travellers do not think to get off the sides onto the firm ground of the valley walls they will find themselves standing atop an 8–12 metre wall of ice with water gushing out from its base. This is an impressive sight; ice is melted by the weight of ice above and the meltwater forced out at the base of the glacier. Some freezes, causing the glacier to creep forward a few centimetres a year, but most flows as a small river into the lowlands where it spreads out into an unpleasant, cold marsh. The Travellers must cross it.

Into the Lowlands

The lowlands area between the glacier mouth and central uplands is characterised by marsh and thick spiny bushes on higher ground. It is likely to be slow going, perhaps forcing the Travellers to rethink their decision to bring so much stuff with them off the glacier. It would be possible to simply march straight through, meeting each challenge as it comes, but there are alternatives. The Travellers might realise it is helpful to plan ahead a little or at least to have a scout out ahead, as discussed on page 9, but clever Travellers might take this further.

Travellers who think about their problems and try to find a solution or at least mitigation should be rewarded. For example, a Traveller might be sent to the top of a nearby ridge, or climb into the upper branches of a cluster-tree in order to take images using a personal comm. These can be converted into a map, to be consulted briefly at need so long as the comms have power. Enterprise of this sort permits the Traveller to make a relevant check at a suitable level. The obvious example is an Average (8+) Navigation check made after ascending a tree, assuming the Traveller does not take a tumble doing so. More daring feats, such as ascending a rocky needle rising tens of metres above the surrounding land, should be rewarded with an easier check.

The Effect of these checks can be kept for use as a 'roving DM' whilst the Travellers are in that hex or an adjoining one. Alternatively, three points of Effect can be expended to automatically avoid an incident. This must be plausible, such as the Travellers negating a Razormouth ambush by stating that they were looking over the images their scout took and spotted the creatures near a landmark they can now see.

There are no specified encounters in the lowlands. Incidents should be determined randomly and the Travellers will gain familiarity with the requirements of their trek. Later segments will contain set encounters which will be administered by the Referee whenever appropriate. The first of these segments is the central uplands. At least this area promises to be a bit less wet than the marsh, although it may hold some unpleasant surprises.



THE CENTRAL UPLANDS

The central uplands pose questions with no ideal answers. Is it better to climb every hill and make an easy (if dark) transit under the canopy of the cluster trees, or wend a path through the scrubby undergrowth just above the 'wet line'? Perhaps struggling through the marsh between the hills is a better option? After all, the Travellers have to cross a bit of wetland between each hill, so why expend all that energy climbing just to come down again? It is likely that whatever the Travellers are doing right now will seem like the worst possible option... until they try something else.

One option that might let the Travellers bypass some difficult terrain would be to build a raft. They have cord, hatchets and a ready supply of wood from the cluster trees, so the idea might seem feasible. However, the trees are at the tops of hills and the launch point will be at the bottom of one. Plus, chopping thick trunks and branches is a taxing business when all you have is machetes and survival hatchets. Rafts are not as easy to build as the Travellers might think; at least, ones that stay intact and afloat are not. All in all, this is a lot of effort and there is no guarantee the Travellers will be able to navigate very far. This endeavour could go badly awry and become rather frustrating.

Constructing a suitable raft will take 1D+12 hours of successful work, ranging from chopping through shaping to construction. The definition of a 'successful' hour is one point of Effect on a suitable skill, at Average (8+) difficulty. The Travellers can be inventive about what skills they use; Survival, Navigation and Seafarer come to mind but a Traveller who finds a way to contribute should be permitted to do so. For example, someone might use their Leadership skill to ensure the log-choppers and log-draggers are working well in concert. Another Traveller might find a way to apply Investigate, perhaps by experimenting with small models or trying out techniques before the full construction takes place. As always, Travellers who think about the problem and propose a plausible solution should be rewarded.

