

# WISDOM FROM THE WASTELANDS

Issue #23:  
Sea Monsters



By Derek Holland and the Skirmisher Game Development Group

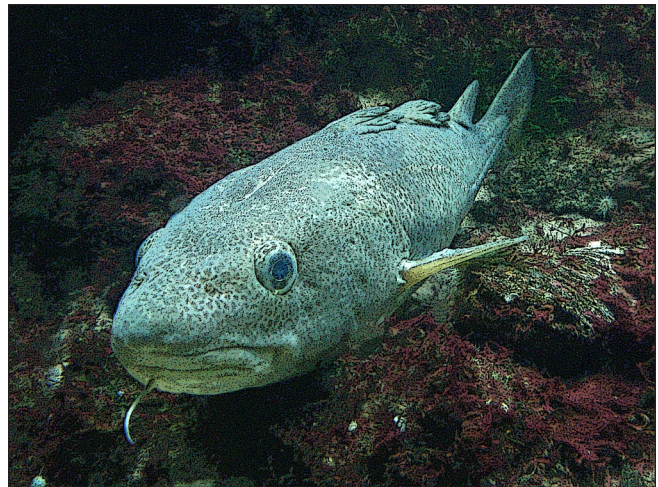
**D**espite much of the planet being covered by ocean, sea monsters have oddly been absent from all editions of the game that inspired *Mutant Future*. Such a vast area, in a variety of latitudes and conditions, provides a huge playground in which to design creatures. As a result, sea monsters could be anything from kaiju crabs to a form of bacteria that converts biological mass to various drugs and artifacts. Here are a few examples.

## Candy Cod

No. Enc.: Swarm  
Alignment: Neutral  
Movement: Swim 180' (60')  
Armor Class: 6  
Hit Dice: 30  
Attacks: Contact  
Damage: 3d6  
Save: L3  
Morale: 5  
Hoard Class: None

This fairly common game fish has a novel way of dealing with predators. Anything that eats a candy cod undergoes a slight change in their biological chemistry makeup: the 'victim' gains the *prey scent* drawback for a week, unless a save versus poison is made. Since this effect applies to creatures both above and below water, monster attacks on fishing villages near the cod fisheries are likewise fairly common.

**Mutations:** *aberrant form (natural weapon, xenomorphism), induce mutation (prey scent).*



## Glup

No. Enc.: 5d4 (10d12)  
Alignment: Neutral  
Movement: 30' (10')  
Swim 180' (60')  
Armor Class: 6  
Hit Dice: 7  
Attacks: 1 or 1 (bite or *temperature control*)  
Damage: 3d4+4 or special  
Save: L4  
Morale: 5  
Hoard Class: Incidental

Glups are 12' long mutant groupers, massive heavy-bodied fish of the sea bass family that inhabit warm seas. They have very large heads and wide mouths, and are unusual in that they beach themselves to breed, in a way similar to elephant seals. Glups can keep the air and soil cool by using their *temperature control* mutation, though they must return to

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This publication is dedicated to providing useful information, game content, and ideas to players of modern, science fiction, and post-apocalyptic table-top and role-playing games in general and to fans of Goblinoid Games' *Mutant Future* RPG in particular. The material contained herein are compatible with it and any others that use the "Basic" system introduced in the most popular role-playing games of the early 1970s and are easily adaptable to many other games (especially successor systems, to include those covered by the Open Game License).

the water every few hours. Females lay their eggs in shallow depressions on the beach and remain nearby, bringing water back from the ocean to refill the nests until the eggs mature. After a month the eggs hatch, whereupon both adults and young return to the ocean, separating into schools of similar-sized fish (i.e., males, females, and offspring). Every year, the beaches where glups breed are covered in fish, but they are not the same fish every year. Each male and female breeds only every five years — so wiping out one colony will not affect the next year's population. Although glups are perfectly edible, they are a perilous prize: even on land these fish are extremely dangerous, strong enough to bite through flesh and bone with relative ease. Those who think they can simply use missile weapons to hunt the creatures will find the grounded fish are far from helpless... they can freeze or fry a would-be predator from 100' away (damage as per the *temperature control* mutation). Few creatures can survive the attacks of an entire colony.

**Mutations:** *aberrant form (natural weapon, xenomorphism), gigantism, temperature control.*

### Greater Inferno Whale

No. Enc.: d6 (0)  
 Alignment: Neutral  
 Movement: Swim 240' (80')  
 Armor Class: 4  
 Hit Dice: 16  
 Attacks: 1 or 1 (bite or fire)  
 Damage: 4d8 or 6d12  
 Save: L12  
 Morale: 10  
 Hoard Class: None

These mutant descendants of orca are rightly feared by mariners around the world. At 60' long and weighing 12 tons, the greater inferno whales' immense size is threat enough to smaller vessels, but their *chemical gland* mutation also provides them with two terrible natural weapons: poison and flame. The animals are able to split the salt in sea water into chlorine and sodium, and break down the water itself into its component hydrogen and oxygen atoms.

