# MOAT MONSTERS A Sourcebook for OGL RPGs







By Derek Holland & the Skirmisher Game Development Group



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Contents of this publication Copyright 2018 by Skirmisher Publishing LLC, all rights reserved. First Self-Standing Publication: February 2018. n most fantasy settings, castles and cities are vital components of civilization, and many of these rely on moats for defense. These large ditches are usually filled with water and meant to stop attackers from reaching the outer walls. Although this tactic was successful in real world history, traditional moats are not as effective in fantasy worlds because of the existence of magic. To counter this and thwart fantasy-world invaders, moats could be filled with different materials and energies, or even populated with monsters.

For moat defenses that do not rely on monsters, consider using something with magical or mechanical properties. One possibility might be an instant-filling moat (whether it holds water or something more toxic is left to the Game Master or castle owner's imagination). Or, make it a bottomless one. Something more intricate might involve a moat filled with a maze, possibly a maze littered with damage-inflicting or condition-causing magical symbols or sigils on the walls. Perhaps an old cinematic favorite would fill your idiom: crushing walls that slam together after a certain number of creatures have entered an area. Or, just load your moat with something simple: fire, lightning, acid, rolling boulders, diseased spikes, illusions, tar, caltrops, methane, or paralytic gas. If your moat designer is feeling playful, she might cover the ground with teleportation spots that send interlopers into the sun, to the moon, or directly to the dungeon.

Moats can be small, perhaps just 10' wide and 3' deep, or they can be grand, 1,000' wide and 100' deep — or even larger. Their size depends on how much defense is needed and what the local government is willing to pay for. Some moats are lined with metal but most are simply stone, earth, or cement. To prevent attackers from building bridges over them, some moats have masonry walls on their inner borders or have some effect (e.g., walls of fire or force, death effects) that reaches above their surface. Other moats might be designed like por-



table holes, with a vastly greater volume inside than appears from outside, or be able to change their shape or volume when an enemy force enters.

Should the prospective castle builder prefer a more active and lively defense, below are some creatures (in Basic/Labyrinth Lord format) that might populate your moats, even some of the non-standard constructions. Although undead are not specifically discussed here, zombie and skeletal ver-sions of many moat creatures could be used around the castles of death lords, necromancers, and the like.

#### Black Block

No. Enc.:	0 (4d4)
Alignment:	Neutral
Movement:	30' (10')
	Swim 120' (40')
Armor Class:	3
Hit Dice:	5
Attacks:	1 (slam)
Damage:	2d4
Save:	F3
Morale:	12
Hoard Class:	II

Black Blocks are one of the very rare Earth Elementals that can swim. They are found in the moat's walls and only move when they detect a Human-sized or larger creature within 30'. Such elementals have a fluid form,



allowing them to engulf and crush prey. Any creature struck by a black block is considered to have an additional 200 pounds for encumbrance, and will probably sink to the bottom of the moat. The only way to escape the creature is to slay it. Black Blocks have a nasty tendency to also attack creatures on land near the moat, a habit that limits their usefulness close to very active locations like the main gate.

#### Blue Ice

No. Enc.:	0 (6d6)
Alignment:	Neutral
Movement:	Swim 30' (10')
Armor Class:	8
Hit Dice:	1
Attacks:	Contact
Damage:	d3
Save:	0 level
Morale:	12
Hoard Class:	None

Blue Ice are very small Water Elementals almost invisible in murky water (surprise on 1-19 rolling d20). When touching a creature, they form a crust of ice around it. The victim can save versus breath weapon to avoid the damage and icing effect. For every 10 points of damage the Blue Ice contact inflicts, the victim's movement rate decreases by 30' (10'). If this is reduced to zero, the victim is encased in ice, cannot move, and will sink to the bottom within d4 rounds. Because Blue Ice never surfaces, it is immune to fire spells. Living creatures, including plants, are never found in a moat with Blue Ice, as the elementals will kill everything over time.

