

Griffins

A Field Guide



by
Rodney Sloan and Bob Greyvenstein





ex-libris



Scarthey
University of the Arcane Arts



Griffins – A Field Guide

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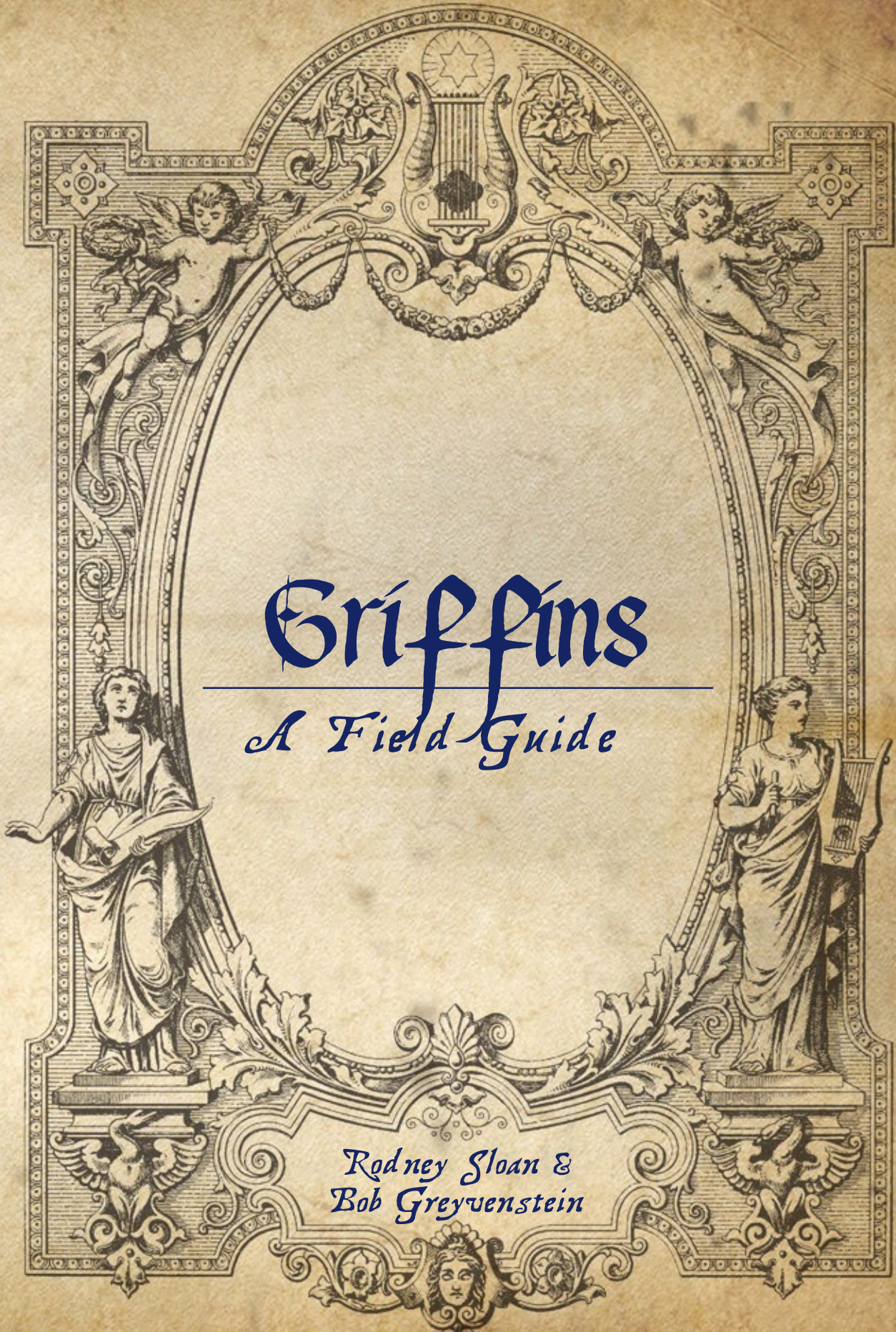
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A Field Guide

*Rodney Sloan &
Bob Greyenstein*





Table of Contents

Introduction	7
Griffin Ecology	8
Common Griffin	12
Mandover's Feral Griffin	16
Arthfael's Flightless Griffin	20
Noble Griffin	24
Terror Griffin	28
Sorcerer's Griffin	32
Griffin Familiars	35
Griffin Rearing and Training	36
Breed Selection	36
Eggs	37
Combat Training	37
Griffin Companions	38
Griffin Riders	40
Martial Archetype: Griffin Rider	41
Oath of the Wind	42
OPEN GAME LICENSE Version 1.0a	45





Introduction



Myrddyn the Mage has long been regarded as the foremost authority on creatures — both mythical and mundane. During his long tenure as Dean of the Arcane Lore of Creatures at the University of Scarthey, he studied and documented thousands of creatures in minute detail. Indeed, he is often and without reproach referred to as the leading expert on creature arcana.

