

Exotic Encounters:

Basilisks



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Introduction

The *Pathfinder Bestiary*, and the long line of monstrous encyclopedia that came before it, do a great job of attacking the problem of providing game statistics and mechanical information for a very wide variety of creatures. There are a lot of strange creatures from fantasy novels and movies, from ancient mythology, and, as time went on, from the twisted minds of game designers and even GMs, for that matter. Anyone today who tried to go about creating an extensive bestiary of all the different cool and interesting fantasy monsters could fill three or four volumes with three hundred monsters each, and still have a long way left to go, with fans crying out for various “forgotten” monsters to get some attention. That kind of breadth doesn’t leave a whole lot of room for depth, and that’s where *Exotic Encounters* comes in.

There are all kinds of reasons why you might not want to use a monster stat-block straight from the core rules. For one thing, if your players have a habit of browsing through such books, or are long-time veterans who know the basic ins and outs of most fantasy staples, you may need an unusual stat-block just to throw them a curve ball and teach them that they can’t count on their out of character knowledge to take all the mystery out of the game. Alternatively, many GMs can recall a time when they wanted to make use of a certain monster in their game, only to find that it was a few CRs too high or low for what they had in mind.

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This particular installment of *Exotic Encounters* focuses on the dangerous and deadly basilisk. A popular figure in medieval mythology, there are numerous different versions of basilisks to be found throughout the ages, and the version associated with most roleplaying games (the kind that turns victims to stone) is actually one of the newest. The **basilisk snake (CR 2)**, found in this book, is a smaller, serpentine version of a basilisk, which has a more gradual petrification gaze, but also exudes a deadly toxin from its skin. The **miasmatic basilisk (CR 7)**, on the other hand, is more lizard-like, and can breathe a cloud of thick venomous gases, which weaken foes and obscure vision. Its terror-inducing gaze is enhanced with glowing eyes, that allow it to affect creatures even through this dense fog. The most powerful basilisk in the book, however, is the **mountain basilisk (CR 10)**, whose gaze can outright kill, and whose poisonous blood infects those who wound it, among other potent and deadly abilities.

Basilisk Snake

At a glance, this creature might be mistaken for an ordinary snake, or even a simple poisonous one, except for the strange red, leathery frill at the top of its head, much like a coxcomb. Its scales are a deep, emerald green, and it rears up slowly, with the front half of its body off the ground, and issues a low, sibilant hiss as its pitch-black eyes rise to meet yours, and you feel a strange, cloying sensation as you meet its gaze.

BASILISK SNAKE

CR 2

XP 600

N Tiny magical beast

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision;

Perception +6

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+2 Dex, +2 natural, +2 size)

hp 19 (3d10+3)

Fort +4, **Ref** +5, **Will** +2

Immune poison

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee bite +5 (1d4-1)

Special Attack stony gaze

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 15, **Con** 13, **Int** 2, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 11

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +0; **CMD** 12 (can't be tripped)

Feats Ability Focus (stony gaze), Weapon Finesse

Skills Perception +6, Stealth +18; **Racial Modifier** +4

Stealth

ECOLOGY

Environment warm and temperate forests and plains

Organization solitary, pair, or colony (4 - 12)

Treasure incidental

Poison Skin (Ex): The skin of a basilisk snake exudes a deadly poison, and it leaves a trail of this toxin everywhere that it goes, which can be harmful to plants and wildlife that cross its path. Any creature to touch a basilisk snake, or the trail of poison that it leaves behind, with their bare skin (including initiating a grapple with it or making an unarmed strike or natural attack against it, but not being hit by its bite attack) is exposed to the following poison.

Basilisk Snake Skin Poison—contact; *save* Fort DC 12, *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds, *effect* 1d4 Con, *cure* 2 consecutive saves.

This poison trail also withers plants that the basilisk snake slithers over, making it exceptionally easy to track. The DC to follow the tracks of a basilisk snake is reduced by -5.

Stony Gaze (Ex): The gaze of a basilisk snake can slowly turn its opponents to stone, as long as they continue to stare into its eyes. This is a gaze attack with a range of 30 feet. Affected creatures must succeed on a Will save (DC 13) or be compelled to continue staring into the basilisk snake's eyes. A creature that fails this Will save can still act normally and even attack the basilisk snake, but must retain eye contact with the basilisk snake, and cannot voluntarily close his eyes or look away for 1 round. Each round, the target may make a new Will save to look away.

Additionally, each round that a creature continues to meet the basilisk snake's gaze, he must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 14). The first time that he fails such a Fortitude save, he becomes staggered for as long as he continues to meet the basilisk snake's gaze. If he fails another of these Fortitude saves before breaking eye contact with the basilisk snake, he becomes stunned, instead. If he fails a third such Fortitude save before breaking eye contact, he becomes paralyzed. Finally, if he fails a fourth Fortitude save in this way before breaking eye contact, he is permanently petrified (as *flesh to stone*). As long as the creature is not petrified, all negative effects of this ability end as soon as the target breaks eye contact with the basilisk snake.

