# Exotic Encounters:





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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. *Exotic Encounters* takes a single, iconic monster, and creates three new variants on that theme. These variants aren't simple tweaks, and are more than simply advancing or removing Hit Dice, though that occurs as well. Each of these three variations on the monster's theme has a specific, flavorful goal in mind, and a role to play, and their statistics entries are gently massaged in order to make them fit those roles. Further, each of these variants comes with brand new specially-crafted special abilities, which are unique to *Exotic Encounters* and not found anywhere else.

This particular installment of *Exotic Encounters* focuses on the carbuncle. These cute and quirky creatures from the Pathfinder Bestiary 2 (and other non-tabletopgaming-related sources, before that), are certainly odd, but don't make particularly threatening foes...until now. The first new carbuncle presented in this book is the **monstrous** carbuncle (CR 3). An oversized, predatory carbuncle, these roving, predatory creatures share their smaller cousins' weakness to magic, but turn their empathic abilities into a deadly weapon, frightening their prey into making foolish mistakes. Monstrous carbuncles also have the ability to create copies of themselves to aid them in hunting elusive or difficult prey. Next, the gilded carbuncle (CR 5) is more intelligent and has greater magical power than the average carbuncle, and they can reflect certain spells back at their caster. They are also able to drain spell power from other creatures with their ruby horn, and use their empathic power to reflect the pain of being attacked back upon their attacker. Finally, the lunar carbuncle (CR 18) is a huge, oversized carbuncle with potent mental powers, including the ability to enthrall foes at great distances, and to steal the spells of nearby spellcasters. Lunar carbuncles are also able to fire powerful beams of energy from their forehead gems, which not only damage victims but interferes with their ability to use magic.

# Monstrous Carbuncle

The creature before you appears to be an oversized lizard with pale-green, pebbly-looking scales and large red eyes. Its forehead bears an octagonal green gem. Its body is slightly bloated, and it licks its lips and smacks its oversized jaws as it catches sight of you.

#### CARBUNCLE, MONSTROUS

#### XP 800

N Medium magical beast

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

Aura unsettling aura (30 ft., DC 12)

#### DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 7, flat-footed 17 (-3 Dex, +10 natural) hp 34 (4d10+12) Fort +7, Ref +1, Will +4 **Defensive Abilities** vulnerability to magic

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

**Melee** bite +6 (1d8+2), 2 claws +6 (1d4+2) **Special Attacks** project partner Spell-Like Abilities (CL 4<sup>th</sup>) 1/day—bull's strength (self only), invisibility (self only), jump (self only)

STATISTICS

Str 15, Dex 5, Con 16, Int 6, Wis 13, Cha 10 Base Atk +4; CMB +7; CMD 14 (18 vs. trip) Feats Improved Natural Attack (bite), Iron Will Skills Stealth +1 (+5 in grass or brush), Survival +3; Racial Modifiers -4 Acrobatics when jumping, +4 Stealth in grass or brush

Languages empathy 30 ft.

ECOLOGY

**Environment** any forests or swamps **Organization** solitary or group (2-8) **Treasure** standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Empath (Su): Monstrous carbuncles possess a crude form of telepathy, allowing them to transmit mild impressions and remembered sensations to other creatures. This form of telepathy cannot convey language or hinder a target in any way (such as by transmitting pain). Thus, a monstrous carbuncle can relate a feeling of fear or the faint smell of leaves, but cannot directly warn an ally of a monster or tell of a treasure under a dirt mound.

Project Partner (Su): Once per day, as a standard action, a monstrous carbuncle can project a quasi-real image of itself. Unlike a standard carbuncle, the monstrous carbuncle uses this ability to create an ally that can fight by its side in a tough situation. This functions as shadow conjuration, except that it can only be used to create a duplicate of the monstrous carbuncle. The monstrous carbuncle created by this ability cannot use any of its special abilities, nor can it use the project partner ability. The

monstrous carbuncle created by this ability lasts for a number of minutes equal to the monstrous carbuncle's Hit Dice. The saving throw DC to disbelieve the monstrous carbuncle created by this ability is equal to 10 + 1/2 the monstrous carbuncle's Hit Dice + the monstrous carbuncle's Charisma modifier (typically 12).

Unsettling Aura (Su): A monstrous carbuncle constantly radiates an empathic aura that causes all creatures within 30 feet of it to be aware of its constant hunger and predatory urges. At the beginning of the monstrous carbuncle's turn each round, each creature within 30 feet of it must succeed on a Will save (DC 12), or be shaken for 1 minute. This ability does not stack with itself, so characters that were shaken on a previous round do not become frightened.

