

We live by the grace of the sea, and we die by her wrath.

When she gives we celebrate, and when she takes we beg forgiveness.

But we never disparage her claims, for when she gives her gift, we gain life.

When she takes from us, we know we have mistreated her.

When we sail the open sea, we are in her embrace alone,
And we long for her to rock us to sleep
Instead of breaking our bodies against the rocks
Or taking our breath to the cold depths.

Gathered, we ask the sea to take our brother into her bosom As she has taken his life from us.

May he be blessed, and the sea as well.

—Common passage from a sailor's funeral

The oceans and seas rule the planet by creating clouds, orchestrating weather, and maintaining the easy breath of tides. In the open ocean, ripples grow to swells before being reborn as waves lapping against every shore on Golarion. From specks of plankton to massive whales and millions of creatures in between, Golarion's oceans and seas support a rich ecosystem, which in turn becomes an exciting frontier for adventure. Filled with strange undersea landscapes and even stranger aquatic races, the seas hold ancient cultures, dangerous creatures, and fantastic treasures just waiting to be discovered.

### LIFE UNDER THE SEA

Despite the sometimes harsh environments, the seas teem with life—in fact, there is more life below the waters at any given moment than the surface has ever seen. Coastal regions support a diverse selection of flora and fauna, and as travelers go deeper into the dark seas, creatures become even more specialized and strange.

Below are some of the major intelligent races dominating the world beneath the waves.

#### **ABOLETHS**

Ancient masterminds of the deep

**Favored Environment:** Cold and temperate deep waters **Areas of Influence:** Arcadian and Obari oceans; Inner, Sightless, and Steaming seas

Allies: Skum, some gillmen and merfolk

Enemies: Some gillmen, humans, and merfolk

Additional Information: Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Into the Darklands 53, