

Tales from the Sablewood

Part I: Rodential Races

A setting of small heroics and woodland critters for 5th Edition.

This series of articles is in an early stage.

The Tales from the Sablewood series are in an ongoing testing and feedback process and so you should expect them to be intermittently updated.

*The current version is **0.1** in which we are working on the flavor and “feel” instead of balance. The next update will be a “balance” update.*

There is an interesting thread through fantasy and children’s fiction in which small woodland critters, such as mice or moles, are presented as human-like heroes. From the *Wind in the Willows* to *Watership Down*, from there to *Redwall* and *Mouse Guard*, there is a small but enduring persistence of this rodential trope. Why is that?

There is something wistful about small, cute creatures that act like we do. They live in little homes in a semblance of our own environments but with a twist. Their homes are burrows, tree stumps, old logs, even mouseholes in the wall of what is seemingly the great house of a giant. It is the same fascination that makes *The Borrowers* a fun read.



There is possibly a simpler reason for the fascination, a more primal one -- and that is the universal image of the small hero triumphing against overwhelmingly large odds. Mice are small frightened little creatures that creep around when everyone else is away. Giving this frightened creature a sword and setting it against hawks and serpents creates a juxtaposition that taps into a reservoir of empathy. It's the ultimate underdog story.

This rules addition to the world's greatest role-playing game is meant to be used to create fantasy stories and situations involving small

woodland creatures in the role of hero, contending against predators and other threats in a fantastical environment not unlike north-western europe. Instead of elves and dwarves, we have squirrels and moles taking up the staff, sword, and battleaxe. It is still fantasy: there are wizards and warriors, clerics and bards, but these roles are filtered through the interesting cultures and environments that are the result of switching the dominant civilization from humanoid to rodent.

A Setting of Woodland Creatures

The default presumed setting of this book is a region of woodlands, meadows, hills, coasts, swamps, and mountains that resembles in many ways north-western europe during the low to middle medieval period. The wilderness is vast, and there are pockets of civilization huddled together against the dangers and predators that prowl the land and sky or tunnel beneath the ground.

Different species live and work together, rather than species representing different cultures with little mixing in between (with some exceptions). It is a pastoral setting, with agriculture and the concerns of simple folk being the window dressing for larger situations. While there are kingdoms and cities, these are few and far between and war and political intrigue are not generally concerns.

Instead the stories and situations of this setting involve travel, villages and towns, survival in the wilderness, and defeating predatory foes while defending the small sanctuaries that dot the wilderness.

It is still fantasy, however, and magic and the strange permeates the dark wood. Weird creatures haunt the little-traveled places such as bogs and deep tunnels. Spirits and monsters dance on the slopes of far away mountains, and common folk make superstitious signs with their paws when the whipping winds pick up or the dark clouds of a storm approach.

Adventurers travel in this place, the few brave souls that travel the small paths between villages and towns. Avoiding the larger beasts, they float from place to place in the wood, taking otter rafts across the wide rivers and finding refuge in the abandoned burrows of forgotten times. Mice, rats, hare, and moles travel together and contend with the savage weasels and ferrets of the wood and brush; all the while keeping an eye to the sky at night for the terror-inducing sign of outstretched wings.

How to Use This Setting

This series of articles is meant to be used to create a role-playing campaign that draws inspiration from the likes of *Redwall* and *Watership Down*. This means you'll replace certain things from the core game with a selection of pieces from this series. There will be, eventually, a total of four articles comprising the series.

The **Rodential Races** article showcases a variety of critters to use as PCs. They are separated into Common and Uncommon and should provide more than enough choices to inspire both the players and the

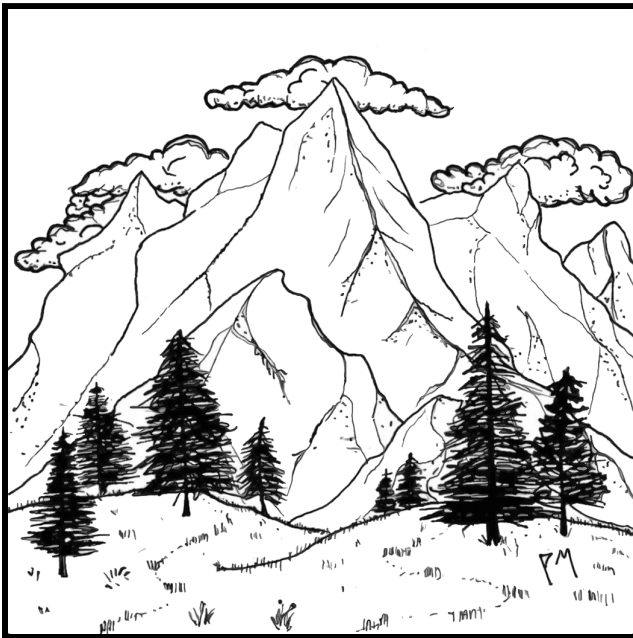
Dungeon Master in charge of creating the setting where these species will live.

The **Non-player Critters** article details new NPCs and foes to replace humanoids from the core monster book as well as supplement the other monsters with appropriate challenges for the setting. Many of these are predator animals as well as supernatural creatures derived from that context. It also provides some direction on using normal monsters in your woodland critter campaign.

The **Running a Sablewood Campaign** article provides some tools and information for creating and running a campaign set in a world in which woodland creatures are the anthropomorphised heroes and villains. It will provide the most detail for the default Sablewood setting. It also lists sources of inspiration to check out to familiarize yourself with a rather niche genre.

The **Sablewood Appendices** article provides additional inspiration in the form of encounter tables, magic items, and sample lairs.

While The Sablewood is the assumed and default setting, this series of articles is written in such a way as to make it easy to use these elements in a home-brewed world.



Folk

The following creatures are folk of the wood and pasture that live in relative peaceful coexistence with each other. They are the more gentle of the folk of the wood, the ones that live in towns and villages and defend each other against the enduring savagery of the predators and the wild wood beyond their fields.

These “folk” replace the “races” in the normal game. Instead of choosing a race, a player should choose one of these. These are

separated into **Common** and **Uncommon**. **Common** species are seen more often and are more numerous in the woodland and meadows. Most of the towns and villages are made up of these creatures. **Uncommon** creatures are either for some reason not nearly as numerous or represent far traveling foreigners rarely seen in the parts of the setting we're concerned with.

Common Folk

Badger

Badgers are large and hardy creatures of solitude. Natural survivors, they are one of the few species not afraid to walk the wilderness alone. Within them is both a stubborn pride and deep wisdom; however neither of these can match their deep capacity for anger.

Living Giants

Badgers are among the largest of the folk of the wood, standing nearly twice the height of the common rat. They are bulky and their fur is thick. Often they have darker gray or brown fur with white and black stripes that start at their heads and run down their backs. They are naturally strong and muscular, their thick limbs supporting their heavy frames.

Wardens of the Wood

Tales of badgers from the days of old speak of wardens and keepers, tribes and clans that protected important or sacred sites. A natural

inclination for solitude meant that great warriors would live most of their days near such sites, silently waiting for trouble to find them.

Other tales speak of a darker past, of barbaric savagery and war among great tribal chieftains. A raging badger was a thing to be feared, and even now other woodland folk treat badgers with some trepidation because of the tales of bloodlust that trickle down through the fog of time.

