



Phelantar's Guide
to
Owlbears
for
The 13th Age Roleplaying Game



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Introduction

The owlbear is the subject of many a joke told by bards, storytellers, and tavern wits across the land. It's an understandable thing to do, given how bizarre the creature sounds. What deranged wizard decided that combining an owl and a bear into a new creature was a good idea? The myths and legends name many wizards who could take the credit or blame for the creation, but historical records are rather more quiet on the facts of the matter.

Regardless of the origin of the owlbear, it's become infamous. Although it might be a joke to those people who haven't faced one, it remains a brutal and dangerous predator which has ended the career or life of many an unwary woodsman, scout, or adventurer. The dark side to the jokes told by minstrels and tavern jesters are the horrifying tales of those people horribly maimed by the owlbear's claws or beak.

Perhaps it's because of either side of the owlbear's reputation that numerous attempts have been made to replicate the "success" that the owlbear has had. Regardless of whether you consider it a laugh or a monster, it's undeniable that the owlbear has spread widely and found a distinct niche in numerous locales. And some wizards and alchemists have taken the concept to heart and developed several variations. Usually, these "new" owlbears are intended as guardian creatures, but some were created for no other reason than to prove the creator's skills.

Most of these owlbears die and disappear after their creator does, but some survive and find ways to reproduce and spread. Some are even recreated as scholars and adventurers find out about them. They are all rare in comparison to the average owlbear and most adventurers will never encounter one, but the tales of their existence still manage to get around anyway. Most find the stories to be unbelievable, a blatant attempt to one-up an already ridiculous creature in the owl bear. But who is to say that the stories aren't true?





Dropowlbear

When most wizards attempt to emulate the owlbear (for whatever reason they might have) they focus on the “bear” half of the creation. They want bigger owlbears, owlbears for different environments, owlbears which have unique powers, and so on. The dropowlbear initially started by taking the owl first and making a much smaller and agile owlbear from it. From the tales and histories, the wizard which first created the dropowlbear did so (as so many do) with the intent on making a territorial creature which could then guard the wizard’s tower from intruders. Rather surprisingly, this didn’t backfire and end in the wizard’s death like so many experiments do. Instead, the dropowlbear spread after the wizard died and word of their experiment with them worked.

Just because it’s much smaller, roughly the size of large raccoon or small dog, doesn’t mean that the dropowlbear isn’t a tremendously aggressive and dangerous creature. It just means that it is different from the typical owlbear. Dropowlbears get their name from the way they lurk in the treetops on branches or clinging to trunks waiting for prey to walk by. At this point, they drop down onto their prey’s head or back before gouging them with their talons and tearing them with their beak. The efficacy of this sudden assault is legendary, especially when multiple dropowlbears attack at once, and much larger creatures have fallen in this manner.

Dropowlbear

Level 4 Wrecker (Beast)

Init: +11

Taloned Grab +13 vs AC - 12 damage and the target takes a -5 penalty to disengage rolls (save ends)

Natural 16+ hit - The dropowlbear may immediately make a Flesh Tearer attack

Miss - Target takes a -2 penalty to disengage rolls until the end of their next turn

Flesh Tearer +12 vs AC - 9 damage and 5 ongoing damage. This attack crits on an 18-20 roll.

Ambush Specialist - The dropowlbear may take an action in an ambush round even when on the side that is ambushed. In addition, the dropowlbear does an +4 damage to enemies coming after it in the initiative order.

