Contact! Kidulan

A Gigantic Sophont Profile

Foreword

Traveller5 has a fully automated process for generating random Native Intelligent Life (NIL), also known as *sophonts*. These sophonts are ones with which Humans would typically discover and interact. There is a particular focus on sophonts as player characters. There is even an exception process for generating the large sophonts such as K'kree and Virushi. However, there are probably gigantic sophonts, larger than the rules can create.

Following this Contact article is an altered process for creating gigantic sophonts. The Contact article itself includes outputs from that process. As always, the referee is encouraged to creatively leverage existing Traveller rules to solve these sorts of problems. When a rule doesn't work, the referee is always encouraged to import and improvise.

Finally, the last section of this document briefly explains the Quick NIL Profile (QNP).

Physiology

Quick NIL Profile: `KID-B-ANLL-SDSIES-F24222—20000 Kidulan`

Natives of Kidulaar (Fornast 0819), the Kidulan (Kid-oo-LAHN) bear an outward resemblance to Terran isopods, though they are much larger. Evolved from herbivore/filter ancestors, the Kidulan have adapted from small three-lobed radial oceanic precursors to a multi-ton, high-shelled bi-lateral form that still retains some of the three-lobed features. Three rows of soft-skinned and boneless tentacles are found under the high-arched shell and are set in rows of a dozen each running the length of the body from just behind the head to very near the tail. The two outermost rows of tentacles are short and typically thick, and serve the Kidulan as legs.

Hunger Reflex

The central row of tentacles are much longer and thinner, though just as strong. When a Kidulan is not eating these are drawn tight against the body so they do not drag. As hunger rises these relax and begin to probe the ground the Kidulan is moving over. Initially picky, these will uproot or tear off any tasty vegetation they discover as it passes under the body. If the individual Kidulan gets too hungry, however, these tentacles will get more active, extend to their full length, and explore out beyond the sides of the body. In this mode they also coincidentally help with locomotion. A hungry Kidulan is a fast Kidulan, at least relatively speaking.

These feeder tentacles also serve the Kidulan as manipulators, though the amount of concentration a Kidulan can apply to such tasks is limited by hunger. At their longest, these tentacles can reach just over two meters beyond the armored fringe of their bodies. This gives the Kidulan the ability to manipulate objects in front of them where their best eyes can be used, and is what allowed the Kidulan to achieve any sort of technological gains. While their tentacles are not susceptible to any but the most extreme of dry conditions they are sensitive to burns, and fire was not an easy conquest for the early Kidulan. The extreme flexibility and variability of their tentacles makes protective gear difficult, and the need to protect every tentacle separately is an additional challenge. For tasks close to their bodies their motive tentacles can be pressed into service as thumbs of a sort, but for more distant tasks three or four manipulative

tentacles must be dedicated to achieve the utility approaching a human hand. That said, the Kidulan have little problem applying significant strength at even the maximum reach of their tentacles.

Digestion

The mouth of the Kidulan is in front of the central row of tentacles on the underside, and leads to a complex gut that takes up much of the volume of the body. The three rows of external tentacles continue inside the gut, and shred, taste, move, and sort ingested vegetable matter. Non-digestible matter is passed quickly through the central gut and excreted, while digestible matter is coated in digestive slime and passed to chambers in the walls of the gut for continuing digestion. Over the evolution of the Kidulan a number of these chambers have enlarged to become significant organs in the body, and have developed additional connections to feed partially digested food from the general chambers near the mouth directly to more specialized stomachs further back. While all Kidulan possess the same number and type of stomachs, the size of the specialized stomachs vary across their world based on available food types.