On the subject of the griffin he wrote widely, detailing specifically *Grypites grypites*, *Grypites domesticus* and the iconic *Grypites rex*. Myrddyn was said to have kept several live specimens within the University grounds, much to the chagrin of the groundskeeper, who was known to have referred to the beasts as Myrddyn's Monsters.

Unfortunately, much of Myrddyn's work was lost, either within the deep vaults of the University or — and it was the greater loss — through the most heinous theft of intellectual property to ever have plagued our faculty. It was, in fact, due to the aforementioned robbery that this and other field guide projects were initiated, so that students could be adequately equipped in the field when studying various unfamiliar creatures of the realms. Furthermore, this guide shall establish the true facts of the griffin over the falsifications recently put out by my longtime rival and detractor, Gilliman Mandover, who undoubtedly had some hand in the dastardly plot that befell our large collection of bestiarum vocabulum.

In creating this field guide we sought to compile and expand on Myrddyn's notes, including contemporary information about newly discovered species, such as *Grypites arthfaelidus*, for which I must humbly take credit. The section on the proper selection of griffin eggs, correct rearing and training of griffin cubs, and the discourse on the correct technique for mounting and riding an adult griffin should prove invaluable to students who wish to pursue an in depth study of these aviaofeline creatures.

So, without further pomp and ceremony, and as residing dean concerned with the arcane lore of creatures at the University of Scarthey, I assure you that you will find no more comprehensive a tome than this and, should you follow it closely, assure yourself many happy landings.

— Professor Ahurnius Arthfael, Esq.
Dean of the High Arcane Lore of
Creatures Scarthey University of the
Arcane Arts





