

# MONSTROUS MENACES™

## # 1: GHARLIDH, GRULNOSC, AND ROCKTOPUS

OFFICIAL GAMING AID DESIGNED AND APPROVED FOR USE WITH

# CASTLES & CRUSADES®

By JAMES MISHLER

### GHARLIDH

**NO. APPEARING:** 3-12

**SIZE:** Medium

**HD:** 4 (d8)

**MOVE:** 40 ft., 40 ft. (climb), 10 ft. (burrow, soil), 1 ft. (burrow, stone)

**AC:** 18

**ATTACKS:** 2 Claws (1d6+2) and Bite (1d8+2)

**SPECIAL:** Blind Sense 120 ft., Hardy, Immunity (Fear), Incapacitating Keen, Rake, Susceptibility (Evil Charm), Susceptibility (Sonic)

**SAVES:** P

**INT:** Low

**ALIGNMENT:** Chaotic Evil

**TYPE:** Monstrous Humanoid

**TREASURE:** 2

**XP:** 140+4/hp

Gharlidhs are a horrific subterranean humanoid race purportedly bred by an evil underground overlord. They feature characteristics of humans, goblins, and orcs, but only vaguely, for most of their five to seven-foot tall body is covered by bony growth from the top of their thick skull to tips of their clawed toes. Their head is misshapen, as they have neither eyes nor nose, and so the skull slopes unnaturally; their ears however are huge, hairy, and pointed. Their mouth is huge, and filled with many sharp fangs.

Gharlidhs speak their own squeaking, high-pitched tongue, which vaguely resembles Orcish, and so can understand though not speak Orcish. Some of the more

intelligent can learn to understand other languages, but find it difficult to speak in such low tones.

**Organization:** Gharlidhs are organized in small mobs, where the strongest lords over the weakest, and the weakest are often eaten alive when no other prey can be found. They possess no culture, and do not make or use tools or clothing.

**Ecology:** Gharlidhs exist purely as a living weapon, and have no natural niche in the ecology. Wild mobs are a scourge upon the lands they trod, as they hunt down and eat everything that moves. They eat any sort of fleshy creature, preferably still alive and screaming! As they apparently do not reproduce naturally, no young are found with wild mobs.

**Treasure:** Wild mobs have treasure only through incidence, such being the leavings of those they have slain or scared off.

An alchemist, cleric, or wizard can attempt to remove the gland in the brain of a gharlidh that causes its immunity to fear. This requires one hour (mostly to bore through the skull) and a successful level-based CL 4 Intelligence check. Holding the gland as a focus while casting *remove fear* grants the target complete immunity to fear for the duration; however, it also makes him *susceptible* to any charm spell, giving him a -4 penalty on his saving throw against such spells. Holding the gland as a focus while casting *charm person* causes the target to suffer a -4 penalty on his saving throw. An alchemist or cleric can use the gland to make a *potion of fear*, while an alchemist or wizard can use the gland to make a *potion of charm person*; in either case time and cost is halved.

**Range:** Gharlidhs have to date been encountered only underground or in areas with access to cavern systems or dungeons attached to cavern systems. While they are unafraid of an unharmed by sunlight, they seem to prefer to operate at night when aboveground, as the feeling of the warm sun upon their bony flesh is unnerving.

**Combat:** Gharlidhs know no fear, and attack without mercy with claw and bite. If they have favorable numbers, they even begin feasting upon their victims before they die; otherwise, once a victim is down, a gharlidh attacks the nearest opponent still moving. They do not attack in an organized fashion unless guided magically by a controlling intelligence.

**Blind Sense:** Gharlidhs see using a sonar sense, like bats; they are blinded if caught in a zone of magical silence, and outside of such detect an area of magical silence as solid rock.

**Hardy:** Gharlidhs need sleep only four hours in 48, and can move at double normal speed for 12 hours without need for rest.