#### Brownshell

No. Enc.:	d8 (3d8)
Alignment	Neutral
Movement:	Swim 360' (120')
Armor Class:	1
Hit Dice:	6
Attacks:	1 (slam)
Damage:	2d4
Save:	F3
Morale:	12
Hoard Class:	IV

These turtles have an affinity for animating water. Each is 4' long and weighs from 100-150 pounds (much of that is shell). Like sea serpents, Brownshells are not very popular moat guardians: they can reach 30' out of the moat to attack those passing by. If a turtle rolls a 20 to hit, the victim is dragged into the water and starts to drown. He can only escape if the reptile is slain. This is much harder than it sounds because the turtles live in groups and which individuals are attacking is not obvious. Brownshell soup is a highly-prized food because most hunters die trying to harvest the main ingredient, and each turtle carcass is worth 200 gold pieces.

# Lake Archon

Angels are found protecting all the world, not just the intelligent races of good. Lake Archons are occasionally found in moats protecting temples or religious capitals. They appear as tall, muscular Tritons and can form two long swords from water at a moment's notice. They can fly (and hover) and will take to the air when defending their stewardship. Lake Archons can be harmed only with +2 or better weapons, are surrounded by a *Protection from Evil* spell (15' radius), are immune to elemental attacks, and can draw the water from the body of a living creature up to 120' away three times per day. Treat this last ability as a *Ray of Death* spell. They can cast all healing and cure spells six times per day, and cast clerical spells as if they were 8th level.

## Lethal Lunch

No. Enc.:	1 (d6)
Alignment:	Neutral
Movement:	10' (3')
Armor Class:	9
Hit Dice:	8
Attacks:	3 or special (tentacles or lure)
Damage:	d8/d8/d8 or special
Save:	F12
Morale:	12
Hoard Class:	none

Another alchemist creation, this monster does not hide, but actually wants to be seen and consumed. Appearing to be a sumptuous feast about 10' in diameter, the lethal lunch emits an odor that forces every carnivore or omnivore within 100' to save versus poison. Those who fail rush to the food and eat. Those who resist and attack the monster find it can form a trio of 15' long tentacles able to lash flesh from bone. Anyone who eats from the monster must save versus death or take 4d6 points of damage per round of eating. Those who die from this turn into small lunches over 2d6 rounds. Then



they slowly move about, looking for a different hunting ground away from their parent lunch. Although they can draw people and animals from beyond the edges of a moat, lethal lunches are popular moat monsters. Some rulers even use catapults to toss small ones into enemy camps, hoping to wipe out whole armies. Obviously, this is a last ditch-defense, as a horde of lethal lunches is as dangerous to the castle as it is to the enemy.

#### Moat Fairie

No. Enc.:	d4 (4d6)
Alignment:	Chaotic
Movement:	30' (10')
	Swim 180' (60')
Armor Class:	6
Hit Dice:	2
Attacks:	1 or 1 (bow or knife)
Damage:	d6 or d4
Save:	T3 or 0 level
Morale:	6
Hoard Class:	VII, XII

Moat Fairies are one of the few moat inhabitants that are not specifically introduced into such structures. They spontaneously generate a few years after a moat, canal, or similar feature is finished. Because of how similar the two look. Moat Fairies are often mistaken for Nixies, but the two act very differently - i.e., Moat Fairies destroy all intelligent life that ventures near their homes, while Nixies enslave people from the surface. The fairies work well with most other moat monsters, as long as such creatures are not intelligent. In the water the fey are quick and save as 3rd-level Thieves. On land they are sluggish and save as 0-level characters. Moat Fairies defend their homes with bows and knives that are made of water but function as normal weapons. The difference becomes apparent when the fairy dies or drops them, at which point the weapons turn to liquid. Many also use poisons made from plants and animals in their homes, incorporating the toxins into arrows that turn to liquid after impact (saves are at -2). Even though they hate intelligent creatures, Moat Fairies will listen to the ruler(s) of the castle or city and obey from time-to-time.



