

Exotic Encounters:

Krakens



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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 kraken. These oceanic titans are staples of oceanic fantasy (and science fiction), and it seems a wonder that any ship can cross the ocean without being downed by one of these great squids. In the transition from 3.5 OGL to *Pathfinder*, the mighty kraken got much mightier, skyrocketing its CR up into a realm where few players are likely to reach. As a result, all of the krakens in this book attempt to create meaningful encounters with evil squids that can be fairly attempted by characters who aren’t nearly at their peak already. The first of these is the **barbed kraken (CR 8)**, a smaller kraken that lacks the size, shipwrecking capacity, and magical talent of the standard kraken, but which has poisonous and debilitating barbs on its long arms, and a maddening glare fitting for a monster of the deep. The **seaquake kraken (CR 13)** specializes in creating giant vortices in the water, which it uses to sink ships and devour their crews. Finally, the **dominator kraken (CR 15)** is even more intelligent than its kin, and can project a telepathic field that allows it to control each and every creature within range.

Barbed Kraken

The creature before you resembles a giant squid. Its bulbous, glaring eye is larger than your head, and its two incredibly long arms, which stretch out far past its many lesser tentacles, end in a forest of jagged barbs as long as your arm.

KRAKEN, BARBED

CR 8

XP 4,800

NE Huge magical beast (aquatic)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft., low-light vision;

Perception +18

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 8, flat-footed 18 (+10 natural, -2 size)

hp 105 (10d10+50)

Fort +12, **Ref** +7, **Will** +8

Resist cold 10

OFFENSE

Speed 10 ft., swim 40 ft., jet 280 ft.

Melee 2 arms +12 (1d6+4 plus barbs), 8 tentacles +10 (1d4+2 plus grab), bite +12 (2d4+4)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft. (40 ft. with arm, 30 ft. with tentacle)

Special Attacks burst of ink, constrict (tentacles, 1d4+2), eye of malice

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 10, **Con** 21, **Int** 17, **Wis** 20, **Cha** 15

Base Atk +10; **CMB** +16 (+20 grapple); **CMD** 26 (can't be tripped)

Feats Blind-Fight, Cleave, Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Power Attack

Skills Intimidate +12, Perception +18, Stealth +5, Survival +15, Swim +31

Languages Aquan, Common

SQ tenacious grapple

ECOLOGY

Environment any ocean

Organization solitary

Treasure standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Barbs (Ex): A barbed kraken's arms are covered in two-foot long poisonous spines, which pump the barbed kraken's poison into a victim's body, and break off in the target when he is struck. Any creature damaged by a barbed kraken's arms has 1d3-1 barbs embedded in his flesh. A creature with one or more barbs embedded in its body suffers a penalty to attack rolls and AC equal to the number of barbs embedded in it, to a maximum penalty of -5. Additionally, at the beginning of each round in which a creature has one or more barbs embedded in it, that creature must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 15 + 2 per barb embedded in the creature, to a maximum DC of 25) or be sickened for 1 round, as the barbs inject their venom. A creature can remove up to two barbs from itself or an adjacent creature as a move action, but doing so without succeeding on a DC 20 Heal check (a

free action made as part of removing the barbs) inflicts an additional 1d4 points of damage.

Burst of Ink (Ex): A barbed kraken can emit a cloud of black, venomous ink in a 60-foot cone once every 1d4 rounds as a free action while underwater. This cloud provides concealment to creatures that are separated by at least 5 feet of the ink, and provides total concealment to creatures that are separated by at least 20 feet of the ink. In addition, the ink is toxic, functioning as a contact poison against all creatures caught within it. The ink cloud persists for 1d4 rounds before dispersing. The save DC against the poison effect is Constitution-based.

Barbed Kraken Ink: Ink cloud—contact; save Fort DC 20; frequency 1/round for 6 rounds; effect 1d2 Str damage and 1d2 Dex damage; cure 2 consecutive saves.

