

HUMBLEWOOD™

Humblewood Playtest

ARKTON & CASTLESHIELD CAVES

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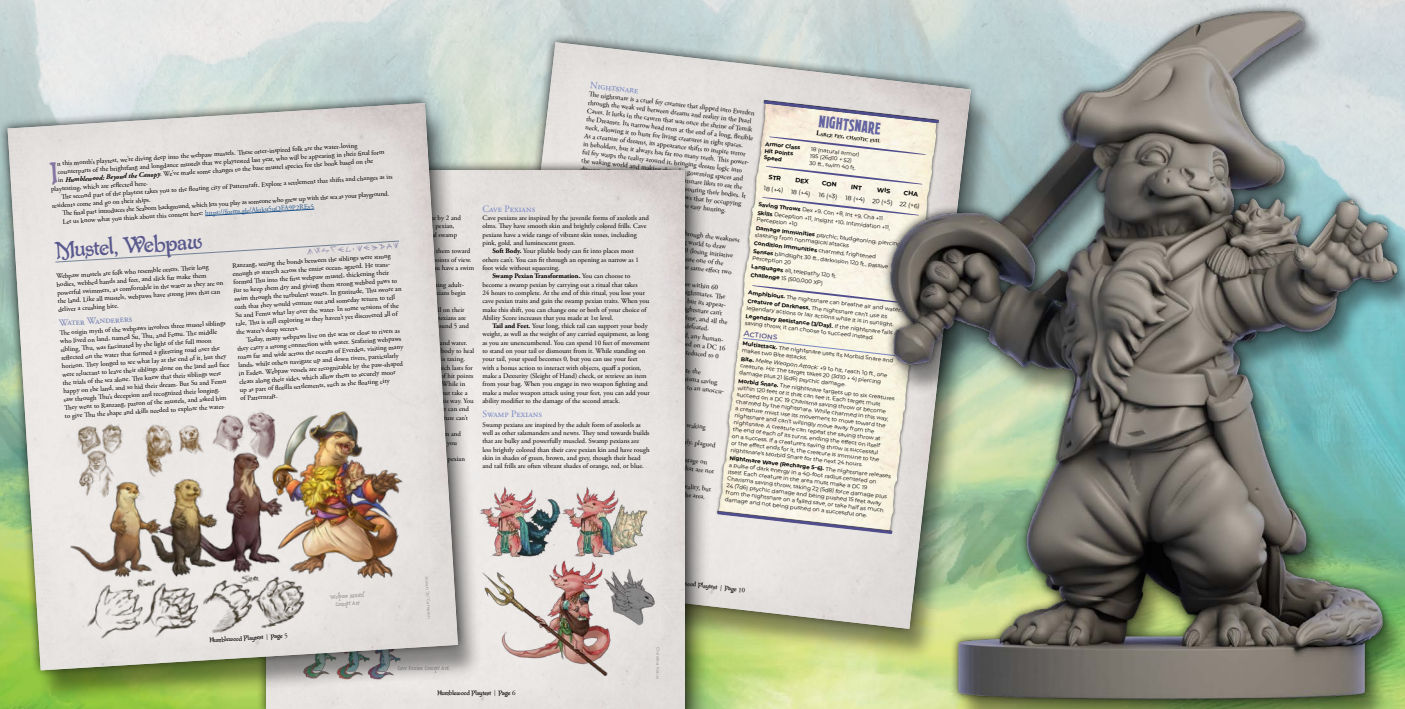
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This month, we are introducing a new species and a new location. First up are the Arktons, a bear-like species who are gentle giants with a strong sense of community care. They also make ferocious warriors, especially when protecting their homes, family, and friends.

Secondly, delve deep into the Castleshield Caves, a former Arkton cave settlement that is now a spelunkers' dream! Included are monsters, adventure hooks, and encounters so you can start playing in this new location right away.

Let us know what you think about this content here: <https://forms.gle/zkpo3dYaP3n1ZHhR6>

New Race: Arkton

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Arktons resemble bears of all kinds, from the massive polar and grizzly bears to the smaller sun and sloth bears. They are the largest of the folk in Everden and use their naturally intimidating size to defend and comfort their allies.

