

# Exotic Encounters:

## Couatls



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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 couatl, a creature that is exotic by almost any definition of the word. From their South American background (which stands out like a sore thumb in the medieval-European-centric world of fantasy roleplaying games), to the fact that few parties have any reason to ever fight one, it’s a fair bet that your game group has never encountered a couatl before. This book aims to provide some couatls that might actually see some use, the first of which is the **jet couatl (CR 11)**, a type of couatl that has fallen from grace and forsaken its heavenly background, as well as its wings, in favor of a variety of new profane powers. Also featured is the **primal couatl (CR 13)**, which is more in tune with the forces of nature than the heavens, and possesses a powerful hypnotic gaze and hallucinogenic venom. Finally, the **radiant couatl (CR15)** is a paragon of the typical couatl’s ideals, but in addition to being advanced and having better spellcasting, its radiant wings can disable those who gaze upon it, and its blood is a fabled cure-all, giving characters of any stripe a reason to come to blows with one.

# Jet Couatl

The creature before you appears to be a massive serpent, at least as large as a man. Its scales are a deep black, but still shimmer with a muted color, as though the glossy black sheen were just a thin layer over a vibrant rainbow of many-colored scales. Two large, angry red scars are visible along its back, as though it had once had appendages there, which have since been severed.

## COUATL, JET

CR 11

XP 12,800

CE Large outsider (native)

**Init** +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., detect chaos/evil/good/law; Perception +23

### DEFENSE

**AC** 24, touch 13, flat-footed 20 (+3 Dex, +1 dodge, +11 natural, -1 size)

**hp** 126 (12d10+60)

**Fort** +9, **Ref** +13, **Will** +14

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 20 ft

**Melee** bite +16 (1d8+7 plus grab and poison)

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

**Special Attacks** constrict (1d8+7)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 9<sup>th</sup>)

Constant—*detect chaos, detect evil, detect good, detect law*

At Will—*detect thoughts* (DC 15), *ethereal jaunt* (CL 16<sup>th</sup>), *invisibility, plane shift* (DC 20)

**Spells Known** (CL 9<sup>th</sup>)

4<sup>th</sup> (4/day)—*crushing despair* (DC 17), *bestow curse* (DC 17)

3<sup>rd</sup> (7/day)—*gaseous form, magic circle against good, suggestion* (DC 16)

2<sup>nd</sup> (7/day)—*inflict moderate wounds, darkness, hold person* (DC 15), *scorching ray*

1<sup>st</sup> (7/day)—*burning hands* (DC 14), *mage armor, obscuring mist, protection from law, true strike*

o (at will)—*daze, ghost sound* (DC 13), *light, ray of frost, read magic, resistance, stabilize*

### STATISTICS

**Str** 20, **Dex** 16, **Con** 20, **Int** 17, **Wis** 19, **Cha** 17

**Base Atk** +12; **CMB** +18 (+22 grapple); **CMD** 32 (can't be tripped)

**Feats** Alertness, Dodge, Empower Spell, Eschew Materials<sup>B</sup>, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes

**Skills** Acrobatics +18, Bluff +9, Diplomacy +18, Intimidate +18, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Knowledge (religion) +9, Perception +23, Sense Motive +15, Spellcraft +15, Survival +16, Use Magic Device +18

**Languages** Abyssal, Common, Draconic; telepathy 100 ft.

### ECOLOGY

**Environment** warm forests and jungles

**Organization** solitary or cult (1 plus 2 - 16 zombies and 4

- 12 humanoids [adept 3])

**Treasure** standard

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Devour the Corrupted (Su):** As a full-round action, a jet couatl can consume an adjacent zombie under its control. This destroys the zombie, and grants the jet couatl a +4 profane bonus to attack and damage rolls, and increases the saving throw DC of its poison by +2 and the saving throw DCs of spells that it casts by +1. These benefits last for 1 minute.

**Poison (Ex):** Injury—bite; save Fortitude DC 16; frequency 1/minute for 10 minutes; effect 1d3 Str and 1d3 Int; cure 2 consecutive saves. Any creature whose Strength and Intelligence scores are both reduced to 0 as a result of this poison immediately dies and rises as a zombie under the jet couatl's control. The DC is Constitution-based.

**Spells:** A jet couatl casts spells as a 9<sup>th</sup>-level sorcerer, and can cast spells from the cleric list as well as those normally available to a sorcerer. Cleric spells are considered arcane spells for a couatl, meaning that the creature does not need a divine focus to cast them.

**Whispers of Corruption (Su):** A jet couatl can use its telepathy to inflict doubts and sow temptations in the minds of its victims. As a standard action, the jet couatl can attempt to weaken the resolve of a single creature within 60 feet that it can communicate with using its telepathy ability. The target must succeed on a Will save (DC 19) or suffer a -1 penalty to Will saves for 1 minute. If the jet couatl uses this ability multiple times on the same creature, these penalties stack. The saving throw DC is Charisma-based.

### Ecology

These debased creatures are couatls that have forsaken their calling and good-aligned nature, and been corrupted by selfishness and pride, and have willingly forsaken the brilliant colors and wings that are the hallmarks of the couatl in order to gain greater profane power. A couatl can become a jet couatl by performing a ritual that offers itself up to the forces of darkness and malevolence. Part of this ritual involves that the couatl ignite its wings, which burn away in a cloud of mystic smoke, and when the choking miasma of ash and dark energy settles, the couatl's scales have been permanently stained black.

Jet couatls are naturally flightless, as their wings have been completely and irrevocably destroyed, though those who continue to gain in power often learn spells which allow them to fly again, regardless. Jet couatls and standard couatls hate one another with a passion, and are the bitterest of enemies.

# Primal Couatl

This creature resembles a large snake, but it flies on the air with a pair of oversized hawk's wings. Its scales are a confused pattern of browns and greens that make it difficult to discern from the forest around it.

## COUATL, PRIMAL

CR 13

XP 25,600

N Large magical beast

**Init** +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., detect animals or plants, low-light vision, scent, tremorsense 20 ft.; Perception +27

### DEFENSE

**AC** 25, touch 13, flat-footed 22 (+3 Dex, +1 dodge, +13 natural, -1 size)

**hp** 168 (16d10+80)

**Fort** +15, **Ref** +15, **Will** +11

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 20 ft., fly 60 ft. (good)

**Melee** bite +20 (2d6+9 plus grab and poison)

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

**Special Attacks** constrict (4d6+18)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 16<sup>th</sup>)

Constant—detect animals or plants

At Will—control weather, gust of wind (DC 15), tree stride, tree shape

**Spells Known** (CL 12<sup>th</sup>)

6<sup>th</sup> (3/day)—wall of stone

5<sup>th</sup> (5/day)—awaken (DC 18), call lightning storm (DC 18)

4<sup>th</sup> (6/day)—cloak of wasps<sup>UM</sup>, control water, dispel magic

3<sup>rd</sup> (7/day)—ash storm<sup>UM</sup>, dominate animal (DC 16), meld into stone, speak with plants

2<sup>nd</sup> (7/day)—animal messenger, barkskin, bull's strength, heat metal (DC 15), summon swarm

1<sup>st</sup> (7/day)—endure elements, entangle (DC 14), goodberry, magic fang, obscuring mist

o (at will)—create water, detect magic, detect poison, guidance, know direction, light, purify food and drink, resistance, stabilize

### STATISTICS

**Str** 22, **Dex** 16, **Con** 20, **Int** 17, **Wis** 19, **Cha** 17

**Base Atk** +16; **CMB** +22 (+26 grapple); **CMD** 36 (can't be tripped)

**Feats** Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Empower Spell, Eschew Materials<sup>B</sup>, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes

**Skills** Acrobatics +22, Fly +24, Knowledge (nature) +19, Perception +27, Sense Motive +24, Stealth +3 (+11 in forested environments), Survival +20; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Stealth in forested environments

**Languages** Celestial, Common, Sylvan

### ECOLOGY

**Environment** warm forests and jungles

**Organization** solitary, pair, or flight (3-6)

**Treasure** standard

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Hypnotic Gaze (Su):** As a standard action, a primal couatl can lock gaze with a single creature within 60 feet, attempting to mesmerize the target with its eyes. The target must succeed on a Will save (DC 21) or become fascinated by the primal couatl for 1 round. Once the primal couatl has fascinated a creature in this way, it can maintain the gaze as a swift action in following rounds, though it cannot use its gaze ability on other characters in any round in which it does so. Each round that the primal couatl maintains the effect, the target is entitled to a new Will save (same DC) to end the effect. A creature that remains fascinated for three consecutive rounds is affected as though by the spell *charm monster* (no additional save, caster level 16<sup>th</sup>). Creatures that are aware of the primal couatl's hypnotic gaze can attempt to avoid it in the same fashion that standard gaze attacks can be avoided (by averting their eyes or blindfolding themselves).