Additionally, as a standard action, a monstrous carbuncle can deliberately focus its predatory urges on a single creature within 30 feet. If it does, that creature must succeed on a Will save (DC 12) or be frightened for 1d4 rounds. A creature that successfully resists the targeted version of this ability is immune to all aspects of the monstrous carbuncle's unsettling aura for 24 hours.

Both versions of this ability are mind-affecting fear effects. A creature does not need to be able to see or hear the monstrous carbuncle to be affected by this ability, but the monstrous carbuncle must be able to see a creature in order to use the targeted version of the ability. The saving throw DC is Charisma-based.

Vulnerability to Magic (Ex): A monstrous carbuncle suffers a -2 penalty on all saving throws made to resist the effects of spells, spell-like abilities, and supernatural abilities. Additionally, any spell, spell-like ability, and supernatural ability can affect a monstrous carbuncle regardless of creature type limitations, and, in the case of spells that have more dramatic effects against certain types of creatures, the monstrous carbuncle is treated as being the least beneficial type of creature possible (for example, it would suffer double damage from a wall of fire, even though it is not actually undead, and could be damaged by a shatter spell even though it is not actually a crystalline creature).

#### Ecology

CR 3

Commonly mistaken for particularly large specimens of the standard carbuncle, especially when they are young, monstrous carbuncles are quite different from their smaller cousins in a variety of ways. For one, monstrous carbuncles are large, predatory animals, and generally subsist on a diet of small woodland mammals such as rabbits, foxes, and squirrels, although they have been known to go after young deer or even wolves, when the opportunity arises.

Due to their unsettling aura, monstrous carbuncles have great difficulty hunting via traditional methods, as they are unable to approach their prey without alerting them to their presence. As a result, they typically hunt in pairs (or, when that is not an option, by projecting a hunting partner): the first monstrous carbuncle uses its aura to scare prey into running straight into the second monstrous carbuncle, which lies in wait.

## **Gilded** Carbuncle

The creature before you appears to be a large lizard with scales that shine in the light with a faintly bronze or golden color. Its eyes are a deep, crystal-blue color, and seem to hold a deep intelligence. In the middle of the creature's forehead is a translucent ruby-red horn, which juts out a full 12 inches and ends in a sharp point.

#### CARBUNCLE, GILDED

#### CR 5

#### **XP 1,600** N Small magical beast

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

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 9, flat-footed 17 (-2 Dex, +8 natural, +1 size) hp 51 (6d10+18) Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +5 Defensive Abilities mental reflection

#### OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee gore +6 (2d6-1 plus spell drain), bite +6 (1d4-1) Special Attacks wound reflection Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8<sup>th</sup>) At Will—qhost sound (DC 13), hypnotism (DC 13), levitate

(self only), silent image (DC 14)

3/day—blur (self only), hideous laughter (DC 16),

suggestion (DC 16)

1/day—confusion (DC 17), hold person (DC 16), invisibility (self only)

#### STATISTICS

Str 9, Dex 7, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 16 Base Atk +6; CMB +4; CMD 11 (15 vs. trip) Feats Improved Natural Attack (gore), Iron Will, Toughness Skills Stealth +11, Survival +7; Racial Modifiers -4 Acrobatics when jumping Languages telepathy 100 ft.

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#### ECOLOGY

**Environment** any underground **Organization** solitary pair, or colony (4-12) **Treasure** standard

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Mental Boost (Su):** Whenever the gilded carbuncle successfully affects a creature with its *suggestion* or *confusion* spell-like abilities, roll a d6. On a result of 1-2, the target gains a +2 morale bonus on attack and damage rolls for the duration of the *suggestion* or *confusion* effect. On a result of 3-4, the target gains a +2 morale bonus to AC for the duration of the *suggestion* or *confusion* effect. On a result of 5-6, the target gains a +2 morale bonus on saving throws for the duration of the *suggestion* or *confusion* effect.

**Mental Reflection (Su):** Whenever the gilded carbuncle is the target of a mind-affecting spell, spell-like ability, or supernatural ability, if that spell or ability allows a saving throw, and the gilded carbuncle succeeds on that saving throw, then the ability is reflected back upon its source. The creature that originated the spell or ability must make a saving throw or be affected by it, as though the gilded carbuncle were the one that originally cast the spell.

**Spell Drain (Su):** Whenever a gilded carbuncle hits a creature with its gore attack, if that creature is capable of casting spells or using spell-like abilities with a limited number of daily uses, then the gilded carbuncle drains some of the victim's daily spellcasting ability. If the creature is capable of casting spells, it immediately loses one of the highest-level spells that it currently has prepared and has not yet expended (or one of its highest-level unused spell slots, if a spontaneous caster). If the creature has spell-like abilities that are usable a limited number of times per day, it loses one daily use from one of its spell-like abilities with the fewest daily uses (for example, a 1/day ability would be lost before a use of a 3/day ability, etc.). The victim chooses the exact spell or spell-like ability to be lost, if more than one could be. For each spell or daily use of a spell-like ability drained in this way, the gilded carbuncle gains an additional daily use of one of its own spelllike abilities.

