

# Regional Guides

This collection of Regional Guides is meant for GMs. Contained herein is much hidden information not meant for players, who should find out such things through the grapevine of contacts, associates, and the drunken tongue-wagging of the mead-hall. If you're a player, know that you only do yourself a disservice by reading these pages.

Note, of course, that if playing a character born in a particular region or having other claim to special familiarity, you might get permission from your GM to peruse that region's Guide.

## Regional Guides at a Glance

*Each Regional Guide contains:*

- ▶ *Description of the region, including its predominant landscape, settlements, brief history, and salient present-day tensions, rumors and issues.*
- ▶ *Weather charts particular to the prevailing climate and season of each region.*
- ▶ *Adventuring Skill Check Key offering GMs a shortcut guide to routine skill checks made by parties on a regular basis while adventuring in the region, including ranges of check difficulties based upon environmental factors and prevailing conditions.*
- ▶ *Terrain and Travel movement rates through a region based upon its predominant terrain type (either Open, Impeded or Restricted).*
- ▶ *Regional Encounter Charts providing quick determination of random encounters during day and night, and tailored-made to the unique demographic makeup of their particular region.*

The Regional Guides serve as an in-depth GMing Aid for explorative adventuring throughout the major forest and mountain regions of the Lake Jorakk Wilderness, as well as a few other regions, such as Lake Adesh, the Middle Plains around Gothmerr, and The Wyrd.

All told, this chapter contains guides to over ten distinct regions, each having its own distinct flavor of landscape, weather, settlement, history and the creatures that call it home. Indeed, so vast is the great Lake Jorakk Wilderness, that each of its lesser regions can quite comfortably stand as a self-contained campaign setting offering many hours of northern gameplay.

So, once your party has stocked their packs, sharpened their axes and rubbed down their mail, once they've plumbed the mead-hall for what information they may (or better-yet hired a guide) and declared themselves ready to head off into the deep and dark of the wilds, to see what may be seen, trap for fur, hunt for scalps, or seek rumored treasure-hoards buried in long-lost halls, come to these guides as one comes to a sparkling font or a refreshing breeze, and let them breathe life into your story, whatever neck of the woods you wish to explore.

Regions can be found and referenced on the Lake Jorakk Regional Map included in this chapter.

## A Guide to the Guides

**Description:** offers a bird's eye view of the region, including its predominant landscape, settlements, brief history, and salient present-day tensions, rumors and issues. Keep in mind, though, that most regions are quite large, so these descriptions must act as mere starting points for your own exploration. Some wilderness regions, like the Lokknwyldr, include several thousand square miles of territory. Almost all the deep wilderness of the Jorakklokk remains uncharted, and there is much which has never even been seen by humans. Who knows what might really be lurking in those deep wilds.

**Weather Chart:** Used for determining daily weather. Each region has a weather chart unique to its climate. For more information on the Weather Charts, including advanced rules, please see "Using to the Weather Charts."

**Adventuring Skill Checks:** These present relative difficulty ranges for key campaigning Skills (listed and described individually below) that adventurers are most likely to use on a regular basis within any given region.

For each Skill, three difficulty levels are provided. The lowest difficulty represents the bare-minimum challenge a region has to offer, while the highest represents the worse conditions a party should ever have to face. Average difficulties are what a party can expect to encounter on a regular basis whilst adventuring in the area.

Some difficulty levels are marked n/a for a region, which means that conditions are so adverse as to make success impossible (e.g., attempting Hunting while up on an alpine peak in the Jorakk Mountains). Of course, one can always argue against "impossibility," but we leave such long-winded discussions to the GM's patience.

Naturally, at the end of the day it remains the GM's prerogative to determine Skill difficulties.

Also, a party will not necessarily know the difficulty level of a region. Indeed, they should not know it unless having claim to such valuable knowledge because of successful Glean Information checks, for example.

**Glean Information:** This represents, perhaps, the most important of skills when first contemplating a bold venture into new territory. It's common sense, really. Asking questions of those who've been there, such as: What should we bring? What can we expect from the weather? Are there any hazards we should know about and/or avoid? Where might we find fresh water? Are there any Orc tribes actively warring right now (or, rather, are there any tribes not actively warring)?

Difficulty levels represent how hard it'll be to find someone who knows actionable intelligence on the region. Thus, the more generally unexplored a region is, the more difficult it'll be to Glean Info on it. Also, keep in mind that the difficulty levels are for factual, and thus actually beneficial, information. Rumors may abound about totally uncharted regions marked N/A for these skill checks. A prime example would be the Lokknwyldr, into which very few have ventured, but about which tall-tales abound.

The appropriate difficulty level depends largely on where the adventurers are doing their asking. If close to the region in question, and in a place where lots of hunters, trappers and other such adventurers are found, such as a mead-hall or trader's post, then use the average, or even lowest, difficulty level. If far away from the region, and/or talking to random uninterested folk, use the highest difficulty level.

For successful Glean Information checks, the GM should reveal some detailed information from the region's Skill, Weather and Encounter Charts, such as what sorts of creatures live there and what chances there are of running into them. The greater the success, the more a GM can feel comfortable revealing. Further attempts are acceptable here, but should be made increasingly difficult to represent information sources being "tapped-out." Failures of 1-15 points result in no information gained, while worse failures result in the party receiving potentially lethal and/or misleading rumors, tall-tales and outright lies.

*Unless they're surly or have something to hide, most explorers, hunters, trappers, and the like, are usually pretty fond of talking about their travels. Most open up after a drink or two, especially when the listener buys. The trick is deciphering good actionable intelligence from puffed up fluff.*

**Direction Sense:** Difficulty levels represent the navigability of a region, in terms of terrain, extent of charting/exploration, any existent trails, dwellings, small settlements, etc.... The more recognizable landmarks, especially roads, trails and other vestiges of civilization, a region has, the easier it will be to find one's way around it.

Some regions, like the Surrlokknskegg, have been explored extensively by trappers and hunters, who have cut many small trails, and even keep cabins and lodges, throughout its territories. Other areas, however, like the Lokknwyldr, are endless wildernesses of twisted and dark forests choked by bogs and dead-end paths. The ranges of the northeastern mountain ranges are infamous for high alpine passes with scrabbly and deceptive routes over broken rock, where wrong turns can leave a soul stranded on precarious ledges without safe egress.

Easiest Direction Sense levels represent areas closest to civilization or obvious landmarks, such as rivers well-known to run north/south. Highest difficulties represent the most remote and confusing of a region's areas - or rolls made after a party has gotten lost (i.e. failed one or two Direction Sense tests), while Average difficulties are what will be found most of the time.

The higher the Direction Sense difficulties for a region, the more seriously a party should deliberate committing to its hinterlands. At the very least, they might consider hiring a guide. But, of course, if they haven't done any homework at all then they won't know what they're getting into. Ignorance is bliss, until it's not.

**Weather Sense:** This can be used by adventurers to somewhat predict weather. By rolling on a region's Weather Chart, the GM can figure out exactly what the weather is doing, and will be doing any number of days in the future. Players who make successful Weather Sense skill checks can get a "feel" for what's going to happen weather-wise at some point in the future.

Difficulty here varies mostly by season and environment. Many regions around Lake Jorakk have highly variable weather patterns, especially in the Jorakk Mountain ranges, and so Difficult (or worse) levels are the norm. Successes here should translate into a vague feel for coming weather, such as "you feel pretty confident the present sunny weather should hold for a few days," or, "it doesn't look like this snow will let up any time soon." Failures of greater than 15 points should result in a confident feeling that the weather will do something it actually won't (for example, thinking it won't rain when a torrential downpour is inevitable within two days).

**Fire-Building:** While application of a skill like Fire-Building might seem somewhat banal and matter-of-course to arm-chair heroes, experienced adventurers know that, next to water, food and shelter, fire is the most important factor keeping a party on the breathing side of life. The Halfling just fell in a creek in the middle months of spring, the sun is setting and a brisk breeze blows. A fire might be the only thing to save his life, unless someone wants to ask the sorceress if she'll warm him up in her bedroll.