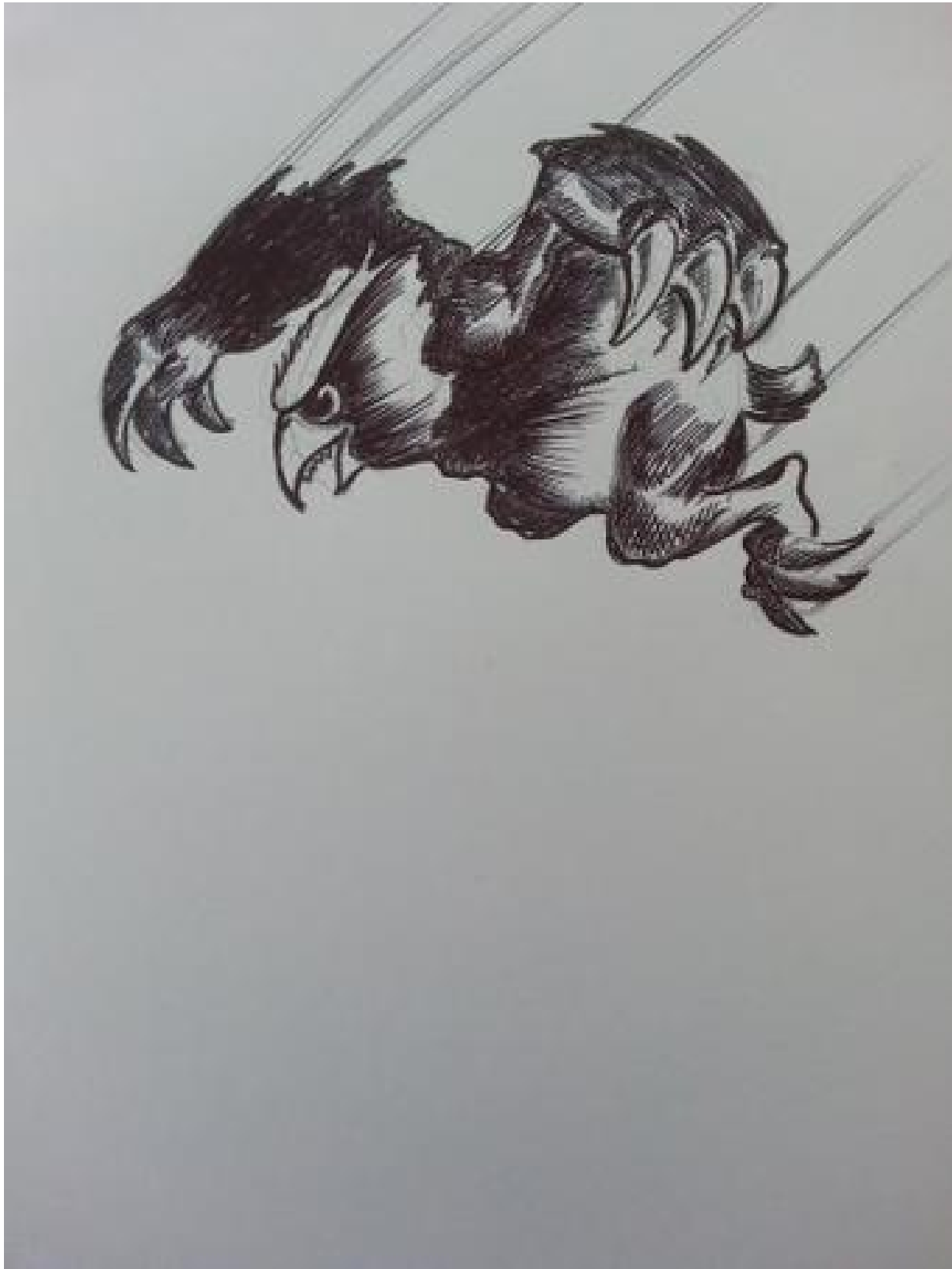
Climber and Glider - The dropowlbear is not affected or slowed by obstacles on the ground.

AC 20

PD 19 HP 38

MD 13







Kookabeara

For some arcanists, merely making owlbears out of regular bears and regular owls doesn't satisfy their tastes. As ridiculous as it might sound to the average person (or even average spellcaster), some of these wizards go above and beyond to try to create something unique. In the case of the kookabeara, the wizards went far beyond known lands to find other base creatures for their new owlbear. The first was a small tree-dwelling creature known to natives as the koala and the other was a bird with an unusual call referred to as a kookaburra. Why these two were chosen, few people could guess. Neither creature is particularly dangerous nor useful as a guard animal, so the only logical explanation is that some wizard chose them purely because of their exotic nature.

The kookabeara is small, about the size of a halfling or human child, and is relatively peaceful. Especially when compared to other owlbears. That said, the kookabeara does have a territorial streak that occasionally makes it dangerous and, unlike other owlbears, the kookabeara is frequently found in groups of between four and eight individuals. A careless hunter or adventuring party who ignores the very loud and distinctive warning cries from a kookabeara can quickly find themselves under a surprisingly brutal attack from above. The kookabeara competes bloodily with the dropowlbear for territory given their similar preferences for environments. The kookabeara often comes out second best in these disputes given that they are less aggressive than their brethren.