Eye of Malice (Su): A barbed kraken's glare is capable of driving those it turns its dark gaze upon into fits of hysteria. As a standard action, the barbed kraken can glare at a single creature within 60 feet that can see it. The target must succeed on a Will save (DC 17) or be confused for 1d4 rounds. This is a mind-affecting compulsion effect, and can be avoided by the same methods that a character can avoid a standard gaze attack, such as averting his eyes or wearing a blindfold. The saving throw DC is Charisma-based.

Jet (Ex): A barbed kraken can jet backward as a full-round action, at a speed of 280 feet. It must move in a straight line, but does not provoke attacks of opportunity while jetting.

Tenacious Grapple (Ex): A barbed kraken does not gain the grappled condition if it grapples a foe with its arms or tentacles.

Ecology

These creatures are often mistaken for young or juvenile krakens by fishermen and other sailors who don't know any better, but sages have determined that they are actually a separate breed altogether, and while they are distantly related to their larger and much more powerful cousins, they possess a number of key differences.

Barbed krakens lack the magical talent and raw size of standard krakens, and are not as adept at destroying ships, but they make up for these drawbacks largely by maturing quickly and propagating rapidly, and most sages estimate that, were a census of the ocean depths possible, barbed krakens would outnumber their larger cousins at least 5 to 1. They are less commonly seen by sailors, however, because they do not prey on ships nearly as often as their larger kin do. Instead, they spend most of their time battling other underwater denizens for territory. Though they mostly try to avoid true krakens, they tend to be bitter enemies of the aboleths, and spend much of their time warring with these creatures for food, territory, and slaves.

Seaquake Kraken

You notice a faint shimmering on the ocean floor below you, and then, suddenly, there is a great rushing of water as a massive vortex forms around you, and the current rushes you downwards, towards the waiting maw of what appears to be an enormous octopus, which seems to be slowly fading into being in the spot that you saw the shimmer before.

KRAKEN, SEAQUAKE

CR 13

XP 25,600

NE Gargantuan magical beast (aquatic)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft., low-light vision;

Perception +21

DEFENSE

AC 28, touch 6, flat-footed 28 (+22 natural, -4 size)

hp 188 (13d10+117)

Fort +17, **Ref** +8, **Will** +9

Resist cold 10

Weaknesses vulnerability to electricity

OFFENSE

Speed 10 ft., swim 40 ft.

Melee 8 tentacles +12 (1d8+2 plus grab), bite +14 (2d6+5 plus grab)

Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (40 ft. with tentacle)

Special Attacks ink cloud, rend ship, swallow whole (10d6 acid damage, AC 21, 18 hp)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 13th)

At Will—*shatter* (DC 17)

1/day—*control water*, *disintegrate* (DC 21), *telekinesis* (DC 20)

STATISTICS

Str 20, **Dex** 10, **Con** 29, **Int** 21, **Wis** 20, **Cha** 21

Base Atk +13; **CMB** +22 (+26 grapple); **CMD** 32 (can't be tripped)

Feats Blind-Fight, Cleave, Combat Expertise, Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Multiattack, Power Attack

Skills Intimidate +18, Knowledge (geography) +18, Knowledge (nature) +18, Perception +21, Stealth +4, Swim +34, Use Magic Device +18

Languages Aquan, Common

SQ tenacious grapple

ECOLOGY

Environment any ocean

Organization solitary

Treasure triple

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Camouflage (Ex): A seaquake kraken can change the color of its skin at will, allowing it to blend in with its environment and lay a deadly ambush. As a standard action, a seaquake kraken can gain a +40 bonus on Stealth checks. This bonus lasts indefinitely, but only as long as the seaquake kraken does not move. Once the seaquake kraken moves, the bonus is reduced to +10, and lasts for 1 round before fading entirely.

Tenacious Grapple (Ex): A seaquake kraken does not gain the grappled condition if it grapples a foe with its arms or tentacles.

