STARFARING EXPLORATION
For Delving Deeper

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Weird Realm Games

STARFARING EXPLORATION

Starfaring ships travel in the aether sea driven by the solar winds; sometimes they are aided or harried by the fickle aetheric currents. As with seafaring exploration, outer space regions unknown to the players can be mapped in advance by the referee or as they are explored. The principal features should be placed thoughtfully with the remainder being filled in by random determination.

The referee can use the Random Wilderness tables to generate space regions for starfaring exploration. Hexes of open terrain should be read as open space, woods as nebulae, mountains as asteroid belts, desert as dust clouds, and swamp as space storm regions. Likewise, rivers should represent persistent aetheric currents, fords should represent confluences of aetheric currents, and trails should represent warp tubes or wormholes. A result of 7 on a hex should be read as a system with a planet. The other features are as per the wilderness, except that villages should be ignored.

For planets, roll on the Random Wilderness Terrain Table for general terrain of the world. An Open result represents a temperate world with plenty of water, a Woods result represents a forest/jungle world, Mountains represent an ice world, Desert indicates a hot world, and Swamp indicates an exotic world (gas giant, ring world, artificial world, hollow world, generation ship, or other referee's special).

Time and Movement

Starfaring exploration retains the wilderness exploration timescale of 1 turn per day.

Distances are measured in star miles, an abstract representation of the vast distances in space. Planetary space (up to 3 hexes from a planet) has a scale where each 1" of movement rate represents 1 space mile traveled per day. Interplanetary space, however, is so vast and largely free of obstruction that sailing rates are improved threefold such that 1" of movement represents 3 star miles traveled per day.

Exploration in space is otherwise similar to seafaring exploration excepting that players must have a space-going vessel. The same types of ships used in seafaring exploration can be used in starfaring exploration (except rafts), if they have the proper magical devices installed. Two common forms of propulsion are aetheric sails and oars. Other more exotic forms of propulsion are possible. Oars can be replaced by other labor-intensive propulsion methods. For instance, many dwarven war galleys have dozens of dwarven laborers shoveling coal into the aetheric steam engines. A magic user or cleric is required at the helm to operate the magical propulsion.

Oared vessels such as galleys and longships are not restricted by solar wind direction, but galleys and sailboats are unable to withstand the stresses of

interplanetary space. These are limited to planetary space, except in calm space weather.

Sailed vessels such as merchants and warships can run swiftly before the solar wind, but otherwise must progress by a series of turns and tacks at impaired speed. Travel directly into the solar wind is generally impossible.

Movement rates for oared ships assume a full and well trained crew. Poor or incomplete crews can achieve half the listed rate.

Movement rates for sailing ships assume running before the wind. All other movement is at half rate. Note that sailing rates are faster in interplanetary space due to sailing unimpeded day and night. One hex should be added to movement rates when traveling with an aetheric current or subtracted when traveling against an aetheric current.

Table 2.29 Starfaring Exploration Rate				
	Movement Rate		Hexes per Day	
Transportation	Oared	Sailing	Planetary	Interplanetary
Sailboat	.	6"	1	3
Raft	6"	.	1	1
Galley, small	12"	.	2	2
Galley, large	18"	.	3	3
Longship	24"	.	4	4
Merchant, small	.	18"	3	9
Merchant, large	.	12"	2	6
Warship	.	6"	1	3

Reserves
With the exception of sailboats and rafts, all sailing ships carry reserve oars and all oared ships carry reserve sails to be used if necessary. These allow movement at half rate.

Resting
All crews require a full day of rest after six days at sea or immediately after weathering a space storm.

Visibility
With the naked eye, visibility is limited to one hex (6 star miles). With a spyglass or other visual assistance, a sailor can see up to two hexes (12 star miles) away in clear weather. However, space weather conditions can severely restrict visibility.

Weather

The solar wind strength and direction should be determined each day in space. Throw one six-sided die to determine which hex face the solar wind is blowing from and two six-sided dice to determine wind strength.

2d6	Wind	Sailing	Rowing
	Table 2.30 Space Weather and Ship Speed		
2-3	Dead calm	No sailing	Normal speed
4-7	Moderate	½ speed	Normal speed
8-9	Fresh	Normal speed	Normal speed
10-11	Strong	+6" (1 hex)	Normal speed
12	Storm	Special	Special

Strong Winds

Sailboats and galleys will capsize in strong solar winds in interplanetary space on a throw of 1-2 on a six-sided die each turn.

Storms

Navigation is impossible in space storm conditions and any vessel will capsize on a throw of 1-2 on a six-sided die each turn. Any vessel that does not capsize is instead moved 2-7 hexes in a direction secretly determined by the referee and is immediately considered to be lost.

Becoming Lost

A ship's captain will have no difficulty navigating a known route so long as the space weather remains fair. However, should the weather turn nasty, there is the possibility of becoming lost. The referee should secretly throw a six-sided die for the players each day spent in strong solar winds—a 1-2 indicating they have become lost. If the players are lost the referee should move them an unplanned distance/direction on his map that turn without alerting them.

Settlements and Strongholds

Settlements and strongholds occur in space as they do in the wilderness. These can be free-floating space stations, hidden in nebulae, clinging to asteroids or comets, or whatever else the referee desires. Whether these are friendly or unfriendly can be determined with a reaction check.

Encounters in Space

Wandering monsters occur in outer space much as they do in the wilderness. The referee need not check for wandering monsters while the players are within 3 hexes (18 star miles) of a friendly port, but once out in space proper they should check once each day in interplanetary space or twice each day near planets. An additional check should be made each day if the players are lost. A throw of 6 on a six-sided die indicates an encounter will occur.