BORN OF THE EARTH

The first arkton is said to have formed during the earliest days of Everden when the world was still new. A nameless earth elemental, weary from wandering the plains, lay down to rest and fell into a deep slumber. As time stretched on, stone, dirt, and mud accumulated around the elemental until a grass-covered hill was all that remained. One warm spring day, after seasons of slumbering, the first arkton emerged from beneath that hill and felt the sun on their fur for the first time.

Modern arktons still carry this myth and their connection to the earth in their hearts, living in large communal caves and honing their abilities to craft with stone and mud. This attitude is especially embodied in the arkton's Amaranthine, Thoso the Sculptor. Thoso is depicted as a massive grizzly

bear, often shown molding a mountain with their bare paws, or using those same huge paws to shield smaller creatures from harm.

GENTLE GIANTS

Even the smallest arktons tower over most of Everden's denizens. Their size often creates an intimidating first impression, which arktons work hard to dispel. In reality, arktons are more likely to be kind and compassionate caregivers who use their large frames to protect those who can't protect themselves rather than using their size to bully others. Arktons' compassion also lends itself to excellent bedside manners, making them excellent healers with a natural ability to comfort the wounded and weary with just a touch.

The same urge to protect others also makes arktons ferocious warriors when it's time to fight. A single arkton can change the tide of almost any battle, and they are valued allies during times of conflict.



LIVING LARGE

Arkton villages and structures are built at a larger scale to accommodate arktons' towering builds. This makes visiting these places as a non-arkton a disorienting experience, as the bulkier furnishings and more spacious rooms can make visitors feel quite small. Arktons are accommodating to smaller folks, however, and make sure small step stools and ladders are available to help them navigate their homes.

The reverse problem occurs when arktons visit the homes of the other folk of Everden. Small doorways and rooms, and furniture built for smaller creatures can prove an obstacle or be accidentally broken. Ever-prepared arktons travel with spacious tents and sturdy, collapsible stools on extended stays away from their own homes to ensure they have a cozy place to rest. In communities where arktons and other folk live alongside each other, it is common to find buildings and furniture constructed to accommodate everyone comfortably.

Most arktons live in large communal cave networks that they call ogovs. Each ogov has one large central chamber that acts as a meeting place that is surrounded by homes and workspaces in smaller caves. The largest ogovs house communities of up to a hundred arktons, and the smallest have as few as a dozen living together.

ARKTON NAMES

Arkton names tend to be short and gruff, with one or two syllables at most. Instead of family names, arktons refer to themselves by which ogov they originate from, such as Vova of Mistfield Ogov, or Rynd of the Barkscratch Ogov. Ogovs have simple names that usually refer to the area surrounding the cave network. On rare occasions, an arkton might be asked to leave an ogov, and they are referred to as "the Lost" moving forward.

Example Names: Agraf, Avda, Besso, Bovar, Dari, Ina, Jora, Kleb, Masha, Nika, Rynd, Tisha, Tomas, Vohv, Vova, Yegor, Zolin

Ogov Names: Barkscratch, Berryvine, Cabbagefield, Gourdpatch, Honeyhive, Mistfield, Northernreach, Redclay, Snowdrift, Undergrove

ARKTON TRAITS

Ability Score Increase. An ability score of your choice increases by 2, and another ability score of your choice increases by 1. To play a typical arkton, choose Strength and Wisdom. Alternatively, increase three ability scores by 1.

Creature Type. You are a humanoid.

Age. Arktons are considered adults around the age of 16 and can live into their 80s or 90s.

Size. Your size is Medium or Large.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 30 feet.

Guardian's Roar. When another creature within 20 feet of you is targeted with an attack, you can use your reaction to roar, making a Charisma (Intimidation) check contested by the attack roll. If you succeed, the attacker must reroll its attack and use the new result. If the second attack misses, the attacker becomes frightened of you until the end of its next turn. You can use this ability a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus, regaining all expended uses at the end of a long rest.

Bear Snug. When you take a short rest, you can touch another willing creature and spend one of your hit dice to heal it. The target regains hit points equal to a roll of your hit die. A creature can benefit from this ability once per long rest.

Darkvision. You can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray. Imposing Presence. You have proficiency with the Intimidation skill.