Vortex (Su): A seaquake kraken can create a massive vortex which sucks its prey down through the rushing water and into its waiting maw. The base of the vortex forms at the seaquake kraken's mouth, and is 5 feet wide. The height of the vortex, and the width at the top, are always the same, and are either 80 feet or the distance from the seaquake kraken to the surface of the water, whichever is less. Creatures that enter the area of the vortex or begin their turn within it must succeed on a Swim check (DC 32) or suffer 10d6 points of damage and be swept along by the vortex, moving 5 feet towards the seaquake kraken's mouth for every 5 points by which they fail to meet the DC. Ships that enter the area of the vortex or begin their turn within it must succeed on a Profession (sailor) check (DC 32) made by the pilot or captain, or suffer the same consequences.

Further, creatures and ships in the area cannot move away from the seaquake kraken's mouth unless they succeed on a Swim check (DC 42) for each such attempt. If a creature of Huge size or smaller moves adjacent to the seaquake kraken's mouth while the seaquake kraken is using this ability, the seaquake kraken can make a combat maneuver check to swallow the creature as an immediate action.

The seaquake kraken must spend a full-round action each round to maintain this ability, and can maintain it for one minute, after which it must succeed on a Constitution check (DC 10 + 5 per previous attempt) each round in order to be able to continue using the ability.

Vulnerability to Electricity (Ex): A seaquake kraken is vulnerable to electricity, and takes half again as much (+50%) damage from attacks that deal electricity damage. Additionally, whenever the seaquake kraken takes at least 10 points of electricity damage, it must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 10 + the amount of electricity damage dealt) or be stunned for 1 round.

Ecology

Seaquake krakens are not technically krakens, as they are more octopuslike than squidlike, and like a kraken's long arms. They are also incapable of producing an ink cloud, though they more than make up for these deficiencies with their other abilities. Their name comes from their most terrifying ability: the power to create a giant vortex. Seaquake krakens prey primarily on the seagoing vessels of humanoids, and will use their spell-like abilities to damage a ship's hull, then use its vortex to finish the job, if necessary, and suck up the crew into its waiting maw.

Dominator Kraken

The creature before you resembles a giant squid, though its arms and tentacles seem somewhat short and underdeveloped, its head is massive, and, looking closely, you can actually see the creature's head pulsing and throbbing even as you feel its mind brush across yours, and you realize that this is a being of enormous intellect.

KRAKEN, DOMINATOR

CR 15

XP 51,200

NE Gargantuan magical beast (aquatic)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft., low-light vision; Perception

+24

DEFENSE

AC 26, touch 6, flat-footed 26 (+20 natural, -4 size)

hp 216 (16d10+138)

Fort +18, **Ref** +10, **Will** +10

Immune cold, poison

OFFENSE

Speed 10 ft., swim 40 ft., jet 200 ft.

Melee 2 arms +18 (2d6+6/19-20 plus grab), 8 tentacles +16

(1d8+3 plus grab), bite +22 (2d8+6)

Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 20 ft. (40 ft. with arm, 20 ft. with tentacle)

Special Attacks constrict (tentacles, 1d8+6), domination field, psionic blast, ink cloud

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 16th)

At Will—*detect thoughts* (DC 19)

3/day—*demand* (DC 25), *insanity* (DC 24)

1/day—*dominate monster* (DC 26), *power word stun*

STATISTICS

Str 22, **Dex** 10, **Con** 27, **Int** 24, **Wis** 20, **Cha** 21

Base Atk +16; **CMB** +26 (+30 grapple); **CMD** 36 (can't be tripped)

Feats Blind-Fight, Cleave, Combat Expertise, Improved Critical (arm), Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Multiattack, Power Attack

Skills Bluff +21, Intimidate +21, Knowledge (arcana) +23,

Knowledge (geography) +23, Knowledge (nature) +23,

Perception +24, Stealth +7, Swim +34, Use Magic Device +21

Languages Aquan, Common, telepathy 120 ft.