Griffin Ecology

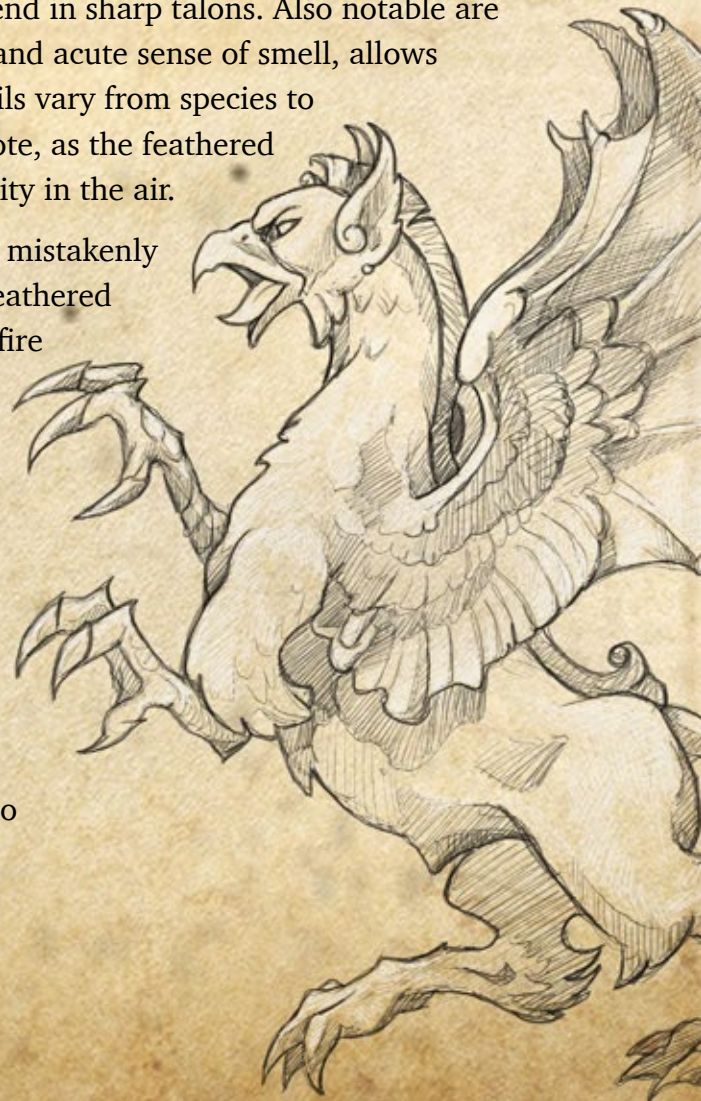



audible for miles around, a griffin's hunting cry heralds the majestic sight of one of these elegant creatures, soaring high on feathered wings. Skilled hunters, these great beasts are ferocious fighters, known for their fierce loyalty to their kin and comrades. It is not surprising then that they are sought after mounts and often trained to guard valuable treasure hordes.

As to their appearance, in general, griffin's have the head and wings of a large eagle, with the body and rear legs of a lion. Depending on species, some have particularly avian forelegs, while others retain a very leonine appearance — though both variants end in sharp talons. Also notable are their long, tufted ears, which, along with their sharp eyes and acute sense of smell, allows them to pinpoint prey, even from great altitudes. Griffin tails vary from species to species, with Mandover's feral griffin being of particular note, as the feathered end of its tail gives this species its surprising maneuverability in the air.

Sphinxes, and particularly hieracosphinxes, are sometimes mistakenly identified as griffins, because of their leonine bodies and feathered wings. The saying "A sphinx thinks" is often cited as a surefire way to tell the difference, but astute scholars have noted that no sphinx bares the long tufted ears common to all griffin species.

Griffins prefer to inhabit regions with vast, open hunting grounds near hilly areas, although Mandover's feral griffin is again the exception to the rule — as it hunts predominantly below the forest canopy. Griffins are well adapted to temperate and warm environments, but generally avoid colder areas. While it is not unheard of for griffins to inhabit desert regions, this often brings them into conflict with various sphinx species.





Griffin, Griffon, or Gryphon?

Myrddyn referred in his notes to these magical beasts in three different ways – namely griffin, griffon and gryphon. At first I believed him mad, or simply lax in his note taking, but on further investigation I discovered that he had intended a deeper meaning within these three terms.

Griffin noun a winged creature with the head of an eagle and the torso and hindquarters of a lion, as referred to in Common.

Griffon noun colloq. the same beast as referred to in the dialect of the seafaring peoples of the tropics.

Myrddyn's retention of their spelling for the creature possibly hints at his doubts to the authenticity of their information, as any traveller can attest to a sailor's fondness for strong drink. I have omitted this spelling completely.

Gryphon noun Antiq. the same beast when referred to in ancient texts. The honorable Order of the Gryphon no doubt retained this spelling due to the deep sense of pride they harbour for their order's long and illustrious history.

AA

Breeding griffins build an aerie of branches in high, shallow caves or amongst rocks. They line these nests with dry grasses, leaves, and on occasion, animal fur. Being intelligent creatures, many griffins are known to keep trinkets within their aeries, though the terror griffin is the only one that decorates its lair with the macabre bones of past meals.

Griffin behaviour is notable as these creatures are fiercely loyal, mating for life. The exception here, unsurprisingly, is the terror griffin. A pride of griffins consists of an adult breeding pair and their young, which leave once mature to find their own mates. Griffins have been known to go to great lengths to exact vengeance for a slain mate or cub, sometimes hunting for their loved one's killer for many years.

A griffin's diet consists predominantly of smaller mammals, which for a large noble griffin includes aurochs, bison, deer, and even cattle, which often brings them into conflict with human settlements. Griffins are not known to hunt humanoids, but will fiercely defend their territory from any intruder, and have been known to attack and drive off dragons.





Griffin reproduction is decidedly avian in nature. Griffins lay a single egg each breeding season — except for Mandover's feral, which may lay up to six. The pair then take turns warming the egg before it hatches after several weeks. The young cub is able to leave the aerie a month after hatching, but it takes several months more before the cub is able to stretch its wings and take its first flight.



Griffins make excellent mounts, although many have discovered at great cost that these beasts cannot be domesticated in the traditional way — they are far too intelligent for that. In a similar fashion, a griffin can be set to guarding treasures or locations — a task their loyal mentality lends itself to perfectly.