The Will save DC is Charisma-based. The Fortitude save DC is Constitution-based. Both save DCs include a +2 bonus from Ability Focus.

Ecology

These foul serpents are considered by some scholars to be distant relatives of the basilisk, though most are of the opinion that the two are related only through their petrifying gaze—a trait that is shared with creatures like medusas and cockatrices—and the fact that they are reptilian. Whatever the case, the basilisk snake's gaze is, in most respects, far more forgiving than that of the larger and better-known basilisk, but also insidious in the way that it forces their victim to maintain eye contact even as they feel themselves slowly turning to stone.

While there certainly are some who fall victim to the basilisk snake's petrifying gaze, its poisonous skin is actually far more relevant, as it not only tends to kill its victims more quickly, and is much easier to contract (merely touching the toxic creature is enough to transmit it), but the basilisk snake actually leaves a trail of the stuff as it moves, which can be especially damaging to crops when they infest a farmer's fields.

Miasmatic Basilisk

The creature before you resembles a giant lizard with bright green skin. As it notices you, it flicks its tail and spits forth a cloud of hissing, purple smoke, which quickly enshrouds both it and you. You can hear it moving just beyond your vision, can hear its hissing breath, but cannot pinpoint its location. Then, suddenly, you see its eyes, glowing through the poisonous fog like blue-white lanterns, and you feel the terror set in.

BASILISK, MIASMIC

CR 7

XP 3,200

N Medium magical beast

Init +1; **Senses** blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +10

Aura stench (30 ft., DC 16, 10 minutes)

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 11, flat-footed 18 (+1 Dex, +8 natural)

hp 76 (9d10+27)

Fort +9, **Ref** +7, **Will** +6

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

Melee bite +13 (2d6+6), 2 claws +8 (1d6+2)

Special Attack terrifying gaze, toxic smog

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 12, **Con** 17, **Int** 2, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 15

Base Atk +9; **CMB** +13; **CMD** 24 (28 vs. trip)

Feats Ability Focus (terrifying gaze), Blind-Fight, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Iron Will, Skill Focus (Perception)

Skills Perception +10, Stealth +14; **Racial Modifier** +4 Stealth

SQ glowing eyes

ECOLOGY

Environment warm and temperate forests, hills, jungles, mountains, and swamps

Organization solitary, pair, or nest (1-4, plus 2-8 young)

Treasure incidental

Glowing Eyes (Su): The miasmatic basilisk is capable of making his eyes glow with an eerie, supernatural light, which cuts through fog, mist, and darkness. This allows the miasmatic basilisk to affect creatures with this gaze attack even if they would not normally be able to see him due to fog, darkness, or other concealment (but not if they would be unable to see him due to cover, closing their eyes, or some other reason). As long as the miasmatic basilisk is using this ability, any creature that can see its eyes is able to pinpoint its location, even if they cannot see its body. The light from a miasmatic basilisk's eyes is not enough to provide proper illumination. The miasmatic basilisk can suppress or resume this ability as a swift action.

Terrifying Gaze (Su): The gaze of a miasmatic basilisk causes intense terror. Treat this as a gaze attack with a range of 30 feet. Each creature affected by the gaze attack must succeed on a Will save (DC 18) or be frightened for 1 minute. A creature that fails its saving throw by 5 or more is paralyzed with fear for 1 minute, instead. A creature that fails its saving throw by 10 or more suffers a heart attack, suffering 9d10 points of damage, and is both exhausted and panicked for 10 minutes. This is a mind-affecting fear effect. The saving throw DC is Charisma-based.

Toxic Smog (Ex): As a standard action, a miasmatic basilisk can exhale a cloud of cloying, purple fumes, which fill a 40-ft.-radius area centered on his location when he used this ability. This toxic smog obscures vision as a *fog cloud* (obscures all sight, including darkvision, but not blindsight, beyond 5 feet. A creature within 5 feet has concealment, and attacks against such creatures have a 20% miss chance. Creatures farther away have total concealment, granting 50% miss chance, and preventing creatures from using sight to locate each other at this range). Additionally, any creature that breathes in this toxic smog is affected by the following poison.

Miasmatic Basilisk Poison—inhaled; *save* Fort DC 16, *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds, *effect* 2d3 Str, *cure* 2 consecutive saves. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Under normal circumstances, the toxic smog lasts for one minute before dissipating. A moderate wind (11-20 mph) disperses the toxic smog in 4 rounds; a strong wind (21+ mph) disperses the toxic smog in 1 round.

