



LPJ9900

# MONSTERS OF NEOEXODUS: TALIKUS

## DESCRIPTION

The talikus is a strange flying creature of huge size. Its body is covered by a multitude of tiny scales as hard as iron, which vary in color from bright yellow to dark green with occasional blue, red, or deep purple hues. This aberration is oddly shaped, with long leathery wings

issuing from its spine and a wide but short tail ending in a fat purplish stub. The talikus' body is reminiscent of that of a large bird, but with a huge goat-shaped head where deep fiery eyes burn amidst an amalgam of hard scales. The creature's muzzle is short but wide, and its

powerful jaw hides great yellow fangs. When it opens its mouth, a thick yellowish-green mucus-like substance emanates from between its sharp teeth. The male talikus also has three small black horns protruding from the top of its cranium, but this crown is only for show.

A talikus walks on three muscular black legs, which end in large eagle-like talons. These talons are as sharp as diamonds and the creature uses them to hunt. Its favorite tactic is to grab a

victim — preferably a medium or large beast — with one of these talons, bite the creature to paralyze it with its poisonous toxin, and then take flight so it can tear it apart bit by bit. The brown, stubby, leathery wings that issue from the talikus' back allow it to soar through the air at great speed.

Despite their savage and unpredictable nature, these creatures are extremely loyal to their mate and stay faithful to it until it dies. When this happens, the survivor mourns the loss for several months, during which time it is particularly angry, attacking anything that gets in its way. The mate of a murdered talikus is espe-

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cially lethal, becoming almost fanatical in its quest to avenge the death of its partner.

Typically, talikuses make their nests in remote hills and mountains, where they can lay their eggs away from the countless predators of the deadly Exodus wilderness. Those that live in the deep desert, however, bury their eggs in the sand. The gestation period of a talikus' egg is anywhere between five to six months. Hatchlings that are buried in the sand eventually dig their way out, if they are strong enough; the others perish.

Because their infants are born without scales, both parents care for the young, providing food, protection, and shelter for the first two to three years of their lives. When they become capable of fending for themselves, the young talikuses leave the parental nest to find a place — and a mate — of their own.

## COMBAT

The talikus is an extremely cunning predator and certainly one of the most dreaded creatures in all the lands of Exodus. Those who face these aberrations in battle rarely live to tell about it, for the talikuses are not only strong and savvy, but also unbelievably cruel and savage. Afraid of nothing, talikuses usually fight to the death — most often that of their victims — even when confronted by great adversity. Once they taste blood, there is no stopping them.

These natural hunters prowl the planet's sky, searching for living preys they can sink their powerful teeth into. When hunting, the talikus uses stealth, preferring to swoop down from the sky upon unsuspecting targets above all else. When spotted, it croaks loudly — a dreadful sound capable of unnerving the bravest of foes — before charging into the fray. Because they enjoy combat, talikuses often attack the beefiest opponents first. When they are engaged in battle with a group of powerful adversaries, however, they approach more carefully and work hard and intelligently to separate the opposition in order to pick at the preys one at a time.

**Constrict (Ex):** A talikus that successfully grabs a target of medium or smaller size deals 6d4+8 points of damage with a successful grapple check.

**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, the talikus must hit with one of its claw attacks. If it gets a hold of its target, it can constrict the opponent.

**Paralyzing Toxin (Ex):** The thick mucus-like substance produced by the talikus' saliva glands fills

its mouth and makes its bite poisonous. Opponents bitten by the aberration must succeed at a DC 25 Fortitude save or become paralyzed for 4d4 minutes. A paralyzed creature remains aware of what is going on around it, but is unable to take any action.

On the black market of some cities and towns, the saliva of the talikus is a prized substance worth a lot of money. Because of this (*and also because of the iron-hard scales of the creature, which can be used to fashion strong suits of armor or shields*), some bold adventurers have dedicated their lives to become talikus hunters. Generally speaking, the career of such a professional is short-lived, but those that make it are regarded as brave, foolhardy, and tremendously powerful heroes.

**Snatch (Ex):** A talikus that hits a creature of at least Tiny size, but no larger than Large size, with a claw attack can attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If the talikus achieves a hold, it can fly off with its prey and automatically constrict its foe. Alternately, it can make either a bite or two claw attacks each round. It can also drop a snatched creature as a free action or use a standard action to fling it aside.

A flung creature travels 120 feet and takes 12d6 points of damage upon impact. If the talikus flings it while in flight the victim suffers this amount of damage or falling damage, whichever is greater.

**Unnerving Croak (Su):** A talikus communicates by uttering abominable croaking sounds. These raspy croaks, which seem to issue from the depths of the abyss, can unnerve living opponents within a 90-foot radius of the aberration. Any living creature able to hear the croak within this area must succeed at a DC 18 Will save to avoid the effect of the unnerving croak. A successful save means the creature is immune to the unnerving croak ability of any talikus for a 24-hour period. A failed save, however, unsettles the victim, which suffers a –2 moral penalty to attack rolls, damage rolls, as well as a –4 moral penalty on all Will saving throws. A potential victim must be able to hear the talikus' cries in order to be affected by this mind affecting, sonic effect.

## TALIKUS

**Huge Aberration**

**Hit Dice:** 16d8+112 (184 hp)

**Initiative:** +5 (Dex, Improved Initiative)



**Speed:** 40 ft. (8 squares), fly 120 ft. (average) (24 squares)

**AC:** 21 (–2 size, +1 Dex, +12 natural), touch 9, flat footed 20

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +10/+18

**Attack:** Bite +18 melee (4d6+8 plus paralyzation) or claw +16 melee (2d4+8)

**Full Attack:** Bite +18 melee (4d6+8 plus paralyzation) and three claws +16 melee (2d4+8)

**Space/Reach:** 20 ft./10 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Constrict, improved grab, paralyzing toxin, snatch

**Special Qualities:** Darkvision 60 ft.

**Saves:** Fort +17, Ref +8, Will +12

**Abilities:** Str 27, Dex 13, Con 24, Int 11, Wis 15, Cha 11

**Skills:** Listen +21 and Spot +21

**Feats:** Improved Initiative, Multiattack, and Power Attack

**Environment:** Any temperate and warm land

**Organization:** Solitary, mating pair, cluster (2-5), pack (5-20, plus one 24 HD elder), or swarm (20-40, plus 2d4 24 HD elders, plus one 40 HD ancient)

**Challenge Rating:** 17

**Treasure:** Double standard

**Alignment:** Always chaotic evil

**Advancement:** 17-32 HD (gargantuan) to 33-48 HD (colossal)

**Level Adjustment:** —

*Written by Richard Farrese*

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