The range of difficulties for Fire-Building represent overall access to fuel, as well as best and worst environmental conditions. Some areas, like the Mundlwyldr east of the Angitish wilderness, are chock full of nice birch and small pine stands where can be found much well-seasoned dead-fall. Paper Birch bark, found routinely all along the southern shore of Lake Jorakk, makes an unequaled tinder which can ignite even when damp. Thus, even the worse conditions that the Mundlwyldr can offer is better than the Jorakk Mountain's averages.

Average difficulty levels are what's encountered most of the time. Easiest levels represent travelling through an area heavy with dry deadfall. Hardest difficulties represent the worst conditions for a region, including weather. For example, if it's raining, then increasing

difficulty levels should prevail.

Where regions are denoted as n/a for Fire-Building, materials can't be found lying about to start a fire. Examples include all areas of the Jorakk Mountains above tree line, as well as many grassland stretches of the Middle Wild Lands, and the Torakki tundra where naught grows but grass and lichen as far as the eye can see.

An indication of n/a doesn't mean a fire can't be started at all. A party might pack in their own wood and tinder, which would make Fire-Building checks quite easy again (assuming it's not raining). Of course encumbrance and fatigue would surely become an issue in that instance.

**Survival:** This skill deals with "living off the land." As long as a party has supplies and uses them, this check is redundant. They can just pitch their tents and break out the grub. But as long as they're trying to gather berries, trap rodents, and fill water skins from creeks, consult this section.

The range of difficulties represents the habitability of a region by season. Average difficulties reflect conditions during the normal "campaigning season" of late spring to early fall. Areas with easier Average difficulties have plenty of water and abundant plant and small animal life to make meals. Easiest difficulty levels represent times or areas of particular abundance, and thus deal less directly with season. Easiest difficulty levels should be used if, for example, a party camps next to a nice fresh lake known for its fat trout and ample groves of wild-berries and herbs. Highest difficulty levels represent survival in the winter.

You'll find that, for most of Lake Jorakk's regions, the Highest difficulty level for this skill is Extremely Difficult. One must be truly skilled to make a living of the Northern Boreal in the dead of winter.

Most of the Jorakk Mountains are marked n/a for Survival as the Highest difficulty level, meaning that living off the land in those regions is impossible in the winter. Survival itself may be possible, but not subsisting. Sustaining oneself in a sub-arctic alpine environment in the winter requires an inordinate amount of gear-based preparation, with room for error being nil. Only the brave, determined and highly capable (or stupid) attempt it.

Failed Survival checks always mean a party is unable to provide for itself that day in terms of gathering food and/or water. Consult the GameMaster's Guide for rules on starvation, thirst and exposure.

**Surviving the Elements:** This represents a different aspect of Survival skill checks in that it deals specifically with enduring environmental conditions, rather than attempting to live off the land. It has much to do with having, finding, and using appropriate clothing and shelter. Still, even parties with all the gear in the world need to co-exist with a potentially lethal environment. This is especially true in the Lands of Jorakk, and especially true in winter. Indeed, the best gear money can buy might not help for long in the Jorakk Mountains during winter.

Average difficulty levels represent conditions presented by a normal campaigning season running from late spring to early fall. Easy difficulties represent particularly benign and balmy weather. Highest difficulties represent winter conditions. All difficulty levels assume a party reasonably geared-up for the season's conditions. Better, or worse, gear should grant small bonuses, or big penalties.

Failed checks mean that a party is unable to care for itself due to environmental conditions. They may become exhausted, sick, sun-burnt, frost-bitten or hypothermic. With too many failures they may very well die from the compounding effects of exposure.

**Hunting:** This deals with taking big game, such as deer, elk, moose, bear, boar and bison. This is different from Survival, which generalizes all aspects of living off the land day after day in lieu of gathering nuts, berries, roots, herbs and catching small animals and fish.

While Survival checks might keep an individual or party going day-to-day, one successful hunt can provide provisions for weeks, even months. Indeed, bagging a full-grown moose might keep a family (party) in meat through the entire winter.

Difficulties here represent plentitude of game by season.

Average difficulties reflect winter, spring and summer months. For lowland areas, average difficulties predominate except during the rut, when hunting becomes easier. Easiest difficulties represent the autumn rut, when animals become highly active in search of mates. Highest difficulties represent seasons when larger animals migrate out of an area, usually trending toward higher areas in the summer and lower areas in

the winter. That said, big animals like elk and moose do not hibernate through the winter, but must eat. It can be easier to track such an animal through the snow, and winter can thus also reflect Average, and even Easy, difficulty levels.

**Trapping:** This deals with the setting of fixed traps and snares along a route in the hope of catching fur-bearing animals. Subsistence trapping is dealt with in Survival, but a skilled trapper should get a bonus to those Survival checks if employing his deadly art. Also, most things trapped may also be eaten, so if a trapper gets a nice beaver for its pelt, he can also put its meat in his stew.

Though just about anything can be caught by trapping (given the right trap and bait) the tables listed for this skill deal specifically with fur-bearing animals in a boreal/taiga biome. Such animals include rabbit, squirrel, raccoon, beaver, mink, otter, sable, muskrat, lynx, bobcat, wolf, coyote, and some others. All those animals also provide a meal.

Difficulties represent season and abundance of wildlife. While each animal has its own habitat, this table attempts to give an overall sense of the experience had by a trapper venturing into the region for profit or sustenance. Winter is generally the easiest season to trap, because animals are desperately hungry and will walk into traps otherwise avoided, and because game trails are easier to identify.

Easiest difficulties reflect areas where game is plentiful and when food for that game is relatively scarce, such as during winter. Highest difficulties reflect particularly low abundances of wild life, such as comes from over-trapping, or where wild life doesn't like to visit. Average difficulties prevail throughout most of the wilderness regions of Lake Jorakk.

**Terrain and Travel:** Each region boasts unique terrain which can, especially in the northern wilderness, present a significant challenge to players, especially when combined with nasty weather and roaming beasts. Some dense areas like the Norrthaeln, where trees grow so thick they must be hacked through, require days to proceed even a few miles.

Each guide has a table similar to the one shown below (an example taken from the Middle Plains Region), offering a brief description of the region's Predominant Terrain Type (either Open, Impeded or Restricted) and listing the distance a party may travel in a day based upon how hard they wish to march.

Distances are given in miles, as well as "tiles." The number of tiles relates to the hexagonal tiles on the included Regional Map. Almost all regional maps present a scale where a single tile is equal to a day's Moderate March through its predominant terrain type. Thus, a GM may glance at a Regional Map and know by one tile how far the party can usually go in a moderate

day of travelling, with marches of more than one tile meaning increasing levels of exertion. For example, in the Open Terrain of the Middle Plains region, 1 tile equals 10 miles, which is the distance a foot-traveler can go given a day of Moderate Marching. However, in the Norrthaeln region, which is almost entirely Restricted Terrain, 1 tile equals 2 ½ miles, which is as far as one may go in such dense undergrowth without risking stress and exhaustion.

While only the Predominant Terrain Types (usually one type, sometimes two) are listed for a region, terrains will obviously vary within a region. If the GM determines that a terrain other than the predominant type will be encountered for a significant stretch of time, consider Open Terrain as 2x easier than Impeded Terrain and 4x easier than Restricted Terrain, while Impeded Terrain is 2x easier than Restricted Terrain.

All tables represent averages for campaigning foot travel, meaning adventurers bearing weapons and expedition gear, not leisure hikes. A party lightly burdened without packs, and such, could travel as much as 50% further than listed per March Difficulty without unduly stressing themselves.

Explorers with the Hiking/Road Marching Proficiency may reduce the difficulty of their march by one level for the distance travelled. So, a distance which would normally be Arduous is only Hard for the proficient marcher.

If using horses or carts/wagons, consult the table below, which shows the terrain-type equivalent for foot travel, as all distances assume foot travel. For example, a wagon travelling through "Impeded Terrain" moves at the "Restricted" rate, while what would normally be "Restricted" to foot travelers is impassable to wagons and carts.

Horses can move roughly 3 times the distance for March Difficulty relative to their foot-born travelers. So, a party on horseback making a Moderate March could move 30 miles in the Open Terrain of the Middle Plains, whereas foot-travelers could only move 10 miles with the same level of exertion.

Note, however, that Hard, Arduous and Forced Marches on horses greatly increase the chance of injuring an animal. Penalties normally suffered by a foot-traveler (as listed in the table below) are instead suffered by the horse as cumulative chances of injury (10% for Hard, 20% for Arduous and 30% for Forced). So, one day of Arduous March, followed by another of Forced March, would require a 20% chance roll the first day and a 50% chance roll the second day. Each horse must be rolled for separately.

One full day of rest is required to negate every 10% chance of injury accumulated. So, if the above horse was rested the entire third day, on the fourth it could resume travelling with a 40% chance of injury, which would still increase further if more Hard, Arduous or Forced Marches were attempted.

Indicated injury means the horse has become lame so that it cannot be ridden anymore. With

*Open Terrain - open plains and fields, or widely spaced trees with an open understory, firm ground, and little elevation loss/gain. Predominant in the Middle Plains, and also found in some elder growths of forest and managed woodlands.*

*Impeded Terrain - thicker forests with some undergrowth and deadfall, as well as some elevation loss/gain.*

*Restricted Terrain - very thick/dense forests with significant undergrowth and deadfall requiring many detours and much trail-blazing, as well as significant elevation gain/loss.*

total rest in a good environment it might be rehabilitated with a one-time Difficult Animal Husbandry (Horses) check. Otherwise it will likely need to be “put down.”

### Horses, Carts and Wagons

Terrain Type for foot travel	Horse and Pony equivalent	Carts and Wagons equivalent
Open	Open	Open if on road/trail, otherwise Impeded
Impeded	Average Riding check required for the day. Success = Impeded. Failure = Restricted.	Restricted
Restricted	Mounts must be led at Restricted movement rate. Average Riding skill check also required, with failure indicating an injured animal (2d4p HP).	No more than 1 mile/day, with a 25% chance of being stuck without movement for the day. All movement, and attempts at movement, are Arduous.

#### *Middle Plains of Drhokker example:*

Almost all of the Middle Plains is Open Terrain, with sweeping fields of grass, crisscrossed by many small streams and shallow rivers that are usually fordable in the campaigning season (even the Jorakk and Jendasha can be forded in some places). In winter, these freeze over and may be crossed without issue. The spring thaw, however, turns many rivers and streams into rushing rapids. Attempted crossing of such should be role-played, as significant loss/injury is possible.

Predominant Terrain: Open			
Difficulty of March	# of tiles	Equivalent miles	Effects*
Easy	½	5	½ day of rest.
Moderate	1	10	N/A
Hard	2	20	Standard Con check, with failure having effects of Arduous
Arduous	2 ½	25	Cumulative -1 penalty to Att, Def and Dam.
Forced	3	30	Cumulative -2 penalty to Att, Def and Dam. Standard Con check, with failure indicating a d4p HP injury.
*The Hiking/Road Marching Proficiency reduces the difficulty of a march by one level for distance travelled. So, a normal Arduous distance becomes Hard for the proficient Marcher.			

**Encounter charts:** These present the folk, creatures and beasts commonly seen in a region, as well as roll-tables reflecting the probability of having significant encounters with any of those folk/creatures based upon the region’s level of settlement. Significant here means a potentially interesting or playable encounter from a game/story perspective. In a settled region, many farmers and herders may be found that offer little in the way of a story.

Vital stats and in-depth descriptions of all creatures presented here can be found in the *Hacklopedia of Beasts*.

► *Some creatures, like Goblins, have additional racial rules in the Hacklopedia of Beasts pertaining to the disposition of larger groups. For example, larger contingents of Goblins and Orcs have a chance of bringing along Wargs and War-Dogs. GMs should not feel compelled to apply such rules, especially if using this campaign setting with a non-HackMaster system. In that case, the all-knowing GM just construes the situation to fit his needs.*

*Greater numbers of any creature appearing may very well include non-combatants such as males and females untrained for war, children, the elderly and the infirm.*

► *These Regional Guides can do a lot of a GM's work for him (depending on the sort of game being run). If used fully and consistently these Guides should create an atmosphere of authenticity, danger and the unknown, allowing parties to dynamically interact with the unique Nordic environments of the Blood-Clans. Many sessions may be had by a party simply trying to establish themselves in the wilds as hunters or mercenaries, with these Regional Guides handling most of the day-to-day of expeditions and forays.*

In general, the further one gets from settlement, the more "Wild" things become. The more "Wild" things become, the higher the chance for wild and dangerous encounters. As each encounter table is tailor-made to its region, it offers a real-time experience of what sorts of folk and creatures inhabit a given wilderness, for good or ill.

These tables lean towards gritty realism, rather than gamey heroism. If your party wanders into some "partially settled" lands every day for a week hoping to bag a stray Ogre, they'll likely become bored and disappointed having encountered naught but a couple shepherds and a score of rabbits. On the other hand, they'll also be surprised if they plan to make it through some stretch of Orc Territory uncontested. That said, while a party can, and very well should, plan for their encounters in the wild by doing some preliminary scouting and rumor-mongering, there are no guarantees. Such is life, and good gaming.

Encounters are not always hostile. In fact the majority of encounters rolled whilst in Settled Lands during the day will be benign. Even Orc bands don't always attack on sight, especially when numbers play against them. Goblin-Kind recognize that perpetual warfare isn't sustainable, and will form temporary peace treaties with their neighbors for expediency's sake.

At the end of the day the GM should use these charts as best fits his purpose and game. It's his prerogative to adlib and wing-it as he pleases. For example, if he rolls a Common Encounter out in the wilderness and wants to make sure it ends up being a lone trapper with some sort of knowledge about the trail the party's on, then by all means he can do so. Just be careful not to dilute the power of these charts so they always work to the benefit of the party. They provide the suspense and danger of the unknown, as befits the dynamic and dangerous environment of the northern wild. It can be satisfying knowing the GM has abdicated control of major elements of his game to fate and the split-second decisions of his table. That is where real heroism comes in. HackMaster heroism.

Of course, no one wants to see his party frivolously demolished by a truly random and off-the-wall encounter, especially if his party has done their due-diligence. But even here the GM shouldn't really fudge his die-roll, since the Honor-Spend-for-re-rolls mechanic applies to these Encounter Charts (see sidebar), thus giving all but the most dishonorable parties a way out. As a rule of thumb for gritty, challenging games, GMs should not fudge/change results on these tables except to wiggle a bit within a certain encounter type for story-purposes.

## BURNING HONOR TO RE-ROLL ENCOUNTERS

► Since it's entirely possible for even well thought-out expeditions to go pear-shaped very quickly because of an odd-ball roll on these encounter charts, parties can spend Group Honor to force a re-roll on any aspect of an Encounter Chart before another aspect has been rolled. This works in the same way as individual re-rolls, except that the required Honor expenditure is paid in-part by every group member. For characters up to 5th level it costs 10 Honor to force a re-roll. A party of 5 would split this so that the cost is 2 Honor each. A majority of party members must agree in order to force an encounter chart re-roll.

Ultimately, we leave the exact nature of any encounter up to the GM. If a band of Dwarves is indicated, the GM decides what they're about and how they'll react to the party. However, next to each Common encounter is listed some possible types (e.g. for a d8p Fhokki encounter, merchants, hunters, performers, farmers, herders, laborers, warriors, mercenaries and slavers are listed). The GM may use these lists as inspiration, or simply count their number and roll an appropriate die to indicate which it is (in the example above, 9 types are listed, so a d10 could be rolled to determine which type is encountered).

Also, while some creatures, like dinosaurs and monkeys, will never be seen in the northlands (except for odd instances of importation), other creatures might be caused to appear when not otherwise represented on a region's encounter charts. This is especially true of the undead, which do not have a usual habitat among any lands of the living, except perhaps for burial grounds. Thus, don't think that just because it's not listed in a Regional Guide it can't ever be found there. It'd just be unusual (even very unusual).

As with everything in this book, these tables are meant to make a GM's life easier, his story richer, and his player's experience more engrossing, meaningful and memorable. It would be a misuse to allow these tables to place unreasonable limitations upon, or deviations from, your story (though one might also argue, for example, that a Sphinx ensconced upon a frozen arctic shore might be an example of imagination gone mad).