When an encounter is indicated, determine the type of monster by dicing on the appropriate starfaring encounter table. If the players are traveling near a planet, an encounter is equally likely to occur on planet as in space. In this case, use the appropriate wilderness encounter table for the type of planet.

1-20	Planetary Space	Interplanetary Space
	Table 2.31 Starfaring Encounter Tables	
1	Hazard: space storm, solar flare, etc.	Hazard: space storm, solar flare, etc.
2	Primitive man-types in space rafts	Shipwreck, survivors on 5-6
3	Monsters hiding in debris or wreckage	Monsters hiding in debris or wreckage
4	Man-types in ships	Man-types in ships
5	Demihumans	Demihumans
6	Ancient race, demigods (advanced tech, magic, powers, or form)	Ancient race, demigods (advanced tech, magic, powers, or form)
7	Monsters hiding in debris or wreckage	Mind flayer ship
8	Man-types in ships	Beholder ship
9	Demihumans	Demihumans
10	Shipwreck	Starmen
11	Men, other	Men, other
12	Men, merchants	Men, merchants
13	Men, pirates	Men, pirates
14	Starmen	Starmen
15	Undead	Undead
16	Non-player characters	Non-player characters
17	Dragon	Dragon
18	Doppelganger ship with chameleon skin	Doppelganger ship with chameleon skin
19	Space creatures, fish, rays, starfish, octopi, squids, blobs, marine saurians, etc.	Space creatures, fish, rays, starfish, octopi, squids, blobs, marine saurians, etc.
20	Demihumans	Space leviathan

Surprise

Surprise occurs in space (as it does in the underworld) with a throw of 5-6 on a six-sided die. If the players are surprised, the enemy ships or monsters will come at them emerging suddenly out of dust clouds or nebulae, appearing from behind quickly moving meteors or comets, or surfacing unexpectedly from a planetary atmosphere.

Encounter Distance

If either party is surprised an encounter will begin at 10-60 yards distance and the surprised party will be unable to respond for one turn; otherwise, an encounter will begin at 40-240 yards distance. Melee range is 1" (10 yards as in the wilderness). Shipboard artillery range is typically 300 yards.

Monster Reaction

Monster reaction to the players in space is as per the underworld.

Evasion and Pursuit

Evasion and pursuit in space is as per the wilderness with the following additional considerations:
- Low visibility occurs in dust clouds, nebulae, asteroid fields, and in shadows,
- Evaders who are able to submerge will automatically escape pursuers without this ability unless they are surprised.

Starfaring Combat

Vessels can engage in ship-to-ship (or ship-to-space monster) combat. Ships are treated much as monsters—having hull dice instead of hit dice, and hull points instead of hit points.

When ship-to-ship (or ship-to-space monster) combat occurs the referee should use the wilderness combat scale (1" to 10 yards and one minute turns) to resolve maneuvering and missile fire as the combatants approach one another.

Table 2.32 Ship Statistics			
Vessel	**Hull Dice**	**Artillery**	**Crew**
Sailboat	1	.	2-4 sailors
Raft	1	.	2-4 rowers
Galley, small	5	1	6-16 sailors, 24-64 rowers, 12-32 marines
Galley, large	8	2	12-32 sailors, 36-96 rowers, 18-48 marines
Longship	6	.	30-80 rower/marines
Merchant, small	4	.	9-24 sailors, 6-16 marines
Merchant, large	7	.	18-48 sailors, 15-40 marines
Warship	10	4	15-40 sailors, 30-80 marines

Solar wind direction, tactical positions, and vessel facings can be marked on a
scale map if desired or simply noted as closing distances. Oared ships can produce
a burst of speed during combat, adding 6" to movement rate for up to three turns
after which the crew is exhausted.

Missile Fire

Shipboard artillery may be fired every other turn while spells and missiles may be
loosed each turn. Normal missiles are ineffective against ship hulls but are allowed
their maximum outdoor range, giving due consideration to space weather
conditions.

Small galleys are assumed to carry a single artillery battery on the fore deck. Large
galleys carry two batteries (one fore and one aft), and warships carry four batteries
(one each fore, aft, port, and starboard). Artillery hits cause 2-12 hull points of
damage and will hole a ship on any score of 10 or more hull points.

A holed ship will flounder in 3-18 combat turns (minutes) unless repairs are made.

Ramming

Medieval-style ships are not generally built for ramming but a faster ship may ram
a slower ship in the side, circumstances permitting. The ramming ship sustains one
hull die damage while the rammed ship sustains half the rammer's hull dice
(rounded down) in damage. If 10 or more hull points are sustained the ship is holed
and will fall toward the nearest planet or other body in 3-18 turns, if in planetary
space. In interplanetary space, they will simply slow to a stop and flounder.
Meanwhile, boarding may ensue.

Melee

When ships ram, grapple, or come along side for boarding the referee is advised to
use the dungeon combat scale (1" to 10ft and one minute turns) to resolve any
hand-to-hand combat. Ship deck plans can be used much as dungeon maps for this

purpose. Troops fleeing from combat will only pitch themselves overboard in fair weather near to a planet; otherwise they will surrender.

Suffocation

The nature of aetheric space results in every object being surrounded by a bubble of oxygen proportional to its size. A human-sized body has a bubble of air that will last 3d6 turns. A ship carries enough air for each crewmember for a cruise of 4-8 months. Once this air is used up, normal-types die in d6 rounds, hero-types die in 2d6 rounds, and superhero-types die in 3d6 rounds.