Weekly Wonders A Conjurer's Guide to PSYCHOPOMPS

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Introduction

One of the joys of playing a summoner—a spellcaster of any class who focuses on conjuring allies with spells like *summon monster*—is being able to make use of all the fun and exciting outsiders that fill the various *Pathfinder Bestiaries*. Although there are now many such tomes filled to the brim with exotic minions to conjure, resources from the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook* often weren't made with future publications in mind. As a result, those relying on *summon monster* and similar spells are working off of lists that, outside of rare sidebars reserved for characters with very specific circumstances, are rarely updated or expanded.

This book focuses on one of the more underutilized but most interesting of the outsider groups, psychopomps. Presented here is a feat that allows characters to easily summon psychopomps with the summoning spells they already have access to, plus 2 new psychopomp-themed archetypes for the cleric and wizard, as well as a new shaman spirit, allowing characters of those classes to form deeper and more meaningful bonds with psychopomps and gain additional psychopomp-related powers. Finally, the book features two new psychopomps, with original stat-blocks and abilities, which not only make for excellent monsters just like those found in the various *Pathfinder Bestiaries*, but also happen to be at CRs that fill gaps among the existing psychopomps.

New Feat

The following feat is designed to allow any interested character the ability to summon psychopomps.

Psychopomp Summoner

You are able to summon psychopomp with spells. **Prerequisite**: Spell Focus (conjuration).

Benefits: Whenever you cast a *summon monster* or *summon nature's ally* spell, you can choose to summon one or more psychopomps instead of the creatures normally available with that spell. The spell level required to summon a psychopomp in this way depends on its CR, as outlined on the table below.

Table: Summoned Psychopomp CRs

Spell Level	CR
ıst	1/2 or less
2nd	1
3rd	2
4th	3-4
5th	5 - 6
6th	7 - 8
7th	9 - 10
8th	11 - 12
9th	13 - 14

New Archetypes

The following archetypes are thematically related to the group of outsiders collectively known as psychopomps, and the ability to summon them. They are presented in alphabetical order based on the class that they modify.

New Cleric Archetype Returned Sage

Returned sages are clerics that died and consulted with the psychopomps on the mysteries of the afterlife. Deeply knowledgeable about death, the course of souls, and the processes of those that travel beyond life's borders, they return to life enlightened and better able to guide others towards their idea of salvation. Exceptionally religious, returned sages lack the martial abilities of some clerics, but give up relatively little in pursuit of this higher learning. Of course, many who embark on this path lack the conviction to actually die in order to learn its secrets, so only the truly dedicated achieve enlightenment on this path.

Weapon and Armor Proficiencies: Returned sages are proficient with all simple weapons and light armor, but are not proficient with their deity's favored weapon, or with medium armor and shields.

This ability modifies the weapon and armor proficiencies class feature.

Single Domain: Returned sages only select a single domain, instead of two.

Psychopomp Summoning (Ex): At 1st level, a returned sage gains Psychopomp Summoner as a bonus feat.

Returned Wisdom (Ex): At 1st level, if a returned sage dies, she learns of the best ways to navigate the realms of the dead and return to the realm of living. She never suffers any drawback from spells and effects that return her to life. Additionally, her body cannot be animated as an undead creature unless her soul is imprisoned or destroyed.

Petitioner's Education (Ex): At 10th level, if a returned sage dies, she can visit the realm of her deity. As long as she remains dead for at least 1 week, when she returns to life she may select an additional domain from among those granted by her deity. She is treated in all ways as having this domain. Even if she dies again and returns to life, she cannot gain a further domain from this ability.

New Shaman Spirit Death Shepherd

Shamans who choose the death shepherd as their spirit have waxy and cadaverous visages, appearing almost like corpses themselves. Their eyes are sunken and voices breathy, seeming to come from far off.

Spirit Magic Spells: death watch (2nd), death knell (4th), speak with dead (6th), wall of bones (8th), ghost bane dirge, mass^{APG} (10th), undeath to death (12th), sunbeam (14th), soulseeker^{PA} (16th), true resurrection (18th)

New Hexes: A shaman who chooses the death shepherd spirit can select from the following hexes.

Death Devourer (Su): As a standard action, the shaman can touch a creature that is dying or that has a negative level, devouring some of their essence. The shaman gains temporary hit points equal to twice the Hit Dice of the touched character + the character's negative levels, if any. The shaman may use this ability at will, but not more than once per creature per day.

Inevitability (*Ex*): With a touch, the shaman can bring a touched creature closer to their inevitable demise. The target suffers a -4 penalty on saving throws against death effects, and the DC to remove the bleed condition from the target using the Heal skill is equal to the DC for this hex. In order to remove the bleed condition with magical healing, the caster must succeed on a caster level check (DC = 10 + 1/2 the shaman's level + the shaman's Wisdom modifier).

Mask (Ex): The shaman can touch a mask in order to empower it with magical energy. Any creature that wears this mask is treated as an outsider, rather than a creature of their actual type, for the purposes of spells and abilities. Additionally, the wearer of the mask can reroll a saving throw against a death effect once per day. The shaman can only empower a single mask in this way at any given time. When the shaman touches a new mask to empower it, the old one loses its magic.

Power Over Undeath (Su): The shaman's spells and hexes can affect undead creatures as though they were living creatures. Additionally, she can touch an undead creature in order to affect it with *disrupt undead*, except that the saving throw DC for the ability is equal to 10 + 1/2 the shaman's level + the shaman's Intelligence modifier.

Shelter Body (Su): The shaman can touch a corpse as a standard action in order to protect it from magical manipulation. The touched corpse cannot be the target of any spells or abilities, except those cast by their allies, unless the caster succeeds on a caster level check (DC = 10 +the shaman's caster level).

Spirit Animal: The shaman's spirit animal appears normal for its type, but always wears an elaborate and beautifully crafted mask to hide its face. The animal gains immunity to death effects, disease, and poison.

Spirit Ability: A shaman who chooses death shepherd as her spirit or as a wandering spirit gains the following ability.

Psychopomp Summoning (Ex): The shaman gains Psychopomp Summoner as a bonus feat and can spontaneously cast *summon monster* spells by sacrificing a prepared spell of the appropriate level, in the same way a druid can swap out prepared spells to cast a *summon nature's ally* spell. When she does, she must summon a psychopomp, and the summoned creature remains for an additional minute.

Greater Spirit Ability: A shaman who chooses death shepherd as her spirit or as a wandering spirit gains the following ability upon having access to the greater version of that spirit.

Soul Shepherd (Sp): As a standard action, the shaman can touch the body of a dead or dying creature, and can either guide the spirit back to its body or send it on to the afterlife. The creature cannot have been dead for more than 1 minute. If she chooses to guide the spirit back into the body, the creature is returned to life at -1 hit point and immediately stabilizes. If she chooses to send the spirit on to the afterlife, the soul departs instantly when she touches it, killing the creature if it was not dead, preventing it from being returned to life with *breath of life* or similar spells, and sanctifying the body, preventing it from being returned to life as an undead creature. She can use this ability a number of times per day equal to 3 +her Charisma modifier.

True Spirit Ability: A shaman who chooses death shepherd as her spirit or as a wandering spirit gains the following ability upon having access to the true version of that spirit.

Enter the Underworld (Sp): The shaman can touch the physical remains of a dead creature in order to travel to the place of their afterlife. This functions like the spell plane shift, and the shaman can take up to 6 other creatures with her when using this ability. She arrives within 10 miles of the soul's location on that plane and knows the distance and direction of that soul. After 24 hours, she and any creatures she brought with her are returned to the exact spot they were when she used this hex. If she is in physical contact with the soul when she returns, the soul is returned to life as well, as though by the spell *resurrection*. The shaman can use this ability once per week.

Manifestation: At 20th level, the shaman becomes one with the spirit of the death shepherd. She becomes immune to death effects, disease, and poison, and gains DR 10/ adamantine and can cast spells which return creatures to life without need of a material component.

New Wizard Archetype Listmaster

Listmasters are wizards who have studied the records of psychopomps in order to gain greater knowledge and power over both the living and the dead. This career requires a great deal of study and effort in the bookkeeping arenas. Good accounting practices and a very disciplined mindset are required for listmasters, who very rarely have the time or energy to focus on the creation of magical items or deep understanding of the working of magical spells. Instead, they can summon psychopomps, and call on the information of death's agents in order to accomplish their goals.

List of Agents (Ex): A listmaster possesses a list of available psychopomp field agents who can assist him in his various endeavors. By speaking a name off of the list, he can summon that psychopomp to his side to aid him in his endeavors, provided, of course, that the listmaster is important enough to warrant the psychopomp's time. The listmaster gains Psychopomp Summoner as a bonus feat. Additionally, he can spontaneously cast summon monster spells by sacrificing a prepared spell of the appropriate level, in the same way a druid can swap out prepared spells to cast a summon nature's ally spell. When he does, he must summon a psychopomp, and the summoned creature remains for 1 minute per level, instead of 1 round per level. A listmaster cannot summon more than one psychopomp at a time in this way, though he may prepare and cast summon monster as normal to summon additional psychopomps for the normal duration.

This ability replaces the arcane school and Scribe Scroll class features.

List of Spells (Ex): At 5th level, a listmaster's careful research and access to the vast stored data of the psychopomps allow him to expand his magical knowledge. He adds a single spell of 3rd level or lower from any spell list to his spellbook as a wizard spell of that level. At 10th level, he can add a second spell of up to 5th level to his spellbook in this way.