Kookabeara

Level 3 Spoiler (Beast)

Init: +8

Ripping Beak +8 vs AC - 10 damage

Natural Even Miss - 4 damage

Warning Call +7 vs MD against 1d3 nearby enemies - 5 damage and the target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls until the start of the kookabeara's next turn.

Pack Attack - For every ally engaged with the same target, increase attack rolls by 1 and damage by 2 (max +3 to attack rolls and +6 damage)

AC 19

PD 13 HP 45

MD 17



Grizzly Owlbear

The grizzly owlbear is what happens when someone decides that the regular owlbear isn't big enough, aggressive enough, or deadly enough. In other words, the grizzly owlbear is the creation of someone who was completely insane. Unfortunately, it's the kind of insanity which has an appeal to others, as many others have subsequently recreated the original experiment. The grizzly owlbear's appeal is that few creatures (or nosy adventurers) want to tangle with something as large and dangerous as this. But when the grizzly owlbear either outlives its creator or escapes from their control, it becomes an incredible menace to everything in the nearby area. The grizzly owlbear will happily kill woodland creatures, livestock, hunters, travelers, and adventurers within its claimed area. Not only have entire villages been slaughtered and eaten by one of these monsters, but they have been known to destroy tribes of ogres and even occasionally kill and eat giants.

Everything that can be said about a regular owlbear can be said about the grizzly, only more so. They are exceptionally territorial, aggressive, and dangerous in addition to being the size of a small house. In most cases where one is sighted, Imperial Legions or mercenary companies with dozens of soldiers are frequently necessary to kill the creature. The fact that they are the size of a small house means that only the most skilled and prepared (or desperate) adventurers and hunters go after them.

Grizzly Owlbear

Huge Level 7 Wrecker (Beast)

Init: +10

Rip and Tear +12 vs AC - 50 damage and 25 ongoing damage (save ends)

Natural 16+ Hit - Target is Stunned

Miss - 25 damage

Wing Buffet +10 vs PD against 1d3 nearby enemies - 25 damage and the target is moved to a nearby location of the owlbear's choice. If used against engaged targets, those targets are popped free. Usable once per turn as a Quick Action.

Unstoppable Bloodlust - Every time the Grizzly Owlbear misses an attack add +1 to attack rolls and +5 to damage for the rest of battle (max +3 to attack rolls and +15 damage). The bonus damage does not apply to ongoing damage

AC 23

PD 22 HP 340

MD 15



Pels Owlbear

Although many of the varieties of owlbear can be described as “some wizard was insane and/or very strange and decided to play with nature”, the pels owlbear is one of the more unique ones out there. Calling it an owlbear is something of a misnomer, as there is no real bear involved in the pels creation. Instead it’s a large aquatic mammal known as a manatee or sea cow. Combined with an owl that lives near water and eats fish produced the pels owlbear. Having an aquatic owlbear would be unusual enough, but even more strange is that the pels owlbear ended up being a remarkably peaceful and passive creature. The pels owlbear is an omnivore which eats fish, small shellfish, and aquatic plants. It doesn’t display the same territoriality and aggression that normal owlbears do, with one exception. When pels owlbears are around their chubs, they will react incredibly violently to any intruders coming too close. In this situation they are as deadly as their landbound brethren. Perhaps even more so, given how the average fisherman or adventurer is considerably more disadvantaged while in the water.

Pels owlbears are uncommon, but not unheard of, along many coastlines and islands. They are sometimes hunted by fishermen, since the pels owlbear will destroy nets and sometimes even small boats to get to the fish contained within, but usually the pels owlbear keeps to itself. The problem adventurers face is that pels owlbears sometimes make their homes in island or half-underwater ruins that might be of interest to such explorers.

Pels Owlbear

Large Level 3 Blocker (Beast)

Init: +5

Snapping Beak +8 vs AC - 20 damage and the target is Hampered (Save ends)

Natural Even Miss - Target is Hampered until the end of their next turn

Torpedo Rush +7 vs PD - 18 damage and the target pops free of all engaged targets. The pels owlbear must move before using this attack.

