

HUMBLEWOOD™

Humblewood Playtest

ALMARE & CASTLE ARGEST & COURTIER

JUNE 2025



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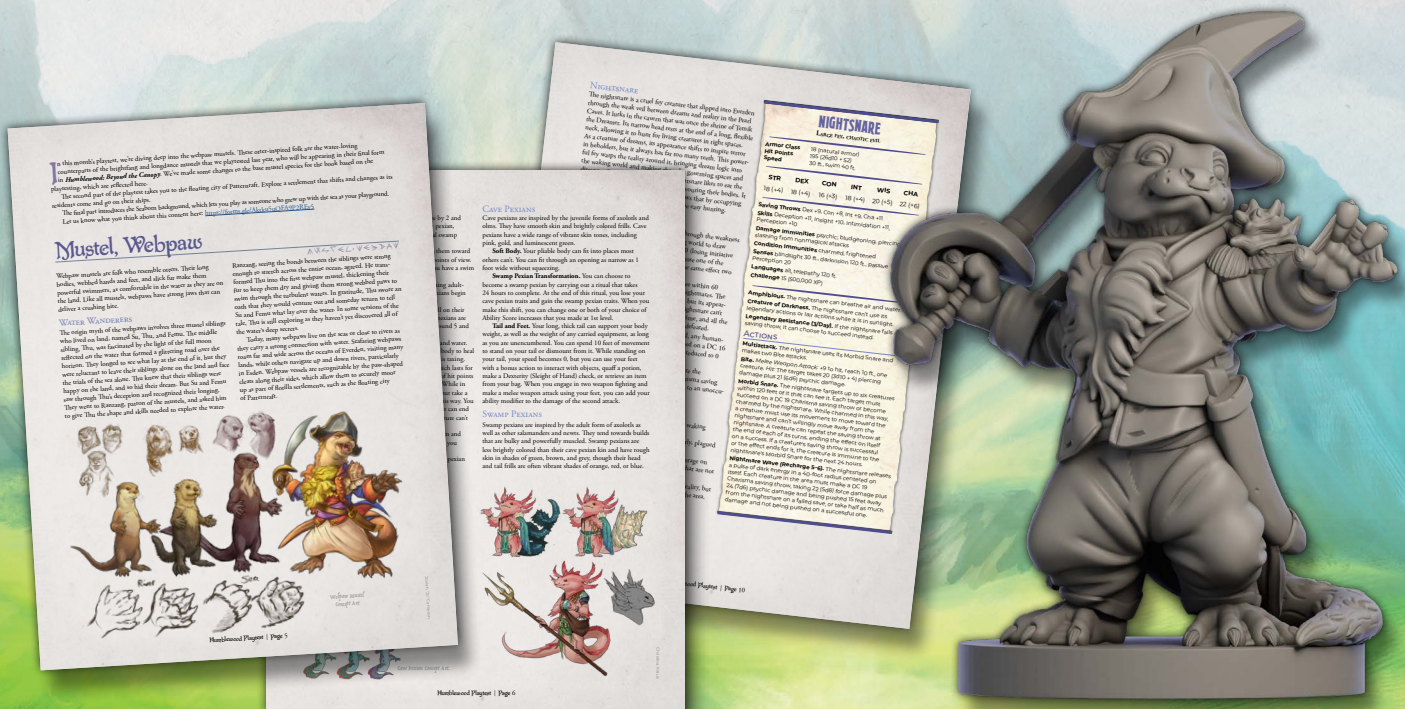
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This month, we're introducing a new birdfolk race, the seabird-inspired almares. We're testing out some new ways features can interact with gliding. If you could let us know how you use gliding in your games and if you're interested in these kinds of abilities, that would be so helpful!

In the second half, we're heading up into the sky to visit Castle Argest, the floating fortress of the Wind King. We've got big plans for Argest and the Wind King for future projects.

Let us know what you think about this content here: <https://forms.gle/ee8Dajeffr8T6FYs6>

New Race: Almare

NEW RACE ALMARE

The almare are intrepid birdfolk shaped by the rough and tumble of tempestuous seas. They have a reputation for being bold, brash, and always getting what they want one way or another. Among all the birdfolk, they are the most adept at using their feathered arms to perform extraordinary feats while gliding.