► The discerning reader, reasonably motivated by want of self-preservation, will realize that the encounter charts presented here make it possible for an entirely green party fresh off the boat and still pulling the tags from their gear to run upon a slathering pack of Sturmwulfn upon their first reconnoitering lark into the woods. Naturally, under such circumstances, said Sturmwulfn pack would have no problem tearing the party limb from limb to thence feast at leisure upon their still-pulsing entrails.

While this sort of encounter could by no means be considered "level appropriate," it is however HackMaster appropriate. HackMaster is a system for gamers that would be real heroes, who, if they get anywhere at all, do so by well-honed wit and skill, rather than the benevolent guidance of a nanny-GM. In HackMaster it's the Darwinians who remain alive and well. Those who would naively take to the deeper wilderness ahead of their time, thinking that the gawd who rules their universe would never allow them to be "tested beyond what they can bear," are in for a toothy surprise.

And those who do get in way over their head, or hit by a nasty case of bad luck, can burn Honor as an entire party for a re-roll on the charts (see Sidebar above).

To use these tables, the GM should first decide what level of settlement his party is travelling through. This is somewhat subjective, but the Regional Maps, which represent mileage by hexagonal tiles, offer an at-a-glance idea of how far the party is from nearby settlement, and thus how “Wild” their locale is.

As a party walks away from a settlement things get wilder and more remote. It then becomes more settled as they approach another settlement. When a party crosses through 2 or more levels of settlement, roll for the Level of Settlement represented by the middle-point of their journey.

Keep in mind that roads act as channels of civilization, so always represent higher levels of settlement than just a mile or two off the beaten path.

Finally, Human Deji, Brigands and Berserkers are often presented in both Common and Wild encounters, with a greater chance of encountering such in the latter. This is because, while such folk can be found travelling, living and trading around Fhokki settlement, they tend to stick to areas otherwise considered “Wild.”

### **Description of Regional Levels of Settlement**

<b>Level of settlement</b>	<b>Description:</b>
Heavily Settled	On a well-traveled road and 3+ settlements within 10 miles OR 1 large settlement within 5 miles OR off-road and 1 settlement within 1 mile.
Settled	On a regularly travelled road and 1-2 settlements within 10 miles OR off-road and 1 settlement within 2 miles.
Sparsely Settled	On a little used road and 1 settlement within 10 miles OR off-road and 1 settlement within 5 miles.
Untamed Lands	On a rarely used road/trail and 1 settlement within 20 miles OR off-road and 1 settlement within 10 miles.
Wild Lands	On a rarely used trail and 1 settlement within 30 miles OR off-trail and 1 settlement within 20 miles.
Deep Wilderness	Off-trail and no settlement within 20+ miles. Usually also forested or mountainous.
Orc and Goblin Territory	Any territory formally claimed by an Orc or Goblin tribe. Usually also at least Wild Lands.
Cursed lands	Lands devoid of life and rumored to be plagued by the lingering malice of angry spirits.
Aquatic	Bodies of water large enough to support water-based trade. Examples would be Lake Jorakk, Lake Adesh and the Jorakk and Jendasha Rivers.

After determining the settlement level of a party's locale, roll a d100 on the column for Chance of Encounter to see if the party runs into anything (a d100 roll under the given value indicates an encounter). One roll should be made for day and one for night (for more see Night Encounters below, and later the Advanced Rule for Multiple Encounters).

If an encounter is indicated, roll another d100 on the Type of Encounter Column under either Day or Night. A Common, Wild, Orc/Goblin, Rare, Weird or Aquatic (if ship-bound) encounter is possible.

With the Type of Encounter determined, reference that Encounter Table and roll a final d100 to find exactly what the party sees, and how much of it. Of course, they might have just encountered tracks!

**Encountering Tracks:** For every encounter indicated while the party is travelling, there is a 50% chance that the party merely encounters tracks, rather than creatures. More on Encountering Tracks is given in the Advanced Rules. For now you can simply know that your party did not see the creatures indicated, but rather their tracks.

Note that when travelling on a road or heavily used trail, tracks will be much less meaningful (in that case you can simply consider a tracks encounter as a non-encounter).

When encountering tracks, "Starting Distance" (below) is irrelevant, as it's assumed the party passes over the tracks and has a reasonable chance of seeing them.

**Starting distance:** If the encounter is immediate (not just tracks), then roll on the Starting Distance chart. This is the distance between the PCs and the creature(s) at the beginning of the encounter.

At this point, neither side has necessarily seen the other, but it's assumed one side might become aware of the other. Who sees who must be determined by observation checks and initiative rolls. The greater the distance and environmental cover, the more chance neither side notices the other at all. It remains for the GM to determine what signs might be detected by either party's scouts, such as tracks, smells, sounds, and breaks in cover.

**Encounters in Camp:** Parties don't just run into things, things run into parties. This is also true when parties are minding their own business and trying to get a good rest. Still, being stationary greatly reduces the chance of an encounter.

When a party camps, or remains stationary for more than half of a day/night encounter period, reduce the listed Chance of Encounter by 50%. For example, a party is camping through the night in the Middle Wild Lands in an Untamed area. Chance of an encounter given the above circumstances (Middle Wild Lands in an Untamed area at Night) is normally 30%, however, while camped this chance drops to 15%. Additionally, since Starting Distances are so great in the Middle Wild Lands, the GM might still determine that the potentially encountered creatures are so far away that neither side will see the other (unless of course the party has a nice fire going).

**Night encounters:** A night encounter roll should be made the same as for day encounters, only rolled under the Night section of the Chance of Encounter Table. Each 24 hour period thus requires 2 encounter rolls (1 for day, 1 for night). Note, however, that during the summer, nighttime is very short-lived and both rolls can be made on the daytime table. On the other side of that coin, winter-nights are long, and require two nighttime rolls.

Night encounters are a lot different than day encounters. The party is likely camping, hopefully with at least one lookout. So are most of the other goodly folk and creatures of the wild. It's stuff like Wolves, Orcs and Cutthroats that love the night. Where encounters do occur after the sun goes down, chances increase dramatically that they'll be disagreeable.

Common Encounters at Night require an automatic d100 roll, with 1-50 indicating an encounter with folks looking to turn Brigand and score some easy loot off easy prey. The GM may simply treat this as an automatic Brigand roll under Common Encounters, or roll as normal to see exactly what kind of folk are thinking of mugging his hapless party. Such encounters will usually be ambushes.

Starting Distances play a decisive role at night. Parties keeping good light discipline might be missed entirely by potential foes determined to enter the scene a long way off. On the other hand, parties using a torch, campfire or other light source will only be able to see up 30 feet, or so, to either side, while creatures outside that perimeter will be able to see the party quite well. Creatures like Orcs, Goblins and Wolves also have good Low Light vision.

Finally, while encounters with non-dangerous folk/creatures during the night are possible, it's likely that such would avoid a party's camp. For example, a deer might be indicated, but it would likely avoid a camp's firelight and be missed by all but the most alert lookouts. Such details remain up to the GM's discretion. But as a rule of thumb, anything that does approach a camp at night will often have ill intentions.

See also the Advanced Rules for Wolf Encounters.

► **Common Encounters:** *Common does not necessarily mean benign (indeed rolling a Common encounter at night forces an automatic roll with a 50% chance that it's Brigands). Common just means folk generally associated with mundane, day-to-day life. While such may very well be benign, in the case of a merchant caravan trying to make it from one point to another, it could as easily represent a band of slavers looking to fill their chain-line, or a warband happy to do some looting given the right opportunity. Deity tribes vary in their aggressiveness, but traditionally expect shows of deference and the offering of tributes from travelers, often reacting violently if threatened or insulted. Many tribes are in the practice of taking slaves when opportunity presents itself. Some Fhokki, who may otherwise be "simple" farmers or ranchers, are happy to kill a stranger if the rewards seem likely to outweigh the risks. This is especially true of the divided petty-clans of Middle Drhokker, where loyalties extend little beyond the immediate family/clan unit, and distrust of outsiders runs high (as does ambition for power and greed for gold). In many corners of the lawless Wild Lands, human encounters can be just as dangerous as "Wild" ones.*

*In general, proximity to settlement influences what actions folk take. Even hardened brigands and cutthroats don't generally strike when witnesses are near (unless strong enough to kill or capture all concerned). Thus, ventures into untamed or wilder lands, or travelling at night, becomes riskier due not only to a greater prevalence of creatures, but also to humans who become more willing to act badly the further they are from civilization. Any trip into the hinterlands should be undertaken with ample preparation and support. Parties should hear rumor of such when in settlements, and be warned*

*against going into the wilds if under-prepared.*

*We leave it largely to the GM's discretion as to whether Common encounters are benign or not (except for at night).*

►► ***Common encounters in Heavily Settled Areas:*** *A GM could quickly bore himself and his table to exhaustion by rolling (and continuing to roll, in the case of Multiple Encounters in the Advanced Rules) for every daytime Common encounter when travelling in, for example, Heavily Settled lands where there's a 90% chance of crossing paths with someone. In such cases, remember that these tables present reasonable probabilities of types of encounters given a region's settledness, but don't filter out what the GM actually wants to share with his table.*

*In more heavily settled areas, where the risk of dangerous Common encounters is low, roll for an encounter and when Common is indicated immediately roll a d100 where a roll under 10 indicates a dangerous Common encounter, with all others being benign for the whole day. The GM can also cut the probability of a Common encounter to a quarter of that given (e.g., 25% instead of 95% in Heavily Settled lands), where a roll under the smaller number indicates a significant encounter. It still might not even be "dangerous," but rather a potentially beneficial run-in with, say, a group of Fhokki prospectors just returning from the Maylurr River Basin who have some story-significant information to share.*

*Either way, the GM knows, and can share with his table, that the party ran into lots of various farmers, settlers, traders, herders, etc..., throughout the day, but that none seemed of particular interest to their goals (though players can still be welcomed to interact with any/all if they wish to do so).*

► **Travelling through Orc and Goblin territory:** Any adventurer taking off into the deep northern wilderness must be prepared for Orkin encounters, for the Orc and Goblin tribes of the Jorakklokk are many, violent and dangerous. They hold vast swaths of territory, and war with all who cross their borders.

While some threat of Orkin encounters exists in all but the most tamed corners of the Rytarr Wilderness, chances of running into a Goblin patrol, or worse, increases greatly once one moves into a tribe's formally claimed territory. Like most creatures, Orcs and their kind guard their homelands jealously. As a matter of prestige, pride and survival, territorial home-forests are closely watched and patrolled. Trespassers are scouted, hunted and captured or killed when possible.

Territorial boundaries are traditionally marked with a tribe's totem, usually burned or painted onto a tree or stretched hide. Such markings are placed at thoroughfares, game trails, waterways, and other likely traffic-funnels such as the path of least resistance between bogs, deadfall and steep hills. It's common for Orcs and Goblins to set the heads of defeated foes alongside totems as a warning and proclamation of tribal power. When Orc tribes feud amongst themselves, it's not uncommon to find great piles of corpses of one tribe or another heaped upon disputed boundaries as macabre cairns of warning against future trespassing.

When travelling through such defended Orc and Goblin territory, roll for encounters under the Orc/Goblin Territory section of the Chance of Encounter Tables. This table greatly increases the chance of running into such creatures and their kind.

**Additional/Advanced Rules for Encounter Charts:** These rules add more depth to your party's wilderness forays. However, we recommend that the GM become comfortable with the basic mechanics of his Regional Guide and Encounter Charts before incorporating the following rules. Of course, some folks will want to tuck in right away.

**Encountering Tracks:** For every encounter indicated while the party is travelling, there is a 50% chance it was not actually be the indicated creature(s), but rather its tracks. Note that weather can make tracks harder or easier to read. Tracks in fresh snow can easily be followed by a non-tracker, while fresh snow over old tracks will make it as though no one had ever been there.

*When tracks are encountered, follow these steps:*

- ❶ Determine the particulars of the encounter as normal
- ❷ Determine the Age and Direction of the Tracks on the table below
- ❸ Determine Difficulty Level of the Tracks (based on age and size) on the table below
- ❹ Allow trackers to roll to see if they notice the tracks (or roll for them). Trackers declared to be “actively tracking” when they pass the tracks receive a -20 bonus to their skill check roll. Otherwise, trackers may make a normal Tracking skill check to see if they notice.
- ❺ If a tracker notices the tracks he may attempt to get information from them, per another normal Tracking skill check (see the Player’s Handbook for more on the Tracking skill).

## Tracking

Age of the tracks ...	
d100	Result
1-10	d4p hours
11-20	2d4p hours
21-30	2d6p hours
31-40	3d6p hours
41-50	4d6p hours
51-60	1d4p days
61-70	1d6p days
71-80	2d4p days
81-90	2d6p days
91-100	3d6p days

Direction the tracks are going ...		
d8	From	To
1	North	South
2	South	North
3	East	West
4	West	East
5	Northeast	Southwest
6	Northwest	Southeast
7	Southeast	Northwest
8	Southwest	Northeast

Difficulty of Tracking skill check	Description ...
Trivial (-90 bonus)	<1 day old tracks made by multiple medium or larger creature(s) in fresh mud or snow.
Easy (-80 bonus)	1-2 day old tracks made by multiple medium or larger creature(s) in soft soil.
Average (-40 bonus)	1-3 day old tracks made by 1 medium or larger creature on a packed trail
Difficult (0 bonus)	1-3 day old tracks made by tiny creatures, 3-6 day old tracks made by a small creature on a packed trail, or more recent tracks made by a medium or larger creature on very hard ground.
Very Difficult (+10 penalty)	Old tracks in inscrutable terrain (slab rock, streams, etc...)

**Multiple encounters** are an obvious possibility. Just because a party is already exhausted and suffering from their previous encounter doesn't mean other creatures will beg off for the rest of the day. In fact, in wilderness areas filled with Orc tribes and Sturmwulf packs a party should become more worried about attack as they weaken, as such malicious and predatory creatures prefer the weak.

Thus, after an encounter has been resolved (including Encountering Tracks, if using that rule), the GM may feel free to roll for another, and another, until "No Encounter" is indicated. Particularly exacting GMs may even want to add a cumulative 10% after each encounter while in Orc and Goblin Territory. Once "No Encounter" has been indicated, the rest of the day can be assumed to proceed without event.

If the above seems too intense, the GM may limit himself to 2 chances for encounters per day and night. He may also ignore this rule entirely.

The timing of an encounter remains entirely up to the GM. He might like to make it random, rolling a die for day and for night to find the hour of the encounter. In Spring and Fall a d12 can be rolled for night and day, however in Summer when only day encounters are rolled, and in the Winter when only night encounters are rolled, 2d12 should be used.

The GM might also like to roll for all encounters at once. That way, he can decide at which times the encounters take place throughout the day.

**Changing probabilities of an encounter:** Parties are more likely to draw attention to themselves if they do silly things like bang pots and pans together as they walk through the woods (albeit it on the local ranger's well-meant advice that doing so will scare away bears), or warm their behinds over roaring bonfires through the night. Such behavior also makes it less likely they'll run across a plump rabbit just in time for dinner. The GM should thus feel free to modify both Chance of Encounter rolls and Type of Encounter rolls according to the actions his party is and isn't taking.

For example, loud and obnoxious parties might have their Chance of Encounter check increased from 50% to 80% if the GM determines there's a good chance that a menacing "something" in the neighborhood hears them and takes interest. If an Encounter is indicated, the GM can then decide before he rolls for the Type of Encounter that any potentially auspicious encounter (such as with a Brownie who knows about some close-by treasure) will hide and avoid the party, whereas potentially threatening encounters automatically hear the party and setup an ambush.

On the other hand, parties remaining diligent about noise, visibility and, erm, smell, can receive a bonus to their chance of a favorable encounter, or at least receive a bonus when it comes time for Observation checks and Initiative rolls. Particularly adroit parties might even be given the option of a free re-roll. This should, however, be done sparingly, and only as reward for excellent expeditioning behavior backed-up by genuinely good rolls (such as sneaking, observation, listening, etc...).