Solitary Survivors

Today most badgers keep to themselves in burrows of their own fashion, or else in small caves hidden among the brambles. They prefer families to towns and villages, and every badger at some point in their lives feels the draw of the silence of the wood. Though not as skilled in crafts as other creatures, they are able to provide for themselves in the wood, and though wary they are among the most helpful folk to find while lost in the wood.

Badgers tend to be stoic and slow to take action. They prefer to think things through, and are often wary of strangers and haste. However, their tempers are legendary. When brought to anger they are dangerous beasts to be around -- attacking suddenly and with great viciousness. This is rare, however, and many badgers prefer to not allow themselves to be brought to such a state.

Traits

Ability Score Increases. +2 Strength, +1 Wisdom

Alignment. Badgers favor Neutral alignments, and the more independent ones favor Chaotic ones.

Size. Badgers are Medium creatures.

Speed. Badgers have a base speed of 25'.

Languages. Badgers are proficient in the *Woodfolk* and *Lowrock* languages.

Blood Rage. When a Badger is brought to 1/2 of their Hit Point total or is given at least one level of exhaustion, they must make a Wisdom Saving Throw against a DC of 12. They may choose to automatically fail this roll. Whether a success or a failure they do not make this saving throw again until after their next long rest.

For one minute after failing the saving throw, the badger enters into a blood rage. The Badger must use their movement to attempt to engage the closest hostile creature. If there is no creature within range of their movement speed, they must use their action to dash and get as close as they can. Once engaged, they must attack or use cantrips that target that creature until

the blood rage ends, the creature is dead, or the badger is incapacitated.

While suffering from the effects of Blood Rage, the badger cannot become incapacitated or unconscious, even if brought to 0 Hit points. Also, they gain advantage when attacking with melee weapons or using cantrips that have spell attack rolls. After the Blood Rage ends, if the badger is at 0 Hit Points, it becomes incapacitated as normal.

Powerful Build. Badgers count as one size larger when determining their carrying capacity and the weight they can push, drag, or lift.

Self-reliant. Badgers are proficient in **Survival**.

Frog

Hailing from the bogs and marshlands, frogs are semi-aquatic creatures with a taste for insects and what seems to be a very eccentric attitude to other woodland folk. Cold-blooded and natural hunters, they nevertheless are not known for being vicious or even very violent. Instead they are known to keep to themselves, and to be natural herbalists.

Skulking Amphibians

Frogs are amphibians with mottled skin. They have long legs, though their natural gait keeps their legs bent most of the time unless leaping. They tend to have darker skin around their eyes, neck, and down their back and lighter colored skin on their chest, stomach, and inner legs and arms.

Secretive Tribes

Frogs come from a long and shrouded history of secretive tribal groups within marshes and swamps that continues into the present day. These ancient tribal groups once used to control wide swathes of territory, and some evidence of more complex stone structures within the swamp show that there may have been powerful frog kingdoms at one point.

Frogs keep an oral history instead of writing much down and much of their history is only known to the frog tribes themselves, and much of that is localized or centered on the local family groups.

Spawning Pools and Herblore

Frog village life is centered around sacred spawning pools watched over by a priestly caste. Their priests are also the ones in charge of making sure breeding is successful, and marriage and love is highly ritualized within these societies to ensure diversity is continually coming into the village tribe. These pools are the most important asset of a village and are protected down to the last warrior if necessary.

Village structure beyond that is simple: a village elder leads the village, a head priest ensures the spawning, and all young frogs are tasked with being warriors, hunters, and foragers. They do not do much agriculture aside from their growing of herbs with special properties.

To outsiders frog habit and custom seems strange and arcane. Frogs have little sense of ego and seem motivated more by the continuation of their customs, oral history, and spawn than personal glory or gratification.

Herblore is a frog specialty, and they are sought out for their knowledge on plants and herbs, especially those common in boggy areas.

Traits

Ability Score Increases. +2 Dexterity, +1 Wisdom

Alignment. Frogs are almost always lawful.

Size. Frogs are medium creatures.

Speed. Frogs have a movement speed of 30 feet.

Languages. Frog adventurers speak *Flytongue* and *Woodfolk*.

Amphibious. Frogs can breathe both air and water.

Herblore. Frogs have proficiency in **Nature** and with an *Herbalist's Kit*.

Leap. A frog's long jump is up to 30 feet and its high jump is up to 15 feet, with or without a running start.

Tongue. Frogs have highly elastic tongues that they can shoot out to grab prey or items. As an action, frogs can grab an item or a creature with their tongue that is up to 30 feet away. They must make an attack roll using their Dexterity Modifier + their proficiency bonus against the target's AC if it is a creature.

If it is an item they grab it automatically. The creature or item is dragged back to the frog if it is Tiny or weighs five pounds or less, otherwise the tongue grab is unsuccessful. The creature is considered grappled and must roll against a DC of 10 + the frog's strength modifier + the frog's proficiency bonus to escape. Otherwise the tongue returns to the frog's mouth.

On the following turn, if the creature is still grappled, the frog may attempt to eat the creature. It is brought into the Frog's mouth and takes 2d6 damage until it dies or breaks free of the grapple.

Hare

Lanky creatures with a fighting spirit and a passion for merrymaking, hares are roughhousing balladeers who to some seem to like to get into trouble. Not to be confused with passive rabbits, hares are natural

travelers who want to see the world and be able to tell their tales around a tavern fire.

Long-eared Pugilists.

Hares are lanky and tend to be tightly muscular and lean. They have long rounded ears that can stand straight up, but tend to move about depending on the hare's mood. They are short furred and tall and tend to have large front teeth.

Song and Story.

Hares have been traveling creatures for as long as history has been written. The wandering hare is an archetype in even the most ancient of tales. There are no known hare villages or towns, and they don't travel in hare-only groups -- though hares can and do travel together they tend to collect a variety of other companions as well.

Hares are a typical subject of tavern songs and ballads, mostly because they tend to write and sing them. Many songs from ages past are purported to be written by famous hare bards.

Vagabonds and Wanderers.

Because of an intrinsic wanderlust present in almost all hares they are a quintessential wandering creature, traveling from village to village in pursuit of the experiences of the open road. They don't stay in one place for long, though they seem to maintain a warm reputation among kindly woodfolk. Hares enjoy getting into the middle of things, which

means when they come through an area they are willing to work and bring a bit of spirit along with their labor.

They do tend to have a lazy streak, however, and have voracious appetites. A common phrase is “hungry as a hare” in the woodlands. Most hares seem to try to put their minds to writing songs and playing instruments as well as competitive athletics such as boxing or wrestling. They are natural athletes and boxing is something they practice from a very young age.

Traits

Ability Score Increases. +2 Strength, +1 Charisma

Alignment. Hares tend toward chaotic alignments.

Size. Hares are Medium creatures.

Speed. Hares have a speed of 30 feet.

Language. Hares speak *Woodfolk* and one other language.

Luck of the Hare. When a hare character is making an attack roll, ability check, or saving throw with disadvantage they can instead make the roll with advantage. After doing so they cannot do so again until after their next **long rest**.

Pugilism. Hares are natural boxers and wrestlers. They are proficient in *Athletics* and their unarmed attacks deal 1d4 damage.

Wrestling. After successfully grappling a target, a hare can still move half their movement speed as a roll or tumble if the creature they are grappling is medium or smaller.

Tavern singers. Hares are proficient with an instrument of their choice.

Hedgehog

Soft-spoken thinkers and purveyors of a variety of crafts, hedgehogs are a strange combination of a shyness and passion. Their spines hide a natural softness that is common among hedgehogs; a tendency to refrain from harsh actions or judgements.

Spiny softies.

Hedgehogs are notable for their spiny hair, that grows long and covers most of their body except their very fronts. These spines can be painful if you get too close to a hedgehog from behind. They tend toward stocky or waddling frames.

Thoughtful and crafty.

Hedgehogs come from ancient clans that once built towns and even small cities based around merit and achievement in philosophy and craft. Being a passive people, they weren't expansionist and had many problems with the more aggressive tribes of that era. Though skilled in many arts and crafts, they never reached the pinnacle that some of the other species were able to.

Still, this attention to personal development and philosophy still seems to run through hedgehog families.

Getting it done.

Hedgehogs are dependable and think things through as a general rule. Many hedgehogs are artisans, especially in stone and timber as well as food and alcohol. Most settlements have at least a few hedgehogs, though they are not as numerous as mice or rats. Some hedgehogs choose to travel or become adventurers to hone their skills as tinkers.

Traits

Ability Score Increases. +2 Intelligence, +1 Constitution

Alignment. Hedgehogs tend towards lawful alignments.

Size. Hedgehogs are medium creatures.

Speed. Hedgehogs have a speed of 30 feet.

Language. Hedgehogs can speak *Woodfolk* and *Cromlyn*.

Natural Artisans. Hedgehogs are proficient with one *artisan tool* of their choice. They may double their Intelligence modifier for any *History* checks related to the craft of their artisan tool proficiency.

Spines. A hedgehog can, as an **action**, stiffen their quills outward by becoming **prone** and curling up into a ball. They may stay in this position for as long as they wish, though moving or taking a different action requires them to lower their quills.

Any creature that attempts to attack in melee, touch, or grapple a hedgehog that has stiffened their quills receives non-magical piercing damage equal to 1d4 + the hedgehogs level. A melee attack with a **reach** weapon does not trigger this damage.

A hedgehog may attempt to shove their spines into another creature by moving toward them and rolling into a ball as they reach them. After a hedgehog has moved at least twenty feet towards a chosen creature in a straight line, they may roll into a ball as an action. If they end their movement adjacent to that creature, the hedgehog rolls a melee attack roll as if they were attacking with a weapon that they are proficient with. On a hit, they deal damage equal to 1d4 + their level.

Mole

Stout, gruff, and hard-working moles are the workhorses of the woodland. Digging tunnels and providing the foundations for buildings and fortresses, moles are the master builders and the salt of the earth.

Made for digging.

Moles are stocky and sometimes a little more round around the middle than other creatures. They also possess large claw-like paws that make burrowing through dirt extremely easy. Their eyes are small and weak, but they have sensitive noses that are constantly twitching to the surrounding vibrations.

Master builders.

Moles have been a constant throughout history. Any time a famous rat or mouse king is written of, there is mention of their master builder -- which is almost always a mole. The natural inclination to build and tunnel is so pervasive that it is the very rare mole that hasn't had a hand in a project. Many mines throughout the ages were mole mines, making many a mole wealthy in precious metals.

Diggers and brewers.

Moles almost always work in groups that build, dig, or mine. Villages and towns near mines benefit greatly from the work they provide as well as the materials they unearth. Their mindset is always set on their tasks, though not in a super-focused kind of manner. Instead they seem

to treat their work as a hobby or modest venture, even if they've spent their entire lives getting it up and running.

Moles are simply naturally modest and have a habit of not taking things too seriously. They prefer simpler outlooks, speaking plainly, and shrugging off setbacks instead of investing a lot of stress and emotion into things. They are masters of understatement and in general don't like to make a bother.

More than a few moles also enjoy brewing beer and whiskey, almost always incorporating their cold cellars into the process. Mole lager, brewed in cold chambers deep beneath the earth, is a popular woodland drink.

Traits

Ability Score Increases. +2 Constitution, +1 Intelligence

Alignment. Moles tend toward neutral alignments.

Size. Moles are medium creatures.

Speed. Moles have a base speed of 25 feet.

Language. Moles speak *Woodfolk* and *Deephollow*.

Diggers. Moles are natural diggers, easily able to clear out a tunnel using only their paws. Moles can form tunnels, passages, and chambers in dirt at many times the pace of any other creature. They can tunnel out 50 square feet of dirt in 1 hour,

however if they spend longer than 8 hours doing so they gain a level of exhaustion for each hour beyond the 8th. They can tunnel out 500 square feet of dirt in a single day of downtime.

If they have the proper tools (such as pick axes, shovels, mauls, and spikes) they can tunnel through stone at double the time mentioned above.

Claws. A mole can choose to use their claws as a natural weapon. If used in this way they are considered proficient with them and deal 1d6 + Strength modifier damage. This does not count as an unarmed strike.

Craftsfolk. Moles are proficient in two of the following artisan's tools of their choice: *miner's tools*, *blacksmith's tools*, *stoneworker's tools*, *carpenter's tools*, or *brewer's supplies*.

Superior Darkvision. A mole's darkvision has a range of 120 feet.

Sunlight Sensitivity. A mole has disadvantage on attack rolls and **Wisdom (Perception)** checks when they, the target of their attack, or whatever they are trying to perceive is in direct sunlight.

Mouse

Stout hearted smallfolk of the fields and meadows, mice are one of the most numerous species of the woodlands. What they lack in size they more than make up for in spirit and ingenuity.

Small and quick.

Mice are smaller than most other species, and tend to have larger round ears. Their fur can range from brown to light gray and sometimes even white. They are quick on their feet and can squeeze into small spaces quite easily.

Visionaries and travelers.

The mice of the woodlands have always been numerous, with many villages being founded by mice tribes of earlier times. While not as migratory as rats, they still have a characteristic need to spread and create sanctuaries within the hostile wilderness. Many of the great heroes of legend are mice who were able to rise to meet challenges far larger than they.

Hardly meek.

Mice are ever-present in many of the towns and villages of the woodlands. They especially like to make houses and cottages that are half-underground, adding comfort to the traditional burrows of old.

Many tend to prefer village and rural life to busy town and city life, leaving that to the more cosmopolitan rats.

There are a great many mice record keepers, and most of the libraries and scribes of the woodland are mice or were mouse-trained. Some mice have a love for history and tales, and there is an old tradition for calligraphy among some of the mouse families.

Traits

Ability Score Increases. +2 Dexterity, +1 to Any other Ability Score

Alignment. There are mice of every alignment.

Size. Mice are small creatures.

Speed. Mice have a base speed of 30 feet.

Language. Mice can speak *Woodfolk* and one other language.

Squeeze. Mice can fit into tight spaces that others cannot. As long as there is about 2 square feet of space, a mouse can squeeze into such a space. While in a hiding spot and staying completely still, they may roll *Dexterity (Stealth)* checks with advantage. If they were already sneaking, once they get into a hiding spot they can choose to reroll a *Dexterity (Stealth)* check once.

Spirited. Mice have advantage on **Saving Throws** against spells and abilities that cause the **Frightened** condition.

Adaptive. Mice are proficient in one **Skill** and one *Tool* of their choice.

Rabbit

Rabbits are quiet and wary creatures, though of the woodland creatures they are the closest to nature. Living in secluded community burrows and acting as wardens to spots of natural wonder, they are distrustful of other folk and prefer peace and quiet.