Breeds



Common Griffin

Grypites Grypites

Ghis regal beast has an eagle-like hooked beak, long, tufted ears, and a feathered mane. Enormous feathered wings sprout from the back of its leonine body.

Common Griffin

Large monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 12 (natural armor)

Hit Points 58 (7d10 + 21)

Speed 30 ft., fly 80 ft.





Str 16 (+3) Dex 15 (+2) Con 16 (+3) Int 5 (-3) Wis 13 (+1) Cha 8 (-1)

Skills Acrobatics +4, Perception +5

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages understands Common but cannot speak it.

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Swooping Pounce. When the griffin moves at least 20 feet in a straight line and then hits with a claw attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the griffin can make one beak attack against it as a bonus action.

Actions

Multiattack. The griffin attacks twice with its claws.

Beak. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 11 (2d8 + 3) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 10 (2d6 + 3) slashing damage.





The most common of all griffin species, *Grypites grypites* is a powerful aerial predator, capable of taking down a horse in a single pounce. Intelligent creatures known for their loyalty, they can just as easily be aggressive foes, protecting their territory with beak and claw. For those who befriend one, however, a common griffin makes a faithful companion and a versatile mount.

A male common griffin weighs between 500 and 600 pounds, while the females tend to weigh a good 50 pounds less, on average. Males measure 8 feet long from beak to tail, with females tending to be a foot shorter in length. The average wingspan of a common griffin is an impressive 25 feet. A single primary flight feather from an adult common griffin averages 4 feet in length.

Common griffins mate for life and are especially protective of their young, which they hatch from eggs. These they lay in high aeries and take turns incubating.

A common griffin egg is worth between 2,500 and 3,500 gp on the black market, with those of verifiable good breeding tending to the upper end of the scale. As with eggs, the practice of selling cubs is regarded as slavery in many regions, but a single cub can fetch up to 7,000 gp.

A common griffin can carry up to 480 pounds. It can carry 160 pounds before being encumbered and 320 pounds before being heavily encumbered. Riding a common griffin requires an exotic saddle.



*Carefully garnered piece
of fur from *Grypites
Grypites**



Mandover's Feral Griffin

Grypites maestus





The wild, yellow eyes of this tawny, panther sized creature dart about, its eagle-like wings ready to take flight at a moment's notice.

Mandover's Feral Griffin

Medium monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 52 (8d8 + 16)

Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft.

Str 15 (+2) Dex 16 (+3) Con 14 (+2) Int 3 (-4)
Wis 13 (+1) Cha 6 (-2)

Skills Acrobatics +5, Perception +5

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Bounding Pounce. When the griffin moves at least 20 feet in a straight line and then hits with a claw attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Actions

Multiattack. The griffin makes two attacks. One with its beak, and one with its claws.



Beak. *Melee Weapon Attack:*

+6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

Hit: 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft.,

one target. *Hit:* 7 (2d4 + 2) slashing damage.



Unlike all other griffin species, the feral griffin has a wild, untamable nature. Despite this animalistic instinct, it still maintains the loyal, protective nature of other griffin species and can be particularly fearsome when its young are threatened.

Mandover claims to have recently discovered the species within the darkest jungles of a far-flung, nameless region. Considerably adept at camouflaging itself within its forest habitat, it is not unlikely that the species is wider spread than Mandover describes. Indeed, his field notes on the creature are cursory at best, and little is known about this griffin's true nature. However, it is probable that this griffin species has been touched by fey magic.

Mandover's griffin eats small forest creatures and birds, the latter of which it catches on the wing. Pairs of feral griffins have been known to use a trap and pounce technique, where one griffin chases its potential meal towards its waiting mate.

One of the smaller griffin species, an average Mandover's griffin is 4 feet long from beak to tail, with a wingspan of 12 feet. It averages around 70 pounds.



Arthfael's Flightless Griffin

Grypites arthfaelidus



White eagle feathers cover the neck and taloned forelegs of this powerful creature. Its body moves with the feline grace of a muscular lion.

Arthfael's Flightless Griffin

Large monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 105 (14d10 + 28)

Speed 50 ft.

Str 18 (+4) Dex 15 (+2) Con 14 (+2)
Int 4 (-3) Wis 13 (+1) Cha 8 (-1)

Skills Acrobatics +4, Athletics +6, Perception +5, Stealth +6

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages understands Common but cannot speak it.

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Keen Smell. The griffin has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Pounce. When the griffin moves at least 20 feet in a straight line and then hits with a claw attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the griffin can make one beak attack as a bonus action.



Actions

Multiattack. The griffin makes two attacks with its claws.

Beak. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 9 (1d10 + 4) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage.



Moving with cat-like grace, these wingless griffin's leap from boulder to boulder, quickly gaining on their fleeing prey. A powerful pounce is enough to end the chase and secure a decent meal.

Although it retains the avian features of other griffin species, Arthfael's flightless griffin has no wings, while the heavy feathering on its forelimbs are often mistaken for vestigial wings. Roughly the same size as the common griffin, Arthfael's variant is exceedingly more powerful, with strong legs adapted to life on the ground.

This strong musculature is also evident in the flightless griffin's neck and jaws, and these creatures are known to rip through flesh and bone with ease.

Flightless griffins, unlike other species, do not maintain aeries, but build their nests in abandoned caves or under spreading thorn bushes. These nests are often decorated with a collection of small trinkets, both magical and mundane, which they keep as souvenirs.

A flightless griffin weighs an average of 700 pounds. It is 8 feet in length from beak to tufted tail.

Arthfael's flightless griffin can carry up to 540 pounds. It can carry 180 pounds before being encumbered and 360 pounds before being heavily encumbered. Riding a flightless griffin requires a mundane saddle.

Although flightless, the Alatain Grygotes still has feathers. This one was found in an old abandoned nest.





Noble Griffin

Grypites rex



his majestic creature's piercing blue eyes peer out from its massive eagle's head above forelegs that end in razor sharp talons. Its body and hindlegs are those of a massive lion with giant eagle's wings rising from its back like two mighty banners.



Noble Griffin

Large monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 170 (16d10 + 48)

Speed 40 ft., fly 100 ft.

Str 20 (+5) Dex 13 (+1)

Con 17 (+3) Int 10 (+0)

Wis 14 (+2) Cha 12 (+1)

Saving Throws

Str +8, Con +6, Wis +5

Skills Acrobatics +4, Athletics +8,
Intimidate +7, Perception +8,
Stealth +6

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive
Perception 18

Languages Common

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Aura of Heroism. The griffin is so awe inspiring that it can actively help allies. As a bonus action, the griffin can take the help action to assist a friendly creature that is within 30 feet. The griffin can do this twice before needing to finish a short or long rest to regain spent uses of this ability.



*Rex Griffes line their nests
with Pests Carcerem leaves
to keep parasites and insects
off their young...*



Actions

Multiattack. The noble griffin makes three attacks: One with its beak, and two with its claws.

Beak. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 14 (2d8 + 5) slashing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 16 (2d10 + 5) slashing damage.

Hunter's Cry (1/day). A noble griffin's ear-splitting cry fills enemies and potential prey with fear. All non allied creatures in a 30-foot cone must make a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or become panicked for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

With its enormous wings beating a thumping tattoo over the battlefield, the noble griffin fills its foe's hearts with fear and inspires its allies to great feats of bravery.

The most impressive of all griffin species, images of the rearing noble griffin decorate the shields and banners of imperial houses and stand guard over castle keeps. Royal kings and princes astride one of these mighty beasts command an awesome presence, as they extol their troops to greater valor in the field.

Despite its massive feathered mane, razor sharp claws, and powerful feline physique, the noble griffin is no mere beast – with its superior intellect it is readily able to offer wise counsel and sound strategy to those it trusts.

A noble griffin is the largest of all griffin species, measuring 9 feet from its hooked beak to the tip of its tail. It has an impressive 28 feet wingspan and weighs 700 to 800 pounds.

A noble griffin can carry up to 600 pounds. It can carry 200 pounds before being encumbered and 400 pounds before being heavily encumbered. Riding a noble griffin requires an exotic saddle.



Terror Griffin

Grypites terribilis





orne on massive, bat-like wings, this leonine creature is a blasphemous mix of bestial parts, its red eyes glowing above snarling fangs.

Bob Gougeon



Terror Griffin

Large monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 19 (natural armor)

Hit Points 180 (20d10 + 60)

Speed 40 ft., fly 80 ft.