Wound Reflection (Su): Gilded carbuncles have harnessed the simple empathic ability of the standard carbuncle into a potent defense mechanism. Whenever a gilded carbuncle suffers 5 or more points of damage from a single attack, they empathically project their pain back to the attacker, making it more difficult for him to attack the gilded carbuncle again. The attacker must succeed on a Will save (DC 16) or suffer a -2 penalty on attack and damage rolls made against the gilded carbuncle. This penalty is reduced by 1 at the beginning of the gilded carbuncle's turn each round. Multiple instances of this ability stack, but the total penalty that the target suffers is only reduced by 1 each round (so a character who hit the gilded carbuncle three times in one turn and failed his saving throw each time would suffer a -6 penalty to attack and damage rolls made against the gilded carbuncle. At the beginning of the gilded carbuncle's next turn, this would be reduced to 5, not 3).

#### Ecology

Gilded carbuncles, referred to by some scholars as "true carbuncles" or "greater carbuncles," have a much greater intelligence and magical affinity than their more common, surface dwelling cousins. Some sages believe that gilded carbuncles are offshoots of the more common carbuncle, who have evolved in strange ways due to exposure to magical radiation and aberrant environs in their underground habitat. Others argue that gilded carbuncles are the original species, and that the standard or "common" carbuncle found on the surface is the offshoot, which adapted to life on the surface by changing their skin coloration and becoming less intelligent.

Whatever the case, gilded carbuncles are relatively peaceful, gentle creatures, which attempt to make their living in places of relative quiet and peace in the underdark, out of sight of that realm's many predators. Despite their humanlevel intelligence, they typically do not gather in groups of more than a dozen or so, and do not build structures or cities, for fear of attracting the attention of predators. They depend heavily on their spell-like abilities to avoid confrontations, and their ability to reflect mental attacks to deal with the many magical and psionic predators that inhabit their ecosystem.

## Lunar Carbuncle

The creature before you appears to be a massive, bloated lizard, its rotund, bulging body making its small, stubby legs seem almost comical. Despite this, its mottled grey scales are each as big as a man's fist, and the large, shimmering red gemstone set in its forehead is over six feet tall. It opens its mouth ponderously and wags its tail slightly, seeming to grin at you.

#### CARBUNCLE, LUNAR

CR 18

XP 153,600

N Huge magical beast

Init +0; Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +1

#### DEFENSE

AC 29, touch 4, flat-footed 29 (-4 Dex, +25 natural, -2 size) hp 337 (25d10+200) Fort +20, Ref +10, Will +11 DR 10/magic; Resist cold 20; SR 29 Weaknesses forehead gem

#### OFFENSE

Speed 10 ft.

Melee bite +33 (2d8+9/19-20), 2 claws +27 (1d8+4), tail slap +28 (2d10+4) Space 15 ft.; Reach 10 ft. Special Attacks enthrall, gem ray Spell-Like Abilities (CL 16<sup>th</sup>) Constant—detect thoughts (DC 20) At Will—charm monster (DC 22), major image (DC 21) 3/day—quickened charm monster (DC 22), demand (DC 26), dispel magic, hold monster (DC 23), veil (self only) (DC 24)

1/day—mirage arcana (DC 23), sympathy (DC 26)

#### STATISTICS

Str 29, Dex 3, Con 22, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 26 Base Atk +25; CMB +36; CMD 41 (45 vs. trip) Feats Ability Focus (enthrall), Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Improved Natural Attack (tail slap), Iron Will, Power Attack, Quicken Spell-Like Ability, Skill Focus (Stealth), Skill Focus (Survival), Toughness, Weapon Focus (bite), Weapon Focus (tail slap) Skills Spellcraft +26, Stealth +22 (+26 in rocky areas), Survival +32; Racial Modifiers -4 Acrobatics when jumping, +4 Stealth in rocky areas

Languages telepathy 400 ft.

#### ECOLOGY

**Environment** any forests or swamps **Organization** solitary or group (2-8) **Treasure** standard

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Enthrall (Su):** As a standard action, a lunar carbuncle can attempt to gain control of the mind of a single creature within 500 feet that it can see. The creature must succeed on a Will save (DC 25) or be affected as though by the spell *dominate monster*, with a few exceptions. First, the effect lasts indefinitely, but the creature may attempt a new saving throw each round to end the effect. Second, as long as the creature is affected by this ability, he gains a +6 morale bonus on attack and damage rolls. The lunar carbuncle can have more than one creature enthralled

with this ability at any given time, but for each creature beyond the first that is currently affected by this ability, each affected creature gains a +2 bonus on saving throws made to end the effect (+2 for two creatures, +4 for three creatures, etc.). This is a mind-affecting compulsion effect. The saving throw DC is Wisdom-based.