Voyagers and Traders

The patron Amarathine of the almare is Keltha the Enterprising, who is usually depicted as an enormous pelican carrying a hoard of treasures in her beak. Keltha's teachings emphasize chasing ambitions and challenging oneself against the world. She is also the Amaranthine of the wind and the ever-distant horizon. Many of her almare followers make a living as merchants and explorers, always pushing themselves to find new opportunities. Some of history's great explorers have been almares. The legendary almare voyager Samfire Cliffnest is credited as being the first to travel from Hintercrag to Humblewood long ago.

STORMBORN STRENGTH

Young almare chicks are traditionally raised to be highly competitive, and if they aren't careful, they can gain reputations as bullies among their peers. This fierce culture emerged from the struggles ancient almares faced living on the tenuous line between sea and land, where they needed immense strength and determination to thrive.

While today almares have a reputation as savvy businessfolk, some are drawn to a life of piracy or theft instead of honest trade. These folk prefer to take from others to enrich themselves. Many prominent almare families have a history of piracy somewhere in their ancestry, which was often the original source of their wealth. Even when they have left their piratical ways behind them generations ago, these almares tend to have a ruthless streak.



ALMARE NAMES

Almare family names often refer to their ancestral connection to the seas and coasts.

Example Names: Anamella, Briskoll, Demora, Gulliam, Maraja, Morcant, Murdo, Myna, Stony, Thalás

Family Names: Breakerbeak, Ebbing, Farglider, Fisher, Highmist, Oystersnatcher, Quilltide, Seaswift, Stonecliff, Waveskimmer

ALMARE TRAITS

Almares are inspired by seabirds. As an almare, you have the following traits:

Ability Score Increases. Increase one ability score by 2 and another ability score by 1. To play a typical shieldwing almare choose Constitution and Charisma. To play a typical swordwing almare choose Dexterity and Charisma. Alternatively, increase three ability scores by 1.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 30 feet. You have a swimming speed of 25 feet.

Age. Almares mature slowly and are considered adults at 25. They can live for over 100 years.

Size. With their massive wingspan, the largest almares are among the most imposing birdfolk, while smaller almares have elegant silhouettes. Your size is Medium.

Glide. Using your feathered arms, you can slow your fall and glide short distances. When falling, you can use your reaction to spread your arms, stiffen your wing feathers, and slow your descent. While doing so, you continue to fall gently at a speed of 60 feet per round, taking no fall damage when you land. If you would fall at least 10 feet in this way, you may fly up to your movement speed in any direction you choose, although you cannot choose to move upwards, landing in the space you finish your movement. You can't glide while carrying heavy weapons or wielding a shield (though you may drop any held items as part of your reaction to spread your arms). You cannot glide while wearing heavy armor or if you are encumbered.

Seafeathers. Your waterproof feathers also give you a measure of protection against the arcane. You have advantage on Constitution saving throws against magic.

Wing Flap. As a bonus action, you can use your powerful feathered arms to propel yourself upward a distance equal to half your speed. You can use it in conjunction with a regular jump, but not while gliding.

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

Lineage Options. You can choose the shieldwing or swordwing lineage option.

SHIELDWING

Shieldwing almares are a good fit for characters inspired by larger seabirds, such as albatrosses, gannets, cormorants, frigatebirds, and boobies.

Greater Glide. While gliding, you can use your bonus action to glide upwards up to your speed. Once you have used this ability, you must complete a short rest before you can use it again. Additionally, you can glide while carrying heavy weapons and shields and wearing heavy armor.

Imposing Wingspan. You can add your Constitution modifier to your Intimidation and Persuasion checks (minimum of 1).

Seawise Endurance. You have advantage on saving throws to resist taking levels of exhaustion.

SWORDWING

Swordwing almares are a good fit for characters inspired by smaller seabirds, such as seagulls, terns, skuas, and tropicbirds.

Brash Opportunist. You can add your Constitution modifier to Deception and Sleight of Hand checks (minimum of 1).