Shy and wary.

Not to be confused with hares, who are more wiry, rabbits tend to have softer and fluffier bodies. They have long ears and large eyes which never seem to blink. Their soft fur can be a large variety of colors and mixtures of color.

Ancient wisdom seekers.

Rabbits have long been in the woodland, living quiet secluded lives in small communities. It is said that they were once ancient keepers of sacred groves and watchers of ancient elder trees that fell long ago, but that with the invasion of the weasels and ferrets their watch failed and they took to ground.

Grove wardens.

Today most rabbits live in secluded communities that are led by druid elders. They live simple quiet lives, and are always on the lookout for danger. They prefer to hide than to fight, and are quick to force out visitors who try to make trouble in their village burrows.

The magic of nature and the lore of the Summerland faerie takes a center place in their lives, and each rabbit family has a tree or plant that is the sign of their house and tends to form part of their family name.

Hares and rabbits tend to not get along, as can be imagined.

Traits

Ability Score Increases. +2 Wis, +1 Dexterity

Alignment. Rabbits tend toward neutral alignments.

Size. Rabbits are medium creatures.

Speed. Rabbits have a base speed of 35 feet.

Language. Rabbits speak *Woodfolk* and *Oaktongue*.

Dangersense. Rabbits can act on the first round of combat even if they are surprised. If a Rabbit is under the **surprised** condition, during the first round of combat on their turn they can make a move action, a standard action, or a bonus action.

Nature adepts. Rabbits choose one cantrip from the *Druid spell list*. They can cast that cantrip using their **Wisdom** score as the **Spell Ability Score**. After casting it they cannot cast it again until they have taken a long rest.

Rat

Almost as numerous as mice, the rats of the woodland are adaptive civilization builders. Spreading their culture far and wide, they are a group of creatures with a natural curiosity and need to shape chaos into order.

Tall and whiskered colonists.

Rats are shorter than hares and badgers, but taller than mice and moles. They have smaller ears than mice, and usually a long naked tail. Their fur ranges in color from gray, to brown, to black, and everywhere in between. They have long whiskers that they enjoy styling.

City-builders.

Rats are the most naturally expansionist of the folk living in the woodland, and many of them are descended from migrants and colonist. Rats long ago founded a great empire that stretched across the land after the dark era of the first weasel invasions. Unfortunately, subsequent invasion of weasels and the appearance of darker and more violent creatures brought the empire down to its knees. However, many of the great towns, walls, towers, and keeps of the woodland were built

by this empire. Rats today keep their history alive through meticulous scribing of ancient documents.

Civic duty.

Rats tend to be the main motivators behind creating spaces of shared defense. Most of the walled towns were founded by rats and still contain a large rat population today. They are skilled at whatever they put their minds to, though they may not be as hyper-focused as other creatures.

They have a tendency to want to travel and spread their culture and ideas, and this has manifested as either migration or invasion warfare in the past. Some creatures are distrustful of rats because of this, and those with ancient family lines in the woodlands still see them as interlopers and even invaders.

Rats and mice get along well, though mice tend to prefer quiet town and village life to the busy upkeep of larger settlements. As adherents, generally, of law and order many of the knightly orders found in the woodland were founded by rats.

Traits

Ability Score Increases. +2 to one score or +1 to two scores.

Alignment. Rats tend toward lawful alignments.

Size. Rats are medium creatures.

Speed. Rats have a base speed of 30 feet.

Language. Rats speak *Woodfolk* and one other language.

Adaptive. Rats are proficient in one tool or language. Rats are proficient in one skill of their choice.

Swift learners. Rats can choose one skill in which they have proficiency. They gain expertise with that skill, which means their proficiency bonus is doubled for any ability check they make with it. The skill they choose must be one that isn't already benefiting from a feature, such as *Expertise*, that doubles their proficiency bonus.

Squirrel

From the shadow of the boughs of trees, squirrels watch and plan their next attack. Squirrels are sharp eyed branch dwellers with a core of iron and near unnatural reaction times.

Jumping from branch to branch.

Squirrels are rat sized, though have smaller ears, larger eyes, and a more rounded snout. They also have large fluffy tails that help them balance as they jump from branch to branch.

Watchers and trackers.

Squirrels have dwelt in the wood since before recorded history. The first skirmishes between rat migrants and wood dwellers involved squirrels ambushing from the trees. Their loosely-organized tribes kept silent watch on the forest floor below because of the rise in predators and interlopers, and in ancient days they did not hesitate to attack first before giving any benefit of the doubt.

Ever watchful.

Some squirrels live in small tree-top villages which many times are above other villages or towns on the forest floor below. They tend to still fulfill a role in society that involves keeping an eye on strangers and keeping watch for predators. Many trackers and rangers come from squirrel villages, and they are often called upon to take care of beasts that wander down from the north.

They boast a good number of bowyers, as ranged weapons are ideal for branch-walkers. Squirrel caches of arrows and bows from days long past can be found dotted throughout the wood.

Traits

Ability Score Increases. +2 Dexterity, +1 Strength

Alignment. Squirrels tend toward chaotic and neutral alignments.

Size. Squirrels are medium creatures.

Speed. Squirrels have a base speed of 30 feet, and a climb speed of 30 feet.

Language. Squirrels speak *Woodfolk* and one other language.

Branch-walkers. Squirrels are proficient in *Athletics* and *Acrobatics*.

Deadeye. While a squirrel is physically higher than another creature by at least ten feet, they gain **advantage** on ranged weapon and spell attacks against that creature.

Toad

Taking in life at their own pace, enjoying a cup of tea or a morning of fishing by the pond, toads are folk that enjoy peace and quiet. However they also have a strange intermittent streak of eccentricity, and you never know when a day of unpredictability will come knocking at their hovel door.

Physical Description

Unlike their smoothed-skinned cousins the frogs, toads have textured and sometimes bumpy skin. Their legs are shorter as well, and they tend to be stockier and in some cases rounder.

Quiet, predictable folk... right?

Toads have never featured prominently in history and tales, being a quiet easy-going folk. However, they are known to have a strange wild streak that manifests sometimes, and so a tale or two focuses on a few days of a toad's life in which they left their hovel behind to get into the thick of it.

Taking it easy.

Toads generally live near ponds and waterways in small bank-side hovels enjoying simple pleasures. They tend to be friendly and to enjoy guests. They are not numerous, and even less so in villages and towns. They are normally found living by themselves or in small family groups.

Fishing is a common occupation, though not near as ubiquitous as with otters. They tend to busy themselves with small gardens, simple crafts, cooking, or wine making.

Traits

Ability Score Increases. +2 Charisma, +1 Dexterity

Alignment. Toads tend toward neutral alignments, and some tend toward chaotic alignments.

Size. Toads are Medium creatures.

Speed. Toads have a base speed of 30 feet and a swim speed of 30 feet.

Language. Toads speak *Woodfolk* and *Flytongue*.

Hop. Toads can long jump up to 30 feet and high jump is up to 15 feet, with or without a running start.

Amphibious. Toads can breathe both air and water.

Wild streak. After a long rest, a toad can decide to have a wild day. Their alignment if lawful or neutral changes to chaotic. Their next ability check, saving throw, or attack (including spell attacks) is made with advantage. The ability check, saving throw, or attack rolled after that is made with disadvantage. The next one after that is made with advantage, and so on alternating between advantage and disadvantage until their next long rest. During their next long rest after a day of having a wild streak they cannot choose to use this ability.

