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GWIN & THE OPEN SEA

NOVEMBER 2025



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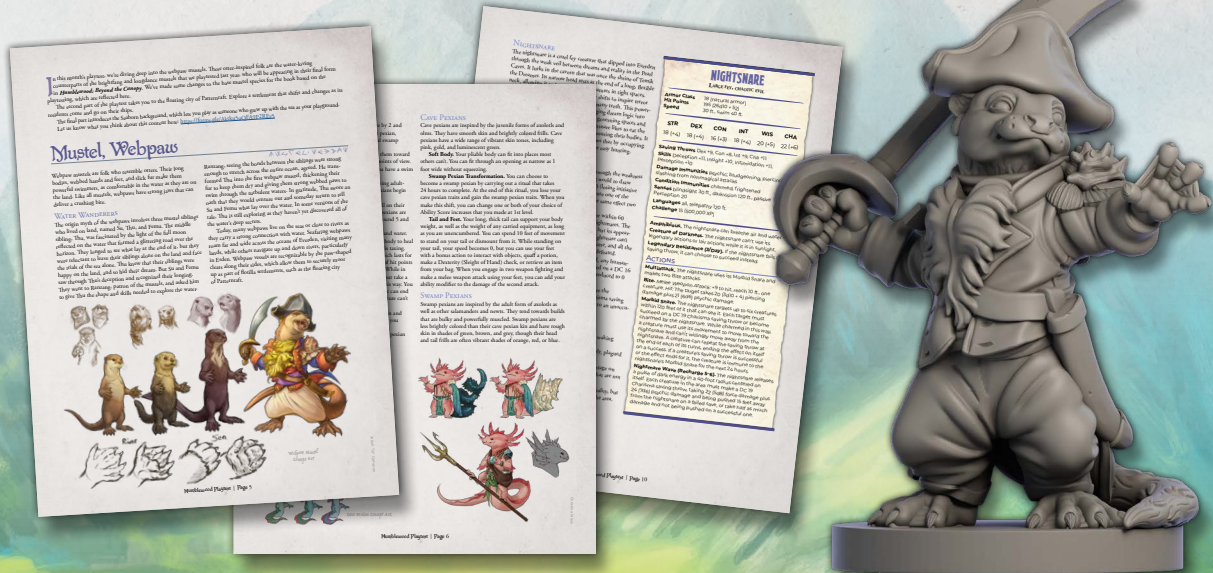


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This month brings penguin inspired folk called gwin to the seas of Everden! The gwin prioritize selfless gifts and strong communities, as well as being the best at sailing the open ocean. Speaking of the sea—we're also sharing some details about the Open Seas of Everden, so you can go on high seas adventures and face off against dastardly pirates and strange creatures!

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New Race: Gwin

NEW RACE GWIN

The gwin are inspired by penguins of all kinds. Skilled sailors and swimmers, they have a culture centered on gift giving, both material gifts and philosophical ones.

THE FIRST GIFT

Long ago, the amaranthine Chebb walked along the shores of the Great Rhythm, staring not at the beautiful ebb and flow of time and space, but instead looking down at the shiny, smooth stones at their feet. Chebb looked for the smoothest, most perfectly shaped skipping stone, to gift it to the Great Rhythm as tribute. Once the perfect stone was in hand Chebb skipped it into the vastness of the Rhythm where it bounced, and bounced, and bounced until it took the form of the first gwyn—a beautiful gift from Chebb to the world of Everden.

Gwin still skip stones across lakes and shores as a tribute to Chebb, but also to represent the importance of selfless gifts—giving away something special with no expectation of anything in return.

UNSALTY SAILORS

Gwin make naturally talented sailors, with many of their settlements not settled at all—instead living in large fleets of boats and lashed-together ice floes. They travel the seas of Everden as wandering waystations, providing places for other sailors to rest and recuperate. Though there are numerous infamous gwin pirates, most gwin follow a strict code of conduct, where helping other folk is their number one priority.

A GIVING SPIRIT

The tradition of gift giving permeates all of gwin culture, from the gift of a name the moment they hatch, to gifts celebrating major milestones or even to take with them when they inevitably pass on to rejoin the Great Rhythm.

When a gwin reaches adulthood, members of their community bring gifts to them to prepare them for the next stage of their life. These gifts can be useful items to furnish their own home or symbolic representation of wishes that the gift giver has for the young adult's future. A common gift is a simple stone, preferably one worn smooth by the shore, with a one word blessing written on it. 'Happiness', 'Adventure' and 'Strong Friendships' are popular wishes to write on a gifted stone.



GWIN NAMES

Gwin tend to have short, poppy names that they can say quickly before diving back under the waves.

Female names: Andee, Dala, Fee, Hofa, Iosy, Koo, Meeg, Ooma, Pebba, Quala

Male names: Brin, Claf, Erno, Gohbo, Lahni, Nibby, Rumo, Stam, Ubo, Vohlo

SPECIES TRAITS

Ability Score Increases. Increase one ability score by 2 and another ability score by 1. To play a typical Gwin choose Charisma and Constitution.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 30 feet. You have a swimming speed equal to your walking speed.

Age. Gwin hatchlings are up and moving quickly, and gwins become adults at the age of 12. They have an average lifespan of around 65 years.

Size. Much like other birdfolk, gwins vary greatly, both in their size and plumage. Your size is Medium or Small.

At Home On The Water. You have resistance to cold damage.

Sharing Carers. During a short rest, you may use your own hit dice to heal your allies. You can use a number of hit dice equal to half your level rounded up in this way. Once you use this trait, you can't use it again until after a long rest.

Slide. If you move at least 10 feet during your turn, you can use your bonus action to slide in a straight line up to your movement speed. You cannot be targeted by attacks of opportunity during this slide. The slide stops early if you move onto any space considered difficult terrain. You can use this trait a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus and regain all uses after a long rest.

Languages. You can speak, read, and write Birdfolk and one other language.

The Open Sea

THE OPEN SEA

Hungry-eyed sea birds drift on columns of warm air, looking for their next meal. Days from dry land, you double check the rope that is your life line on these tumultuous waters. Grey clouds loom on the horizon, signs of a terrible storm in your future. You get brace yourself against the cold wind and get ready for a rough night.

Vast and uncharted, the raucous seas and oceans of Everden are full of danger, adventure and treasure for those foolish enough to brave their waters. They are home to some of Everden's largest creatures and many of its most fearsome, cut-throat folk.

Piratical Problems. As most folk experience the open sea as travelers sailing across it, the greatest threats to their safety aren't necessarily the life that lurks beneath the waves, but instead the scallywags and ne'er-do-wells who pillage and plunder above them. Pirate vessels come in all shapes and sizes, some carved from a single piece of trunk from a massive tree, others are elaborate and ramshackle scroungecraft things, barely holding themselves together. There are even tales of pirate gangs in flying machines, held aloft by balloons filled with hot air, who drop down on unsuspecting sailors.

Most pirates aren't looking to harm or kill the folk they find, they are more interested in valuables and trade goods on board the ships they raid. Sometimes they will steal a whole ship, tying up its passengers and dumping them at the first port they come across. This isn't to say that there aren't more dangerous villains on the high seas, but only the most sinister pirates kill intentionally.

Elemental Hazards. Tumultuous storms, whirlpools and patches of wild elemental energy all plague travelers who journey across the ocean. Sailors go to great lengths to prepare for these dangers, using precious cargo space for replacement sails, extra rations and other redundancies. For those with enough funds to do so, there are sorcerers and wizards in many port towns who will enchant your vessel with protections against the elements, though you have to be wary of charlatans.

Some sailors speak of "living storms," enraged elementals that drown ships and pull them into the depths. Scholars who study this phenomena suggest they may be larger versions of hollowings, the spirits of elementals destroyed by terrible experimentation and the abuse of elemental magic. There are even some seafarers who go so far to say that these living storms require a sacrifice of some kind, if you hope to survive an encounter with them.

Home on the Water. There are safe havens on the open sea, for those who know where to find them. Dotted across the oceans of Wesden are small islands that can offer respite to weary sailors. Some are unoccupied paradises, while others have been "claimed" by pirate communities as places to store their ill-gotten goods.

Many scam artists purport to have maps to all these hidden islands and sell them at a high price to easily tricked explorers. There are rumors, however, of a true map of the seas of Everden. This so-called "living map" is said to show the changing tides, the location of every island, and even show the whereabouts of every ship and sea monster in real time. If such a map was ever found, it would surely make whoever discovered it the monarch of the seas.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

You can use these hooks to begin an adventure on the open seas or create your own.

Bring Back Burgo (Low Level). Your party is approached by two young strigs, Bessa (she/her) and Binno (he/him) who are concerned about their grandfather, the once infamous Captain Burgo Gripclaw (he/him.) Now quite elderly, Burgo has gone missing, commandeering a small boat and taken off towards a nearby island, ranting about his “lost bounty.” Has the once great captain lost his mind, or will the party find a treasure thought lost forever?

Lost At Sea (Mid Level). On a multiple day journey across the open sea, your party’s ship lurches to a halt in the middle of the night. An investigation above decks finds the ship’s captain and all but one of the crew missing, seemingly evaporating in the dead of night. The remaining crew member is a gwin named Pequod (they/them), the captain’s first mate.

Pequod said they heard a loud noise just before the boat stopped and when they went to see what happened, they found only the haunting shadow of a large bird circling in the night sky overhead. What is this bird and what does it portend? Can the party find out what happened to the crew? Can they get this crew-less ship home?

Race For The Map (High Level). Famed mustel pirate captain Benji Bracklebolt (he/him) has put a bounty on the ultimate treasure, the “living” map of the high seas. Bracklebolt claims to have found its location on a previously undiscovered island far out in the open sea. The bounty for the map: one million gold pieces to the first crew that can bring it back to Bracklebolt in one piece. He launches the race with a single riddle: “Where water and air meet, the map to everything will be found, trapped in verdant bonds.” Can the party fight off monsters, the elements and blood-thirsty pirates to crack the clue and find the map?