**Immunity (Fear):** Gharlidhs are immune to all kinds of natural and magical fear.

**Incapacitating Keen:** Once per minute a gharlidh can give off an incapacitating keen. Any creature of four or fewer levels or HD who is engaged in melee with the gharlidh must make an additional CL 4 Charisma save or be struck with fear, as per the *cause fear* spell cast by a 4th level cleric. All others of four or fewer levels or HD within 60 feet must make a CL 2 Charisma save or be shaken, suffering a -1 to hit and to damage for 1d6 rounds. Gharlidhs are immune to this ability.

**Rake:** If a gharlidh successfully bites, it can make two attacks with its clawed feet. These attacks have an additional +3 to hit and inflict 1d6+5 damage each.

**Susceptibility (Evil Charm):** Gharlidhs were bred to be commanded through evil magical charm effects, and thus have no save against any such spells when cast by an Evil caster. In such cases they also count as merely 1 HD creatures, for purposes of how many creatures a spell caster can control. Against charms cast by Neutral or Good casters, gharlidhs have a normal saving throw.

**Susceptibility (Sonic):** Though they are immune to their own natural keening attack, they are highly susceptible to other sonic attacks, suffering a -2 penalty to their saving throws and suffering an additional +1 point of damage per die (to the maximum afforded by the total number of dice).

## GRULNOSC

**NO. APPEARING:** 1

**SIZE:** Large

**HD:** 6 (d8)

**MOVE:** 20 ft., 10 ft. (climb)

**AC:** 24 or 14 (see below)

**ATTACKS:** Spit Acid (2d4) or Lick (1d3 + Acid)

**SPECIAL:** Acid Flesh, Acid Lick, Acid Spit, Acid Trail, Darkvision 60 ft., Immunity (Acid), Light Sensitivity, Water Vulnerability, Weapon-Wrecking Shell

**SAVES:** P

**INT:** Inferior

**ALIGNMENT:** Neutral

**TYPE:** Aberration

**TREASURE:** 4 (coins and gems only)

**XP:** 360 + 6/hp

Grulnosc look much like a giant snail with an extremely thick, stone-like shell, save that it stands six to eight feet tall at the top of its shell. Upon closer examination, however, the slimy flesh of the creature is revealed to be utterly different in nature from that of normal snails, or any other known living creature, and the shell is of solid rock, latticed with metals and perhaps even gems; the seven eye stalks with very human-like eyes that it projects from its "head" also indicate to those steeped in animal lore that this is not a natural creature, or even a giant-sized version of such.

**Organization:** These creatures are solitary; if they bump into one another outside the time of seeding, they simply ignore each other and move on in opposite directions.

**Ecology:** These creatures live underground, as they fear and loathe sunlight. They feed on special minerals, which they gather over time through wearing away trails in their caverns and tunnels.

They gather once every seven years to exchange genetic material; all grulnosc within a local cavern complex gather in one cavern (usually off the beaten path), where they use concentrated acid to create a shallow pool. Therein they leave a large volume of special, nutritious acid slime, in which they place strings of genetic material that eventually merge to form young grulnosc, usually 1d3 grulnosc per attendant grulnosc. By the time the acidic pool runs out of slime, the little grulnosc have formed small shells, and leave their birth cavern to make their own way in the subterranean world.

**Treasure:** As the grulnosc feeds its way through stone and rock, sometimes it encounters bits of copper, silver,

gold, or even platinum or gems. These it cannot digest, but instead the material works its way through their digestive system into their ever-growing shell. Sometimes the raw nuggets appear on the shell surface, sometimes not. Knives and such can be used to pry nuggets and gems from the outer shell, and hammers can be used to smash the shell to find the treasures inside, however, each such attempt requires a CL 3 Strength check, failure by 10 or more indicates the tool breaks.