Whilst construction is taking place, someone might get to a high point and map out a route, or even scout one. Events may happen to detached party members whilst they are doing this and they will be far from any help. A

successful planning session ensures the Travellers can use their raft to get through the next D3 hexes. They may still have encounters and incidents but they will be moving at watercraft speeds and relatively unimpeded. If no scouting is done, there is a four in six chance that the raft reaches the end of the navigable waters every hex. This does not mean it has to be abandoned; the Travellers could use it as a sled to carry their equipment – possibly including another sled – until they reach a navigable body of water. The marshy areas between hills in the uplands tend to have multiple short sections of this sort and in some cases the Travellers may be able to portage their raft between areas of navigable water, effectively turning hill or overgrown terrain into river terrain.

A Hexagonal Building

There is one set encounter in the central uplands. The Travellers will spot an artificial structure on the slope of a nearby hill, octagonal, built of fusion-cut stone, with heavy growth of bushes all around it. The entrance is buried beneath the bushes, requiring some hard work to make a tunnel. If the Travellers make the effort they find themselves in the Octagon Shelter. These were built on many frontier worlds to provide shelter for people in the same position as the Travellers. This one is over a century old and has clearly never been used.

There are two floors to the Octagon Shelter, which is dug into the hillside at its rear. The lower floor is of solid stone, lit by extremely dim lights running off a nearly-dead battery weakly charged by solar panels on the roof. This floor is almost completely bare other than dead vegetation near the entrance. A stone staircase leads up to the upper floor, which is similarly empty other than basic shelves and furnishings – all made from stone blocks. There are connection points for electronic and communications equipment, which can receive a small amount of power from the solar cells. A Traveller who connects their comm up will discover the building can act as an antenna. This will boost the range of a personal comm somewhat but will not be enough to contact the settlement at Audamu. The Travellers will detect a starship's transponder but after a while it becomes apparent it is from the ship they abandoned. There are no other contacts; their journey is not yet over.

THE COASTAL PLAIN



The coastal plain is mostly low-lying wetlands, with higher areas equivalent to Hilly or Overgrown terrain. The Travellers are unlikely to encounter anyone more than 20 kilometres from the settlement, although they might find signs of exploration or hunting parties. It is not until they are within 10 kilometres of Audamu that the Travellers will see signs of habitation. They may receive assistance from local herders or farmers, although it is entirely possible to walk right past the few scattered hamlets and into the town itself without meeting anyone.

Once the Travellers are detected they will find the locals helpful but lacking in resources. They will offer what they have – shelter and a bowl of hot stew – without hesitation and will care for anyone who is injured. These people are desperately poor by the standards of starfarers but they are not unhappy. They live in a miserable, cold bog swept by ocean storms but gather together around the fire to sing terrible folk songs and drink equally poor – but potent – home-made spirits. What the Travellers make of this lifestyle may determine how the locals treat them in the longer term. Those who pitch in and make the best of it are welcomed, whilst those who look down on the bog-dwelling peasants will find themselves friendless in a town where friendship may be the only thing that makes life tolerable.

The Travellers will eventually be rescued when an over-optimistic trade ship comes through but that might be a while. They may actually be sorry to leave and their new friends will surely miss them. Overall, the Travellers' time on Instuv might change their perspective a great deal. Perhaps they will no longer take for granted the 'necessities' of modern life such as hot running water and access to a datanet. It may be that an hour's delay in boarding their comfortable liner is no longer equivalent to the collapse of civilisation. After all, they have lived through an experience where dry feet or getting enough to eat might be impossible goals – and even surviving the day may be in doubt. Before they go, however, there is one set encounter. This might take place as the Travellers march across the coastal plain or it might be after they reach Audamu. Either way, they witness the final descent of the trader *Mathvein*.

AN ABANDONED SHIP

The *Mathvein* suffered a catastrophic misjump emergence. The bridge and associated chambers simply ceased to exist due to jumpspace impingement, leaving the vessel out of control. Automatic systems

placed the vessel in the best orbit they could before control was lost but by that time anyone who had not exited aboard an escape pod was dead. The vessel has been slowly losing altitude ever since and finally made entry into the upper atmosphere. Again the automatics did their job as best they could, softening the fall and preventing total destruction. What was left of the ship came down in a bog on the coastal plain.

