

Two New PC Races: Leprechauns & Giant Eagles

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One thing I liked to do for the original AD&D(R) campaigns I once ran was to create some player-character races specific to those worlds. Last year at the 1994 GEN CON(R) games fair, I was on two separate panels talking about creating new PC races, and the following are two new races I created for handouts. Each race is written up in the style of The Complete Book of Humanoids, by Bill "Star Wars" Slavicsek, with special notes on how I worked out the details. Comments are welcome; please leave them on the "Original Campaigns" folder. Thanks to Bill and to Dori Hein, my two 1994 co-panelists.

The leprechaun is nice for players who either love their Irish heritage or just want to cause trouble. The giant eagle is for the player who wants something REALLY different and a little Tolkienish. (I once played a giant eagle that was the reincarnated form of a gnome thief, and this worked out wonderfully. Try it!)

LEPRECHAUN

Ability Score Adjustments. +2 bonus to Dexterity and Charisma, -2 penalty to Strength and Constitution.

Ability Score Range

Ability	Min	Max
Strength	2	12
Dexterity	8	20
Constit.	6	16
Intell.	8	18
Wisdom	3	16
Charisma	8	18

Class Restrictions

Class	Max Level
Wizard	
Mage	12
Spec.	15 (illusionist)

Rogue

Thief 12

Bard 12

All Other Classes: nil

Class Mixing. Any wizard class may be mixed with any rogue class.

Hit Dice. PC leprechauns receive hit dice by class. Normal Constitution bonuses apply.

Alignment. Leprechauns are basically true neutral, but PCs can be of any neutral alignment. Neutral-evil leprechauns are very rare and are known as red caps, for their blood-dyed caps.

Natural Armor Class. 8, due to their small size (score will drop with high Dexterity bonuses).

Background. Leprechauns are faerie folk who live in family clans in temperate forests, glens, and hills. They are 2 feet tall, with pointed ears and noses, who dress in pointed shoes, brown or green breeches, green or gray coats, and wide-brimmed or stocking caps. Some males have beards. Leprechauns enjoy the same foods that humans like; they especially like wine, and many also smoke pipes. They weigh about 20 lbs.

Languages. Leprechaun, halfling, elvish, gnomish, pixie, Common (as appropriate).

Role-Playing Suggestions. If the player can manage a respectable Irish brogue, all the better, but any sort of slightly accented "country" speech might work. Leprechauns are merry, light-hearted, full of laughter and jokes, mischievous, clever, and helpful of the small and weak. They mean no one harm, though they distrust bigger folk and non-faeries.

Leprechauns will never physically attack a foe. They are sworn to never use weapons, but they can easily become fearsome saboteurs against evil opponents with their *polymorph*, *illusion*, *ventriloquism*, *invisibility*, and thieving powers. They love to outwit and defeat more powerful foes.

Leprechauns make great companions for parties composed of elves, halflings, gnomes, and other faerie and sylvan folk. They dislike humans and dwarves, who tend to be very greedy, but can be won over given sufficient reason to trust such beings.

As noted in the MONSTROUS MANUAL(TM) tome, leprechauns are fond of borderlines, places or times when opposites meet or are mixed (shorelines, twilight, equinoxes, etc.). They also love and collect gold. I'd avoid having them dress in green all the time (too dull), but a nice mix of rustic, woodsy, relaxing colors would be nice.

Special Advantages. Leprechauns can go invisible and use ventriloquism (12th level of ability) five times each per day. They have an 80% magic resistance and move at 15, being light and fast on their feet. PC leprechauns have a 75% chance to snatch/pickpocket small items less than 2 feet long and weighing 10 lbs. or less. Leprechaun rogues have instead a bonus of 75 points to add to their pickpocketing skill.

