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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 speciallycrafted special abilities, which are unique to *Exotic Encounters* and not found anywhere else.

This particular installment of *Exotic* Encounters focuses on the mysterious manticore. These creatures of ancient persian mythology have been portrayed many different ways throughout the centuries. Though they always bear the body of a lion, and usually the face of a man, details like wings, tails, and horns have varied wildly. The regal manticore, introduced in this book, takes the more majestic, non-winged form favored in the middle ages (though it is no less monstrous for doing so). The razor manticore, by contrast, bristles with natural weaponry, gaining a deadly spiked horn, and the ability to use its teeth to gnaw opponents, to devastating results. Finally, the **poisonous manticore** has the deadly scorpion's tail that many have come to expect from manticores in other media, but which the standard Pathfinder manticore lacks.



Image by Forrest Imel

Regal Manticore

The creature that stands before you appears to be some sort of majestic blend of man and beast. It has the body of a lion, with a reddish-gold coat. Its face is like that of a man, except that its eyes have feline pupils, with rich gold irises, and its mouth is full of hundreds of long, slender, needlelike teeth. Finally, emerging from the creature's head are a pair of stag-like antlers, which catch the light and glint with a golden hue.

MANTICORE, REGAL

CR 3

XP 800

LE Large magical beast

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 12 (+3 Dex, +3 natural, -1 size)

hp 30 (4d10+8)

Fort +6, **Ref** +6, **Will** +5

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee bite +6 (1d8+3), 2 claws +6 (1d6+3) Space 10 ft.; Reach 5 ft. Special Attacks staggering shout

STATISTICS

Str 17, Dex 17, Con 15, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 17 Base Atk +4; CMB +8; CMD 21 (25 vs. trip) Feats Ability Focus (staggering shout), Iron Will Skills Knowledge (arcana) +5, Intimidate +7, Perception +6 Languages Common SQ regal blessing

ECOLOGY

Environment warm hills and marshes **Organization** solitary, pair, or pride (3-6) **Treasure** standard

Regal Blessing (Su): A regal manticore can grant a blessing or impose a curse on a creature as a standard action. If the regal manticore chooses to grant a blessing, then the target gains a +1 luck bonus to ability checks, AC, attack rolls, saving throws, and skill checks. If the regal manticore chooses to impose a curse, then the target suffers a -1 penalty to those things, instead. Either way, the effect lasts indefinitely, but the regal manticore can only maintain a total number of blessings and curses equal to its Hit Dice. If the regal manticore is slain, all blessings that it is currently granting end immediately, but all curses that it is currently imposing remain in effect for a number of days equal to the regal manticore's Charisma bonus. A curse imposed by a regal manticore can be removed by *remove curse* or more powerful magic.

Staggering Shout (Su): As a standard action, a regal manticore can shout, its voice making a majestic, trumpeting sound that causes other creatures to be overcome with awe at the incredible noise. Each creature within 60 feet that can hear the regal manticore must succeed on a Will save (DC 17) or be staggered for 1d4+1 rounds. Any creature that fails its saving throw by 5 or more is dazed for 1d4+1 rounds, instead. Regal manticores are immune to the staggering shouts of other regal manticores. This is a mind-affecting effect. The saving throw DC is Charisma-based.

Ecology

Regal manticores are only very distantly related to their more common cousins, and some scholars believe it a misnomer to call them manticores at all, and that they are in fact more closely related to sphinxes. Whatever the case, regal manticores have the trademark body of a lion and head of a man, and they also share the average manticore's fondness for feasting on flesh.

Regal manticores get their name as much from their arrogant attitude as they do from the fact that their appearance, bearing, and demeanor are far more refined than that of the standard manticore. Regal manticores disdain hunting, and prefer to bully or persuade other creatures to procure live human sacrifices for them, often insisting that their victims be brought to them bound and gagged, to be devoured alive. In order to procure such help, the regal manticores generally fall back on their mystical ability to provide blessings (or grant curses) and their skill at intimidation. If unable to find someone willing to do their dirty work for them, regal manticores generally use their staggering shout to disable prey, and then devour their staggered or dazed victim.

Razor Manticore

The creature that stands before you looks like a nightmare escaped from some insane wizard's laboratory. It has the body of a lion, with reddishbrown fur and huge, razor claws on its feet. It has a pair of monstrous bat wings, with wicked spikes at their ends, and a tail that resembles a club studded with hundreds of wicked, scythe-like barbs. Its head is disturbingly humanoid, but its mouth is filled with no less than three rows of shark-like, interlocking razor teeth. Finally, a huge, serrated horn grows from beneath its limp, greasy, tangled mane of hair, jutting a full foot from the top of the creature's head.