The former reaction allows a whale to surround itself with a perpetual cloud of class 7 poison gas extending out to a 50' diameter on the surface and a 25' diameter underwater.

The latter three elements fuel its fiery surface breath weapon: a cone of fire 100' long by 25' wide, which can be produced *every* round. Given the spectacular nature of this weapon, the whales' attacks on ships and other surface targets are obvious from many miles away, especially at night.

Pods of inferno whales prefer to hunt large aquatics and do attack ships by accident — or in times of hunger, on purpose. Due to their poison, the whales devastate the waters they inhabit, forcing them to be nomadic or starve to death in a matter of weeks or months.

There is a smaller inferno whale that does not have the *gigantism* mutation or split water into oxygen and hydrogen, and does less damage with its bite and breath. This creature was posted online for free on Skirmisher Publishing LLC's old forum.

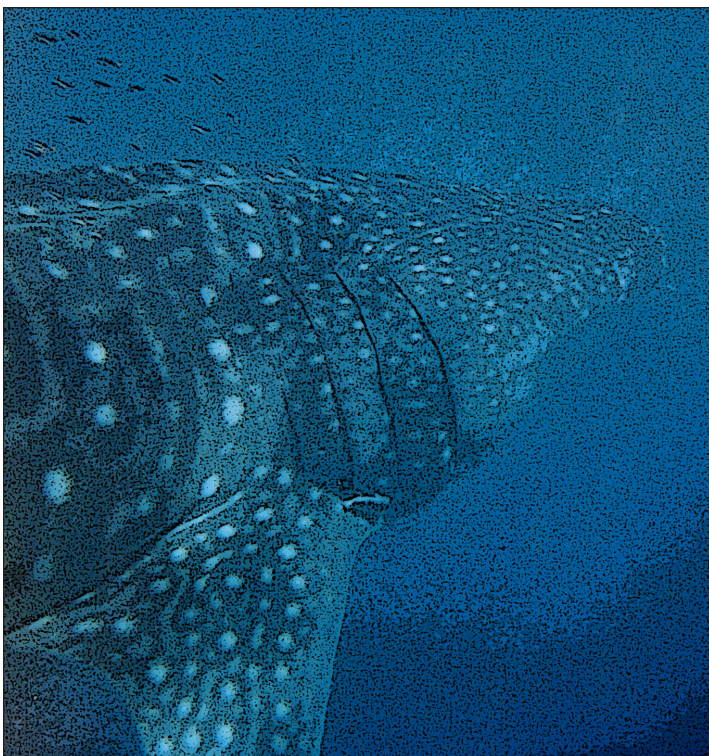
**Mutations:** *chemical gland, gigantism, toxic weapon.*

### Shark King

No. Enc.: 3d6 (0)  
 Alignment: Neutral  
 Movement: Swim 150' (50')  
 Armor Class: 7  
 Hit Dice: 2  
 Attacks: 1 (mud shark)  
 Damage: special  
 Save: L2  
 Morale: 10  
 Hoard Class: None

Three to five foot long intelligent sea bass, the shark king survives because of its creations. The fish has no control over real sharks but rather animates mud or sand into the form of a 15' long shark. When defending itself, the bass simply has the "mud shark" suffocate its enemies. To do this, the bass must make an attack roll with a +10 bonus. If the attack hits, the mud shark engulfs the target creature, and the victim suffocates (see the drowning rules below, this attack also applies to gilled creatures). Shark kings are not violent and have few wants beyond food. They are not a good source of information and most people ignore or avoid them. A few have started to farm other fish species by using their mud sharks in a manner similar to sheep dogs.