Interactions

While their tentacles are driven by hunger, adult Kidulan retain their intellect and conscious thought regardless of hunger, and can carry on conversations while eating since their speech apparatus is not related to their digestive tract but instead resides in a set of chambers connecting the lungs to three breathing holes located between the second and third shell segments above their eyes. Standing within reach of a hungry Kidulan to converse can be a frightening experience, but long-time human residents of Kidulaar know that the best defense against being forcibly examined is simple leather boots or, for the brave, bare legs. The Kidulan are strict herbivores, and bystanders classified as "animal" are subsequently ignored by the tentacles. Kidulan with enough Human contact are aware of the problems their hunger reflexes cause and typically avoid contact until they have eaten or have access to the food services of the cities. "Don't interrupt a Kidulan at lunch" is a common bit of advice for new visitors.

Language

The Kidulan are a loud and noisy race, but their vocal apparatus are not capable of most human languages. Humans can speak a pidgin form of Kidulan, though not loudly enough for easy communication, and can hear and understand the majority of Kidulan language with the right training. Kidulan who deal with humans often rely on audible translation devices, though a few go so far as to get neural voders instead. Despite their size, external neural reading technology is effective, allowing a Kidulan with a glued-on speaker and "skullcap" to speak to non-Kidulan. Kidulan who have learned Galanglic can hear normal speakers sufficiently provided they aren't speaking softly.

Lifecycle

Kidulan are the apex species of Kidulaar once they reach about two local years old. There are small predators that can take down the very young, several species that prey on eggs, and parasites that vex even adults.

Kidulan start about 0.5m long, a little less high, and about 0.3m wide at birth. They grow for their entire lives and add height relative to length. In theory a Kidulan with an endless food supply that required no personal energy to acquire would keep growing, but in practice the Kidulan stop around 3 to 3.5m long and high and about 2m wide, not including tentacles. Their shell is segmented similar to a Terran isopod, but loses the ability to curl up within the first year of life.

Society

The Kidulan have a technic society, though it has a very different technological focus than is typically seen among Humaniti. Most Kidulan, roughly 75%, are farmers. Compared to early Humans of Terra, the Kidulan are early in their agricultural phase, having enough spare food capacity to support a minority of non-farmers and a small but still impressive amount of offworld export (Kidulan grain is an exotic high-mineral-content foodstuff sold in a number of markets within about 12 parsecs; they also produce alcoholic beverages and a variety of non-edible organics). The Kidulan have progressed farther than Humaniti did under those limitations, on average, though they had help from Vilani contact during the Ziru Sirka.

Kidulan have trouble travelling beyond their homeworld primarily due to their size. At more than three meters long, nearly that high, and two meters wide, they are incapable of traversing the corridors of most starships, and instead must travel in cargo bays. They also consume prodigious amounts of food per day. The plant life of Kidulaar is fast-growing and food supplies are helped along by technological solutions, but a Kidulan travelling to other worlds must account for his intake by carrying tons of food. The requirements of space and food intake mean that a ship designed specifically for Kidulan would be more similar to the ships of the K'kree than those of Humaniti.

The population of Kidulaar approaches three billion sophonts, the majority of which are Kidulan. Only their status as a "colony" and the economics of travel keeps the more adventurous and well-off Kidulan from hopping a ship. Kidulaar is a subject world under the rulership of Del Fforge (Fornast 0619). The Fforge family traces its roots, if not its name, to the Ziru Sirka, and established the trade links and production processes that make Kidulaar a significant economic power. Their refusal to give up the “management” of Kidulaar to the natives has hampered their advancement as a noble house in the traditionally egalitarian Third Imperium, but only they and the Iridium Throne are concerned by this. The Kidulan are content to have their extra-planetary affairs handled by the Fforge family.

