

is the seat of an interstellar government. If there are several interstellar governments within a subsector, each will probably have a capital. Capital designations are assigned by the referee.

Other notations are possible as well. The referee may elect to note the presence of prison worlds, exile worlds, preserves or reserves for various purposes, and so on.

ANIMAL ENCOUNTERS

Pages 18-19 of the charts and tables booklet apply to this chapter.

Animals in any ecological system interact with each other, forming food chains, obeying instincts, defending territory, and generally living out their lives. When people enter such an ecological system, they will encounter the animals of the system, prompting natural reactions such as attack or flight.

Although the precise nature of animals may change, and they may prove quite alien to ordinary experience, most will conform to the broad classifications given below. A referee may choose to establish his own ecological system on a specific world, ignoring the encounter system outlined here. This system, however, is intended to allow broad latitude in both animal types and attack/defense mechanisms, while remaining essentially logical and reasonable.

Animal Types: Nearly all animals may be classified into four basic categories: herbivore, omnivore, carnivore, and scavenger. Specific definitions for these terms are provided in a later section of these rules, and differ from the precise scientific definitions in current use. Within each category, a variety of animal types exist, based on specific feeding/hunting habits; examples of this concept are grazers, chasers, and pouncers. Animal encounters may be further classified into various categories and types and specific attack and defense mechanisms determined. The resulting description indicates the actions an animal will take without resorting to such confining labels as bear or tiger. While a referee may well elect to use such names, this system also allows the players freedom to encounter truly alien beasts as well.

Animal Encounter Tables: The referee must create a series of unique encounter tables, one set for each world in the universe (only a few of these are necessary before play begins). Each set consists of one encounter column for each relevant terrain type of the world. Generally, a referee will conceal the exact details of these encounter columns so that persons will only have clues as to the relative abundance or scarcity of specific animals in any specific

area. Once these tables are created, they are used each day to determine if animals are encountered, the specific nature of such animals, and how they react to the adventurers. Hunting for sport or food is possible, and danger posed by animals may be great.

CREATING ENCOUNTER TABLES

Initially, the referee must prepare a blank encounter column for each terrain type on the world. The terrain DMs chart indicates the general types of terrain which might be expected on the worlds to be visited. The referee should determine if the encounter table will use one die or two; two-dice tables are more complex and should be selected for terrain or worlds that will be frequently used, while one-die tables are for worlds or terrain types which the referee does not feel merit detailed representation. The examples of blank encounter tables shown indicate the predetermined sequences of animal categories which should be used in most cases; these sequences may be varied by the referee to fit specific situations or world conditions.

Once the encounter table format has been decided upon, the referee notes the terrain type for the table and consults the terrain types table. Any applicable DMs are recorded. The referee refers to the animal types table and rolls two dice for the animal category involved. The result is the animal type for the entry. The animal attributes table is consulted to determine if the animal has any special attributes, such as flying or swimming. The animal sizes and weaponry table is consulted to determine the animal's size, wound potential, weaponry, and armor. Finally, the characteristics table is consulted to note the animal's predisposition to attack or flee and its speed.

When the encounter table calls for events, the referee should insert an event from those described in these rules, or generate additional events appropriate to the situation.

Animal Types: The animal types table indicates the types of animals which occur within the animal categories on the encounter column.

Special Attributes: Animals which adventurers will encounter will tend to be walkers, but may be flyers, swimmers, amphibians, or even triphibians. Throw two dice and consult the special attributes table. DMs are imposed for various world sizes and atmospheres. Insure that the correct terrain column is used on the table. Four special attribute types are possible on the table:

Flyers: Animals capable of flying through the use of wings, levitating gas sacs, or other mechanisms.

Swimmers: Animals living in liquid and swimming through the use of fins, flippers, jets, or other mechanisms.

Amphibians: Animals living in liquid, but capable of emerging onto land.

Triphibians: Animals living in liquid, but capable of walking on land and flying in the air.

Certain entries on the table are followed by a parenthetical DM which must be applied to the animal size throw; its general effect is to make flyers smaller and swimmers larger. Note the special attribute (if any) on the blank encounter column being filled in. Record any size DM temporarily for use in the size throw to come.

Animal Size: Animals range in size from small (massing about 1 kilogram) to giant (massing 6 tons or greater), and exhibit a variety of characteristics related to size. Throw two dice and consult the weight, hits, and wounds columns of the animal size and weaponry table (rolling only once for all three). DMs are imposed on this throw based on planetary size, the terrain DM chart (by specific terrain type), and as required by special attributes, if present.

Animal size is expressed on the table in kilograms and may be taken as a general indication of size in relation to human beings (humans are assumed to be approximately 100 kilograms). All sizes may be construed to cover a range of plus or minus 20%.

Animal Hits: The hits column indicates the number of hits an

animal can take, expressed as a dice throw. When an animal has received wounds equalling or exceeding the first dice throw, the animal is considered to be unconscious. When it has received wounds equalling or exceeding its total hits, it is dead. If an animal receives wounds equal to twice its hits, it is destroyed and has lost any food or pelt value. For example, an animal listed on the animal size and weaponry table as taking 2D/2D hits would have two dice rolled twice: the first result would be the number of hits required to render the animal unconscious. The second two-dice throw would indicate the additional hits required to kill the animal. If more than twice this combined value is achieved, the animal is completely destroyed.