The GM should only use the mechanics described above intentionally, and with full acceptance of the consequences. We don't want anyone tempted to, say, cheat by re-rolling after a Sturmwulf pack has been indicated. If you decided odds were in favor of your players being heard by something nasty, it's probably because they were bumbling along like a bunch of boobs. Let the dice, and the bodies, lie as they fall.

**Winter encounters:** When exploring in the winter, all regions should be treated as two levels less settled than otherwise, with Wild Lands being the most wild an otherwise settled place can get. Furthermore, chances of an encounter for the new level of settlement are reduced by half (in addition to any other reductions). So, if travelling through an area that would be considered Settled in the summer months, during winter treat it as Untamed. Furthermore, if the Untamed percentage chance of encounter were normally 20%, during the winter it would become 10% (and 5% if camping at night).

**Wolf encounters:** The Wild Lands are notorious for their roving packs of hungry wolves. While common wolves won't usually attack humans, unless a pack is very hungry and/or the humans vulnerable, stories abound in the northlands of wolves shadowing a party for days on end during winter, going so far as to enter the fire-circle at night in hopes of catching prey unawares, or at least stealing an easy camp snack. The greater Dire breeds are even more persistent and cunning.

But all such common wolves are but pests compared with the real terrors of the north: the terrible Warg and Sturmwulf packs. Those wolfish aberrations possess a brooding intelligence and malice, and have power in their jaws to crush a man's skull, even though it be encased in iron. The latter is especially true of the Sturmwulfn, who stand as tall as 6 feet at the shoulders, and have been known to bring down Giants. Only the most hardened parties can hope to stand against a determined Sturmwulf pack.

While any breed of wolf may be seen in almost any reach of the northern wild, all become much more active, and dangerous, at night and in winter. Because of their superior senses, wolves feel they own the night, and become much more willing to attack. Furthermore, winter hunger drives them to new levels of boldness and violence as they hunt desperately for sustenance.

Thus, if settlement is half a mile or more away:

- ▶▶ Any time that a Wild encounter is indicated at night, immediately roll a d100 with a result of 35 or less meaning that the encounter is wolfish.
- ▶▶ When any type of encounter is indicated in the winter, roll a d100 with a result of 25 or less indicating a Wolfish encounter (if not wolfish, proceed as normal). At night this chance increases to 45 or less.
- ▶▶ If a wolfish encounter is indicated, roll a d8 to determine the type of wolves encountered.

d8	Type of wolves
1-4	Common
5-6	Dire
7	Wargs
8	Sturmwulfn

## Northern Climate and Seasons

As a whole the Lake Jorakk Region presents climatic patterns typical of the northern boreal: hot, sunny summers, short springs, rainy autumns, and frigid winters with temperatures below zero being the norm. However, it is a vast region, and its climates can vary to extremes, ranging from a more temperate boreal around Narr'Rytarr and much of the southern shore, to the subarctic and arctic of the northern, western and eastern rims. Lake Jorakk's wide range of climatic zones can be best understood in terms of three unique geographic features.

First are the great northern Jorakk Mountain ranges, which protect the entire lake from severe arctic winds, known as the Faltarkk, which prevail out of the north through the winter and keep much of the western Torakk frozen year-round.

Second are the Faltarkk winds themselves, which continually buffet and freeze the western rim through the winter, making it all but inhospitable for six months out of the year. The Faltarkk are primarily responsible for the permafrost of the Torakk.

Third is the truly massive size of Lake Jorakk, which has a highly moderating effect on the whole region, sparing it the wild temperature swings typical of inland boreal environments, such as are found in the Wild Lands. Indeed, much of the southern shore of Lake Jorakk more closely approximates a coastal boreal climate.

The southern shore of Lake Jorakk enjoys relatively consistent seasons. Spring is brief, beginning with Ragarokk, or Break-Up, and lasting only a month or two. Summer typically proceeds through Flenmandr, the "month of flies," when mosquitoes and black-flies become extremely troublesome, especially around the western rim. Autumn comes fast and ends quickly, usually midway through Samnuldrmandr, the "month of gathering." Winter comes in Fraermandr, the "frost month," and lasts for six months, ending in Eosttrmandr, the "Month of Eosttr." Winter is by far the longest season, characterized by endless nights, bitter cold, deep snows, and howling winds off the frozen lake.

The northern rim's winter is much more severe, lasting about one month longer with a warming season of only three to four months, where spring, summer and fall blend into one season of respite from the otherwise unrelenting brutality of "Huuntr," or winter.

## Months of the Year

No.	Fhokki Tongue Names	Merchant Tongue Names	Rough Latin Equivalent	Coinciding Northern Season
1.	<i>Jraffhuuntr</i> "long winter"	Renewal	Feb-March	Winter, or Huuntr
2.	<i>Eosttrmandr</i> "Eostr month" or "month of fertility"	Sowing	March-April	
3.	<i>Ragarokk</i> "break-up"	Mustering	April	Spring, or Ragarokk, meaning "break-up"
4.	<i>Panimandr</i> "thanks month"	Declarations	April-May	
5.	<i>Vorsdengmandr</i> "month of Vorsdeng"	Mid-season Harvest	May-June	Summer, or Olmnr
6.	<i>Olmusmandr</i> "month of the sun"	Replanting	June-July	
7.	<i>Krakkmandr</i> "month of the Kraken"	Siege-hold	July	
8.	<i>Flenmandr</i> "month of flies"	Arid	Aug	
9.	<i>Virdbittrmandr</i> "wood cutting month"	Reaping	Aug-Sept	Fall, or Nundr, meaning "dying"
10.	<i>Sythrrmandr</i> "month of Sythrr" or <i>Samnuldrmandr</i> "month of gathering"	Harvest	Sept-Oct	
11.	<i>Fraermandr</i> "frost month"	Frosting	Nov-Dec	Winter, or Huuntr
12.	<i>Jull</i> , also <i>Mundlhuuntr</i> "middle-winter"	Snowfall	Dec-Jan	
13.	<i>Norrhuuntr</i> "dark winter" also, <i>Mulksugtr</i> "fat-sucker"	Famine	Jan-Feb	

### Summer, or "Olmnr" - (Vorsdengmandr to Flenmandr)

During the summer months, low pressure systems from the Byth Mountains create a westerly wind pattern largely devoid of moisture. Most of the lands in the eastern rain shadow of the Byth Mountains remain quite arid through the summer, supporting little more than the tough grasses, shrubs and low trees of a grassland steppe, or Tundra in the case of the Torakk.

However, once the warm, dry westerlies hit Lake Adesh they pick up a significant amount of moisture, building rapidly into thunderheads which proceed beyond Lake Adesh's eastern shore to cool and drop massive amounts precipitation on the western Rytarr Forest regions of the Hunttwyldr and Lokknwyldr. Throughout the summer, those regions experience predictable, violent afternoon thunderstorms. Of all Lake Jorakk's regions, those two receive, by far, the most annual precipitation. Accordingly, the Hunttwyldr region boasts some of the tallest stands of timber found in the Rytarr, whereas the Lokknwyldr, with its poor drainage, has long been a vast bog as much lake as forest.

The Central Rytarr Forest regions receive, in general, much less moisture than the western regions. Their summer days tend toward mild and sunny, with occasional afternoon thunderstorms and days of light rain. The regions directly southeast of the Dunvaggr around Narr'Rytarr, as well as the western Mundlwyldr and much of the Olfrar River Basin, do tend to receive a significant amount of rainfall, however.

Further east, in the Rytarr Forest regions of Mundylywyldr and beyond, there exists a southerly lake effect somewhat similar to that experienced in the southwestern regions. Warmer air from over the lake picks up moisture through the day and then, as the southern shore cools towards late afternoon and evening, draws southward to rapidly elevate and build into heavy thunderheads which dump their weight on the inland forest. The eastern lake is renowned for violent thunderstorms, both out on the water and inland. Late afternoon gales with high winds, lightning and torrential downpours are quite common.

The far eastern lake rim, which forms a bowl of high mountain ranges around the Gryffnirsaer, or "Sea of Gryffn," presents an unpredictable and deadly array of violent weather through the summer, where quick and intense thunderstorms are possible at any time of day and night, both out on the lake and on shore.