Lifecycle

The Kidulan reproduce remotely. All Kidulan are hermaphroditic internally and asexual externally. At irregular intervals an "egg" is produced by every adult Kidulan. More of a spermatic cyst, the egg enters the central gut and is excreted normally. Among the wandering Kidulan, these unfertilized eggs are typically allowed to sit where they fall, though some Kidulan may move them into new vegetation or even collect them in common areas if a local community has created one. The more sedentary Kidulan of the cities gather eggs into common areas. In either case the egg sits, hopefully undisturbed, until another Kidulan happens across it. Unfertilized eggs are composed entirely of a mineral matrix intermixed with hardly genetic material, and if left in a safe place can last for years. Roughly disk-shaped and approximately 20cm across, these eggs are subject only to the "digestive" juices of another Kidulan and a few specialized tiny predators who bore into them for the minerals. In practice specialized egg borers get most of them after about a year, and social convention in the cities tends to discard and recycle unfertilized eggs more than two local years old.

The unfertilized egg of another Kidulan is the only non-vegetable matter that an adult Kidulan's tentacles will react to when hungry, and any eggs encountered are scooped up and swallowed. In the gut of the second Kidulan the egg is passed to a specialized chamber, where it is fertilized, resealed in a hard shell, and then, once again, excreted. This process takes about a day and a Kidulan’s taste for eggs is diminished or absent during this period.

Fertilized eggs are treated with a bit more regard than unfertilized eggs, in general, and may be collected for keeping in a safe gathering place or sequestered in a secluded location. Fertilized eggs suffer from a different set of predators, but have an external shell that starts very thick and extremely tough and thins gradually as the embryo consumes the minerals of the shell from the inside. An egg that has become leathery and soft is about to hatch. Fertilized eggs are approximately 30cm across and nearly spherical.

After approximately two-thirds of an Imperial year the egg hatches a small, fully formed, and very hungry, juvenile Kidulan. The remaining egg shell is the only animal matter that a Kidulan will ever eat to its benefit.

Juveniles follow roughly the same eating patterns as adults, but start out less discriminating. Nothing that can be swallowed is safe around a young Kidulan for its first several years. Most small things, including small animals, will get swallowed. Most animals can make the passage safely provided they are calm, and the young Kidulan learns quickly what is food and what is not.

Young Kidulans are instinctively attracted to adults via sound and smell, and it is not unusual in the Kidulaar countryside to encounter an adult followed by one or more juveniles in a "flying wing" formation. It is at this stage that the young Kidulans learn language and the arts of civilization, as adults encounter each other or visit communities. Urban Kidulan can and do attract young as well, but generally relegate the parental role to specialized teachers until professional skill training is needed.

Kidulan lifespans rival the Vilani, reaching roughly 140 Imperial years on average. Most Kidulan stop growing outwardly by their 45th year, but the shell continues to thicken their entire lives and the smooth shell of youth becomes first rough, then sharp, and finally spiny. By the time a Kidulan reaches 90 their shell has begun to grow inward, though it will normally be many more years before this strangles, impales, or otherwise kills the aged Kidulan.

Kidulan Travellers

Occasionally a young Kidulan will retain the desire to encounter new tastes beyond the normal age. Still fairly small at this stage (rarely more than a few hundred kilograms and up to a meter long and high) these adolescent Kidulan sometimes encounter offworlders and pursue passage offworld. This normally requires the intervention of an adult who can speak Galanglic and arrange the finances, but adolescents can and do travel offworld. Because they continue to grow and eventually become too large for standard starship corridors, the wonders of space travel wear thin in a few years and most Kidulan return home. Those who remain abroad begin finding travel increasingly expensive and typically settle where the food is good. While not common, adult Kidulan can be encountered throughout much of Fornast and the trailing regions of Core, often in mercantile or administrative roles.

An offworld Kidulan who becomes successful enough to acquire a starship will usually hire a crew from other races or have a ship built with Kidulan physiology in mind.

Playing Kidulan

Kidulan abroad will usually be "children" in their culture, entering one of the itinerant careers at Age 8 and leaving it two terms later. At age 16 Kidulan become too large (mostly width of corridors and doors) for standard starship travel and must either return home or settle in a more sedentary career offworld.