Miss - 9 damage and the pels owlbear pops free

Protective Instincts - The pels owlbear may pop free from an engaged target to intercept another enemy as an immediate interrupt.

Underwater Aptitude - While fighting completely underwater against land-based creatures, the pels owlbear gains a +1 to all attack rolls and saving throws.

AC 19

PD 17 HP 94

MD 13



Snowy Owlbear

It was somewhat inevitable that attempts would be made to create owlbears better suited for certain environments and the snowy owlbear is the result of one of those attempts. It, in fact, is one of the more unusual varieties of owlbear largely because it doesn't just mix in a cold-weather suited owl and bear, but actually incorporates magical energies taken from water elementals to enhance the creature's viability in frigid areas. The snowy owlbears feathers have the appearance of hard packed snow in both texture and color and the beak and claws have a distinct blue tinge. The snowy owlbear also has a unique ability to flap its wing-arms and send a spray of small, but razor sharp, ice shards at prey.

Snowy owlbears are, because of their peculiar heritage, thankfully rare outside of northern climes. The few exceptions are, of course, wizards and other arcanists who don't feel that the laws of nature or common sense should really be applicable to them or their needs. Sometimes snowy owlbears are found high in the mountains of warmer areas. Amongst owlbears, snowy owlbears are one of the most easily avoided as they have a tremendous aversion to fire and will often, but not always, avoid travelers with torches or around campfires. However, sometimes the presence of fire drives the snowy owlbear into an uncontrollable rage that ensures that either it or the fire-bearer will be dead.

Snowy Owlbear

Large Level 6 Wrecker (Beast)

Init: +9

Vulnerable: Fire

Icy Talon +12 vs AC - 40 cold damage and the target pops free

Natural Even Hit - Target is Dazed (save ends)

Natural Odd Miss - 10 damage

Snowstorm +10 vs PD vs up to 2 nearby enemies - Ongoing 10 cold damage and the target is Stuck until the end of their next turn. Usable once per turn as a Quick Action.

Fire Fear - When hit by a Fire attack or engaged with an enemy carrying some sort of fire (magical weapon, torch, lantern) roll a hard (16+) saving throw at the end of the snowy owlbear's turn. On a failure, the owlbear takes a -1 to all defenses until the end of it's next turn. On a success, the snowy owlbear gains a +2 to all attack rolls until the end of it's next turn.

AC 23

PD 21 HP 195

MD 14



Teddy Owlbear

The owlbear, for good or ill, is remarkably well known considering that it's a violent and bloodthirsty predator who won't hesitate to kill. It's for this reason that owlbear dolls and wooden figurines have long been common as gifts for young children. With that in mind, disturbed and amoral wizards have turned to these and created murderous constructs out of them. These teddy owlbears appear to be as any other doll, but are secretly magical constructs that are frequently ordered to awake late at night and butcher the inhabitants of a house or manor with razor-sharp claws that emerge from the doll's paws. Some then find a place to go inert before the magic animating them dissipates so that they look nothing more than another piece of clutter in the murder scene. Others are longer lasting and seek to find a way back to their creator so that they can be used once again. Sometimes the teddy owlbear is even used as a defensive measure, as few people would look twice at one of them on a shelf and think to protect themselves from an ambush.

In the rare circumstances that they're discovered in the act or someone has caught on to the method the teddy owlbear uses to attack its victims, the creature is a surprisingly effective combatant. The small size and high level of agility make it difficult to hit and the claws are like razors which rarely cut deep but cause a lot of bleeding. The creature is also smart enough to lure attackers into traps or trick them into attacking an innocent creature before it sneaks away.

Teddy Owlbear

Level 3 Spoiler (Construct)

Init: +9

Vulnerable: Fire

Paw Razors +11 vs AC - 5 damage, 5 ongoing damage (save ends), and the teddy owlbear pops free of the target.

Natural 16+ hit - Ongoing damage is increased to 10

Natural Even Miss - Teddy Owlbear pops free of the target

Hamstring +9 vs PD - 7 damage and the target is Stuck.

Natural Even Miss - 5 damage

Quick & Tiny - Teddy Owlbears gain a +5 bonus to Disengage rolls.