This ability replaces the bonus feats gained at 5th and 10th levels.

List of Dangers (Ex): At 15th level, a listmaster has managed to find his way into death's records of his final moments, providing him with a list of all the ways he might die. By spending 1 hour studying the list, he can determine all the ways he was supposed to die in the next 24 hours and to try to prevent these events from happening. He can choose one of the following benefits, which lasts for 24 hours: a +2 circumstance bonus on saving throws, a +8 bonus on Initiative checks and Perception checks, or a +2 dodge bonus to AC.

This ability replaces the bonus feat gained at 15th level.

List of Deaths (Ex): At 20th level, a listmaster has acquired a list containing the deaths of all the creatures who might die at his hands. He can consult the list whenever he casts a spell by increasing the casting time, to 1 full round for spells which take less than a round to cast, or by doubling the casting time of spells which take 1 round or longer to cast. If he does, the saving throw DC of the spell increases by +1 (this bonus stacks with that granted by Spell Focus and similar abilities), and any damage dealt by the spell is increased by +2 per damage dice.

This ability replaces the bonus feat gained at 20th level.

New Psychopomps

The following section presents two new types of psychopomp, which can be encountered normally as enemies or allies, or can be summoned by characters capable of summoning psychopomps. They are presented in alphabetical order.

Kithleen

This small furry quadruped resembles a sleek cat, and while its fur appears black, close inspection reveals it is actually a very dark grey. A white silk mask fits snugly over its face, heightening the illusion that the creature is feline.

KITHLEEN

XP 200

N tiny outsider (psychopomp)

Init +4; Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +7

 $CR_{1/2}$

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 16, flat-footed 12 (+4 Dex, +2 size) hp 6 (1d10+1)

Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +3

Defensive Abilities danger sense; **Resist** cold 10, electricity 10; **Immune** death effects, disease, poison

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee 2 claws +2 (1d4–1)

Special Attacks disrupting claws, ill fortune

STATISTICS

Str 8, Dex 18, Con 13, Int 11, Wis 16, Cha 12 Base Atk +1; CMB -2; CMD 12 Feats Toughness Skills Acrobatics +8, Bluff +5, Diplomacy +5, Knowledge (religion) +4, Perception +7, Sense Motive +7 Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Infernal

ECOLOGY Environment any (Purgatory) Organization solitary, pair, or pride (3-10) Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Danger Sense (Ex): A kithleen has a special sense that protects it when confronted with sudden danger. A kithleen retains its Dexterity bonus to AC even when surprised or attacked by an invisible creature. A kithleen may choose to treat its initiative as 15 if it rolls less than that for initiative.

Disrupting Claws (Ex): Undead creatures hit by the kithleen's claw attack suffer an additional 1d6 points of damage and must succeed on a DC 11 Will save or be staggered for 1 round.

Ill Fortune (Ex): A kithleen has the power to invite deadly accidents into the lives of the living, speeding up the natural process of death. With a touch, a kithleen can curse an individual with ill fortune. A character cursed in this way suffers a -4 penalty on all saving throws until the kithleen dies or chooses to lift the curse. A successful DC 11 Will save negates this effect.

Ecology

A kithleen resembles a house cat with a fitted mask obscuring its true face. As a psychopomp, kithleen are responsible for the affairs of the dead. Specifically, kithleen are tasked with overseeing and processing the deaths of animals and vermin. While for many psychopomps, the deaths of their charges grow tedious over time, this is especially true for the kithleen, whose charges do not speak, accomplish great deeds, or indeed engage in any activities other than those dictated by their natural instincts. While some kithleen find this a refreshingly honest occupation, the majority view their lot with at least some resentment, and so relish any opportunity to escape the tedium. As such, kithleen are keen to be summoned, serve as familiars, or engage in psychopomp operations not involving processing an endless stream of animals who met their intended end.

In addition to serving in the capacity of processing of deceased animals, kithleen are charged with investigating and dealing with instances of undeath involving animals. While occasionally the causes of such things are obvious, as in the case of undead dinosaurs raised by mages seeking powerful guardians, in other cases the causes of undead animals are far more mysterious and may require the kithleen engage in a lengthy investigation on the Material Plane. Because of their relatively weak forms, kithleen often seek help in these investigations, either traveling in large packs or enlisting the aid of mortals.

Neribum

This swarm of bat-winged entities is shrouded in shadow, and each wears a beaked mask in a cruel mockery of a murder of crows. The swarm waits patiently and peacefully, intoning a prayer for the dead in perfect unison.