Uncommon

Bat

Mysterious night-flyers, bats occupy a place of almost mythic fear in the woodlands. This is not a deserved reputation, however, as bats are a friendly albeit odd group of creatures. Being nocturnal and having a great appetite for insects, as well as an odd ability to sense beyond sight, however, separates them.

Night flyers.

Bats are creatures with membranous wings, short snouts, and large ears. Their colors have a wide variation between black, brown, red, and white and they possess claws with the ability to handle weapons and objects at the top end of their wings.

Mythical monsters.

Bats have a bad reputation in the wood and are the subject of many tales of dread, some of them making them out to be demons or shape-changing spirits that steal nestlings from their cradles. This largely comes from their nocturnal habits, their voracious appetites, and their general alienness.

Throughout woodland history bats have been largely ignored by their neighbors, though those that have actually traded with them have found them to be friendly in their own odd way.

Upside down debates.

Bats live in caves or in the boughs of thick leaved trees. During the day they tend to sleep by hanging upside down on branches or easily gripped stone and moss. Their societies are not structured the way other woodland villages are, instead all bats are considered equals. Group business is decided with debate and discussion as they are suspended upside down. These discussions can last for hours. The debate is never heated, however, and bats generally maintain a calm and curious demeanor that can prove frustrating to other creatures

they engage with in debate -- especially as playing devil's advocate is a favorite bat pastime.

Though historically shunned by other creatures, there has been more trade and interaction with bat communities recently. They have proven more than willing to help creatures if it means reversing their reputations, though their enthusiasm sometimes goes overboard and other creatures find them awkward to speak with.

Traits

Ability Score Increases. +2 Intelligence, +1 Constitution

Alignment. Bats tend toward good alignments.

Size. Bats are medium creatures.

Speed. Bats have a base movement speed of 30 feet and a flying speed of 30 feet.

Language. Bats speak *Woodfolk* and *Skinwing*.

Winged. Bats possess wings that have a wingspan that is twice as large as their height. They must have enough room to extend their wings to take flight, and if flying they must move their entire flight speed during movement unless they are landing or taking off.

Sonara. Bats can emit a high pitched vibratory squeal as a bonus action. After doing so, they can sense their surroundings and any creatures within 100 feet of them despite light conditions, the blindness condition, magical darkness, or invisibility. They cannot detect a creature that is invisible due to *Greater Invisibility*, however.

Darkvision. Bats can see in dim light within 60 feet of them as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. They can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

Beaver

The stout work focused beavers have a drive to use wood in constructions, usually near waterways. A less common creature, villages and towns that boast at least one beaver are the envy of their neighbors.

Flat-tailed woodchucks.

Beavers possess a large flat tail used in swimming, and have large and strong front teeth that can quickly chew through timber. Combining this with tools make them some of the fastest lumberers in the woodlands. They are larger creatures, and tend to have round frames.

Dam-builders.

Beavers have historically been known to build dams that double as homes, diverting streams and forming calm pools. They also have a stereotype of being wisdom givers, and a few tales of young mice or rats beginning their adventures involve a wise old beaver found in the wood who makes the young hero work with them while they give simple but profound insights.

Place in Society

Beavers tend to live by themselves or in small families within villages or towns with other creatures. There are no beaver settlements. Young beavers will tend to live with a partner or mentor before finding a mate, the better to help each other with their projects and endeavors.

They are highly useful in wood construction, though are infamous for their independent streak. You can ask a beaver to build you something, but be wary of telling them exactly how you want it.

Many beavers beyond building get into woodworking to make tools, weapons, and useful objects like carts and doors. Almost no beaver doesn't at least dabble in wood crafts.

Traits

Ability Score Increases. +2 Wisdom, +1 Strength

Alignment. Beavers tend toward neutral alignments, and some toward chaotic alignments.

Size. Beavers are medium creatures.

Speed. Beavers have a base speed of 25 feet and a swim speed of 35 feet.

Language. Beavers speak *Woodfolk* and one other language.

Builders. Beavers are proficient with *Carpenter's Tools*, *Woodworker's Tools*, and one other artisan tool.

Clubtail. As an action, a beaver can attempt to knock up to two creature's prone with it's tail using the normal rules for doing so.

Lumbertooth. Beavers have the capability to chew through wood at a very fast pace. As an action they can chew a wooden object such as a door and deal 2d20 damage to it without needing to roll an attack roll.

Powerful Build. Beavers count as one size larger when determining their carrying capacity and the weight they can push, drag, or lift.

Dormouse

Instilled with natural magics, a dormouse is a rare sight. Much less numerous than their more spirited mice cousins, dormice are more shy and more subdued. They have an excellent sense of hearing, and more often than not will avoid anything they hear coming instead of curiously trying to see what it is.

Small and out of sight.

Dormice are similar to mice, except they tend to be slimmer and have fluffy tails instead of naked ones. They sometimes have longer hair growing from their ears as well. Their excellent sense of hearing means they are often twitching their ears even unconsciously as they take in all the sound they can around them.

Keeping out of stories.

Dormice have always been rather rare. Historically they've been wherever mice are, though perhaps a little more secluded within those communities. Records of dormice are also extremely rare, and the few that mention them say that they have capabilities to keep themselves hidden from those they want to avoid.

Alone in the Crowd.

Because of their natural magic, dormice tend to have a strange place in society. For protection they live among others in towns and villages, but within those communities they keep to themselves. They tend to teach only among themselves, with children following the trade of their parents. They are more thoughtful and less enthusiastic than mice, and perhaps a bit gentler.

Dormice are born with minor magical abilities that manifest generally in ways that ensure they can escape predators and trouble. Because of this the common superstition is that they are in some way connected to the faerie Summer Realms.

Traits

Ability Score Increases. +2 Intelligence, +1 Wisdom

Alignment. Dormice are generally good.

Size. Dormice are small creatures.

Speed. Dormice have a base speed of 30 feet.

Language. Dormice speak *Woodfolk* and one other language.

Acute Hearing. Dormice have advantage on any **Wisdom (Perception)** rolls in which hearing is a factor of the perceiving.

Flufftail Glamours. Dormice know the *Minor Illusion* cantrip. Intelligence is the Spell Ability for this spell.

Escape from Predators. Immediately after they take damage, dormice can use a reaction to magically become invisible until the end of their next turn or until they attack, deal damage, or target a creature with a spell or ability. Once they use this ability, they can't do so again until they finish a short or long rest.

Hamster

Hailing from desert lands to the far south-east, hamsters in the woodland are generally traders and caravaners. Affable and cunning in

deal-making, they are an uncommon but friendly sight to the native woodlanders.

Round and round.

Hamsters are known for their circular appearance. Being quite soft looking and tending toward rotundness, this gives them a reputation for being gluttons that isn't entirely undeserved. However, this aspect of their appearance is normal rather than being from overeating. Their rather comical countenance can have a disarming effect, which happens to be good for trade.

From the sea of dunes.

To the south-east, far and away, are vast deserts where strange creatures live amongst the sand and ancient ruins. Many months, even years, of travel it takes to get there and back -- and hamsters are the only ones that do so regularly. Coming from great cities that live in the shadows of the giant dunes of sand, hamsters that come to the woodland are there to trade and to also learn.

Merchants from afar.