The northern shore sees patterns similar to those around the eastern rim, with heavy thunderstorms in the afternoon being nearly predictable. Landslides and flash floods are common occurrences in the northern mountain valleys, as rocky topsoil and sparse plant life mean that most precipitation becomes run-off which can quickly gather into cascading rivers where were previously dry ravines.

Because of the moderating effect of Lake Jorakk, most of its shores, except the north, see fairly consistent temperature ranges through the summer, with highs in the low 80s, and lows in the 50s.

The mountain valleys of the north shore are generally cool during the day and cold at night, even in the middle of summer, with temperatures rarely rising above 65 degrees and often dropping below freezing at night. Even in the lower valleys, snow is not unheard of at night.

Most notably, the northern summer is famed for its length of days. Around Narr'Rytarr and the rest of the southern lake shore, the sun sets around midnight and rises again only four hours later. Further north in the Jorakk Mountains the sun never sets at all, though around midnight it does dip far toward the horizon so that it gives off little-to-no warmth. As a rule, northern folk make themselves busy through the summer, as winter's unending darkness renders all but the pursuit of comfort and survival infeasible.

### **Fall, "Nundr" - (Virdbittrmandr to Samnuldrmandr)**

The brief Autumn of the southern lake shore is marked by drizzly days and cold nights, the beautiful yellows, oranges and reds of aspen, poplar and birch leaves dying, the rutting of elk, moose and deer, intermittent snows, and the whiff of far-off cold warning of winter-to-come. The fall lasts about two months, and is a time of gathering and preparation.

Temperatures are usually mild and cool, with highs trending toward the 60's and nights sometimes dropping below freezing. Snow flurries are not unusual as early as mid Samnuldrmandr. Thunderstorms become much less frequent, being replaced by long stretches of light rain intermingled with bright, sunny days. The northern shore and eastern rim do not have much of a fall, and usually start seeing snow and continual freezing toward the end of Virdbittrmandr.

### **Winter, "Huuntr" - (Fraermandr to Eosttrmandr)**

Through the winter months, far northern arctic pressure systems send dry, frigid winds, called the Faltarkks, howling south over the Torakki tundra, trending southeast toward the western Lake Jorakk rim. These bitter winds have kept the Torakk locked in ice for many centuries, and in those flat and drab lands of permafrost, little grows beyond moss, heath and lichens. However, the vast ranges of the Jorakk Mountains protect the lake from the brunt of the Faltarkks, largely sparing it the Torakk's wasting fate.

The western lake shore is, however, less protected from the Faltarkk Winds, and its winter is thus known to be dry and bitterly cold. Centuries of high winds and frigid temperatures have made the forests north of Lake Adesh grow stunted, hoary and tough. The snows of the western rim are much lighter than further east, as the Faltarkk Winds are markedly dry, having little opportunity to collect moisture before Lake Jorakk. In the west, temperatures in the single digits and lower are the norm, with drops far below zero being common. Wind chill can make it feel much colder.

The Central Rytarr Forest regions are famous for extreme climatic patterns throughout the winter. As the early winter Faltarkk winds hit the still unfrozen Jorakk Lake in the west, they warm slightly and pick up a good deal of moisture. As they reach the southern lake shore they rapidly cool again and dump precipitation in the form of thick, heavy snows that blanket the forests from Vrykk to east of the Angitish Hills. The Mundthaeln, or Middle-Hills, just west of the Dunvaggr, receives the brunt of this snowy lake effect. In those areas, snow packs of over eight feet are average for just the first two months of winter, with the regions west and east of the Mundthaeln receiving almost as much. During these early months, temperatures typically hover between freezing and the teens.

By mid-to-late winter, by which time Lake Jorakk has mostly frozen over, these heavy snows are replaced by howling, bitter winds reminiscent of the Faltarkks. Though influenced by that arctic system, much of the mid-to-late winter winds that buffet the southern shore are a product of the frozen lake itself, which pulls air off the northern ranges and sweeps it towards the relatively warmer south with chilling ferocity. As these winds cross the vast frozen surface of Lake Jorakk they pick up top layers of snow and ice, carrying them high in the air as far south as Drhokker. Out on the lake itself, winds regularly reach gale force, and hit the southern forest shore almost constantly throughout later winter, where snow is piled in great drifts reaching the tops of the lakeside trees. In all the forests bordering the southern lake, average snow depths range between 12-15 feet by mid-winter, though along the shore drifts can be much higher. On many clear and sunny days the snow continues to fall from a shimmering sky, representing ice blown in from as much as a hundred miles north.

Temperatures drop steadily throughout the entire lake region as the great Lake Jorakk freezes, beginning in the far north around the beginning of Fraermandr, and continuing towards the south, with the southern shore freezing in the first weeks of Jull. By the end of Jull it is generally considered safe to journey across the entirety of Lake Jorakk from south to north without concern of falling in, though few would ever find reason or want to do such a thing. In some warm winters, however, middle sections of the lake may remain free of ice. The Dunvaggr does not freeze until later, usually remaining open until the middle of Norrhuntr, owing to the influx of warmer water from the Jorakk River. However, by the end of Norrhuntr, the Jorakk River itself usually freezes over as far south as Trarr and Vhott.

After the month of Jull, when most of the lake has frozen over, temperatures drop precipitously all along the southern lake shore, with single digits and lower becoming the norm. Wind chill regularly drops felt temperature well below zero.

Because of the exceedingly harsh conditions found along the greater lake during winter, settlement in those areas has been quite limited and, where it does exist, remains a trying affair of endurance, spirit and will-power. The Dunvagr is largely spared the bitter winds and drifts of the southern shore, however, by the sheltering effect of the Mundthaeln, or Middle-Hills.

Lake Jorakk's northern shore is a desolate and inhospitable place throughout all the months of winter. Sub-zero winds from the higher ranges rush down towards the relatively warmer lake surface, creating an almost constant wind effect along the shoreline. These winds are strong, and frigid, but generally dry. Snowfall is thus relatively light along the northern shore, usually averaging just 3 feet per year, though this will stay late into the spring as temperatures almost never rise above freezing until early summer.

Along the largely uncharted eastern rim of the lake, the climate is varied and somewhat erratic through winter, with the surrounding mountains having an often contradictory effect on weather patterns. East of the Angitish, the Rytarr Forest regions experience less wind effect off the lake, and almost none of the Faltarkk Winds. However, further east the northerly curving ranges create winds of their own, and the bowl of the Gryffnirsær and its surrounding shores can at times become a maelstrom of snow storms and blizzards.

Owing to its far northern latitude, the southern Lake Jorakk region is dark for most of the winter, enjoying only 5 hours of daylight in the middle of winter. The northern shore, however, never truly sees the sun at any point through the long month of Norrwhuuntr, or "dark winter."

### **Spring, "Ragarokk" - (Ragarokk to Panimandr)**

In the Dunvig Skarrnic dialect, the period between winter and summer is referred to as Ragarokk, meaning "Break-Up." While the lower Wild Lands enjoy a more traditional spring of budding wild flowers, blossoming trees, foaling wildlife and mild temperatures, the northern regions experience spring as a violent, cacophonous upheaval that is the thaw of its rivers and inland sea. This is usually a brief period lasting about three weeks to a month.

The Jorakk River is the first to break-up, as it warms much more quickly in the south and brings a flood of warmed snow-melt rushing northward. As the river thaws in the Middle Wild Lands, its breaking top-ice quickly builds up on the still-frozen northern sections, causing huge ice-jams that are pushed onward by the flood of spring melt. As the warmer southern water flows under the upper ice layers they thaw from the bottom up, while the warming air and sun causes them to simultaneously thaw from the top down. With the building pressure from flooding spring melt, the whole length

of the still-frozen Jorakk River thus begins to buckle and heave upward within about a week of the start of Ragarokk. From the source of the Jorakk River to its mouth, extreme flooding is a regular and deadly occurrence as massive ice-jams form suddenly and get locked up in bends in the river so that they block large sections of flow, causing the river to spill over its banks and form temporary lakes that can devastate settlements. Gothmerr is an example of a town built with this pattern in mind, it being situated on a small tributary shoot of the river and sheltered by the eastern aspect of an island that largely protects it from the devastating spring break-up of the Jorakk River. While floods are common on the western shore at that stretch of the river, Gothmerr itself has never been inundated.