Heavy Claws. You have powerful claws that you can use as natural weapons to make unarmed strikes. When you hit with them, the strike deals 2d6 + your Strength modifier bludgeoning damage.

Languages. You can speak, read, and write Arkton, Birdfolk, and one other language of your choice.

Castleshield Caves

CASTLESHIELD CAVES

At the end of a long tunnel, a seemingly bottomless pit opens like a gaping maw in the stone. Even small sounds echo ominously through this large, open space. Something digs along just on the other side of a stone wall, shaking free rocks and dust that scatter loudly down into the pit. In the dark below, a flicker of light bounces off a vein of precious gemstone. Treasures abound in this cavern, but are they worth the risk?

The Castleshield Caves were once a bustling arkton ogov, home to dozens of arktons who depended on the caves for protection. During a particularly cold winter, ice crept into the cracks and crevices, causing the caverns to collapse. The disaster forced the denizens of the ogov to flee to safety. A massive pit opened where the central cavern once was, creating access to deeper natural caverns beyond the ogov that had never been explored by the folk of Everden.

Caverns Deep. The enormous hole at the center of Castleshield Caves is considered to be bottomless by the locals, though scholars and explorers insist that that can't be the case. The deepest anyone has got down the pit is approximately 900 feet, and there was no bottom in sight. The darkness at that depth has been described as smothering, and even magical light seems to struggle to fight back the shadows. The walls of the pit are rough providing hand and footholds for skilled climbers. Openings to the old residential areas of the ogov and deeper natural parts of the cavern can be found, though many are unstable.

Unearthed Treasure. Now that the dirt and stone of Castleshield Caves have settled and stabilized, explorers have begun investigating what the cave-in has uncovered. Massive veins of valuable ore, previously inaccessible, stripe the walls of the pit—including never-before-seen minerals and gemstones. One of the newly discovered metals, referred to as shieldite, has shown incredible properties that include absorbing and reflecting elemental energy and uncanny resilience.

Dangers In The Dark. Uncovering these ancient, natural caves has disrupted the habitats of several strange creatures, never before seen by any living folk. Some smaller creatures,

like the swarms of stonebunters, have no fear of everfolk and are very curious to investigate anyone who enters the caves. Other creatures, such as the ancient fellfishers, are less friendly, attacking climbers from their burrows in the cavern walls. Word of these new creatures is reaching scholars from universities across Everden, who want to study and understand these monsters from Everden's prehistory.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

You can use these hooks to begin an adventure in the Castleshield Caves or create your own.

Sample Collectors (Low Level). The local mining guild hires the characters to gather a sample of shieldite so they can research how to forge armor with it. The guild provides the party with basic climbing and mining equipment and an *immovable rod* to help with their task. If the characters can get 500 feet down into the Castleshield pit and secure a fist-sized chunk of shieldite, the mining guild will let them keep the *immovable rod* and 50 gp each as a reward.

Poacher Problems (Mid Level). The party meets a capran researcher from the Avium named Follo [he/him], who desperately needs help recovering a hive of stonebunters that have been captured by a group of poachers. Follo was studying the stonebunters in the caves when the poachers arrived, and he couldn't stop them from absconding with a **stonebunter brood mother*** and **several stonebunter swarms***. He is concerned that the creatures will be mistreated and used for their incredible burrowing abilities and begs the party to track down the poachers and return the stonebunters to their home.

Delved Too Deep (High Level). An entire mining operation has gone missing in the deepest part of the Castleshield Caves, and the party is hired to uncover what happened. The owner of the operation, an eluran named Fhaz [she/her], is offering 1,000 gp per character to rescue their crew and as much of the mining equipment as possible. Upon descending into the caverns, the party discovers a hive of **fellfishers*** that have captured the mining crew as live food for their spawn. Can the characters survive the thousand-foot delve into the darkness and rescue the miners, or will they get caught in the fellfisher's web themselves?