**Mutations:** *animate object.*



## Shellback

No. Enc.: d10 (0)  
Alignment: Neutral  
Movement: 30' (10')  
Armor Class: 5  
Hit Dice: 14  
Attacks: 1 (touch)  
Damage: d3  
Save: L7  
Morale: 12  
Hoard Class: None

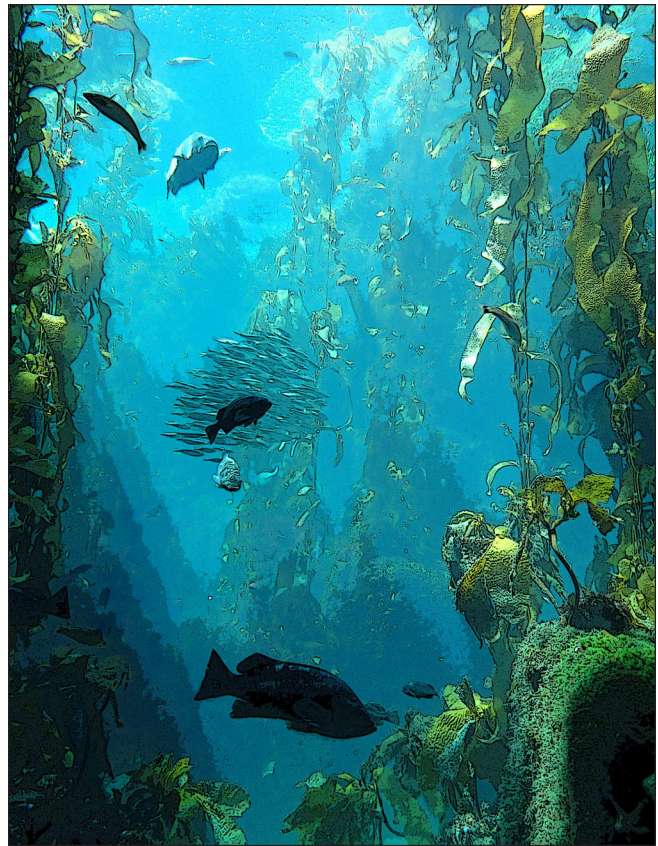
Because of its appearance, the shellback is often thought a giant snail, but it is actually a clam with a foot so large it cannot be hidden within its shell. Fully mature shellback are up to 8' long and mass near 1000 pounds, so heavy they cannot survive out of water or hold up their shells under full gravity. The clams have eyespots that can distinguish light from dark but are otherwise blind; the creatures compensate with an excellent sense of smell. The shellback secretes a class 9 sleep poison, which the clam can deliver by hitting a target with its foot, and any creature that falls asleep is quickly eaten. Even though a shellback does move on a trail of mucous secreted from its foot, this residue does not contain the poison — it is only extruded during an attack in a special type of slime. The clam also releases an odor that draws a menagerie of creatures to colonize its shell and provide some protection. Some of these hitchhikers include, among others, sponges, sea lilies, soft corals, and shrimp, some of which are dangerous, either toxic or simply having sharp limbs and jaws.

**Mutations:** *aberrant form, fragrance development, gigantism, increased smell, toxic weapon, vision impairment.*

## Slaath

No. Enc.: 1 (1)  
Alignment: Neutral  
Movement: Swim 180' (60')  
Armor Class: 5  
Hit Dice: 25  
Attacks: 5 (frond-blades and bite)  
Damage: d8/d8/d8/d8/5d4  
Save: L15  
Morale: 10  
Hoard Class: VII (X5), XX

Slaath are a gigantic form of bladderwrack kelp that live in deep water and often become the basis for unusual ecosystems. To create convenient rest locations, these plants produce slime bubbles and attach them to the ocean floor. While inside their bubbles, slaath produce oxygen, which diffuses into the surrounding water and draws many different types of animals to the abundant resource. As fully mature slaath can grow to 150' long and 30' wide, these bubbles and the populations of creatures around them can get quite large. Any flame produced within a bubble may spark an explosion, with the severity of damage caused depending on the concentration



of available oxygen. In game terms it could be anywhere from d6 to 10d20 points of damage.