Leprechauns have two more powerful powers, each usable once per day per PC level. First, each can *polymorph* nonliving objects from one substance into another; the target object must save vs. disintegration or be *polymorphed*. The maximum size of a target object is 1,000 cubic feet or 2,000 lbs., whichever applies. An object must be *polymorphed* as a whole; part of an object cannot be changed (e.g., a large stone in a wall could be changed if the whole wall could not). Second, each leprechaun can cast an illusion equal in all ways to a *spectral force* (12th level of ability). Concentration is required, or the effect ends three rounds after the leprechaun's attention is broken.

Leprechauns collect gold to give to sylvan deities as tribute. These deities usually allow a leprechaun to grant up to three *limited wishes* to foes if his gold hoard is threatened, but these wishes should provide little real benefit to an enemy. If a leprechaun can trick a foe into making a fourth wish, that bogus wish eliminates the effects of the first three and causes the foes to *teleport* away and become lost. Threats must be real; a faked attempt to steal the gold will not provide any limited wishes, so other PCs will not be able to receive such benefits from the leprechaun PC.

Special Disadvantages. Leprechauns never engage in physical combat, and they never carry or use weapons. They can use magical items normally within class restrictions, but again cannot use magical weapons such as daggers, darts, etc. They can use knives and such for noncombat purposes, for cutting cloth, trimming weeds, etc. Their small size frustrates their use of many magical items meant for bigger folk, as well as most nonmagical tools and devices.

The leprechauns' 80% magic resistance also hinders their use of magical items, as they must check against this resistance for any held device to be used. This resistance also hinders any magical effect cast upon the leprechauns, even if the spell is beneficial. (This includes all healing and protective spells!) However, any spells cast by a leprechaun still function normally within the restrictions given above.

Monstrous Traits. Craving (gold, wine, or tobacco), dexterity, hearing.

Superstitions. Leprechauns are firm believers in the power of borderlines, and actively seek them out. They believe everyone is trying to steal their gold, but this is usually less a superstition and more a tragically correct assessment of the situation.

Weapon Proficiencies. None. All weapon-proficiency slots must instead be filled by nonweapon proficiencies.

Nonweapon Proficiencies. Agriculture, alertness, brewing, carpentry, cobbling, cooking, dancing, danger sense, drinking, eating, fast talking, gaming, herbalism, local history, musical instrument, poetry, pottery, seamstress/tailor, singing, weather sense, weaving, whistling/humming, winemaking.

Special Notes:

Certain elements of the leprechaun, as presented in the MONSTROUS MANUAL tome, were toned down to allow for more balanced game play (in particular the "at will" abilities of *polymorph*, *illusion*, *ventriloquism*, and *invisibility*). Magic resistance was given a restrictive aspect rather than being altered or removed, and

certain powers were clarified and restricted for better play (especially the *polymorph* power and the ability to grant *limited wishes*). Side information also clarified why leprechauns have certain behaviors, such as gold-collecting.

Because of the leprechauns' small size, a DM might consider having all hit-point die rolls have a -1 modifier, so that hit points are lowered to a minimum of 1 hp per die to reflect the lessened body mass. If this is done, then all PCs who are 3 feet or less in height should be treated in the same way. Constitution bonuses still apply.

GIANT EAGLE

Ability Score Adjustments. None. The type of die used for generating ability scores is changed instead, to reflect a more restricted range of starting scores.

Starting Ability Score Range

Ability	Min	Max
Strength (2d4+4)*	6	12
Dexterity (2d4+4)*	6	12
Constit. (2d4+4)*	6	12
Intell. (3d6)	3	18
Wisdom (3d6)	3	18
Charisma (3d6)	3	18**

* +1 STR, +1 DEX, and +1 CON points gained per level of ability, to a maximum of 18 (no percentile roll for strength).

** CHA scores over 12 apply only to other avians.

Class Restrictions

Class Max Level

Warrior

 Fighter 8

Priest

 Shaman* 8

* If The Complete Book of Humanoids is not available, use the

cleric instead.

Class Mixing. No class mixing is allowed.

Hit Dice. PC giant eagles receive hit dice by class (d10 for warriors, d8 for priests). Normal Constitution bonuses apply.

Alignment. Giant eagles are basically true neutral, but PCs can be of any neutral alignment (LN, NG, CN, NE, N).

Natural Armor Class. 10 on the ground, -2 modifier in flight due to high speed, with further bonuses for high Dexterity.

Background. Giant eagles are huge birds (size Large, stand 10 feet tall, wingspan 30+ feet). They are carnivorous and actively hunt prey while flying, using superior vision to locate victims from miles away. Giant eagles make their nests in tall, heavy trees and high, rocky cliffs. They tend to be solitary.

Giant eagle PCs begin play as young adults, slightly smaller and weaker than full adults. As they grow, they gain the ability and combat bonuses detailed here.

Giant eagle shamans worship nature or avian spirits, but are not found as druids even if of neutral alignment. Spellcasting for eagle shamans requires verbal (eagle cries), somatic (wing and claw gestures), and material (held in claws or beak) components. Spellcasting cannot be performed in flight, unless using spells with verbal components only.

Languages. Giant eagle only (avian "tongue" of cries, postures, and gestures). However, a giant eagle has limited telepathy that allows it to communicate with one intelligent creature per round within a range of 10 feet. This power may be used at will throughout the day, even while performing other actions except spellcasting.

Role-Playing Suggestions. Giant eagles fly at every opportunity, getting the best perspective on outdoor situations. They prefer to scout all environments carefully, and remain suspicious of the motives of most intelligent beings. They get along best with dwarves and elves, who usually mean them no harm, but are careful

around humans. They like aarakocra. Giant eagles are very courageous and fear little.

While giant eagles do not have hands, they can wear magical rings on their claws (one ring per foot) and magical bracers or phylacteries on their legs (one per leg).

Special Advantages. Giant eagles fly at MV 48 (D). They can reach altitudes of 5,000 feet or more with updrafts.

Eagles have eyesight so acute that they have a +6 bonus to avoid being surprised by any visible creature. A being successfully hiding in shadows or natural terrain reduces this bonus to +4. A magically invisible creature might be detected if the DM feels there is sufficient cause for this to occur (water surface disturbed, footprints appear in dust, rustling of leaves). In this event, the eagle gets a +2 bonus to avoid surprise each time such an event occurs. (See the 2nd Edition DMG, page 120, for more.) The DM may treat eagle PCs as if they each wore *eyes of the eagle*, giving them 100x telescopic sight (e.g., items 1 mile away seem to be only 52.8 feet away.).

Giant eagles can drop at high speed toward the ground, breaking the fall or pulling out into a flat glide at the last second by spreading their wings.

Special Disadvantages. Giant eagles move at MV 3 when on the ground. They have no hands and cannot use the vast majority of magical devices. They may use scrolls if they know reading, but someone must hold the scrolls open; they may use potions, but someone must open the bottles and pour them into a dish to allow drinking; and so forth. They cannot use wands, staves, pistols, tools, keys, etc. They can carry Small-size objects in their claws in flight, but cannot carry anything in their claws when walking. Of course, giant eagles cannot swim.

If wounded for 75% or more of total hit points, a giant eagle in flight must land at once, as it cannot sustain flight and likely has injured its wings. If wounded for 90% or more of total hit points while flying, the eagle plummets to the ground (crash!). *Fireball* spells, breath weapons, and the like are especially

dangerous, as they put out so much damage and are hard to avoid, often knocking the eagle out of the sky regardless of the saving-throw result.

In any enclosed space of 1,000 cubic feet or less, giant eagles feel claustrophobic and suffer a -3 penalty on attack rolls.

Monstrous Traits. Flight, appearance 1, sight, speech.

Superstitions. Giant eagles fear dark enclosed spaces, and normally refuse to enter tunnels or dungeons farther than a few feet, with a quick retreat after.