ENCOUNTERS IN THE CASTLESHIELD CAVES

d6	Encounter
1	A wave of 5 (2d4) stonebunter swarms * crawl past the party, making it difficult to walk or climb.
2	A mustel spelunker (druid) named Feeney [they/them] has snapped their rope and is clinging to the wall of the pit, desperately in need of rescue.
3	An overprotective stonebunter brood mother * thinks the party is coming for its brood and attacks.
4	A gallus prospector (scout) named Pasha [she/her] is preparing to descend into the pit.
5	The ground beneath the party gives way, and the characters risk losing their footing. The characters must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or fall 30 feet into the pit, taking 10 (3d6) bludgeoning damage and landing on a cramped ledge.
6	Two fellfishers * have climbed up from the depths and are using their sticky tongues to drag explorers to their deaths.

WHAT LURKS IN THE CASTLESHIELD CAVES

STONEBUNTER SWARM

Stonebunters are tiny, many-legged insectoid creatures that have dark purple intersecting armor plates that cover their whole bodies. Their armor plates have sharp, crystalline edges that allow them to burrow rapidly through stone and earth while rolled up into a ball. They travel in big groups, weaving and rolling over each other haphazardly.

STONEBUNTER SWARM

MEDIUM SWARM OF TINY MONSTROSITIES, UNALIGNED

Armor Class 12 (natural armor)
Hit Points 22 (5d8)
Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft., burrow 15 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
3 (-4)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	1 (-5)	7 (-2)	1 (-5)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, slashing

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained, stunned

Senses blindsight 10 ft., passive Perception 8

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Tiny insect. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 0 ft., one target in the swarm's space. *Hit:* 10 (4d4) piercing damage, or 5 (2d4) piercing damage if the swarm has half of its hit points or fewer.

Undermine. All creatures within 5 feet of the swarm must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or be knocked prone.

STONEBUNTER BROOD MOTHER

Ponderous and immense, stonebunter brood mothers resemble enormous versions of their much smaller spawn. They are extremely protective of their broods and are quick to lash out defensively when threatened. Brood mothers are usually covered in dozens of stonebunters that clamber all over them frantically. These stonebunter swarms will leap to the brood mother's aid if the brood mother is injured or ambushed.

STONEBUNTER BROOD MOTHER

HUGE MONSTROSITY, UNALIGNED

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 85 (9d12 + 27)
Speed 20 ft., climb 20 ft., burrow 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	9 (-1)	17 (+3)	2 (-4)	10 (+0)	7 (-2)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, slashing
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained, stunned
Senses Blindsight 10 ft., Passive Perception 10
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Swarm Carrier (1/Day). As a bonus action, the brood mother can shake and deposit 2 (1d4) **stonebunter swarms*** in unoccupied spaces within 5 feet of it.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The brood mother makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its slam.

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

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 16 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Raucous Tremors (Recharge 5–6). The brood mother targets any number of creatures it can see within 10 feet of it. Targets must succeed on a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or take 10 (3d10) thunder damage and be knocked prone.

FELLFISHER

Older than many creatures in Everden, fellfishers are sinister hunters who hide in the deepest places of the world. They hunt by hooking unsuspecting prey and dragging them down into the dark. Resembling twisted scorpions with coal-black chitin, fellfishers have an organic harpoon they can fire from an opening on their backs. This vicious weapon allows it to skewer prey and reel it in so the fellfisher can poison its victim, paralyzing it to be devoured later.

FELLFISHER

LARGE MONSTROSITY, UNALIGNED

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 104 (11d10 + 44)
Speed 30 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	8 (-1)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +8, Int +3

Skills perception +9, stealth +10

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 19

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Drag. As a bonus action, the fellfisher attempts to reel in its prey. A Large or smaller creature grappled by the fellfisher's hookline must make a DC 15 Strength saving throw. On a failed save, the target is pulled 30 feet towards the fellfisher. If the grappled creature ends this movement within 5 feet of the fellfisher, the fellfisher can make one paralytic sting attack against it.

Magic Resistance. The fellfisher has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Spider Climb. The fellfisher can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The fellfisher makes three attacks: two with its pincers and one with its hookline.

Hookline. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, range 80 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 26 (4d10 + 4) piercing damage and is grappled (escape DC 16). The fellfisher can only have one creature grappled at a time this way.

Pincers. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) piercing damage.

Paralytic Sting. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) piercing damage plus 10 (3d6) poison damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or become paralyzed for 1 minute. An affected target can repeat its saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.