A wizard can attempt to remove the acid-generating node of a dead grulnosc. The operation takes three hours and a level-based CL 6 Intelligence check. If successfully removed, the node can be used as a focus when casting *acid arrow*, and increases the damage from 2d4 to 2d6. If the attempt fails, the node is destroyed and the wizard suffers 2d6 points of acid damage each round for three rounds; this concentrated burst of acid cannot be neutralized by normal water, though elemental water is efficacious.

**Range:** Grulnoscs are found in deep cavern complexes, and prefer to avoid areas that are occupied by civilized humanoids and like beings.

**Combat:** Grulnoscs never attack unless they are disturbed. First upon being attacked they hunker down in their shell, protecting all but their front “chest” and head, which cannot fit in the shell. They prefer to spit acid from an advantageous position, if possible climbing up a high wall and spitting from the ceiling, trying to get their opponent to flee.

**Acid Flesh:** The very flesh of the grulnosc is acidic and of unnatural nature. Anyone who eats the flesh of a grulnosc, even when cooked, suffers 1d3 points of damage and must make a CL 6 Constitution check or be sickened with horrific stomach cramps and diarrhea for 1d6 hours (unable to take any action, including defense or movement other than a 5 ft. crawl).

**Acid Lick:** If an opponent closes to melee with a grulnosc in its unprotected front, it gets a free attack each round with its 3-foot long, serrated acid-dripping tongue before its opponent gets its attack (even if it otherwise loses initiative) and in addition to its spit attack.

**Acid Spit:** A grulnosc can spit a very strong acid with great accuracy, with a base 100 ft. range. This is a ranged touch attack. The acid deals 2d6 points of damage upon hitting; it also deals an additional 2d6 points of damage the second round and again on the third round. The acid can be neutralized with water; half a full skin of water does the job.

The limited contact is not normally enough to damage

metal armor, though such will be scarred and slightly pitted. Leather, partial leather, and hide armor loses one point of AC protection for every three full rounds of acid damage the target suffers per spit. However, against metal armors, on a natural 20 to hit, the acid strikes a vulnerable spot, such as a leather strap, and if not neutralized in three rounds it burns through the strap and reduces the value of the armor’s AC bonus by one point.

**Acid Trail:** As a grulnosc eats of the rock beneath it as it slithers, it leaves behind a melted trail in stone and rock, three to four inches deep with a coating of slick slimy acid. The acid is weaker than that which it spits, as it has already cut through rock and stone, and so touching or stepping in the slime causes only 1d3 points of damage per round of contact. This acid maintains its strength for ten minutes after the grulnosc passes.

**Immunity (Acid):** Grulnoscs are immune to all sorts of acid, even magical and extra-planar acids. In fact, they consider other acids to be delicacies, can smell such out to 600 feet, will seek out these acids in order to consume and enjoy them. They will not, however, attack a creature that carries such acids, as they are rather cowardly.

**Light Sensitivity:** Grulnoscs fear and loath sunlight, as it burns their flesh; they suffer 1 point of damage every minute when exposed to light, and suffer a -3 penalty to all attacks and saving throws when exposed to sunlight.

**Water Vulnerability:** As befits creatures steeped in acid (even having a form of acid-based blood), water is deadly to grulnoscs. A canteen or half-skin of water, splashed on the fleshy front of the creature, causes 1d4 points of damage. Create water deals 1d8 points of damage per caster level, but the grulnosc gets a Physical save to take only half damage.

**Weapon-Wrecking Shell:** A grulnosc is covered over most of its body by a very thick and strong shell of metal-reinforced rock. When it hunkers down, all of its body is covered by this AC 24 shell, save for the very front portion of its “chest” and head; only a single opponent directly in front of the creature attacking with a melee weapon can attack its soft underbelly, which has an AC 14. However, any such opponent is also subject to its special Acid Lick attack (see above).

Also, any normal weapon used to attack the creature’s shell has a 1 in 20 chance of shattering, if the attack roll would normally hit an AC of 10; magical weapons are not affected.