Weapon Proficiencies. Giant eagles cannot use any sort of artificial weapon. However, they begin play able to use several attack modes in the following ways:

- * 1d4/1d4 for claws and 1d8 for bite (when attacking ground opponent or Small/Tiny aerial opponent);
- * 1d4/1d4 for claws (when attacking an aerial opponent in a short swoop-and-strike or fly-by motion);
- * 1d4x2/1d4x2 for claws with dive (+4 to attack roll, 50+ feet starting altitude above victim, double flying speed, fly-by against aerial or grounded opponent);
- * 1d2/1d2 for wings with buffet (target must be on a forward side, not directly in front, within wingspan reach; target must save vs. Dexterity on 1d20 or be knocked to the ground);
- * Snatch creature of Tiny size (2 feet or less in height, weighing less than 25 lbs.) from ground, water surface, or air, carrying it away; both claws must hit; 25% chance that one arm of victim is pinned; automatic claw damage may be inflicted every round on victim; victim may be dropped from a great altitude; eagle's speed is reduced by half and Maneuverability Class reduced by one level; at 4th level and above, eagle may snatch Small being (4 feet or less in height, weighing less than 50 lbs.), with 50% chance of arm pin on Tiny creature.

Every level of ability gained grants an eagle a +1 bonus to every die of damage done using a natural weapon. Thus, a 4th-level eagle fighter does 1d4+4/1d4+4/1d8+4 with its claws and bite, 1d2+4/1d2+4

with its buffet, and $(1d4 \times 2) + 4 / (1d4 \times 2) + 4$ for a diving attack. This represents gains in the eagle's size and weight as it matures.

Every level of natural fighting proficiency taken allows an eagle to gain a +1 bonus to all attack rolls, with an extra bite attack taken during any normal claw/claw/bite routine (i.e., the extra bite attack cannot be taken during dive, buffet, or snatch attacks).

Nonweapon Proficiencies. Dancing (aerial acrobatics), direction sense, endurance, languages (modern), local history, navigation (aerial only), observation, reading, weather sense. Alertness and danger sense are normally unnecessary due to the quality of the giant eagle's vision.

DM's GUIDELINES FOR PLAYER-CHARACTER MONSTERS

Fit the monster race, as best as possible, into normal format for human, demihuman, and humanoid PCs (normal ability scores, classes, kits, proficiencies, etc.).

Examine possible means of communication, movement, manipulation, spellcasting, and skills acquisition; think about special advantages and disadvantages in play.

Allow only classes and kits that seem logical and sensible within the confines of your own campaign and common sense (e.g., eagles cannot be thieves).

Allow for increase in size and ability scores for animals and monsters if they grow from juvenile size to adulthood. Consider setting a creature's maximum level limit at twice its normal hit dice, for most sorts of animal PCs.

Consider allowing weapon proficiencies for natural weapons and attack routines (claws, bite, head butt, hug, dive, spit, throw item, etc.), with bonuses to hit and damage being added to normal combat results. The natural weapon proficiency from *The Complete Book of Humanoids* should be considered.

Clarify all vague powers and areas of ability, getting the exact effects of innate magical powers, proficiencies, etc. Carefully consider unbalancing effects of certain special powers, and look for ways to restrict those special powers without removing them (e.g., an eagle can be surprised under some circumstances).

Look at similar creatures in MONSTROUS MANUAL tome or other game or literary sources for possible powers, abilities, and social notes (e.g., borrowing the dragon's buffet and snatch attacks for the giant eagle, and investigating the giant eagles of J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit* for personality traits). If a real-world animal is being played, look up authentic material on its appearance and behaviors, modifying game material if desired to add more realism and special traits (e.g., check details on flight abilities, plumage, habitats, and diet or normal eagles).

Establish and stick to limits on playability for your particular campaign (no undead, no Outer Planes critters, no giant space hamsters, no beings over 16 hit dice or 16th level, whatever).