Hamsters have a varied and complicated society in the desert lands, but those that are in the woodland tend to be from the merchant and traveler classes. Traveling in great caravans around the woodlands and trading between settlements they collect goods as well as knowledge to bring back to their homelands.

They are friendly and witty, though are fierce in negotiation. They aren't known to be cheats or unfair, however, though this isn't to say there aren't any that are. Occasionally a hamster will set up a permanent shop or settle down in a village and become a local fixture; even when they're not selling anything they find their way into the local economy in some way. Because of this they tend to make excellent civil servants.

Traits

Ability Score Increases. +2 Charisma, +1 Intelligence

Alignment. Hamsters tend toward good alignments.

Size. Hamsters are medium creatures.

Speed. Hamsters have a base speed of 30 feet.

Language. Hamsters speak *Woodfolk*, *Southtrade*, and one other language.

Natural Merchants. Hamsters are proficient in *Persuasion*. Hamsters can sell mundane equipment and gear for $\frac{3}{4}$ of its listed price instead of $\frac{1}{2}$. They can also determine the value of any item or object they spend a few seconds studying, unless that object is magical or if the hamster doesn't know what the object is.

Tradepurse. Hamsters begin the game with 100 gold pieces in a small wooden box with a good lock. They also possess the key to the lock.

Pouch of Last Resort. Hamsters can store up to 10 pounds of objects within their cheeks. Their cheeks can each store items that don't exceed 1 square foot. While carrying objects in this manner it is very obvious.

Feign Weakness. Hamsters can make a pitiful display of themselves to catch a hostile creature off guard. As a reaction, a hamster can attempt to fool a hostile creature that is attempting to attack it into thinking they are weak and harmless. They must make a **Charisma (Deception)** ability score roll contested against that creature's **Wisdom (Insight)** roll. If they win the contest that creature must attack a different target if possible. If there are no possible other targets it will instead attack the hamster at disadvantage. Serpents and Birds are unaffected by this ability.

Lizard

Curious and rather forward, lizards have a hard time interfacing with warm-blooded creatures. They enjoy the company of anyone, however, and despite their lack of etiquette they can prove to be faithful allies.

Scaly scuttle-claws.

Lizards are reptiles with snouts and sometimes small flaps or horns coming off their heads. Covered in scales and possessing large unblinking eyes, their appearance can make other creatures a little guarded around them. They possess claw-like hands and feet that are textured in such a way as to allow them to stick to surfaces.

Tricksters and jokers.

Lizards have long had a reputation of being fond of pranks and jokes; these often don't make much sense to warm blooded creatures. Tales and histories speak of many travelers coming across lizard villages and being treated well but also being the subject of strange exercises. Things such as waking up to find their boots filled with insects or their weapons replaced by rubber objects.

Lizards, for their part, consider such pranks as a necessary way of learning about other creatures. Being a society of creatures that is intensely curious, they have a reservoir of knowledge kept on grass-fiber scrolls within their villages. Most of this knowledge involves interactions with strangers.

Curiosity never killed a lizard.

Lizards live in villages and towns among other creatures as well as within their own communities. Curiosity causes many lizards to seek

out other towns and villages, and though they are not numerous as a whole a great many lizards become adventurers.

Lizard villages near the bogs have a method of extraction and production to create a kind of rubber from a rare bush. They generally use this rubber to make toys or items with which to use in jokes or pranks.

Traits

Ability Score Increases. +2 Constitution, +1 Dexterity

Alignment. Lizards tend toward chaotic alignments.

Size. Lizards are medium creatures.

Speed. Lizards have a base speed of 30 feet and a climbing speed of 30 feet.

Language. Lizards speak *Woodfolk* and *Flytongue*.

Scuttle-claw. The texture of a lizard's claws allows them to climb non-horizontal surfaces with ease. Lizards do not need to roll Strength (Athletics) ability checks in order to climb sheer surfaces. They still need to roll if a surface is slick with liquid, ice, ash, sand, or similar substances.

Cold-blooded. Whenever a lizard receives cold damage they are considered restrained until the end of their next turn.

Bite. A lizard's fanged maw is a natural weapon which they can attack. They have proficiency with this natural weapon. If they hit with it, they deal piercing damage equal to $1d6 +$ their Strength modifier, instead of the bludgeoning damage normal for an unarmed strike.

Scratch. A lizard's can choose to use their claw as a natural weapon. If used in this way they are considered proficient with them and deal $1d6 +$ Strength modifier damage. This does not count as an unarmed strike.

Natural Armor. Lizards have tough, scaly skin. When they aren't wearing armor, their AC is $13 +$ their Dexterity modifier. They can use their natural armor to determine their AC if the armor they wear would leave them with a lower AC. A shield's benefits apply as normal while they use their natural armor.

Otter

Tall and sleek, natural swimmers and fishers, otters are the consummate sailors of the woodland. Sticking to the coasts and the riverways, otter ships and barges are the best and most reliable way to travel the open waters.

Swimming water snakes.

Otters are long-bodied and possess sleek fur specially adapted to swimming. They tend to have furry snouts with straight whiskers giving

most of them an appearance of rough and tumble living that tends to fit their preferred pastimes.

Kings and Queens of the Sea.

Otters are said to be descended from a kingdom of old that sank into the waters of the far western sea. The otter diaspora spread themselves over the islands and coasts of the woodland where they live to this day among strangers and other travelers.

Given their habits of story-telling and hard drinking, otters have long had a history of tavern living that is true up to the modern day. Though this might be, their history is also replete with triumphs of ship-building and sailing, much of which is focused on finding any evidence of their lost kingdom to the west.

Guardians on the Water.

Otters are found in many walks of life. Sailors is a common trade, as well as fishermen, travelers, adventurers, warriors and guards, and even some trades. The riverways of the woodland are the roads of the otter barges, giving the option of quick and relatively safe travel to those that can afford it. The coast port towns and villages boast the true pride of otters everywhere however: the great ships with which the sea otters travel up and down the coast and even out to the east to explore.

Otters can have a bit of a rough reputation, however, and more than a few have taken up as bandits and pirates along with some of the more predatory elements of the woodland. There are in fact tales and whispers that otters are related to the predatory weasels. For the most

part this is an exception, however, and many live lives of adventure and fun without dipping into lives of crime and prey-seeking.

Traits

Ability Score Increases. +2 Strength, +1 Dexterity

Alignment. Otters tend toward chaotic alignments.

Size. Otters are medium creatures.

Speed. Otters have a base speed of 30 feet and a swim speed of 40 feet.

Language. Otters speak *Woodfolk* and *Seachant*.

Powerful Build. Otters count as one size larger when determining their carrying capacity and the weight they can push, drag, or lift.

Sling and stone. Otters are proficient in all thrown weapons.

Half-aquatic. Otters may hold their breath underwater for up to five minutes, and gain advantage on any Dexterity rolls made while in the water.

Sailor survivors. Otters are proficient in *Survival* and *Vehicles (Water)*, as well as either *Cook's Utensils* or *Tinker's Tools*.

Shrew

Small mole and mice like creatures that travel in nomadic bands, shrews are tough despite their size and ready to fight whenever and wherever the fight finds them. An odd ability to sense the presence of others with a squeak makes them infamously hard to surprise.

Little scrappers.

Shrews are small and look a bit like a cross between a mole and a mouse. Their most defining physical trait are their elongated noses that come off their snout and droop slightly. Despite their size they're very hardy little creatures, and can prove difficult to frighten or kill.