**Poison (Ex):** Injury—bite; save Fortitude DC 23; frequency 1/round for 10 rounds; effect the target suffers hallucinations, causing him to be nauseated and suffer a -4 penalty on saving throws to resist becoming fascinated. These effects last 1 round; cure 3 consecutive saves. The DC is Constitution-based.

**Powerful Constriction (Ex):** A primal couatl deals more damage than normal with its constrict ability, inflicting twice the damage it would normally deal with its bite attack.

**Spells:** A primal couatl casts spells as a 9<sup>th</sup>-level sorcerer, except that the primal couatl draws its spells known from the druid spell list, instead of the sorcerer/wizard spell list. Druid spells are considered arcane spells for a primal couatl, meaning that the creature does not need a divine focus to cast them. The primal couatl still uses its Charisma score to determine its bonus spells per day and its saving throw DCs, and still casts spells spontaneously, like a sorcerer.

## Ecology

While couatls are well-known for being servants of various good-aligned deities, not all couatls take up this calling, and some choose to truly "go native," embracing the natural world and the primal forces of the wild. These couatls, known as primal couatls, cease being outsiders entirely, and are wholly embraced by nature. This fundamental change in what the couatl is and does causes its spellcasting abilities to alter dramatically.

Primal couatls are almost always found in the deepest and darkest corners of the most wild and uncharted places, far from the trappings of civilization. They spend much of their time hunting and living a very animalistic lifestyle, but are quick to act on any encroachment on their wild and native paradise. A few more self-serving primal couatls instead set themselves up as deities of small, isolated tribes, using their hypnotic gaze to foster small empires.

# Radiant Couatl

The creature before you appears to be a large snake, its scales a beautiful panoply of every imaginable color. Even more beautiful, however, are its wings, which appear to be made of translucent feathers of every color, which shine like gems as sunlight pierces through them, and resemble nothing so much as stained glass.

## COUATL, RADIANT

CR 15

XP 51,200

LG Large outsider (native)

**Init** +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., *detect chaos/evil/good/law*;

**Perception** +23

### DEFENSE

**AC** 28, touch 15, flat-footed 22 (+5 Dex, +1 dodge, +13 natural, -1 size)

**hp** 207 (18d10+108)

**Fort** +12, **Ref** +18, **Will** +17

**Defensive Abilities** *protection from chaos, protection from evil, universal antidote*; **SR** 26

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 20 ft., fly 60 ft. (good)

**Melee** bite +22 (2d6+7 plus grab and cursed bite)

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

**Special Attacks** constrict (1d8+7)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 13<sup>th</sup>)

Constant—*detect chaos, detect evil, detect good, detect law, protection from chaos, protection from evil*

At Will—*detect thoughts* (DC 17), *ethereal jaunt* (CL 20<sup>th</sup>), *invisibility, plane shift* (DC 22), *protection from energy*

**Spells Known** (CL 13<sup>th</sup>)

6<sup>th</sup> (4/day)—*heal, true seeing*

5<sup>th</sup> (7/day)—*break enchantment, hold monster* (DC 20), *mark of justice* (DC 20)

4<sup>th</sup> (7/day)—*charm monster* (DC 19), *fire shield, freedom of movement, holy smite* (DC 19)

3<sup>rd</sup> (7/day)—*daylight, dispel magic, gaseous form, magic circle against evil*

2<sup>nd</sup> (7/day)—*cure moderate wounds, eagle's splendor, owl's wisdom, scorching ray, silence* (DC 17)

1<sup>st</sup> (8/day)—*endure elements, mage armor, magic missile, obscuring mist, true strike*

o (at will)—*daze, detect magic, detect poison, disrupt undead, light, ray of frost, read magic, resistance, stabilize*

### STATISTICS

**Str** 20, **Dex** 20, **Con** 22, **Int** 17, **Wis** 19, **Cha** 20

**Base Atk** +18; **CMB** +24 (+28 grapple); **CMD** 38 (can't be tripped)

**Feats** Alertness, Dodge, Empower Spell, Eschew Materials<sup>B</sup>, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes

**Skills** Acrobatics +26, Bluff +11, Diplomacy +26, Fly +28, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Knowledge (religion) +18, Perception +29, Sense Motive +18, Spellcraft +21, Survival +22, Use Magic Device +26

**Languages** Celestial, Common, Draconic; telepathy 100 ft.

### ECOLOGY

**Environment** warm forests and jungles

**Organization** solitary, pair, or flight (3-6)

**Treasure** standard

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Cursed Bite (Su):** The bite of a radiant couatl carries a powerful curse that punishes any who would dare to raise their hand against such a creature. A creature that is damaged by a radiant couatl's bite must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 23) or be permanently sickened. The second time that a creature is damaged by a radiant couatl's bite, he must succeed on a Fortitude save (same DC) or be permanently blinded. The third time that a creature is damaged by a radiant couatl's bite, and each additional time thereafter, he must succeed on a Fortitude save (same DC) or be affected as though by the spell *bestow curse*. A *break enchantment* or *atonement* spell, or more powerful magic, removes all penalties caused by a radiant couatl's bite. The saving throw DC is Wisdom-based.

**Radiant Wings (Su):** A radiant couatl's wings create brilliant patterns of light in the proper conditions, which make it difficult to even look at the creature, let alone fight it. As long as the radiant couatl is in an area of normal or brighter light, any creature within 30 feet of it that looks at it must succeed on a Will save (DC 24) each round, or be dazzled for as long as it remains within 30 feet of the radiant couatl, and continues to look at the radiant couatl, and for 1d4 rounds thereafter. If the creature fails a saving throw to resist this effect while it's already dazzled, that creature becomes confused, instead. If the creature fails a saving throw to resist this effect while it is already confused, it becomes nauseated, instead. Any nausea or confusion caused by this ability lasts for the same duration as the dazzled effect. Creatures can avoid the affects of this ability by averting their eyes or blindfolding themselves, as though it were a gaze attack.

**Spells:** A radiant couatl casts spells as a 13<sup>th</sup>-level sorcerer, and can cast spells from the cleric list as well as those normally available to a sorcerer. Cleric spells are considered arcane spells for a radiant couatl, meaning that the creature does not need a divine focus to cast them.

**Universal Antidote (Ex):** A radiant couatl is immune to ability damage and drain, energy drain, curses, diseases, and poisons (including magical diseases and poisons), as well as to all of the following conditions: blinded, confused, dazed, dazzled, deafened, exhausted, fascinated, fatigued, frightened, nauseated, panicked, paralyzed, petrified, shaken, sickened, staggered, and stunned. Additionally, the blood of a radiant couatl is a powerful cure-all, and 5 oz. of the creature's blood can replicate the effects of a *miracle* spell, but only for the purposes of undoing or removing harmful effects.

## Ecology

These truly beautiful creatures are paragons of their race, and while most couatls are devoted to virtue and order, radiant couatls are exemplars of these ideals. They are best known for their blood, however, which is said to be able to cure any illness or affliction, including the most powerful of curses. Sadly, for this reason, radiant couatls are frequently hunted by the evil or the desperate. Some radiant couatls actually encourage this to a certain extent, allowing good-hearted creatures in need of their blood to "hunt" them, during which time they test the hunters' worthiness, and, if they deem the hunter worthy, they allow themselves to be "slain," and enough blood to be collected to aid the hunter, without slaying the radiant couatl.

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# Exotic Encounters: Couatls

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 couatl, a creature that is exotic by almost any definition of the word. From their South American background (which stands out like a sore thumb in the medieval-European-centric world of fantasy roleplaying games), to the fact that few parties have any reason to ever fight one, it's a fair bet that your game group has never encountered a couatl before. This book aims to provide some couatls that might actually see some use, the first of which is the jet couatl (CR 11), a type of couatl that has fallen from grace and forsaken its heavenly background, as well as its wings, in favor of a variety of new profane powers. Also featured is the primal couatl (CR 12), which is more in tune with the forces of nature than the heavens, and possesses a powerful hypnotic gaze and hallucinogenic venom. Finally, the radiant couatl (CR 15) is a paragon of the typical couatl's ideals, but in addition to being advanced and having better spellcasting, its radiant wings can disable those who gaze upon it, and its blood is a fabled cure-all, giving characters of any stripe a reason to come to blows with one.