# Moat Rat

No. Enc.:	d4 (3d6)
Alignment:	Neutral
Movement:	Swim 90' (30')
Armor Class:	6
Hit Dice:	4
Attacks:	1 or 1 (bite or claws)
Damage:	d6 or d4
Save:	F2
Morale:	8
Hoard Class:	VI

Moat Rats were created by an alchemist to be a fairly cheap city defense. They look like a mixture of rodent and seal, but have clawed forelegs that drip a seizurecausing venom. Targets who fail their save take d4 points of damage per round for 2d4 rounds and are paralyzed for d4+3 hours. Moat Rats cannot move on land and rarely attack boats — they much prefer underwater prey. Descended from pack rats, these rodents collect shiny or otherwise interesting items and stash them in holes on the moat bottom (usually in rocks rather than mud). As guardians, they are popular enough that some city rulers can sell pups for up to 500 gold pieces each.

# Muck Beast

No. Enc.:	0 (6d4)
Alignment:	Neutral
Movement:	Burrow 90' (30')
Armor Class:	6
Hit Dice:	4
Attacks:	1 (bite)
Damage:	Special
Save:	F2
Morale:	12
Hoard Class:	XX

Muck Beasts are used to create, sustain, and defend a special kind of moat, one filled with soil rather than water. Walls of stone buried in the ground keep the beasts from escaping into the surrounding lands and slaughtering the locals. A Muck Beast looks like a mixture of lung fish, snake, and alligator with large webbed feet. It is only 8' long, but even that is too large for its legs to support it on the surface and it can only burrow through soil. When attacking, the beast bites from below. On a to-hit roll of 18+, the beast drags its target underground in an attempt to suffocate it. If the beast makes a kill, it strips the flesh from its victim's bones and leaves the rest on the moat bottom. The constant burrowing cannot be seen from the surface but keeps trees and shrubs from growing. Some ancient forest meadows are actually muck moats of castles long since eroded away, but still kept in shape by their inhabitants.

# Pebble Worm

Swarm
Neutral
Swim 30' (10')
7
5
Contact
d4
0 level
12
III

When these minor alchemical creations are put into a moat, it is first treated with a chemical and then clay pebbles are dumped in the water. The pebbles hatch into 6" long worms that look like copper wire. Because they are small and weak, Pebble Worms are very cheap to make in quantity. A single moat can contain scores of swarms — enough to take down even a Sea Serpent. Unfortunately, they are also short-lived, each lasting only d3 days, and so their components have to be stored near the moat in case of invasion. More than one castle has fallen when the chemical was corrupted by infiltrators.

# Pink Pike

No. Enc.:	0 (d12)
Alignment:	Neutral
Movement:	Swim 150' (50')
Armor Class:	5
Hit Dice:	3
Attacks:	1 (bite)
Damage:	d6
Save:	F2
Morale:	12
Hoard Class:	Special

A specialty of some Elf and Orc spellcasters, Pink Pike are transformed Humans used to slaughter any compatriots who try swimming through a moat. They look like 5' long fish with Human skin and hair. Some facial features are retained and people seeing a pink pike for the first time must save versus death or be so frightened they try to flee for d6 rounds. Those who knew the Human before it became a pike save at -4. Otherwise they are normal fish.

# Red Cap

No. Enc.:	0 (2d6)
Alignment:	Neutral
Movement:	Swim 150' (50')
Armor Class:	6
Hit Dice:	3
Attacks:	1 (slam)
Damage:	d4+2
Save:	F2
Morale:	12
Hoard Class:	II

Red Caps are another sort of elemental used in moat defense. Whereas Blue Ice stays below the surface, Red Caps always remain above it. To those who know what they are these elementals are obvious, appearing as waves that move constantly, even in the calmest weather. Drawn to motion, a Red Cap slams into anything on the moat's surface. If the Red Cap makes a kill, it forms a small amount of red foam on its crest for d4 minutes.