Ecology

These foul lizards are named basilisks due to the strength of their terrifying gaze, but in reality they have little in common with their better known namesake. Miasmatic basilisks have only four legs, like a normal lizard, and their gaze does not petrify their victims, but rather invokes a deep and irrational fear, and, when combined with the toxic gasses that they are able to spew from their mouths, often result in horrific hallucinations, and, in the right circumstances, have even been known to lead to instantaneous death.

For the most part, miasmatic basilisks are ambush predators, who prefer to wait for prey to come to them. They then disable the prey with their gaze and/or poison. Though they have only animal intelligence, these creatures display a ruthless cunning, and know how to use their toxic smog to stalk their prey unseen and use the prey's own natural fear to enhance the effectiveness of their gaze.

Mountain Basilisk

The creature before you is like some sort of horrid, nightmarish lizard, grown to immense proportions, and warped by foul magic. The creature's scales are a dull brown with hints of red, and its back is covered with a small forest of long, dagger-like spines, which grow larger the closer one gets to the end of its tail, which resembles some sort of horrid natural morningstar. It hisses, spraying flecks of bubbling, toxic spittle, and moves to attack.

BASILISK, MOUNTAIN

CR 10

XP 9,600

N Large magical beast

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision;

Perception +13

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 8, flat-footed 24 (-1 Dex, +16 natural, -1 size)

hp 123 (13d10+52) fast healing 10

Fort +12, **Ref** +7, **Will** +7

Defensive Abilities basilisk regeneration

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee bite +18 (3d6+9), 2 claws +13 (1d8+3), sting +13 (1d8+3 plus poison)

Ranged poison +11 touch (1d4 acid + poison)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Special Attack deadly gaze, spit poison, unnerving hiss

STATISTICS

Str 22, **Dex** 8, **Con** 19, **Int** 2, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 11

Base Atk +13; **CMB** +20; **CMD** 29 (33 vs. trip)

Feats Ability Focus (unnerving hiss), Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Improved Natural Attack (claw), Iron Will, Skill Focus (Perception), Skill Focus (Stealth)

Skills Perception +13, Stealth +12; **Racial Modifier** +4 Stealth

SQ poisonous blood

ECOLOGY

Environment temperate and warm mountains and hills

Organization solitary

Treasure incidental

Basilisk Regeneration (Su): A mountain basilisk's fast healing stops functioning for 1 minute after it hears the sound of a cock crowing. This sound can be simulated or illusory, but, if it is illusory, and offers a saving throw to disbelieve, the mountain basilisk is automatically entitled to make such a saving throw, and the sound has no effect if it succeeds.

Deadly Gaze (Su): The gaze of a mountain basilisk kills its victims instantly. This is a gaze attack with a range of 30 feet. Affected creatures must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 16) or die instantly. This is a death effect. The saving throw DC is Charisma-based.

Poison (Ex): Varies—contact; save Fort DC 20, frequency 1/round for 8 rounds, effect 1d3 Con, cure 2 consecutive saves. The saving throw DC is Constitution-based.

Poisonous Blood (Ex): A mountain basilisk's very blood is poisonous, and sprays out in great spurts when it is injured. Any time that the mountain basilisk suffers 5 or more points of slashing or piercing damage from a single melee attack, its blood splashes onto each creature adjacent to it, exposing them to its poison. A successful Reflex save (DC 20) allows a creature to avoid being splashed in this way. The saving throw DC is Constitution-based.

Spit Poison (Ex): A mountain basilisk can spit a wad of acidic spittle and poison. Treat this as a ranged touch attack with a range increment of 10 feet and a maximum range of 50 feet. If the attack hits, it deals 1d4 points of acid damage, and exposes the target to the mountain basilisk's poison.

Unnerving Hiss (Su): A mountain basilisk's long tongue is capable of making an unsettling hissing sound. As a standard action, the basilisk can hiss, causing all animals, humanoids, and monstrous humanoids within 60 feet of it that can hear it to gain the shaken condition for 2d4 rounds unless they succeed on a Will save (DC 18). Creatures that fail their saving throw by 5 or more instead suffer a -4 penalty on attack rolls, saving throws, skill checks, and ability checks (they are still considered to be shaken, but the penalty is more severe). This is a mind-affecting fear effect. The saving throw DC is Charisma-based.

Ecology

Larger and more fearsome than their more numerous cousins, mountain basilisks are referred to by some sages as "true basilisks," as they better match ancient texts referring to basilisks. Reclusive and rare, mountain basilisks were unknown for some time, which may be why the smaller, eight-legged basilisk has acquired the name. True to legends, the stare of a mountain basilisk outright kills its victim, rather than turning him to stone, though that is only one of the many ways in which the deadly mountain basilisk can kill prey or intruders into its lair.

Some legends state that the ashes of a mountain basilisk—or, in some stories, its deadly poison—hold transmutive properties that, when properly harnessed, can be used to turn silver into gold.

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