Ancestor glories.

Shrews are descended from warrior-bands that came down from the north in ages past. They have a rich warrior history that they keep through an oral tradition of storytelling. In these stories their ancestors sought out and slayed great serpents, eagles, and hawks to prove their honor and skill. They believe these ancestors fight with them when they fight creatures today, defeating the ancestors of their enemies while the shrews do the same in the physical world.

Nomadic warrior bands.

Shrews live in nomadic groups that travel around the wilder and rougher parts of the woodland. They are adept survivalists and all must

contribute as warriors. These bands are lead by a warchief, who takes advice from a seer who uses divinatory techniques to provide wisdom from their ancestors.

These bands seek out dangerous predators in the woodlands and engage them in battle when possible. Though few in number, the fact that any survive is a testament to their toughness, tenacity, and pure stubbornness.

Occasionally a shrew band will roll into a town or village to stay for a day or so, to stock up on supplies and trade. The pelts and trophies of defeated predators fetch a high price in the markets. During these times a shrew with a sense of adventure might separate from the group to travel with other adventurers. The band does not discourage this, as long as the shrew keeps their honor and their lifelong task of defeating their foes.

Traits

Ability Score Increases. +2 Constitution, +1 Wisdom

Alignment. Shrews tend toward lawful alignments.

Size. Shrews are small creatures.

Speed. Shrews have a base speed of 30 feet.

Language. Shrews speak *Woodfolk* and *Lowrock*.

They do not know Fear. Shrews are immune to the **Frightened** condition and any spell, ability, or game effect that can cause the **Frightened** condition does not affect them.

Tough little scrappers. Shrews have advantage on **death saving throws** when they have failed two of them.

My Ancestors Fight With Me. Whenever a Shrew lands a critical hit they may use a *Hit Dice*. Instead of healing hit points, they add an additional 1d6 to the damage of the critical hit.

Plain spoken. Shrews had disadvantage on **Charisma (Deception)** ability checks.

Turtle

Slow, thoughtful, and generally pleasant, turtles are the most ancient creatures of the woodland if also one of the least numerous. Living long lives the other creatures can at times be seem to them as fleeting sparks from a crackling fire.

Armored hermits.

Turtles are cold-blooded creatures with the unique feature of having a shell of natural armor that they take with them everywhere. Slow moving and thoughtful, they have slow reaction timing which can prove

quite dangerous. However they have proven to be quite tough as well as wise.

Ancient wanderers.

Turtles are considered the most ancient of creatures of the woodland. The most ancient tales and written histories mention them, and always as hermits tending to their homes in the woodlands and leading simple mindful lives. They have a pacifist nature, though not a weak-willed one.

Slow and steady.

Turtles rarely cause a stir. They do have tendency to spend parts of their lives traveling, collecting wisdom and experiences to enrich themselves with. They are known to be friendly but can also be exasperating to more hasty creatures. Turtles enjoy taking the long way to a point, whether in travel or conversation.

Turtles have their own written history, though these are not collected. Instead each turtle keeps a record of their life and passes it down to an offspring or, barring that, a trusted friend. To receive a turtle's record is to become the next author, and any creature that is given that responsibility will have been someone the turtle greatly loved.

Contemplating, meditation, and inner peace are almost universal goals among turtles, though some very rare turtles have turned bitter and unwell in their thinking. Once on such a path, it is very difficult for

them to get off of it. A turtle without inner peace can be a truly disturbing experience.

Traits

Ability Score Increases. +2 Wisdom, +1 Constitution

Alignment. Turtles tend toward good alignments.

Size. Turtles are medium creatures.

Speed. Turtles have a base speed of 25 feet.

Language. Turtles speak *Woodfolk* and two other languages.

Shell armor. Turtles have a natural AC of 16 + their Dexterity modifier. They cannot wear armor, but can use shields to raise their Armor Class if they are proficient with them.

Contemplative. Turtles can spend one hour contemplating or meditating. If they do so, they must make a Wisdom Saving Throw against a DC of 20 - their level. If they make their save, they gain inspiration. Nothing happens if they do not. Until after their next long rest any time spent in meditation has no effect.

Cold-blooded. Whenever a turtle receives **cold damage** they are considered restrained until the end of their next turn.

Resilience. Turtles receive a universal +1 to their **Constitution Saving Throws.**

Vole

Often mistaken for mice, voles are small creatures with a love of family and comrades. Simple living and fond of little pleasures, voles are less inclined to get as spirited as their mice cousins and are less shy and wary than their dormouse cousins.

Physical Description

A little smaller than mice, though often fatter, voles have small rounded ears and a shorter rounder snout. They have longer fur than mice as well, a long with shorter limbs and a shorter tail.

History

Voles have been around for as long as mice, and many records confuse the two together. Mice and voles themselves, however, while being aware of their relation to each other have always felt as two separate species. Voles tended to stick to smaller communities and to not be as ambitious as mice, but also tended to be warmer and friendlier.

Place in Society

Voles prefer small town life, and many of the villages will have more voles than the towns. Most voles enjoy simple pleasures and will collect

a variety of things like tea, food, beer, wine, and other goods to entertain and enjoy. They are the main growers of tobacco in the woodland, and almost all tobacco and pipe sellers are voles.

Voles are known for their affectionate behavior and their sense of bonding. Families are tightly knit, and friends are almost considered family. They tend to have a natural empathy and other creatures often find them soothing to be around.

Though less ambitious than mice they can be just as swift at picking up skills and trades, and voles are found in a wide variety of vocations. The only trades in which voles are more rare are those requiring a lot of traveling or spending time alone.

Traits

Ability Score Increases. +2 Charisma, +1 to any other ability score

Alignment. Voles tend toward good alignments.

Size. Voles are small creatures.

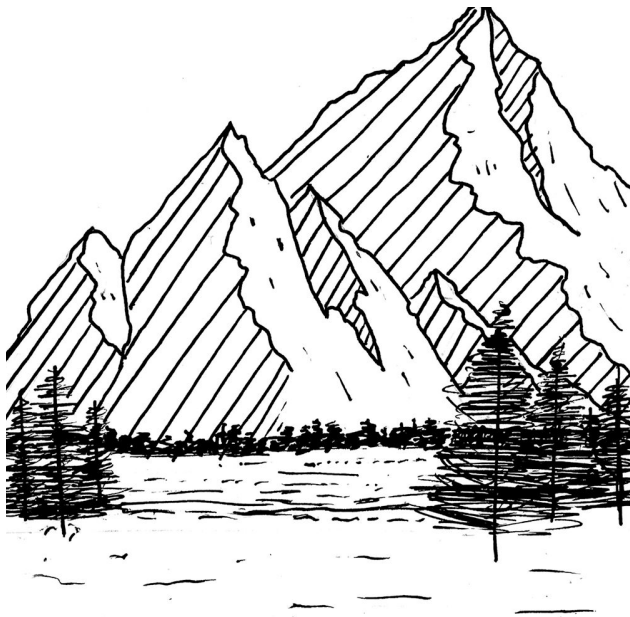
Speed. Voles have a base speed of 30 feet.

Language. Voles speak Woodfolk and one other language.

Natural Empathy. Voles are proficient in Insight and have advantage on Wisdom (Insight) rolls involving a creature that they have spent longer than twenty-four hours around.

Quick learners. Voles gain either one tool proficiency or one language proficiency of their choice.