Str 21 (+5) Dex 16 (+3) Con 17 (+3)

Int 12 (+1) Wis 14 (+2) Cha 16 (+3)

Saving Throws Str +9, Con +7, Wis +6

Skills Acrobatics +7, Athletics +9, Intimidate +11, Perception +10, Stealth +11

Damage Immunities poison

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 20

Languages Common, Orc

Challenge 11 (7,200 XP)

Fear Aura. Any creature hostile to the griffin that starts its turn within 20 feet of the griffin must make a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw, unless the griffin is incapacitated.

On a failed save, the creature is frightened until the start of its next turn. If the creature's saving throw is successful, the creature is immune to the griffin's Fear Aura for the next 24 hours.

Innate Spellcasting. The griffin's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 15). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components.

At will: *detect magic*

1/day: *cloudkill*

Relative size:



Magic Resistance. The griffin has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magic effects.

Actions

Multiattack. The terror griffin makes three attacks. One with its beak, and two with its claws.

Beak. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8 + 5) slashing damage plus 17 (4d6) poison damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) slashing damage.

A horrid amalgamation of bestial parts, the terror griffin is nothing like the purer griffin species — it is a creature bred only to sow sorrow and reap death. The foul result of corrupting magics, the terror griffin might bear the feline body and a feathered mane of its distant cousins, but its bat-like wings and crocodilian tail testify to its magical genesis.

A terror griffin is slightly smaller than a noble griffin, at 7 feet long. It sports a wingspan of 21 feet and weighs in at 600 pounds.

A terror griffin can carry up to 630 pounds. It can carry 210 pounds before being encumbered and 420 pounds before being heavily encumbered. Riding a terror griffin requires an exotic saddle.



Sorcerer s Griffin

Grypites domesticus





With avian forelegs, this dog-sized creature has a cat-like face sporting a sharp parrot's beak. Feathered wings sprout from the spotted fur of its back.

Sorcerer's Griffin

Small monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 5 (2d4)

Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft.

Str 4 (−3) **Dex** 16 (+3) **Con** 10 (+0)

Int 12 (+1) **Wis** 13 (+1) **Cha** 8 (−1)

Skills Acrobatics +5, Perception +5, Stealth +5

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Common, plus any 3 others

Challenge 0 (10 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The griffin's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 15). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components.

3/day: *detect magic*



Actions

Multiattack. The griffin makes two claw attacks.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +0 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 slashing damage.

With the temperament of a large house cat, these miniature griffins make topical pets. Highly intelligent, they can just as easily be found curled up by the fireside of a studious wizard as stalking ancient crypts in search of long lost magical baubles.

Sorcerer's griffins exert a strong will of their own, but despite this, they are highly loyal to those they befriend. Should its master pass away, a griffin is more likely to ail and die, or slink into the woods, than it is to take to a new master.



The origin of this species is unknown, but it is most probable that it was the result of magically influenced crossbreeding. While the sorcerer's griffin shares many physical attributes with its larger cousins, the species is varied enough to cast into doubt whether it has any real griffin heritage at all. The species was most probably bred for sniffing out magical relics within ruins, where its wings and small size would make it an invaluable asset to treasure hunters.

Sorcerer's griffins average about 3 feet in length, with a wingspan of 8 feet. They weigh around 35 pounds.

Griffin Familiars

A sorcerer's griffin is a rare and highly prized pet, and even more sought after as a wizard's familiar. More specifically, a wizard may cast the find familiar spell and have it take the shape and statistics of a sorcerer's griffin, but only if the wizard has seen and spent time with a genuine sorcerer's griffin. Such a familiar does not have the ability to cast spells, nor can it speak, but it does understand up to 4 languages.





Griffin Rearing and Training

More than one hapless individual has lost life or limb to a griffin he thought he could train. Although it is quite possible to draft a griffin cub into service, the correct procedure must be followed with the utmost care. Remember the first rule of griffin rearing — it is the griffin who chooses the master, not the other way around. Below we have set an in-depth treatise on the subject of griffin rearing and training. Adhere to it and you'll save yourself much unnecessary bloodshed.

Breed Selection

Each griffin breed has its own characteristics, and some breeds are simply not worth attempting to train at all.

Arthfael's flightless griffin offers the best opportunity for the novice griffin breeder. Although it cannot fly, or indeed, because it cannot, this breed offers a large degree of safety — falling from a flying griffin is almost always fatal.

A sorcerer's griffin is even easier to raise and train, but cannot be ridden. Still, this species make sterling pets, offer great companionship, and are particularly useful to the treasure seeking adventurer.