# ROCKTOPUS

**NO. APPEARING:** 1 Adult or 1d12 Spawn (max 13-HD)

**SIZE:** Large

**HD:** Spawn 1 to 8; Adult 9 to 16 (d10)

**MOVE:** 40 ft., 40 ft. (swim), 20 ft. (climb)

**AC:** 16

**ATTACKS:** Four Tentacles (1d6) and Bite (2d6)

**SPECIAL:** Breathe Water, Chameleon Power, Constrict, Darkvision 120 ft., Paralytic Poison Spray, Severing Bite, Spell Casters, Spell-like Abilities

**SAVES:** P (and M for spell casters)

**INT:** High or Superior

**ALIGNMENT:** Neutral Evil

**TYPE:** Magical Beast

**TREASURE:** Equals HD for adults who can speak, 1/2 HD for adults who cannot

**XP:**

1 HD:	11+1/hp
2 HD:	25+2/hp
3 HD:	80+3/hp
4 HD:	100+4/hp
5 HD:	200+5/hp
6 HD:	300+6/hp
7 HD:	450+7/hp
8 HD:	675+8/hp
9 HD:	1,800+9/hp
10 HD:	2,700+10/hp
11 HD:	3,375+11/hp
12 HD:	4,025+12/hp
13 HD:	5,400+13/hp
14 HD:	6,750+14/hp
15 HD:	8,300+15/hp
16 HD:	9,200+16/hp

**Note:** CKs must add additional XP for Spell Casters based on their casting level.

At some dark point in the history of the world, oceanic octopi were magically mutated such that they took to life on dry land, albeit preferably in wet subterranean locations, though these creatures can survive quite well aboveground in tropical locations such as rain forests, jungles, swamps, and marshes; anywhere, really, provided there is a large and deep pool of water for spawning. Full-grown rocktopi are nine to 16 feet long (one foot per hit die), with eight long tentacles of many suckers, a large bulbous body, two large eyes, and a razor-sharp beak.

Rocktopi all speak their own tongue, and adult rocktopi have a 5% per HD of being able to speak one or two additional languages, normally the language of the most prominent local human or humanoid cultures.

**Organization:** Rocktopi are solitary, from time to time mating as the moods strike male and female, though thereafter they separate again. After mating, a female rocktopi seeks out the deepest pool, richest of water it knows, and there lays its eggs, hundreds if not thousands at a time. The eggs hatch in one to eight months, each tiny rocktopus being three to six inches long, with one or two hit points. These rapidly spread out throughout the pool and onto land beyond, where they hunt small insects, worms, and the like (and are in turn hunted by larger creatures). Those that survive one month reach one foot in length and one hit die; every month thereafter they grow one foot and one hit die, until at ten months they attain minimal adult growth. These “small” rocktopi deal only 1d3 damage per tentacle and 1d6 damage with a bite, do not have the severing bite of the full-grown adult, and their constrict attacks are useable only against creatures half their length or less, but otherwise have the full abilities of adults.

If rocktopi encounter each other at any other time, they attack, seeking to kill the interloper, as they are very territorial.

**Ecology:** Rocktopi are top-niche predators in the area around their lair, save for dragons, hunting even great cats, young dragons and giants, and humanoids, though preferring less troublesome prey such as sturgeon, cattle, and sheep.

**Treasure:** Adult rocktopi have gained enough intelligence to determine that treasure is valuable to other intelligent races, though they have little need of it themselves. They often use it to bribe humanoids and humans to do their bidding; some gather treasure when humanoids of low intellect begin worshiping the mighty beast! Spell-casting rocktopi keep their spell books, scrolls, and other such materials safely in air-filled caves. They are quite aware of their mortality, and are willing to exchange their treasure for their life, if such is needful (though the most cunning rocktopi keep smaller, lesser stashes just for such occasions).