Seawise Agility. When you make a melee attack on your turn, you can disengage as a bonus action. Once you have used this ability, you must complete a short rest before you can use it again.

Sky Dive. While falling or gliding, you can use your action to drop into a dive to make a melee attack against a target within no more than 100 feet below you and no more than 20 feet from you in any other direction. You have advantage on this attack, and you deal an additional 1d8 damage of the attack's type on a hit. You take no damage from the rapid descent and don't land prone if you end your turn on a surface. When you finish your dive, you end your movement in an unoccupied space adjacent to the target. You can't dive at targets that are above you or parallel with you.

Castle Argest

CASTLE ARGEST

As you ascend, Castle Argest comes into full view. Resting on a cushion of white clouds, its great, golden, nest-like walls give an impression of power and strength. Shining spears held by its guards flash in the sunlight, and the bright pennants bearing the sigil of the Wind King snap in the magical winds that keep the massive castle afloat in the sky.

Castle Argest is the seat of power of the Wind King. The sky castle floats over the center of the Gasparian Isles on a cloud that varies from fluffy white to thunderous grey but never blows away. The magic that keeps it aloft is a well-guarded secret known only to the royal family. While Castle Argest rules over the Gasparian Isles, it is inaccessible to most Islefolk, whose only interactions with the castle are the occasional glimpse of a troop of guards sent down to deal with unrest or the annual visit from the castle's tax collectors.

The Wind King. The Wind King is a shieldwing almare who resembles a royal albatross. He has ruled over the Gasparian Isles from his sky castle for over 50 songs. The king never descends to the isles, instead remaining within his exclusive and highly defended court. Even within Argest, the king appears to perform the mandatory rituals of the court but otherwise remains secluded in his wing of the castle. He is a remote and mysterious figure, and many rumors swirl around him and his family. Among these, one of the most outlandish rumors is actually true—unlike most birdfolk, the Wind King doesn't just glide; he can truly fly.

The Wind Court. Castle Argest is filled with intrigue. Those who live and work within its gilded walls carry out the elaborate rituals and courtly dances that fill the castle's

calendar, but courtiers and staff alike are alert for threats and opportunities to advance. Most residents of Castle Argest, including almost all the staff and many of the nobles, aren't allowed to leave as they please. With nowhere else to go and little else to entertain them, the nobles play their games of power. The court is divided into several major factions called Nests. Among these are the Northgust and Southbreeze Nests, which are currently the most influential and share the bitterest of rivalries.

A Place Apart. Reaching Castle Argest is no easy matter. An invitation from the Wind King or a member of the Wind Court is necessary. Unauthorized folk openly using magical flight to approach the castle will be shot out of the sky by the castle guards without question. Those few who are invited and the members of the court who are permitted to leave can ascend or descend on one of the castle's magical elevators. These golden, cloud-shaped pods descend from Argest to anywhere across the Isles, and they provide a smooth transit up into the sky and the isolated castle that hangs there.

NPCs in Castle Argest

Castle Argest is home to nobles and the staff who serve them. Although the hierarchy is strictly maintained in public, because of the castle's peculiar isolation, true friendships sometimes emerge between the nobles and staff, and there is a surprising casualness behind closed doors. Most of the castle folk are descended from those who have lived here for generations, but others chose to come to Argest, seeking employment or opportunities in exchange for being unlikely to ever leave.

Here are some examples of the kinds of NPCs that could be encountered in Castle Argest.