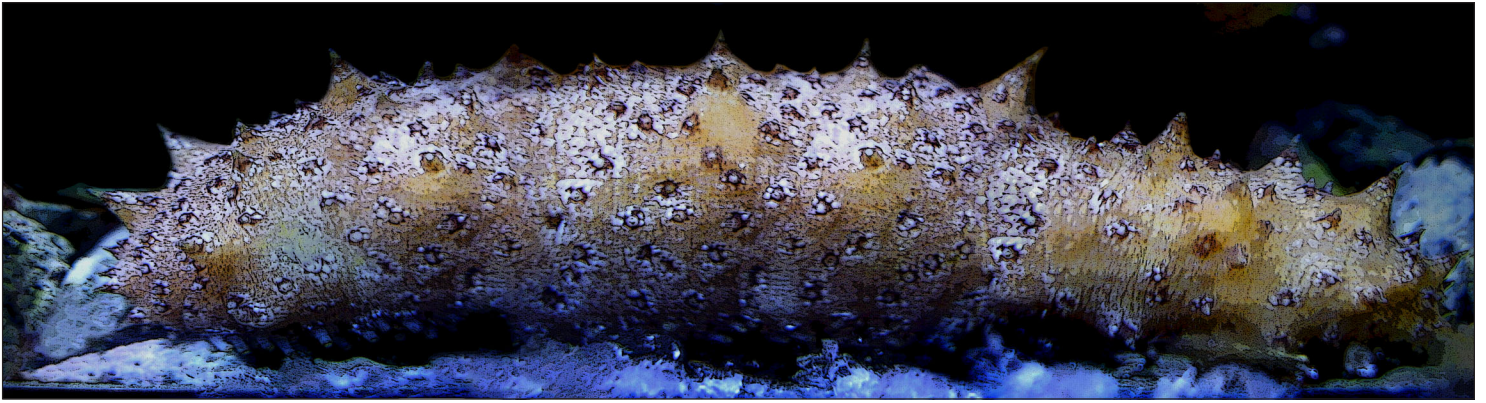
The slaath feed by capturing and enveloping prey with blade-like fronds. Several of these simultaneously crush the victim and draw it toward the mouth for a bite attack. Slaath do not swallow living prey whole but rather grind them into a “soup” first with wooden “teeth.” The leaves of the slaath usually contain many small items, the result of its feeding method, while the bubble may contain a large hoard — as slaath are very long lived and only move when the bubble is destroyed by fire.

**Mutations:** *abnormal size, carnivore, chemical gland, free movement, full senses, natural armor (plant), natural vegetal weapon.*

## Sticky Tree

No. Enc.: 1 (0)  
Alignment: Neutral  
Movement: Swim 240' (80)  
Armor Class: 8  
Hit Dice: 60  
Attacks: 1 (bite)  
Damage: Swallow whole (or 25d10 damage)  
Save: L21  
Morale: 12  
Hoard Class: XXII (x10 in gut), XX on skin

The sticky tree is a giant swimming sea cucumber that can grow up to 300' long, 40' wide, 30' tall, and reach a mass of 250 tons. Green and blue pebbly skin makes sticky trees



difficult to see against ocean water on overcast days. To feed, the creature comes to the surface and sticks a “tongue” out of the water. This looks like a conifer and smells like blood. Predators and scavengers are drawn to the tongue and become snared by glue the animal produces. The glue is Strength 20 and trapped creatures must make Strength versus Strength checks to escape (once per minute). After leaving the tongue out for 30 minutes, the sticky tree draws it into its mouth and swallows all the captured creatures automatically (death, no save). If attacked by a large creature, or attempting to eat a ship, the cucumber can make a bite attack which does 25d10 points of damage. Creatures under 25' tall that are hit by the bite are automatically slain. Because of the large numbers of ships that pass through the sticky tree’s gut, its waste will usually contain a treasure hoard class of XXII. Ten times that amount can be found in its gut. The creature’s skin is slightly tacky and picks up anything that falls out of its mouth (hoard class XX). Not many fishermen stay in areas where sticky trees are sighted, for obvious reasons.

**Mutations:** *aberrant form (natural weapon, xenomorphism), gigantism, loss of trait, prey scent.*

### Stonegull

No. Enc.: d6 (3d8)  
 Alignment: Neutral  
 Movement: 60' (20')  
 Swim 90' (30')  
 Fly 150' (50')  
 Armor Class: 2  
 Hit Dice: 4  
 Attacks: 3 (bite and wings)  
 Damage: d6+3/d6/d6  
 Save: L3  
 Morale: 5  
 Hoard Class: VII (in garden)

Stonegulls are 3' tall birds that have coral-like feathers and nest in sea-bottom algae gardens. They are omnivores and collect prey — fish, anglers, sea cucumbers, etc. — both to eat and to fertilize their gardens. The birds cultivate the algae as food for their chicks; in the fledglings, these algae-provided nutrients are processed by the *chemical gland*, producing the mineral-hardened adult feathers. Though stonegulls prefer flying off to find their prey, they are always willing to

consume those who intrude into their territory. Some sapients have learned to raid the gardens at night when most of the birds are sleeping: humans can eat the algae, and the gulls produce much more than they can eat themselves. Anyone foolish enough to face a stonegull in melee has to deal with rock-hard feathers and a vicious beak attack.