There are two glands in the rocktopi that can be removed and used as material components in a *water breathing* spell; in such case, one gland is used, and doubles the duration of the spell to four hours per level of the caster. If both glands are consumed without the casting of the *water breathing* spell, they together act as a *water breathing* spell cast as though cast by a caster of the HD of the rocktopus. Also, a single gland can be used in the creation of a *potion of water breathing*; this halves the cost and time. Removal of a single gland must be done by an alchemist, druid, or wizard, requires one hour, and is successful only with a level-based CL half-HD Intelligence check.

Provided an adult rocktopus was slain with less than half its hit points in damage from slicing weapons, fire, and like attacks, a wizard can carefully remove the choice parts of a rocktopus skin for use in the creation of a cloak with the powers of the *cloak of elvenkind*. This process requires one hour per HD, and the wizard must make a level-based CL HD Intelligence check to successfully remove and preserve the skin.

If a rocktopus is slain without having used its paralytic poison spray, an alchemist or assassin can attempt to remove the poison sac; this requires a successful CL HD Poisons skill check. If successful, the CK must determine how many doses are available depending on the method of deployment; there might be enough for HD number of doses if it is portioned out through a small blowgun that attacks a single person within 5 feet, or fewer if the method of deployment is wider, and the CK's adjudication.

The beak of an adult rocktopus can be carefully removed by a spell caster, in order to use it in the creation of a *featheredged sword*. A successfully harvested beak halves the cost and time to create the sword. The process requires one hour per HD, and the caster must make a level-based CL HD Intelligence check to remove the beak safely. If this check is failed by 10 or more, the caster not only fails to properly harvest the beak, but also cuts off: 1d6: 1-5 that number of fingers, 6: a hand!

Finally, for each equivalent caster level of spell-like abilities an adult rocktopus knows and double the spell-casting level of a spell-casting rocktopus there is a 1% chance the rocktopus has developed an *ioun stone* in the center of its brain. Thus, a non-spell-casting 15 HD rocktopus that casts its spell-like abilities as a 7th level caster has a 7% chance of having an ioun stone; a 16 HD rocktopus with the spell-casting abilities of a 16th level wizard has a 40% chance of having an ioun stone in his brain (8 for spell-like abilities and 16x2 for spell-caster level). If possessed, there is a 50% chance this is an *orange prism*, granting the user a +1 caster level; otherwise it is a random stone type. There is an additional 50% chance the stone has manifested instead on the creature's forehead, and thus it gains the power it provides. Otherwise the stone is hidden in its brain, and it gains no power thereby. If the stone is upon its brow, it is a simple one-round action for anyone with a knife to remove it, one it is dead; otherwise, it is a one-hour operation to find it and cut it out, requiring a spell caster to make a level-based CL HD Intelligence check to remove it successfully.

**Range:** As with their watery cousins, rocktopi prefer to lair in caverns that are large enough to admit their malleable bulk, but too large for other large creatures to fit. A rocktopi can fit through a hole 1/5th its length, so many rocktopi lairs are difficult for even humanoids to reach. Even surface rocktopi prefer to live in caverns, so while they may hunt in jungle and swamp, their lair will be underground, often in water-filled caverns of a deep lake or pond.

**Combat:** At their heart, even spell-casting rocktopi prefer to attack physically with their tentacles rather than spells; such must make a Mental save in order to attack first with spells rather than physical attacks (though response with spells will follow once it suffers damage). Rocktopi attack with four of their eight tentacles, seeking to capture and negate the most dangerous opponents first (spell casters recognize other spell casters as more dangerous than fighters). Those who are held by the suckers of the tentacle are constricted each round thereafter, and one such victim is attacked with the fearsome bite.

**Breathe Water:** Though they are now generally surface dwellers, rocktopi can still breathe water, though for no more than 12 hours at a time; thereafter, they must breathe air for at 10 minutes per hour they spent breathing water.

**Chameleon Power:** Rocktopi skin has chameleon-like qualities, such that after it spends a full minute motionless, its skin takes on the appearance of the material around it. Under such circumstances even a large specimen can be missed unless it is being sought; searchers must actively make a Wisdom check to see the rocktopus (elves get a free check even if they aren't looking), or it automatically gets surprise, should it choose to attack.