Bonds of Iron. Voles cannot be forced to roll an attack roll that targets an ally or perform action that would result in an ally making a saving throw.



Cultures and Languages

There are a variety of cultures in the woodlands, and these are often shared by a variety of species. In general they are regional, but this isn't always the case. The following are the major cultures within the wood. When you create a character for a Sablewood setting you should think about the cultural background of your character as well. If you wish, you can replace one of the language from your Folk choice or gained through your background with the language associated with the culture chosen.

Languages

Common

Bramblethorn - Language of the savage muscatari tribes that hunt the wild lands. Related to Muskatari, though very distantly.

Dialects: *Weasel tongue, Martentongue, Foxtongue*

Deephollow - Language of burrowing and cave creatures, derived from ancient mole language. Underground ruins from ancient days might have scrollwork or engravings in this language.

Flytounge - The language of amphibious creatures. The frog dialect is considered a more pure form of the language, and the toad dialect more

casual. It is said to come down from a very ancient people that built stone structures among the swamplands and worshipped bizarre gods.

Dialects: *Frog, toad*

Highrock - Language of the great mountain paths and passes, derived from the northern clans and chiefdoms as well as ancient Hawktongue birdspeech.

Jaytongue - Most common version of birdspeech, has a great variety of dialects.

Dialects: *Eagle, Hawk, Kestrel, Corvid, Sparrow*

Lowrock - A language common among the creatures of the rocky woodlands bordering the mountains. Derived from the northern clans and chiefdoms.

Seachant - The language of the coastal and sailing creatures, derived from the language of old nomadic otter clans.

Woodfolk - Language most widespread in the woodland region. A melting pot language largely derived from mouse and rat tribal migrants. This language is “*Common*”.

Exotic

Oaktounge - The ancient druidic language passed down through rabbit families. It is said to be derived from an ancient faerie language.

Cromlyn - An ancient language spoken by a league of city-states that once existed to the near-south, usually spoken by those who study classical history and arts.

Crowcant - A hodgepodge nonsensical language crows use amongst themselves. It is made up of a variety of different languages and made up words.

Hawktounge - Also called 'High Jaytongue', a more ancient form of birdspeech spoken by large birds of prey. It is considered bad luck to speak it openly in woodland communities for fear of summoning dark wings of death.

Histcrawl - The language of serpents, sometimes used in magical practice. It is considered evil and demonic and it has been known for books written in this language to be burned by fearful townsfolk.

Muskatari - The language of the far eastern empire of weasels, ferrets, and martens. It has a large variety of dialects and relies on a complicated system of caste and respect indication.

Mystari - An ancient language from somewhere in the south, the most common language used in magical, arcane, and occult study and art. It came to the woodland through rat migration, but is not considered native to rat culture.

Northtongue - The language spoken currently by the folk across the northern mountains. It is descended from the same roots as Lowrock and Highrock.

Southtrade - The language of travelers from the south-east; hamsters. Unlike any other language spoken in the woodland.

Skinwing - The language of the bat communities. No one knows where it is derived from and it doesn't share any similarities with other languages of the wood.

Woodland Cultures

Woodfolk

Language: Woodfolk

Woodfolk is the general term for anybeast that lives in the wood alone or in villages or smaller more rural communities. A large portion of the creatures of the woodland are woodfolk. They are used to living simple lives, living off of the land, and keeping watch for predators. They tend to be more self-sufficient but less educated than other cultures, especially those that live in the towns and cities. Farmers, hunters, wood harvesters, and the like are likely woodfolk.

Townfolk

Language: Woodfolk

In the pockets of safety that are the towns and the very few cities of the woodland live the townfolks; creatures used to living in close quarters with a large number of diverse neighbors. They tend to be more specialized in their given trade and more used to relying on those around them. They tend to be better educated and less wary of strangers.

Coastfolk

Language: Seachant

Up and down the coastlands and islands off the coast live the salty coastal folk. Fishing villages and harbor towns are where they live, making their lives from what the ocean can bring. They tend to be as rustic as woodfolk but to live in larger communities. Boating is a way of life, as is drinking and song.

Bramblefolk

Language: Bramblethorn

Where the deep wood meets the brambles in the foothills before the great mountains live the bramblefolk. Hermits and frontiersbeasts that contend with the predatory clans of weasels and worse dangers are hardy and self-sufficient folk that live very close to the natural cycles of

life. Few can live this sort of life for long, but those that do have cores of iron.

Lowrock Folk

Language: Lowrock, Highrock

Those that live among the rocky foothills are descendants of the northern chiefdoms that settled here long ago. With thick accents and strange ways of life, these creatures tend to live in small villages ruled by chieftains in hillforts. They contend with both the roaming bands of weasels and the dangerous beasts that come down from the mountains.

Shrewband

Language: Lowrock

Shrews live together in nomadic bands that travel the woodlands. These warrior bands hold together with a shared oral history and a cultural quest to hunt predators and gain glory through battle. While there are shrews that don't live in these nomadic bands, the only creatures in these nomadic bands are shrews.

Spawnfolk

Language: Flytongue

Frogs keep themselves isolated from other creatures culturally. Their strange ways and obsession with defending their spawning pools have created a homogenous culture that is wary of outsiders and rarely

interacts with them. These frog villages are ruled by their spawning priests and can seem quite foreign to other woodlanders.

Foreign Cultures

Southsand

Language: Southtrade

Hamsters from the South-east travel far and wide for trade which seems to be a cultural obsession of sorts. Those in the woodlands are almost all merchants or caravan folk, used to living on the open road and meeting new people. They are an open culture that enjoys the giving of gifts and hospitality. Some hamsters have settled down in the woodland, but most travel in the way of their people from village to village and town to town selling their wares and learning what they can of all that is interesting in the world.

Imperial Rat

Language: Cromlyn

In the south once ruled a great empire of rats that stretched into the woodland. Centuries ago, however, this empire fell and shattered into a hundred pieces. Some of the domains in the south have kept up what traditions they can, however, and these small city-states are home to the imperial rat culture. Despite the name, it encompasses a lot of different creatures, though rats are by far the majority. They consider

themselves to have a natural nobility and class and have a sense of superiority when it comes to the simpler folk of the woodlands.

North Clans

Language: Highrock, Northtongue

Across the great northern mountains lies a deep and dark forested land of evergreens, lakes, and even greater mountains. Here creatures live in small warrior clans that vie against each other and the great beasts that prowl the cold night air. Occasionally some of these northern clan folk will cross the mountains into the more pleasant clime of the woodlands, bringing with them trade or sometimes battle in the form of raiding parties. These have become less and less common, however, as predators have become more numerous and so normal beasts have less motivation to fight each other.

East Empire

Language: Muskatari

Far to the east, past the mountains and beyond the dry hinterlands lies the great empire of fanged creatures. Weasels, ferrets, minks, foxes, and others rule this vast slave empire. Unlike the bramble tribes of predators that the woodland folk are used to contending with, these are an organized civilization with armies and an appetite for slaves. Almost unknown to the woodfolk, there have recently been evidence of some amount of incursion into the woodland, suggesting there might be a conflict in the future.

Links and attributions.

Tales from the Sablewood article icon designed by [Lorc](#) and retrieved from [Game-icons.net](#); used under the [CC BY 3.0](#) license. The designer and Game-icons.net are not employed by and do not endorse or support [9th Key Press](#) or any article, post, or product created under the 9th Key Press name.