AC 19

PD 18 HP 32

MD 12



Screech Owlbear

In the field of owlbear experimentation, if such a thing could really be said to exist, a common attempt is to give the created owlbear some sort of unique power or ability that no other owlbear could duplicate. One of the more successful experiments of this nature is the screech variety of owlbear, which takes the notable sounds made by the screech owl and turns them into a sound weapon with devastating power. Unfortunately, as effective as this new mutation of owlbear was in respect to deadly power and ability to kill intruders, it is also rather indiscriminate and more than a few wizards who created or tamed one were killed merely by being in the wrong place as their owlbear guardian let loose a sonic assault.

Yet, despite this rather serious problem, screech owlbears are perhaps the most common owlbear found aside from the normal one. Even when wizards aren't taking the risk to create more, the screech owlbear is a very effective predator and will stake a claim on an area of land to inhabit for 15 years or more unless slain. One of the only things keeping screech owlbears from becoming more of a danger is their relatively low birth rate and, funnily enough, other owlbears.

Screech Owlbear

Large Level 5 Wrecker (Beast)

Init +7

C: Death Screech +8 vs PD against 1d3 nearby enemies - 25 damage and the target is Dazed until the end of their next turn.

Natural 16+ Hit - Target is Weakened instead of Dazed

Natural 1-5 Miss - Make an attack against a nearby ally.

Paw Swipe +10 vs AC - 35 damage and the target pops free

Natural Even Miss - 10 damage

Sound Senses - The Screech Owlbear is immune to Illusions and Invisibility

Scream of Pain - When hit with a critical hit, the screech owlbear may immediately use a Death Screech attack. If the critical hit would kill the screech owlbear, Scream of Pain may not be used.

AC 21

PD 18 **HP 135**

MD 16



Owlbear Zombie

Say what you will about necromancers, but most of them are remarkably egalitarian arcanists. They will call up dark energies to animate the corpses of creatures of any race, religion, creed, or species without hesitation. Given the owlbear's reputation it's no surprise that many necromancers have turned to them, or their dead bodies at least, for use as an undead minion. In fact, raising an owlbear as an unthinking undead creature solves the most problematic part of keeping an owlbear as a guardian creature: the uncontrollable aggressiveness. There are drawbacks to zombie owlbears of course, which is that a zombie lacks the strength, agility, and resilience of a living creature. However, to many necromancers this seems an acceptable trade-off, especially when it means that their owlbear won't attempt to tear off their face if they get somewhat careless.

More rare than ones raised by necromancers are "naturally occurring" zombie owlbears. In places of immense negative magical energies like the site of a prisoner massacre or a serial killer's hideout, undead can be spontaneously created as the energies infuse the corpse or skeleton and reanimate it. These uncontrolled owlbear zombies are arguably even more dangerous than ones created by necromancers as they are prone to wander far and wide, killing any person or animal they come across and eating the flesh in a mockery of a living creature.

Owlbear Zombie

Large Level 4 Trooper (Undead)

Init: +4

Vulnerability: Holy

Rot Claw +9 vs AC - 24 damage and the target is Vulnerable to all attacks from Undead creatures (save ends)

Natural Odd Hit or Miss - Both the target and owlbear zombie take 10 damage

Unstoppable Unlife - The first time an owlbear zombie is reduced to 0 HP, roll a normal (11+) saving throw. If successful, the owlbear remains at 1 HP and may make an immediate Rot Claw attack. The next time it's reduced to 0 HP, the save becomes hard (16+). The owlbear zombie may not save a third time to stay upright.

Headshot - A critical hit against an owlbear zombie deals triple damage

AC 21

PD 16 HP 112

MD 16



Designer's Notes

It would be misleading to say that these owlbears didn't come from something of a joke that was made, referring to the tendencies of a popular fantasy game to make distinct races or classes for every sort of environment out there. Fire dwarves, water elves, desert halflings, and so on and so forth seemed to pop up every time you turned around no matter how ridiculous or unnecessary it was.

That being said, even though these owlbears started off as a joke I've done my best to make them interesting and actually workable in your game. Even if, yes, they're named things like dropowlbears or kookabearas. If the idea of multiple kinds of owlbears, especially some of the weirder ones, doesn't fit into your campaign please consider just reflavoring or refluffing them to be more consistent with what you need. They don't *have* to be owlbears if you don't want them to be.



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