**Forehead Gem (Ex):** A lunar carbuncle's forehead gem can be attacked and damaged separately. It has an AC of 20, hardness 10, and 33 hit points. Damage dealt to the forehead gem counts against the lunar carbuncle's hit point total. If the gem is reduced to 0 hit points, the lunar carbuncle can no longer use its gem ray special attack, it loses its spell resistance, and the saving throw DCs of its spell-like and supernatural abilities are decreases by -4. A lunar carbuncle that has its forehead gem destroyed grows a new one in 2d4 weeks.

**Gem Ray (Su):** As a standard action, a lunar carbuncle can release a powerful beam of magical energy from the gemstone on its forehead. This takes the form of a line 15 feet wide and 300 feet long, which deals 20d6 points of electricity damage to each creature in the affected area. A successful Reflex save (DC 28) halves this damage. Any creature that takes at least 30 points of damage as a result of this ability is infused with an energy that interferes with magic, temporarily suppressing the magical properties of any magic items in the creature's possession, and preventing him from casting spells. Artifacts, as well as magic items with a caster level of 26 or higher, are not affected by this ability. Both of these effects last for 1 minute. The lunar carbuncle can use this ability once every 1d4 rounds.

**Spell Steal (Sp):** As a full-round action, a lunar carbuncle can attempt to access the mind of a spellcaster within 500 feet that it can see, and forcibly steal his magic. The target must succeed on a Will save (DC 23) or the lunar carbuncle may immediately cast a single spell of the highest spell level that the target has available. The exact spell cast is chosen at random from among those available, and is expended, as though the target himself had cast it. The lunar carbuncle makes all decisions about casting the spell (such as the target, and any modes or choices the spell allows), and uses its own caster level (16<sup>th</sup>) and Charisma modifier to determine the spell's effects. This is a mind-affecting compulsion effect. The saving throw DC is Wisdom-based.

#### Ecology

Lunar carbuncles do, in fact, seem to hail from the moon, although recently at least one wizard has, for reasons unknown, taken it upon himself to relocate several of these creatures into caves and caverns locally, introducing them to the planet's ecosystem. In their natural habitat, these massive lizards are apex predators, with little to fear from most other creatures. They typically hunt by using their impressive array of mental powers, like *charm monster* or *sympathy*, to bring their prey to them, rather than actively tracking such creatures down. As a result, they grow to enormous size and bulk, and move even more awkwardly than standard carbuncles.

Unlike a standard carbuncle, the gem on a lunar carbuncle's forehead persists after the creature's death, and is quite valuable. Though the exact value of these gems varies depending on their size and coloration, as well as the buyer, the gem from an adult lunar carbuncle can typically be expected to auction for at least 20,000 gp, assuming it is undamaged. Permission to copy, modify and distribute the files collectively known as the System Reference Document ("SRD") is granted solely through the use of the Open Gaming License, Version 1.0a.

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# Exotic Encounters: Carbuncles

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 QRs too high or low for what they had in mind.

Exotic Encounters takes a single, iconic monster, and creates three new variants on that theme. These variants aren't simple tweaks, and are more than simply advancing or removing hit Dice, though that occurs as well. Each of these three variations on the monster's theme has a specific, flavorful goal in mind, and a role to play, and their statistics entries are gently massaged in order to make them fit those roles. Further, each of these variants comes with brand new specially-crafted special abilities, which are unique to Exotic Encounters and not found anywhere else.

This particular installment of Gzotic Gnoounters focuses on the carbunde. These cute and quirky creatures from the Pathfinder Bestiary 2 and other non-tabletop-gaming-related sources, before that), are certainly odd, but don't make particularly threatening focs...until now. The first new carbunde presented in this book is the monstrous carbunde (CR 2). An oversized, predatory carbunde, these roving, predatory creatures share their smaller cousins' weakness to magic, but turn their empathic abilities into a deadly weapon, frightening their prey into making foolish mistakes. Monstrous carbuncles also have the ability to create copies of themselves to aid them in hunting clusive or difficult prey. Next, the gilded carbuncle (CR 5) is more intelligent and has greater magical power than the average carbuncle, and they can reflect certain spells back at their caster. They are also able to drain spell power from other creatures with their ruby horn, and use their empathic power to reflect the pain of being attacked back upon their attacker. Finally, the lunar carbuncle (CR 78) is a huge, oversized carbuncle with potent mental powers, including the ability to enthrall foes at great distances, and to steal the spells of nearby spellcasters. Lunar carbundes are also able to fire powerful beams of energy from their forchead gens, which not only damage victims but interferes with their ability to use magic.