SQ genius magic, tenacious grapple

ECOLOGY

Environment any ocean

Organization solitary

Treasure triple

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Domination Field (Su): As a full-round action, a dominator kraken can produce a psychic field that allows it to control nearby creatures like puppets. Each creature other than the dominator kraken within 30 feet of the dominator kraken must succeed on a Will save (DC 25) or be affected by this ability. For each affected creature, the dominator kraken may have that creature perform a full round's worth of actions as a free action during the dominator kraken's turn. The dominator kraken chooses what actions the affected creature takes, and can have the creature do anything, including cast spells with a casting time of 1 round or less, make attacks, move, etc. Creatures

affected this way are not considered helpless, however, so the dominator kraken cannot have one affected creature perform a coup de grace on another affected creature (unless the second creature was already helpless). Any actions taken in this way do not count against the number of actions that an affected creature can take in a turn. Creatures that have been stunned or confused by one of the dominator kraken's abilities are able to act normally for the purposes of this ability. This ability only functions on creatures in water or other liquids, and the dominator kraken must also be in water to use this ability. The saving throw DC is Intelligence-based.

Genius Magic: A dominator kraken uses its Intelligence modifier, rather than its Charisma modifier, to determine the saving throw DCs of its spell-like abilities.

Ink Cloud (Ex): A dominator kraken can emit a cloud of sickly-green, venomous ink in a 40-foot spread once per minute as a free action while underwater. This cloud provides total concealment to creatures within the affected area, preventing even darkvision from functioning. In addition, the ink is toxic, functioning as a contact poison against all creatures caught within it. The ink cloud persists for 1 minute before dispersing. The save DC against the poison effect is Constitution-based.

Dominator Kraken Ink: Ink cloud—contact; save Fort DC 26; frequency 1/round for 10 rounds; effect 1d2 Wis; cure 2 consecutive saves.

Jet (Ex): A dominator kraken can jet backward as a full-round action, at a speed of 200 feet. It must move in a straight line, but does not provoke attacks of opportunity while jetting.

Psionic Blast (Su): As a standard action, a dominator kraken can create a 60-ft. cone of psychic energy. Each creature in the affected area suffers 4d6 points of damage that is not subject to damage reduction, and are stunned for 1d2 rounds. A successful Will save (DC 25) halves the damage and negates the stunned condition. The dominator kraken can use this ability once every 1d4 rounds.

Tenacious Grapple (Ex): A dominator kraken does not gain the grappled condition if it grapples a foe with its arms or tentacles.

Ecology

Dominator krakens are physically weaker than their better known cousins, but are nonetheless still terrifying denizens of the deep, and more than make up for their lesser stature with their incredible mental abilities. Dominator krakens' most fearsome ability, their domination field, actually transmits the dominator kraken's thought waves through the water around it, creating an electrical field in the water that allows it to reach and control the brains of dozens of creatures at once. This field is unstable and short-lived, mercifully, allowing some slim chance of escaping the creature's slimy clutches for those poor souls unfortunate enough to meet one face to face.

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Exotic Encounters: Krakens

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 kraken. These oceanic titans are staples of oceanic fantasy (and science fiction), and it seems a wonder that any ship can cross the ocean without being downed by one of these great squids. In the transition from 3.5 OGL to *Pathfinder*, the mighty kraken got much mightier, skyrocketing its CR up into a realm where few players are likely to reach. As a result, all of the krakens in this book attempt to create meaningful encounters with evil squids that can be fairly attempted by characters who aren't nearly at their peak already. The first of these is the barbed kraken (CR 8), a smaller kraken that lacks the size, shipwrecking capacity, and magical talent of the standard kraken, but which has poisonous and debilitating barbs on its long arms, and a maddening glare fitting for a monster of the deep. The seaquake kraken (CR 12) specializes in creating giant vortices in the water, which it uses to sink ships and devour their crews. Finally, the dominator kraken (CR 15) is even more intelligent than its kin, and can project a telepathic field that allows it to control each and every creature within range.