ENCOUNTERS IN THE OPEN SEA

d6	Encounter
1	While in port, your ship picks up 1d6 hull haunters that start wreaking havoc when you set sail.
2	Two hunter sharks start circling your ship.
3	A recklessly fast schooner crewed by 3d4 high seas sailors pursues you.
4	1d8 giant vultures start descending towards your ship from above.
5	A 30-foot wide whirlpool opens underneath your vessel. A creature at the wheel of your vessel must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw. On a failure, your vessel gets trapped in the whirlpool. The whirlpool is considered difficult terrain, and if your vessel ends its movement in the whirlpool the creature at the wheel must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or it takes 10 (3d6) bludgeoning damage.
6	An aggressive tempest auk takes notice of your vessel and dives towards it.

WHAT LURKS IN THE OPEN SEA

HIGH SEAS SAILOR

The sailors of the seas of Wesden come in many forms, but to be a successful sailor you need to be fleet of foot and quick of wit. Often friendly and keen for a chat, most sailors will be happy to help new travelers. When wronged, however, you can be sure a vengeful ambush is around the corner.

HULL HAUNTER

Small, mischievous spirits that stir up trouble on ships, hull hunters are more a nuisance than a true menace—though if enough of them turn up they can do a lot of damage.

HIGH SEAS SAILOR

SMALL OR MEDIUM HUMANOID (ANY), ANY ALIGNMENT

Armor Class 13
Hit Points 33 (6d8 + 6)
Speed 30 ft., climb 20 ft., Swim 20ft

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +0, Con +0

Skills Insight +3, Perception +5, Sleight of Hand +5, Stealth +7

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages Birdfolk and one other language

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Sea Legs. On each of its turns, the sailor can use a bonus action to take the Dash or Disengage action.

Look Out Below! Once per turn, if the pirate drops up to 10 feet down onto a target, it deals an extra 7 (2d6) damage when it hits that target with a melee weapon attack. Additionally, the target must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The pirate makes two shortsword attacks.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage, or 10 (2d6 + 3) piercing damage while enlarged.

Hand Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage

Makeshift Explosive (Recharge 5-6). All creatures within 10 feet of a point the sailor can see within 30 feet must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw, taking 10 (4d4) thunder damage on a failed save or half as much on a successful one.

HULL HAUNTER

SMALL UNDEAD, CHAOTIC NEUTRAL

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 21 (6d6)
Speed 0 ft., fly 50 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
1 (-5)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)

Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical Attacks

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, unconscious

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Understands Birdfolk and Auran but can't speak

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Incorporeal Movement. The hull hunter can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

Possess Ship. As a bonus action the hull hunter can possess one part of the ship, either a lantern, rigging rope or the ship's wheel. While possessing something it can only be removed from the object by hitting it with radiant damage or by turning it. It can also leave the object as a free action at any time.

ACTIONS

Fire Flare (while possessing a lantern only). All creatures within 10 feet of the hull hunter must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or take 7 (2d6) fire damage and be blinded until the end of their next turn. A creature that covers or protects its eyes makes the saving throw with advantage.

Rigging Rampage (while possessing rigging rope only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 20 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 7 (2d6) slashing damage and the target must make a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or be knocked prone. Instead of doing damage, the hull hunter can choose to grapple the target instead (escape DC 10.)

Wild Wheel (while possessing a ship's wheel only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 10 (3d6) bludgeoning damage and the target must make a DC 10 Strength saving throw or be thrown 20 feet in a random direction away from the wheel. Additionally, if the ship is moving, it begins to turn in the random direction the target was thrown.

TEMPEST AUK

The tempest auk is a massive, flightless bird that inhabits the waters of the deep ocean. It mainly hunts large fish and seals, but will occasionally come into conflict with sailing ships that infringe on its territory. A tinge of elemental energy imbues its attacks with frost and its speed is unmatched in the water. The beak of the tempest auk is capable of splintering the strongest hull, and sailors do their best to give the bird a wide berth.

TEMPEST AUK

HUGE MONSTROSITY, UNALIGNED

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)
Hit Points 66 (7d12 + 21)
Speed 20 ft., swim 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)	5 (-3)	12 (+1)	6 (-1)

Saving Throws Str +7, Con +6

Skills Perception +7

Damage Resistances cold

Senses passive Perception 17

Languages —

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Siege Monster. The auk deals double damage to objects and structures.

Tempest Barrier. The auk is surrounded by powerful wind and swirling water. Any creature that starts its turn within five feet of the auk must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or take 7 (2d8) cold damage and be pushed 10 feet away from the auk.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The auk makes three attacks using Beak, Claw, or a combination of them.

Beak. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage plus 5 (1d10) cold damage and the target is grappled (escape DC 15). The auk can only grapple one creature at a time and cannot use its beak attack while grappling a creature.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d12 + 4) slashing damage.

Frozen Slam. The auk moves up to 20 feet in a straight line. If the auk is in water during this move, it does not trigger any attacks of opportunity. Any creature in its path must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 11 (2d10) cold damage and be knocked prone. If the auk ends this movement in the same space as another creature, that creature is moved to a space within five feet of the auk. The auk may then make a beak attack against one target within range. If the auk is in water, this attack is made with advantage.