# Red Ice

No. Enc.:	0 (3d6)
Alignment:	Neutral
Movement:	Fly 30' (10')
Armor Class:	4
Hit Dice:	6
Attacks:	1 (slam)
Damage:	d4+4
Save:	F3
Morale:	12
Hoard Class:	VI

Red Ice are Fire Elementals and require a special kind of moat — one filled with flames. Although they can fly, Red Ice will not leave their home, and take d8 points of damage per round from cold air (anything under 450 degrees). Within the flames, the elementals move freely and attempt to capture any creatures that move through the moat. If the elemental hits with a 20, its victim is paralyzed for 3d4 rounds. This is long enough for Red Ice to kill a victim by incinerating its lungs or, in the case of fireproof creatures, suffocating it.

# Sea Bee

No. Enc.:	Swarm
Alignment:	Neutral
Movement:	Fly 180' (60')
Armor Class:	5
Hit Dice:	9
Attacks:	Contact
Damage:	d8
Save:	F2
Morale:	12
Hoard Class:	Special

These insects make underwater colonies using magic to form the liquid into combs. They are very gentle while foraging and few people get stung. On the other hand, those who disrupt Sea Bee hives are viciously attacked until dead, and their corpses incorporated into the honey. Sea Bees placed in moats have their honey harvested by spellcasters who calm the insects with magic. Bloodless honey is very sweet and expensive. Blooded honey is very addictive and gives those who eat it supernaturally fast reflexes for 24 hours (Dexterity increases to 20). Some rulers use the bees for executions and store the blooded honey until it is needed.

# Sea Serpent, Moat

	•
No. Enc.:	1 (d8)
Alignment:	Neutral
Movement:	Swim 180' (60')
Armor Class:	4
Hit Dice:	12
Attacks:	1 (bite)
Damage:	3d4+4
Save:	F8
Morale:	12
Hoard Class:	VII



At 60' long and about 3 tons in weight, the Moat Sea Serpent is a terrifying giant snake, with gills and a venom that transforms victims into water (save versus poison to survive). Moat Sea Serpents are classic monsters, but not popular guardians, as they can reach 20' out of the water to pick off people walking alongside the moat or over a drawbridge. On the other hand, they are very useful for keeping invaders from bridging a moat.

#### Slip Slime

No. Enc.:	1 (d4)
Alignment:	Neutral
Movement:	360' (120')
Armor Class:	3
Hit Dice:	7
Attacks:	1 (slam)
Damage:	2d4
Save:	F3
Morale:	10
Hoard Class:	IV

Slip Slime are oozes that leave a zero friction material in their wake. Because they move constantly (they cannot stop, in fact), their lairs are covered with this material. Creatures trying to walk on the slime or its trail will fall if they fail a save versus breath weapon at -4. Prone creatures will slide along the trail until they hit a wall or other obstacle, traveling at a movement rate of 120' (40') and taking d6 points of damage. The only way to destroy the slimy material is with a powerful, expensive acid. It costs 50 gold pieces to clear a 10' square.

# Spike Shell

No. Enc.:	2d4 (6d12)
Alignment:	Neutral
Movement:	10' (3')
Armor Class:	2
Hit Dice:	1/2
Attacks:	1 (tentacle)
Damage:	d2
Save:	0 level
Morale:	12
Hoard Class:	None



Living caltrops, Spike Shells are nasty poisonous snails. They are herbivores and the moats they live in are filled with vegetation. The snails do not leave the moat because they need heat — lots of it. If the temperature falls below 100 degrees F, the snails freeze to death. The swamp or tropical forest they require is kept stable by magic. Their poison is easy to harvest and causes 6d6 points of damage to any who fail a save. While alive, each snail is worth 75 gold pieces. Dead snails are worth 10 gold pieces because their poison degrades quickly and allows +6 on the save.