Sophont Generation Data

Homestar: M2 V (Kidulaar / Fornast 0819)
Ecological Niche: Herbivore Filter
Size: 5
Characteristic Profile:

Strength:	15D
Dexterity:	2D
Stamina:	4D
Intelligence:	2D
Education:	2D
Social Standing:	2D

Speed: 1 (5 kph)
Endurance: 1
Body Profile: Globular (around 3m x 3m x 2m)
Density: Standard (1.0)
Volume: 20,000 L.
Mass: 20 tons.

Genders. Roll 2D:

2D	Gender	Characteristic Modifiers	Special Abilities
2	One	Int-4, Edu-5	
3	Two	Str+3D, Sta-2, Int+2, Edu+2	Musician
4-6	Three	Sta-3, Int-2, Edu+4	
7-9	Four	Sta+4, Edu-2	
10	Five	Str+2, Dex-5, Int+2, Edu+3	Osmancer
11-12	Six	Str-3, Dex+5, Int-4	Rage

Life Stages:

Career resolution begins: 34 standard years
Physical aging begins: 46 standard years
Retirement (mental aging begins): 90 standard years
Average lifespan: 140 years

Senses:

Vision	24 (strong), FIN (FarIR - IR - NearIR)
Hearing	14 (freq=8, span=5, voice=4, Range=4 (Long/500m))
Smell	16 (sharpness=5)
Touch	20 (sensitivity=3)
Awareness	Unaware
Perception	Oblivious

Racial Scent: KDL-1ZM
Body Structure: Bilateral N-TBS-ANLL-N
Body Features: Segmented Shell, Tentacles

Psionics. Gender “Four” is psionic. Upon testing, an individual’s psionic strength is equal to its Intelligence, minus the current life stage. For young adults, this is Intelligence - 3.

Sophont Species Tech Level Cap: TL 7. This is the maximum Tech Level the Kidulan culture may achieve.

Gigantic Sophonts

A How-To Guide

Process

Luckily, Traveller5 has BeastMaker, a method for generating gigantic animals. It seems obvious that part of this process can be hijacked for the physiology of gigantic sophonts. This section shows when to use BeastMaker steps as a complement to the Sophont Creation process.

Initialize Sophont

Apply the sophont creation process as usual, until you get to the section on **Characteristics**.

Characteristics. Book 3, page 228. When generating characteristics for Gigantic Sophonts, it is important to record the genetic component of the characteristics. Generate characteristics as written from the Character Generation rules — **except for Strength**.

At this point, switch over to BeastMaker (Book 3, page 255 and 257, tables 3, 4, 6, 7).

Inject BeastMaker Process

Size. Table 3. Determine sophont size code using table 3: SIZE. Gigantic sophonts will probably be size code 5 or greater.

Strength. Table 4. Generate Strength using table 4: STRENGTH. Note that the resulting value is the SIZE times a number of dice. For example, the Kidulan is a size 5 sophont. Rolling a 3 on the STRENGTH table results in a Strength of 5 x 3D = 15D.

Determine **Speed** (table 6) and, if desired, **Weapon** (table 7).

Now skip ahead to page 257.

Endurance. Table E, “Animal Endurance”. The genetic die for Endurance has special meaning with Gigantic Sophonts: it is equivalent to animal endurance, which establishes how much a beast can carry and for how long. When you note this value, it helps to give examples. In particular it may be important to state that your Gigantic Sophonts might be able to carry quite a bit of gear.

Beast Size (optional). If desired, use table S, Animal Sizes, to fine tune the sophont size.

Body Profile. Use table B, Body Profile, to determine the sophont’s dimensions.

Density. Use table D, Density, to determine the sophont’s density. A default of “1” is a useful shortcut.

Volume. Now that the sophont’s body profile and density are known, determine its volume in liters and mass in kilograms.

Finalize Sophont

Now flip back to page 229, and continue the sophont creation process as usual, skipping the section on **Sophont Size and Weight** since that is already done. (For example, since we are using BeastMaker for size considerations, Bulk is not used.)