Lake Jorakk itself begins to thaw toward the middle and end of Ragarokk, beginning with the Dunvaggr, which warms more quickly than the rest of the lake because of the influx of the Jorakk River. As the Dunvaggr thaws, stimulated by the flow of warmer southern water and a succession of sunny days, the pressure from the Jorakk River's ice flow causes it to buckle and heave skyward in a highly violent process. Throughout Ragarokk, the sound of cracking and exploding ice can be heard echoing all along the hills surrounding the Bay of Man. At the beginning of break-up, enormous ice-jams form where the Jorakk River meets the bay, so that great piles of ice build there as much as fifty feet high. These ice-dams often create widespread flooding along the banks as far back as Narr'Rytarr, though most of that settlement is built up on higher ground to afford some protection. By the middle of Panimandr, the Dunvaggr is usually clear.

The greater lake doesn't usually begin to thaw until the first week of Panimandr, but after that time progresses quickly so that by the middle of the month the entire southern half of the lake is breaking up. With the melt of the Rytarr Forest's deep snow pack, countless rivers and streams flood the frozen lake with new water, causing the level of the lake to rise rapidly underneath its ice crust and build upward pressure that ultimately causes it to violently buckle upwards so that oftentimes slabs of ice several hundred feet across shove into air. Throughout Panimandr, the jumbled surface of the frozen lake groans, whines, cracks and explodes with reports loud enough to be heard miles away. It is chaos and violence on an epic scale, reminiscent of prophecies told of the end of the world.

By the end of Panimandr, the lower half of the lake is mostly clear of ice, though larger bergs may still remain. However, the middle and northern sections of the lake don't thaw until early-to-mid summer, with some heavily shadowed bays of the far north and east never thawing at all.

## Using the Weather Charts

Daily weather can be a great tool for creating setting and atmosphere. The difference in mood between a sunny spring day versus a raging thunderstorm or the stillness of a heavy snow-fall is vast. This is especially true of landscapes like those found in the Blood-Clans of Jorikk, where climate molds its people as much as geography and culture. Indeed, it could be said that one who does not know northern climate does not know the north at all.

In addition to atmospheric feel, use of realistic daily weather patterns adds a real-world feeling of anticipation, anxiety and danger to adventuring. If a party knows their GM will be rolling for atmospheric events like snow and week-long drizzle-fests, they'll be much more likely to spend precious coin on things like tents and cloaks. If the GM's also following rules for stuff like hypothermia and frostbite, getting caught in a storm could prove as dangerous as a creature encounter.

The Weather Charts found herein make it easy to track daily weather patterns for each region within the great Lake Jorakk Wilderness. All a GM need do is roll a d100 on the tables provided to determine any given day's weather for any given region during any given season. Advanced rules exist for those wanting an even more accurate portrayal of weather.

**Introduction:** By consulting a region's Weather Chart and rolling a d100 you can quickly determine Weather and Temperature for any day of any season.

Temperature is presented as a temperature range, as well as the subjective "feel" of the outdoors (e.g., Hot, Warm, Cold, Freezing, etc...). Keep in mind that folk in the Lands of Jorakk don't think in terms of numbers, but in terms of felt temperature relative to seasonal norms and patterns. Also note that temperature ranges listed pertain to experience of the lands around Lake Jorakk. What is considered a "hot day" in the north might very well be quite moderate for a southern summer day.

Though "snow" and "ice" aren't found in any charts, simply know that when "Precipitating" is rolled on the Weather chart, and "Freezing" or colder is rolled on the Temperature chart, that what's falling from the sky is white and frozen.

By the same token, if it's clear and warm, then you can leave your hall without a big bear fur. If the result is Afternoon Thunderstorms, then it's likely the day starts out nice and sunny but turns dark around mid-afternoon with lightning, thunder and heavy rains. This can be a good way to get adventurers stuck out in the wild without that bear fur when they need it most.

Finally, if the GM should ever roll a result that just doesn't seem right, feel free to re-roll or

change it. Weather is very complex and affected by many factors, and while these charts take a lot of them into account, they're not full-proof. Still, do know that "freak occurrences" like snows in the middle of summer can happen (which is why a very slight chance of very random weather occurrences is usually provided).

Seasons in the Weather Charts represent the standard cycle of the northern year. Some areas, like the Northern Shore where winter lasts at least a month longer than the southern shore, have much different cycles than standard.

**Additional Weather Modifiers** may be used to make weather even more accurate and realistic. Feel free to use all or none of these modifiers.

Northern Temperature Ranges	
Range	Temperatures in Fahrenheit
Extremely Hot	86+ degrees
Hot	76-85 degrees
Warm	61-75 degrees
Cool	50-60 degrees
Cold	33-49 degrees
Freezing	21-32 degrees
Frigid	0-20 degrees
Sub-Zero	below 0 degrees
<i>Temperature ranges do not include effects of wind chill or humidity both which can significantly alter perceived temperature.</i>	

*Setting of the Sun* can make things considerably colder, especially in the northern regions where a balmy day can drop to freezing at night. The average range between highs and lows in the northlands is 25 degrees (variances in this range are noted per region). So, after the sun sets, just knock 25 degrees off what was rolled for the day's temperature. In general, this is the same as a drop of two temperature ranges on the Weather Chart (i.e., Cool would become Freezing). Alternatively, the GM can roll 6d6 if he wants to make this drop in temperature random.

Effects of weather on temperature can be dramatic. For example, in the summer, spring and fall, cloud cover hiding the sun can drop temperature significantly, especially in northern latitudes. On a nice spring day, it can feel hot in the sun, but quite cold in the shade. On the other hand, in the winter, cloud cover creates an insulating effect, especially at night. Clear nights are some of the coldest to be had. For such effect, consult the table Weather effects on temperature.

Weather effects on temperature:	
Weather conditions	Change in temperature
Cloudy during day in summer/spring/fall	One temp range cooler
Thunderstorms	2 temp ranges cooler.
Clear at night in spring/fall*	One temp range cooler
Clear at night in winter*	One temp range cooler
Overcast at night in winter*	One temp range warmer
<i>*In addition to a 25 degree (or 2 temp range) drop for nightly lows, if using that rule</i>	

**Wind Chill** can further reduce felt temperature by d4 degrees for every category of wind strength present: light breeze, breeze, light wind, wind, strong wind, heavy wind, gale force (see Wind Strength below). So, if strong winds are present then 4d4 should be rolled, with the result being the additional reduction in felt temperature. Note that wind chill does not affect the actual freezing point of water.

**Wind Strength:** If the GM would like to make wind strength random he may do so by rolling

Wind Strength Effects on Perceived Temperatures		
d100 Roll	Wind strength	Wind Chill (in d4 degrees cooler)
1-15	calm	n/a
16-40	light air	n/a
41-65	light breeze	1
65-75	gentle breeze	2
76-85	moderate breeze	3
86-90	fresh breeze	4
91-95	strong breeze	5
96-98	moderate gale	6
99-100	gale+ (indicates serious storms)	7

on the following table, but also note that these results may contradict those from the regional Weather Chart (such as rolling for a thunderstorm on the weather chart, and “calm winds” below). Also, some areas have prevailing wind conditions not reflected on the following table.

For example, the whole southern shore of Lake Jorakk experiences frequent

heavy and gale-force winds through much of mid to late winter. The GM should use his discretion, and defer to the greater regional Weather Charts and overall climatic patterns when in doubt.

**Northerly Aspects:** Some mountain valleys, especially around the eastern lake rim in places like the Bay of Gaad, the Vord River Valley and the Black Basin, have north-facing aspects which boast some of the coldest, barest landscapes of the whole lake region, and even all

Tellene. Some of these north faces literally never see the sun. In the north, such environments represent permafrost biomes.

For northern latitude environments with a severe northerly aspect, such as at the northern feet of a very tall and precipitous mountain, simply deduct 2 temperature ranges from whatever is rolled for the day’s temperature. This deduction would then stack with further deductions.

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