#### Swamp Pepper

No. Enc.:	0 (5d8)
Alignment:	Neutral
Movement:	0'
Armor Class:	7
Hit Dice:	4
Attacks:	1 (10' diameter cloud)
Damage:	d4 plus special
Save:	0 level
Morale:	12
Hoard Class:	Ι

Used in tropical moats, Swamp Pepper is usually found with other dangerous plants or swamp creatures (such as spike shells). Each plant is a herbaceous shrub 8' tall and 5' wide, covered in hand-shaped leaves and red flowers. If disturbed, the plants emit a cloud of pepper so hot it blisters the skin and blinds those who fail to save versus poison for 3d4 rounds. Swamp Pepper is only mildly dangerous on its own, but its ability to blind helps the other monsters found with it. And, the cloud of bright orange pepper attracts the attention of guards on the castle walls.

#### **Trap Stone**

No. Enc.:	0 (5d4)
Alignment:	Neutral
Movement:	10' (3')
Armor Class:	2
Hit Dice:	5
Attacks:	1 (spine)
Damage:	d6
Save:	F5
Morale:	12
Hoard Class:	II

Trap Stones are Earth Elementals used in empty moats, empty of water that is. They are mixed with real boulders meant to slow an enemy advance. If a creature or person comes within 5' of a trap stone, it shoots out a long, slender spear from its center in an attempt to impale. If the attack hits with a 20, the target takes another d6 points of damage and cannot move for d4 rounds or until the spine is broken (AC 3, 10 hit points). Individual Trap Stones have six spines and regrow them at a rate of one per hour. Scouts can discover trap stones without entering the moat as the elementals are constantly moving from wall to wall, searching for a way to escape.

#### Vapor

No. Enc.:	1 (1)
Alignment:	Neutral
Movement:	Fly 90' (30')
Armor Class:	0
Hit Dice:	15
Attacks:	Contact
Damage:	Special
Save:	F5
Morale:	12
Hoard Class:	Special

There are many forms of vapor, but all are contaminated Air Elementals 30' in diameter and 6' high. Some common forms follow.

**Death Vapor** are infused with negative energy and drain 1 hit point per round. This is permanent damage.

**Rust Vapor** decay any ferrous metal they touch (treat as a Rust Monster).

**Dessicating Vapor** inflicts 3d6 points of damage per round those those within it.

**Explosive Vapor** detonates when ignited and does 3d6 points of damage to anyone within 20'. Strangely, it does not die from blowing up and will reconstitute in d4 hours.

**Blood Vapor** does only d3 points of damage per round, but its wounds cause bleeding. Bleeding characters take d3 points of damage per round until the wounds are healed with magic.

**Glowing Vapor** becomes brighter when enveloping living creatures and does d6 points of damage per round.

**Glue Vapor** lays down an adhesive with a Strength of 15. Weaker creatures within the vapor are stuck to the surface they are touching, until freed by someone stronger or who has alcohol.

**Antimage Vapor** casts *Dispel Magic* as a 20th level caster every time it comes into contact with magic.

**Shadow Vapor** produces a light that causes living creatures' shadows to animate and attack. Treat the animated shadows as Zombies that cannot be turned. This effect applies to everyone within the vapor and up to 50' away from it. There is no save and, as soon as one shadow is slain, the next will be animated.

Fortunately for those who create moats, Vapors are very heavy and cannot rise above 10', even in flight, so ss long as a moat is deeper than this a Vapor cannot escape.

#### Whistle Sedge

No. Enc.:	0 (d12 patches)
Alignment:	Neutral
Movement:	0'
Armor Class:	6
Hit Dice:	5
Attacks:	Contact
Damage:	d4
Save:	0 level
Morale:	12
Hoard Class:	II

Whistle Sedge is found in moats filled with water and covered with vegetation. It has a very extensive root system that acts as a substrate for other plants. Its stems are sharp, inflicting d4 points of damage to any creature touching them. This contact causes the vegetation to make a high pitched sound. Those who wear plate armor (and can somehow walk on water) or have a natural armor class below 5 are immune to the damage but still trigger the whistling.



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