**Constrict:** When the rocktopus attacks with its tentacle, any creature struck must make a CL HD Dexterity save or be caught by the suckers on the tentacle, and automatically held tight in addition to suffering damage. If the save is failed by four or more, one arm is also caught; if failed by eight or more, both arms are caught. A victim thus held may attempt a CL HD Strength check to break the grapple each round. Each round held a victim is automatically crushed for 2d6 points of damage, and one such victim is randomly chosen for a bite attack.

**Paralytic Poison Spray:** When all else fails, a rocktopus can make a paralytic poison spray attack just before it flees. This spray is a cone three times as long as the rocktopus, with a width at the end as wide as it is long. All within are coated with a sticky black ink-like substance, and must make a CL HD Strength save or be blinded and paralyzed for

1d6 minutes per HD of the rocktopus. Those who make the save are merely blinded for one round per HD of the rocktopus, though the blindness can be negated with splashing 1/2 gallon of clean water over the eyes. Rocktopi are immune to their own poison, but not to other rocktopi poison. This ability can only be used once per day.

**Severing Bite:** The bite attack is generally only used against victims held in the creature’s constricting tentacles, as few are foolish enough to walk directly under the rocktopus and invite such attack! Victims held in the creature’s tentacles do not get to apply their Dexterity bonus to AC, and the rocktopus has an additional +4 to hit a held target. Additionally, if the bite attack is a non-modified 18-20 to hit, the victim loses a limb/hand/foot or even its head! Roll on the Feather edged Sword table from the **Castles & Crusades Monsters & Treasure** book; any result indicating a limb that is held fast by the tentacle indicates that no limb is lost.

**Spell Casters:** A rocktopus has a 1% chance per HD of having Superior Intelligence (and/or Wisdom) and thus the ability to learn and cast spells. These learned spells are in addition to any natural spell-like abilities the creature possesses. Roll 1d10 to determine the magical tradition of the spell-casting rocktopus: 1-3 wizard, 4-5 illusionist, 6-7 cleric, 8-10 druid. Roll 1d8 to determine spell-casting level; on a roll of 8 roll a d12, adding any result of 1 to 8, disregarding any roll of 9 to 12. A spell-casting rocktopus gains all the spells and other abilities of its class and level, but only gains 1 hit point per spell-caster level. They have bonus spells based upon their Intelligence or Wisdom as normal (Wisdom is equal to Intelligence for Clerics and Druids). They can use any magic-item useable by a character of their class; even rings can fit on the tips of their tentacles.

Wizard and illusionist spell casters must keep a spell book; they can learn spells from scrolls and other spell-books, taking extra time to adapt somatic components to their own physiques. Clerics and druids do not generally use standard unholy symbols; instead they tattoo the unholy symbol of their deity upon their own flesh, often multiple times, using their own ink.

Most spell-casting rocktopi gather around them servants of humanoid and human sort, either to assist them in their search for more spells or as worshippers for their dark god. Some rocktopi even move into a small village, taking it over through force of their spells and followers, and install themselves in a castle or temple.

**Spell-like Abilities:** All adult rocktopi gain spell-like abilities, as per the following:

HD	0 <sup>th</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>
9	1	--	--	--
10	2	--	--	--
11	2	1	--	--
12	2	2	--	--
13	2	2	1	--
14	2	2	2	--
15	2	2	2	1
16	2	2	2	2

Spell-like abilities are randomly determined from any of the four spell-casting traditions. These are innate abilities; each can be used once per day, as a spell-caster of a level equal to the creature’s HD minus eight.

# MONSTROUS MENACES™

## #1: GHARLIDH, GRULNOSC, AND ROCKTOPUS

OFFICIAL GAMING AID DESIGNED AND APPROVED FOR USE WITH

# CASTLES & CRUSADES®

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