Both the common and noble griffin species make worthwhile mounts. On the other hand, the terror variant, although powerful, is particularly dangerous and should, in this author's educated opinion, be avoided at all costs. Their mood and allegiances are as changeable as the wind, and it is more likely than not to turn on its rider when one least expects it.

Likewise, Mandover's feral is not worth the time and effort of taming, as it is particularly bestial in nature. None have ever managed to domesticate one and most likely never will.





Eggs

Hatching a griffin egg requires constant heat. It is best to keep the egg — which averages 6 inches in length and can weigh up to 4 pounds — close to a warm body and well wrapped in warm layers. If successfully incubated, the egg will hatch after several weeks.

Griffin eggs are safest to handle when rescued from the aerie of a deceased breeding pair, otherwise one can expect swift and painful retribution from the adult griffins.

The sale of griffin eggs, though prohibited in many kingdoms, does a roaring trade. A common griffin egg can go for 2,500 gp on average and up to 3,500 gp for one of verifiable good breeding. A sorcerer's griffin egg sells for around 1,500 gp and an Arthfael's flightless averages around 1,800 gp. Of all species, eggs of the noble griffin fetch the highest price — 5,000 gp on average.

Combat Training

To train a griffin in order to ride it into combat, the griffin must first become comfortable with the trainer. This is a downtime activity requiring 40 days to achieve. The griffin must spend some of this time practicing to bear a rider's weight. The trainer must be proficient in the Animal Handling skill.

Because of their intelligence, trained common and flightless griffins are able mounts, and can understand simple commands made in Common. Noble and terror griffins, on the other hand, don't take well to commands, but will follow reasonable suggestions to the best of their abilities.

Riding most griffin species requires an exotic saddle, and a saddle that works for one species of large griffin usually works just as well on a large griffin of another species. Riding an Arthfael's flightless griffin requires a mundane saddle.





Griffin Companions

The following are some sample griffins that can be used as companions. Although griffins are monstrosities, you can (with your GM's permission) use these creatures as animal companions, special mounts, or pets.

Griffin Companion

Large monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 10 (natural armor)

Hit Points 13 (2d10 + 2)

Speed 30 ft., fly 40 ft.

Str 14 (+2) Dex 15 (+2) Con 12 (+1) Int 5 (-3) Wis 13 (+1) Cha 8 (-1)

Skills Perception +3

Senses darkvision 30 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages understands Common but cannot speak it.

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Swooping Pounce. When the griffin moves at least 20 feet in a straight line and then hits with a claw attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 11 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.





Order of the Gryphon



Actions

Beak. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (2d4 + 2) slashing damage.

Modifications: Use the following modifications to alter the above stats to fit a griffon of your choice.

- **Flightless Griffin.** Strength to 17, Speed 50, no fly speed, gains Keen Smell.
- **Noble Griffin.** Strength to 16, Dexterity to 12, remove Swooping Pounce, replace with the Hunter's Cry ability below.
- **Terror Griffin.** Remove Swooping Pounce. This griffin can instead cast fog cloud once per day as an innate spell. A Terror Griffin is fickle, and may change its allegiance if offered riches or power.

Hunter's Cry (1/day). A noble griffin's ear-splitting cry fills enemies and potential prey with fear. All creatures in a 15-foot cone must succeed at a DC 11 Wisdom saving throw or become panicked for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Griffin Riders

There are a few options available to characters who want to employ a griffin as a mount or as a companion, such as using Wisdom (Animal Handling) or class abilities, as deemed appropriate by your GM. Here we've provided a few more options, including two archetypes.

Martial Archetype: Griffin Rider

Forged in battle, the griffin riders are as one with their mounts. A griffin rider must earn the respect of their mounts. With time, the bonds the rider forms with its mount is inseparable.



Griffin Rider

At 3rd level, the cavalier earns the service of a loyal flightless griffin to carry him into battle. Use the statistics given for a griffin companion, except that it doesn't have a fly speed while mounted. The griffin's hit point maximum equals the number in its stat block or five times your fighter level, whichever is higher. At 7th level, the griffin can fly at its full speed while mounted, as it trusts its rider further. At level 12, the griffin gains the abilities and statistics of a common griffin.

The griffin can take any action on its turn except for the attack action. If you use your action to command it, it can make an attack. Once you have the Extra Attack feature, you can substitute one of your attacks to command the beast to take the Attack action. At level 18, it no longer requires commands to attack, and can even use its multiattack on its turn.