MANTICORE, RAZOR

CR₇

XP 3,200

N Large magical beast

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 11, flat-footed 17 (+2 Dex, +8 natural, -1 size)

hp 84 (8d10+40)

Fort +11, Ref +8, Will +3

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (clumsy) **Melee** bite +12 (1d8+5 plus gnaw) and 2 claws +12 (1d6+5), or gore +13 (2d6+5) and 2 claws +12 (1d6+5) **Ranged** 4 spikes +9 (1d6+5) **Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. **Special Attacks** hurl horn

STATISTICS

Str 20, Dex 15, Con 20, Int 3, Wis 12, Cha 7 Base Atk +8; CMB +16 (+20 to grapple); CMD 26 (30 vs. trip) Feats Flyby Attack, Improved Grapple, Improved Natural Attack (gore), Weapon Focus (gore) Skills Fly -2, Perception +10, Survival +4 (+8 tracking); Racial Modifiers +4 Perception, +4 Survival when tracking

ECOLOGY

Environment warm deserts, hills, jungles, and mountains

Organization solitary, pair, or pride (3-6) Treasure incidental **Gnaw** (Ex): When a razor manticore hits with its bite attack, it can choose to gnaw the target, biting down and refusing to let go. This functions as the grab universal monster ability, except that the razor manticore does not have the option to conduct the grapple normally, and must use only its mouth for the grapple, suffering the normal -20 penalty for doing so (and not gaining the grappled condition, as a result). The razor manticore cannot make bite attacks while it is grappling in this way, but it can maintain the grapple as a free action, and each round that it succeeds in maintaining the grapple it automatically inflicts its bite damage on the creature it is gnawing.

Hurl Horn (Ex): With a snap of its neck, a razor manticore can fire the horn on its head, in the same way that an average manticore can fire spikes from its tail. This attack has a range of 30 feet with a range increment of 10 feet. If the attack hits, it deals damage as normal for the razor manticore's gore attack, except that the razor manticore adds twice its Strength modifier to the damage (for a total of 2d6+10 damage). This attack also has a critical multiplier of x3.

Spikes (Ex): With a snap of its tail, a razor manticore can loose a volley of four spikes as a standard action (make an attack roll for each spike). This attack has a range of 180 feet with no range increment. All targets must be within 30 feet of each other. A razor manticore can launch up to 32 spikes in any 24-hour period.

Ecology

The exact origins of these fearsome creatures is unknown. Also known as "horned manticores" in some lands, it is generally believed that the origin of this subspecies of manticore can be traced back to the laboratory of a mad wizard who hoped to create an even more deadly version of the manticore, a race well known for being a conglomerate of different deadly predators, by giving it even more natural weapons. Whether or not this is true, there's no questioning that these more animalistic manticores are twice as violent are their more common cousins.

Poisonous Manticore

The creature that stands before you seems to be an amalgamation of as many deadly creatures as possible. It has the body of a lion, its fur black with a few red highlights. It has a pair of massive leathery, bat-like wings, also black, and with red at the tips. Its head is like that of a man, though with sharp, pointed teeth, but the feature that stands out the most is the giant scorpion-like tail that curls up over its body, covered in a slick, black carapace, and tipped with an eight-inch long stinger that glistens, as though with blood, or venom.

MANTICORE, POISONOUS CR 9
XP 6,400
NE Large magical beast
Init +3; Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision,
scent; Perception +12
DEFENSE
AC 22, touch 12, flat-footed 19 (+3 Dex, +10 natural,
-1 size)
hp 115 (11d10+55)
Fort +11, Ref +9, Will +4
OFFENSE
Speed 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (poor)
Melee bite +15 (2d6+5), 2 claws +15 (2d4+5), and
sting +16 (1d8+5 plus poison)
Space 10 ft.; Reach 5 ft.
Special Attacks fearsome roar, paralyzing venom
STATISTICS
Str 20, Dex 17, Con 21, Int 6, Wis 12, Cha 11
Base Atk +11; CMB +17; CMD 30 (34 vs. trip)
Feats Ability Focus (paralyzing venom), Flyby
Attack, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Improved
Natural Attack (sting), Power Attack, Weapon
Focus (sting)

Skills Fly +5, Perception +12, Survival +4 (+8 tracking); **Racial Modifiers** +4 Perception, +4 Survival when tracking

Languages Common

ECOLOGY

Environment warm hills and marshes **Organization** solitary, pair, or pride (3-6) **Treasure** standard

Fearsome Roar (Ex): As a full-round action, a poisonous manticore can let loose a terrifying roar, which is not only frightening to hear, but also has enough force to push back its opponents. This has two effects. First, each creature within 60 feet must succeed on a Will save (DC 20) or be shaken for 1 minute. This is a mind-affecting fear effect. Additionally, the force of the roar pushes back all creatures in a 15-ft. cone. The poisonous manticore makes a single bull rush combat maneuver and applies the result to each creature in the affected area. This does not provoke attacks of opportunity, and the poisonous manticore cannot choose to move with any of the targets, but this otherwise functions as a normal bull rush attempt.

Paralyzing Venom (Ex): When necessary, a poisonous manticore can secrete a powerful paralyzing agent on the tip of its tail. As a move action, the poisonous manticore can cover its stinger with this substance. The next time that the poisonous manticore hits a creature with its sting attack, it does not deliver its normal poison. Instead, the target must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 22) or be paralyzed. The target may make a new saving throw each round to end the effect, and the effect ends automatically after one minute. Any resistance or immunity to poison that the target may possess is applied to this effect, and anything that can remove or suspend the effects of poisons applies to this, as well. A poisonous manticore may use this ability once per hour. The saving throw DC is Constitution-based.

Poison (Ex): Sting—injury; *save* Fort DC 20; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d4 Dex damage; *cure* 1 save.

Ecology

This subspecies of manticore is easily identified by its large scorpion-like tail, which it can use to deliver a paralyzing toxin that allows it to slowly devour its prey alive and fully conscious, and these creatures are just intelligent enough to be able to derive a cruel, sadistic satisfaction from doing so. While they are much better hunters and killers than more common breeds of manticores, their propensity for killing their mates (and eating their offspring) has gone a long way toward keeping their population under control. 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: Manticores

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