NERIBIUM

XP 12,800 N Diminutive outsider (psychopomp, swarm) **Init** +10; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +20

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 20, flat-footed 14 (+6 Dex, +4 size) hp 119 (14d10+42) Fort +12, Ref +10, Will +12 Defensive Abilities swarm traits; Resist cold 10, electricity 10; Immune death effects, disease, poison, weapon damage OFFENSE Speed 10 ft., fly 90 ft. (good)

Melee swarm (5d10) Special Attacks bane of death, carry away, distraction (DC 20), drag soul, haunting cries

STATISTICS

Str 11, Dex 22, Con 17, Int 11, Wis 16, Cha 22 Base Atk +14; CMB —; CMD —

Feats Ability Focus (haunting cries), Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Improved Iron Will, Iron Will, Skill Focus (Sense Motive, Survival) **Skills** Bluff +23, Diplomacy +23, Knowledge (religion) +17, Perception +20, Sense Motive +26, Survival +26 **Languages** Abyssal, Celestial, Infernal

ECOLOGY

Environment any (Purgatory)

Organization solitary, pair, or massacre (3-20 swarms) Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Bane of Death (Su): A neribum's natural attacks are especially effective against undead. An undead creature damaged by a neribum's swarm attack must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 20) or be destroyed.

Carry Away (Ex): A neribum can carry away a single creature that it swarms. When a neribum moves, it may choose to attempt to carry away a single creature that it damaged with its swarm attack. The creature must succeed on a Reflex save (DC 23) or be caught by the swarm and forced to move with it. A character caught in the neribum swarm gains the grappled condition (though the neribum does not). Because the neribum is a swarm, it automatically deals swarm damage to creatures in its area. To escape, the grappled character must succeed at a Reflex save (DC 23) in order to free itself from the swarm. The saving throw DC is Dexterity-based.

Drag Soul (Su): A neribum can carry the souls of the recently departed away. Any creature that dies within the area of a neribum's swarm attack, as well as any creature within the area of the neribum's swarm attack that had died within the last minute, has its soul dragged off by the neribum. Such creatures cannot be brought back to life by any means short of a *wish* or *miracle* spell, unless the neribum is first dispersed, or until 1 year has passed and the soul has settled into its afterlife.

Haunting Cries (Su): A neribum swarm can speak in unison with a terrifying cry. As a standard action, a neribum can use this ability to affect all other intelligent creatures in a 120-foot-radius spread, centered on the neribum. Each affected creature must succeed on a Will save (DC 25) or become frightened for 1d6 rounds and shaken for 1 minute after that. Creatures that succeed on their saving throw are shaken for 1 minute, instead. The neribum can use this ability once per minute.

Ecology

CR 11

Neribum are escorts for artistic souls, hermits, and other individuals of exceptional wisdom who choose to live in isolation. Though it appears as a swarm of individual entities, a neribum actually possesses a single mind, though many bodies, with many voices through which it speaks. These bodies are all bound together by a powerful psychic field, which serves as the mind of the creature. Because of this, unlike other swarms, once dispersed, a neribum's individual bodies quickly die if not allowed to reform.

Primarily, neribum serve as escorts for those souls that might need some extra help getting to their destination. Observers often mistake them for ravens or crows because of their masks, and their swarmings often are written off as carrion feeders waiting for a feast. In fact, neribum hold nothing but respect for the dead, and hatred for those who would seek to cheat death. In their role as escorts, neribum are occasionally called upon to remove wayward souls, restless dead, or those who seek to extend their lives beyond their appointed time.

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Summon the Ushers of the Afterlife!

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One of the joys of playing a summoner—a character of any class who relies heavily on spells such as summon monster to conjure allies and minions to fight on their behalf—is the fact that it lets you play with some of the fun and exciting monsters from the various Pathfinder Bestiaries that are normally reserved only for GMs. Unfortunately, since spells like summon monster were written with only the first of those books in mind, it's often frustratingly difficult to gain access to the exciting monsters found in later supplements.

Weekly Wonders: A Conjurer's Guide to Psychopomps focuses on providing players of various classes with options for summoning and working with outsiders of the psychopomp subtype. Included are:

• A simple and straightforward feat allowing a spellcaster of any class to easily summon a wide variety of psychopomps using existing spells like summon monster.

• The returned sage, a cleric archetype for those whose brush with death has brought them closer to their deity and emboldened their faith, and allows her to call upon psychopomps to aid her.

• The death shepherd spirit, for shamans, which grants access to a wide variety of psychopomp-themed abilities.

• The listmaster, a wizard archetype for those who have gained access to the psychopomps' fabled records, allowing him to co-opt their own agents for his needs, but also gaining insight into his own death and the deaths of others.

• Two new types of psychopomp, suitable both for summoning and as foes; the CR 1/2 kithleen, a catlike creature that can bring about deadly misfortune to its foes, and the CR 11 neribium, a swarm of batlike psychopomps that can snatch the souls of the recently departed.

ROLEPLAYING GAME COMPATIBLE

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