If the Travellers choose to investigate they will find the upper deck has survived surprisingly well. Nobody remaining aboard could have lived through the cold, dark weeks before entry, nor could they have survived the crash. Some equipment, clothing and personal effects have, however, and the Travellers may be able to retrieve treasured possessions. The bridge is gone but the aft part of the lower deck is more or less structurally intact. Damage is extensive and widespread, largely due to small jumpspace incursions which have crippled many key systems. However, there is a lot of salvage available. Most of it is not very useful to someone trying to repair a starship but to a TL4 farming community it could be invaluable.

With some work the Travellers could restart the trader's reactor. With a lot more work they could dismantle it and set it up in a hut in town. They could easily get the lights on in some parts of the ship but if they think bigger and rally local support they could provide electric lighting to the town. There is no way to provide everyone with hot running water but a bathhouse could be set up. There are also a few power tools that could be converted to make local crafters' lives easier. In short, if the Travellers want, they can be benefactors to the people of Instuv, honoured and remembered for generations to come. They might also provide the locals with salvaged items to trade when the next ship comes through.

The Travellers will come across a couple of crewmembers' bodies, which really should be given a proper funeral. The Travellers knew these people for just a few days but decency towards the dead is one of the factors that place sophonts above the animals they have been among for the past few days or weeks. The Travellers could also get the ship's emergency beacon working and re-establish communications. The reward for this is not immediate but eventually a ship that might have jumped straight out of the system receives their signal and offers to take the Travellers offworld.

APPENDIX: ANIMAL ENCOUNTERS

The Travellers might encounter all manner of creatures during their trek across Instuv. Most are harmless or sufficiently skittish that they pose little threat. Some will flee at a sudden noise, others avoid contact altogether. Some creatures, however, are a hazard to the Travellers.

Ground Scavengers

These small creatures closely resemble winged lizards. They will not attack anything still alive or moves like it is but sometimes follow Razormouth bands to scavenge their kills. Ground Scavengers are difficult to hit due to their small size and agility but can be easily killed with almost any weapon or a good stomp. They are driven off by any sort of noise or resistance, so only dead or dying Travellers have much to fear from them. They are, however, a real nuisance. Large groups of Ground Scavengers may swirl around Travellers, making a piteous screeching sound and perhaps trying to dash in and nip some small piece of food.



Animal	Hits	Speed
Ground Scavenger	1	3m
Skills	Recon 1	
Attacks	Claws (1)	
Traits	Alarm, Small (-4) Heightened Senses	
Behaviour	Scavenger, Carrion-Eater	

Marsh-Hunter

Possibly a relative of the River-Hunter, the Marsh-Hunter is much smaller. It is an air-breather adapted to life in very shallow waters. Marsh-Biters can be encountered in rivers and also sometimes venture short distances onto land. Its body and limbs are more crocodilian than fish-like, although it shares the long neck and relatively large teeth of its much more dangerous cousin. Marsh-Biters are usually found in small packs of 1D+2 and will attack something as large as a human if they are hungry enough.



Animal	Hits	Speed
Marsh-Hunter	8	4m
Skills	Melee (natural) 1, Recon 1	
Attacks	Claws and Teeth (1D)	
Traits	Armour (+2), Small (-2)	
Behaviour	Carnivore, Hunter	

Croconeck

These creatures are fairly harmless. They are broadly crocodile-shaped, with an elongated neck to permit nibbling at vegetation along the shores, hence their imaginative name. Although large (specimens of up to 15 kilograms have been noted) these creatures pose no danger to anything without leaves.