When reduced to 0 hit points, the griffin immediately stabilizes. Should your griffin die, you must spend 10 days of downtime and 500 gold to bond with another griffin.

Master of Wind

Starting at 7th level, you gain the ability to protect your mount. When your mount would take damage, and as long as you are within 10 feet of your mount, you can use your reaction to halve the attack's damage against your mount.

Mounted Attack

When you reach level 10, your ability to fly and fight improves. Any melee weapon attacks made while on your mount deal an additional 1d8 damage.

Shared Fate

When you attain level 15, when your griffin fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed. It can do so twice, and must finish a long rest to replenish these spent uses.

Unbreakable Bond

Upon reaching level 18, your bond with your mount is unbreakable. As long as you are within 10 feet of your griffin, neither of your armor classes can be reduced below 18. You can use your bonus action to grant your mount the Dodge action, and it can use its bonus action to take the Help action as long as it targets you.





Oath of the Wind

A paladin sworn to the tenets of the air is not unlike a paladin bound to nature. Just as a griffin would demand skill, bravery, and independence from its rider, so too does this oath hold these ideals dear. Mastery of the skies is not for the faint of heart, and though its domain is coveted by many, it is held by few. Knights who follow this oath mete out justice on slavers, tyrannical rulers, and those who would, whether by dint of hubris or evil act, seek to oppress others. Many followers of this oath find likemind companions within the Order of the Gryphon, and the Order boasts many knights which follow the Oath of the Wind.

Tenets of the Wind

The tenets of the Oath of the Wind are clearly known to all sky knights, and shared freely with outsiders. They represent the rigor and grace that embody the griffin's natural majesty. Each of the three tenets are to be upheld to avoid disgrace.

Exemplify Mastery. You must always practice your craft, and hone your skill. A griffin's claws must be kept sharp.

Embody Bravery. The griffin's ferocity is known to animal and man alike. If a battle can be won, it must be done through your unwavering valor.

Espouse Freedom. Freedom is tantamount; When you see tyranny, strike it down. Hubris is a special kind of slavery, from which all must be freed.

Oath Spells

You gain oath spells at the paladin levels listed.

Oath of the Wind Spells

Paladin Level	Spells
3rd	feather fall, heroism
5th	find steed*, warding bond





9th	conjure animals, wind wall
13th	death ward, freedom of movement
17th	flame strike, hallow

**Oath of the Wind allows you to select a griffin companion when you cast find steed.*

Channel Divinity

When you take this path at 3rd level, you gain the following two Channel Divinity options.

Zephyr Wings.

You can use your Channel Divinity to empower any mount. If you are riding on a mount without a fly speed, it gains one equal to its walking speed. The mount changes form to look more like a griffin. If your mount already has a flying speed, it can dash as a bonus action. This effect lasts for 10 minutes. At level 10, you can affect up to 3 mounts at once with each use of this ability.

Air Superiority.

Using your Channel Divinity, you become a terror from above. You can create a 20-foot radius of thundering sound that can hinder your enemies. Creatures caught in this area must make a saving throw against your spell save DC. Those who fail take 3d6 lightning damage and fall prone, while those who succeed take half as much damage and do not fall prone. If you are riding a creature with a flying speed, the damage increases to 5d6.

Judgement of the Heavens

By 7th level, your aerial attacks are augmented. As a bonus action, you can grant yourself advantage on a melee attack you make while jumping, falling, mounted, or flying. You can use this ability twice, and regain spent uses after finishing a long rest.





Aura of Freedom

Beginning at 15th, you are able to promote freedom within your ranks. You and friendly creatures within 10 feet have advantage on saving throws against effects that would reduce your speed. Allied creatures that end their turns in this aura also get a saving throw to end such effects if such saving throws were not already allowed. As an action, you can cause your aura to grants the effects of the freedom of movement spell for one minute. Once you have used this effect, you cannot do so again until you finish a long rest. At 18th level, the range of this aura increases to 30 feet.

Terrible Thunder Bird

At 20th level, you gain the ability to create a terrible mount. You can use your action to target one allied beast or summoned mount within 30 feet. The target is transformed, and gains statistics of a terror griffin. You have perfect control over the creature, but are prone to acts of cruelty and malice just as the terror griffin is. A beast that is slain while transformed in such a way has a 10% chance of being reborn into an egg that eventually hatches as a common griffin.

Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.



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