NPCs in Castle Argests

d6 NPC

- 1 Lord Ebbon Weir [he/him] is a young corvum noble who recently inherited his title. His ambition is matched only by his naivety when it comes to court intrigue.
- 2 Heckal Silvershade [she/her] is a vesper ambassador from the Great Cave City. She works hard to maintain the appearance of neutrality while actually playing the Court Nests against each other. Heckal resembles a long-eared bat.
- 3 Liege Mimil Maxilimul [they/them] is a tilia noble. They are one of the few nobles permitted to leave the castle regularly to attend to their estate on one of the isles below. Mimil has a very profitable hustle smuggling in rare goods from below for other residents.
- 4 Lady Larin Spume [she/her] is a fastidious swordwing almare noble who cares deeply that the court's rituals be performed perfectly. She leads a minor faction called the Rightmist Nest that focuses on preserving court traditions.
- 5 Netty Shortspines [she/her] is a spiny hedge from Humblewood who works in the castle laundry. She was swept to the isles by chance, and although she's grateful to have found a position in the castle, she longs to see her home again someday.
- 6 Grilda Grumfella [she/her] is the head cook of the Northgust Nest. She is a jovial porchini who resembles a wild boar. Grilda has a kind word for everyone, save for her rival cook in the Southbreeze Nest, a precocious luma named Billiam Bollingbough [they/them], who folk call a once-in-a-generation culinary genius.

You can use these hooks to begin an adventure in Castle Argest or create your own.

A Golden Cage (Mid Level). A swordwing almare net maker called Gusty Tidetrip [she/her] asks the party to help her little brother, Firth [he/him]. She says that he was abducted by one of Castle Almare's golden pods against his will, and she wants the party to get him back. If the party can find a way up to the castle and find Firth, they discover that he

Wind King's Gauntlet (High Level). The party receives an invitation to Castle Argest as personal guests of the Wind King. When they arrive, they discover that they aren't the only adventurers he has called here. Faced with a series of challenges and combats, the party finds themselves pitted against the other heroes in a competition with deadly consequences as the Wind King searches for "the greatest heroes." The stated reward for winning is a powerful artifact, but in truth, the Wind King wants to find heroes capable of defeating a terrible evil that lurks below on the Gasparian Isles.

$$X \in V \Rightarrow A \subset G \Rightarrow \neg X \in X \Rightarrow \neg X \in G \Rightarrow \neg X \in V$$

Skill Proficiencies: Insight and your choice of either Deception or Persuasion

Languages: one of your choice

Equipment: an exceptionally fine dagger, a letter from a family member or mentor, an antique piece of jewelry, a set of fine clothes, a purse containing 25 gp

Your masterful grasp of etiquette makes you welcome in the highest social circles and courts wherever you go. However, you understand that nothing comes for free in these environments. Nobles and other court figures may ask you to give something to them in exchange for access to the court, such as information or a subtle bribe.

d8	Personality Trait
1	I love to gossip.
2	I'm deeply awkward outside of the social situation I grew up in.
3	I'm highly aware of other folks' comfort and discomfort in social situations.
4	I wield my refined manners with the elegance of a rapier.
5	I see every interaction as a transaction.
6	Etiquette is very important to me.
7	I have an endless supply of amusing anecdotes.
8	I have a strong sense of duty and propriety.

d6 Ideal

- 1 **Dignity.** Respect causes the relationships between folk of all kinds to flourish. (Lawful)
- 2 **Sincerity.** Even though it may hinder my prospects, I want to live according to my truth. (Good)
- 3 **Caution.** Decisions are best made after careful deliberation of all sides. (Neutral)
- 4 **Dominance.** Power and privilege are mine by right. (Evil)
- 5 **Liberty.** I will never let myself be stifled by stuffy manners again. (Chaotic)
- 6 **Change.** I will be part of the revolution, whether from the inside or the outside. (Chaotic)

d6 Bond

- 1 I'm scared my friends won't like me if they find out who I truly am.
- 2 I was very close with someone at court, but they betrayed me.
- 3 I believe the tales of chivalry that I grew up hearing and want to be the kind of gallant noble that exists in stories.
- 4 I hate the court I grew up in and hate the marks it left on my personality even more.
- 5 I love the opulence and comfort of court life.
- 6 I was raised by a nursemaid who I love like a mother. I know her far better than my own parents.

d6 Flaw

- 1 Raised in opulence, I am unaware of my own privilege.
- 2 I don't respect the time of others.
- 3 I fall back on stiff politeness, finding it hard to connect with others.
- 4 I judge folk for their lack of refinement.
- 5 I am terrified of the world beyond the familiarity of the court.
- 6 I treat my relationships with others as trinkets to be tossed aside when they no longer entertain me.