Animal	Hits	Speed
Croconeck	12	5m
Skills	Melee (natural) 1, Recon 1	
Attacks	Teeth (D3)	
Traits	Small (-1)	
Behaviour	Herbivore, Grazer	

River-Hunter

This ferocious beast lurks in the rivers and marshes and attacks anything that comes within reach. Its body is shaped somewhat like a crocodile with a long neck and small, stubby limbs that are partway between legs and fins. It is covered in tough scales. With its long neck and two vestigial horns on its head, it bears a vague resemblance to the Plateface and Croconeck, but where they are harmless beasts this monster is savage and vicious. It is also, fortunately, solitary.

River-Hunters will attack boats, either by bumping them from underneath to spill occupants or more often by simply sinking its teeth into the vessel and jerking about until it is sunk, then chasing down the occupants. River-Hunters can lunge a short distance onto the shore and reach a surprising distance with their neck, striking like a snake at the end of a lunge. They are normally very large but there are rumours of both much smaller and truly gigantic specimens being spotted from time-to-time.



Animal	Hits	Speed
River-Hunter	30	4m
Skills	Melee (natural) 1, Recon 1	
Attacks	Horns and Teeth (3D)	
Traits	Armour (+4), Large (+1)	
Behaviour	Carnivore, Killer	

Plateface

The Plateface is another example of an animal named for its similarity to Terran species. Platefaces have a vague similarity to a Terran rhinoceros or a triceratops with a much smaller head plate. They are large grazing creatures that wander in small family groups or occasionally larger herds. Some locals simply refer to them as 'big grazers' and they pretty much do what the name suggests. Not really big enough to be considered megafauna, the Plateface is still an impressive beast. A Plateface can attack with its large twin horns on the head and is protected by a tough scaly hide, but they are essentially harmless unless they step on a Traveller by accident. They will flee from loud noises and only fight to protect young or if cornered. Platefaces are sometimes preyed upon by Razormouths but usually inflict casualties even if they are brought down; it takes a team effort to kill something as powerful as a Plateface.



Animal	Hits	Speed
Plateface	30	4m
Skills	Melee (natural) 1, Recon 1	
Attacks	Horns and Teeth (3D)	
Traits	Armour (+4), Large (+1)	
Behaviour	Herbivore, Grazer	

Razormouth

The Razormouth is the apex predator in this part of Instuv. They resemble 'reptilian bugs the size of large dogs', as the earliest account of their existence puts it. Razormouths have been encountered on other worlds but given their resemblance to other species on Instuv, it is likely these other populations were transplanted. Razormouths are pack predators, typically operating in groups of 4–12 adults and near-adults, plus a few juveniles. Rogues are sometimes encountered, thought to be females no longer capable of breeding, or possibly females which have left a pack to guard a clutch of eggs. Very little is known about the life cycle and characteristics of the Razormouth, other than that they are aggressive and cunning – and not afraid of humans.

Razormouths are, singly, not all that dangerous to a human. However, they are capable of knocking down a person by running into them, usually from behind whilst they are distracted by other pack members. Someone attacked this way must succeed in an Average (8+) DEX check or be knocked over. They will suffer damage equal to any negative Effect and more importantly will be savaged by multiple Razormouths on the ground. Larger prey are usually chased to exhaustion or driven into natural hazards. A pack of Razormouths will have several favoured killing spots in their territory and astute Travellers might spot signs of pack activity in the form of stripped bones close to a natural hazard like a drop or boggy area.



Animal	Hits	Speed
Razormouth	30	6m
Skills	Melee (natural) 2, Recon 1	
Attacks	Claws and Teeth (1D)	
Traits	Armour (+2), Fast Metabolism (+2), Small (-2)	
Behaviour	Carnivore, Killer	

A FINAL NOTE

Stranded takes away the Travellers' fancy gadgets and flings them among the animals of a primitive planet. This is a chance to explore what sets sophonts aside from mere animals – creative problem-solving, intelligent cooperation and decency towards one another. When the Travellers finally ascend from the

surface of Instuv, this can be a symbolic moment as well as an escape from disaster. Or the Travellers may learn nothing from their experience. It has been wisely said that what sets humans above the animals is not the capacity to learn but the ability to choose not to!