Animal Wounds: The wounds column indicates the general effect of size on an animal's ability to cause damage when it hits. The formula is noted and applied to the effects of the animal's weapons when they are determined. If, for example, the animal has teeth as its weapons, then the weapons range matrix (in personal combat) states that teeth inflict 1D hits when they hit. A wound alteration of -2D indicates that the referee should roll 2D and subtract that from 1D to determine the actual number of hits inflicted. If the wound alteration is +4D, then the teeth will inflict 1D + 4D hits. If the wound alteration is x4, then the teeth will inflict 1Dx4 hits. The result is that of two animals armed with the same weapon, the larger will inflict a heavier wound. For simplicity, the damage dice should be rolled once when the animal is generated; the animal would inflict that number of hits every time it hits. A roll of 0 or less equals 1; an animal always has the ability to do some damage. If the referee wishes to take the trouble, he can roll the proper number of dice every time the animal hits; in this case, a roll of 0 or less would equal 0.

Animal Weaponry: Animals are naturally equipped with weapons which enable them to attack and defend. Familiar terms such as teeth and claws indicate the effects in the combat system, but should also be considered to approximate other equivalent systems if necessary. Entries such as teeth + 1 indicate a DM to the combat roll of the weapon, making it more effective. In some cases, unusual weaponry is indicated by the statement as [weapon type], for example as pike. The combat effect may be read from the weapons matrix (and wounding from the range matrix) in the chapter on personal combat. Weapon types should always be considered to be descriptive of result rather than of strict process.

Throw two dice and consult the animal weapons column. Implement DMs as indicated on the table.

Animal Armor: Some animals possess armor protecting them from attack by other animals. Armor is intended to indicate the general effectiveness of the armor, not its specific construction. Entries such as battle + 4 indicate DMs to the combat die roll, making the armor less effective.

Throw two dice and consult the animal armor column. Implement DMs as indicated on the table.

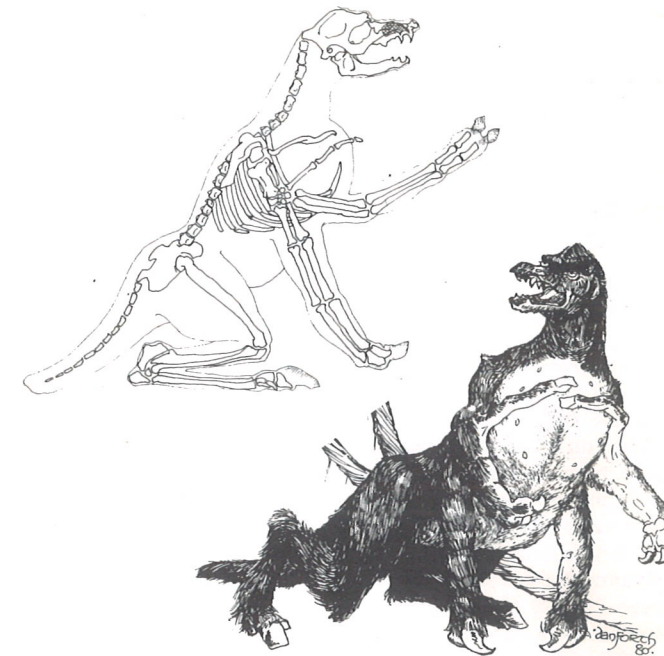
Animal Characteristics: Because animals have predispositions to attack or to flee, these details must be noted on the animal encounter table for each specific type presented. These characteristics are noted in the form of three codes in the table: A, F, and S. Each is followed by a number which indicates the throw involved.

A indicates attack predisposition; A7 would indicate that the animal will attack on a throw of 7+. The number 0 indicates a special case, and the animal will attack if it meets certain criteria for its type.

F indicates predisposition to flee. F7 would indicate that the animal will flee on a throw of 7+. The number 0 is a special case, and the animal will flee if certain criteria for the animal type are met.

S indicates speed. S0 indicates that the animal is immobile. S1 indicates normal or ordinary speed; S2 indicates double speed; S3 indicates triple speed; S4 indicates quadruple speed.

The animal characteristics table indicates die rolls to derive these three characteristics.



Referee's Additions: The referee may invent new animal characteristics within this system. Larger or smaller animals may be invented, extrapolating from the system presented. Other animal weaponry and armor types may be invented; the easiest to implement are those already found on the weapons matrix, with or without DMs, such as cloth - 1 (cloth minus 1), ablat + 1, foil, stinger - 1, and so on.

Animals may also be provided with more complex motivations than the simple dice rolls for attack and flight. The animal type descriptions later in this chapter will prove helpful in this regard. Carnivores will base their decisions on the sizes of the party and of individuals. Large herbivores will be less likely to flee than small ones, tending to ignore a party unless it approaches too close. Humans may resemble a carnivore's natural prey or a herbivore's natural predator. Any animal may attack if the party threatens its young, nest, territory, or meal. Any animal may flee if startled or if the party appears sufficiently threatening; even the most vicious carnivore is reluctant to risk its life for a meal.

Other responses are possible beyond attack or flight. A carnivore may stalk a party, hoping to attack an isolated member. An armored animal may curl up into a ball or retract its extremities into its shell. Animals may find certain parts of the group's equipment attractive and fasten themselves to the outside of an ATV or try to eat clothing. There may be responses analogous to that of the skunk or the opossum. An animal may be friendly or want to play; it might even mistake a party for members of the opposite sex.

Common Sense: Airless worlds will almost never have any life of consequence on them; if they do, animal life will still tend to follow the same broad guidelines given above. Still, flyers and liquid breathers will be almost non-existent.

The referee should always be prepared to alter or restrain prescribed procedures if it is felt that they contravene logic or reason.

USING THE ENCOUNTER TABLES

Each day, an adventuring band may possibly have one or more encounters with some animal life forms. As a general rule, the referee will check for an encounter once while the band is traveling and once while the band is halted (for rest, exercise, encampment, or whatever). There is a one-third chance (throw 5 or 6 on one die) that an animal encounter will occur in any of the specified terrain types. Referee-initiated modifications to this frequency may