Notes

Combat. Combat is used as-is. The essential point to know is that it may be easy to knock out a Gigantic Sophont, but they are harder to kill. Also remember that a Gigantic Sophont may do a devastating amount of "ramming" damage, per the BeastMaker rules.

The Quick NIL Profile

NIL: Native Intelligent Life. A *sophont* people as an evolutionary product of their homeworld.

The QNP is a useful way to organize sophont files. Name sophont profiles using the QNP and the sophont name. Name folders to hold relevant text and media. For a chronic organizer like me, this is REALLY useful.

I think there are some important bits of information that are particularly effective for comparison and classification: symmetry, size, limb groups, and characteristics. From there, I arrive at this format:

CAT-1-2222-333333-444444-MMM Name

"CAT": **Catalog Entry**. This is a three-letter code for this sophont. Typically it is the first three letters of the sophont name; for example, ASL for Aslan.

1: **Symmetry**. Most sophonts will be bilateral, but that's a good thing: it gives you an idea about how stilted our universe is, and maybe we ought to give more weight to the other types.

B: Bilateral (this includes both vertical and horizontal orientations)

R: Radial

T: Trilateral

A: Asymmetric

2: **Limb Groups**. Up to four groupings; no specifics on how they're grouped. Wings can go in the first or second slots.

A: Arms (these end in manipulators of some kind)

L: Legs (legs in the first or second slots mean the sophont has a horizontal axis, like a Virushi, rather than vertical, like a Human.)

W: Wings

N: No limb group in this slot.

3 and 4: **Characteristics**. These are the most fiddly. They come in two groups.

The first group is the letter codes for the characteristics themselves — for example, Human has SDEIES (Str - Dex - End - Int - Edu - Soc). Vargr, however, have SDEIEC (Str - Dex - End - Int - Edu - Cha) and Bwap have SAVIES (Str - Agl - Vig - Int - Edu - Soc).

The second group is the number of dice rolled for each characteristic, in order.

5: **Mass**. This is the average sophont mass, in kilograms.

6: **Name**. Finally, end it with the name of the sophont.

EXAMPLES

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AEL-B-WLLN-SAEIES-222222-60  Ael Yael
AMI-B-AALL-SDEIIC-433222-120 Amindii
ASL-B-ANLN-SDSIES-222222-96  Aslan
BLO-B-ALLL-SDVIEC-532221-108 Blorp
BWA-B-ANLN-SAVIES-142222-45  Bwap
CET-B-ANLN-SDVITC-223222-66  Cetian Horn
CHA-B-LLLL-SDSITK-323222-120 Chamax
CRA-B-ANLN-SGVITK-233222-60  Crawni
DEN-R-TNNN-SGEIIS-132322-54  Denizen Liaison
DRO-B-AWLN-SAEIEK-122222-48  Droyne
EBE-B-ANLN-SDEITS-323222-96  Eber
HIV-R-LNNN-SDEIEK-222222-150 Hiver
HUM-B-ANLN-SDEIES-222222-72  Human
KID-B-ANLL-SDSIES-F24222-20000 Kidulan
KKR-B-ANLL-SDEIEK-523222-120 K'Kree
KLA-A-TNLN-SDEIEK-313112-84  Klaxun
KUR-B-ALLL-SDSIEK-322222-108 Kursae
LIT-B-ANLN-SDEIES-121222-48  Little Guys
LIZ-B-LNLN-SDSITS-322222-108 Shadows Lizards
OCT-B-AALL-SDVIES-332222-84  Octopoids
PRI-A-LNLN-SDVIEK-234222-84  Primordial
ROU-R-ALLF-SGVITS-323221-125 Roup Sophonts
SHR-B-LLLL-SDEITK-423222-108 Shrieker
VAR-B-ANLN-SDVIEC-223222-66  Vargr
YRI-B-AANN-SDEITS-121222-48  Yrii Zhurphani of Yori
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