**Mutations:** *aberrant form (gills), chemical gland, gigantism, natural armor.*

### Striking Lump

No. Enc.: 0 (1)  
 Alignment: Neutral  
 Movement: 0'  
 Armor Class: 4  
 Hit Dice: 20  
 Attacks: Special  
 Damage: Special  
 Save: L21  
 Morale: 12  
 Hoard Class: XX

Extremely reactive coral, the striking lump uses a rapidly-expanding form of skeletal construction to trap creatures that disturb it. Anything attacking or even brushing against the coral must save versus energy attacks, or be entombed and die. Unless the victim is very large, this process will take 1d4 rounds. Breaking free a trapped creature takes 50 hit points of damage with physical attacks — and anyone trying to do so may be entombed themselves. The growth attack continues as long as there is something struggling to get free. A lump colony can occupy anywhere from 50 to 5000 square feet of ocean floor, and the only reason the species has not covered the whole ocean bottom is their specific needs for temperature and water depth. While regular coral are harmed by acidic and very warm water (the former inhibits their skeletal growth and the latter harms their algal symbionts), striking lumps are not harmed by either. It is immune to acidic water, and grows too deep for algae, living in the very cold water 2-5 miles down. Inferno whales could destroy lump colonies but the whales rarely dive to that depth. Creatures preying on striking lumps use boiling water to kill the polyps, eliminating the danger of the growth attack.

**Mutations:** *special, frailty (weakness to heat).*

## DROWNING

A terrestrial entity can hold its breath underwater for only so long before starting to drown.

For characters, this is Constitution x2 rounds; creatures have their Hit Dice x3 rounds. Some mutations and artifacts modify these amounts. Mutants with the *reduced oxygen efficiency* drawback can only hold their breath for Constitution/2 rounds. Once the time limit has been reached, a character starts to drown, and must save versus death every round or die.

## NEW MUTATIONS

### Animate Object

The mutant can cause a single object to move on its own. The target must be within 50' and can weigh up to 200 pounds. The animation takes total concentration, so the mutant can only walk slowly.

### Chemical Gland

The mutant plant has an organ that allows it to replicate one substance. It could be industrial, like glue, or medicinal, like stim-shot A. The Mutant Lord and player must work together to decide which substance is created. Three doses can be manufactured each day.

### Loss of Trait (D)

The mutant has lost a mutation or species trait that is not vital to survival. Consult the following chart for the type of characteristic lost.



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### Loss of Trait Table

Roll	Type	Effect
1	Mutation	The mutant loses one randomly determined non-drawback mutation.
2	Drawback	The mutant loses one randomly determined drawback mutation. If the mutant has no drawbacks, then it loses one regular mutation.
3	Species Trait	The mutant loses a trait common to its species. This characteristic could be anything, such as a lizard losing its scales, or a fish losing its swim bladder. The ML and player must work together to decide what is lost.
4	Missing Organ	The mutant loses an organ. This could be any type of structure, from a sense organ to reproductive to digestive (the loss some organs could be fatal if it happens during play). The ML and the player must work together to decide what is lost.
5	Physical Statistic	The mutant loses 1d4 from a randomly determined physical statistic.
6	Mental Statistic	The mutant loses 1d4 from a randomly determined mental statistic.

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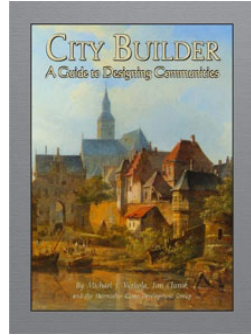
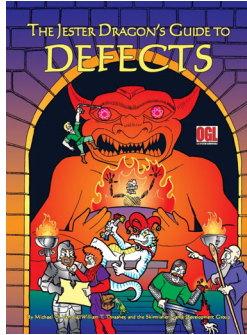
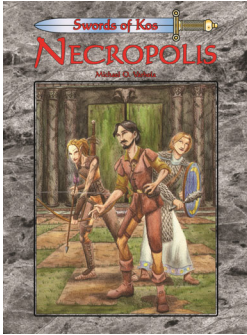
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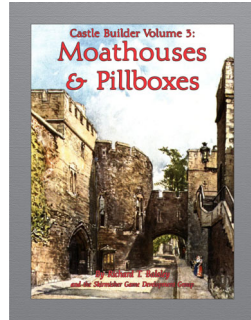
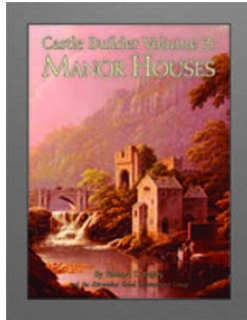
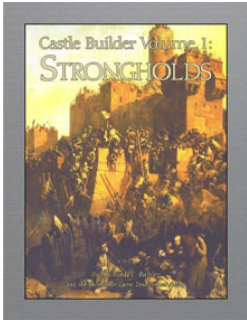
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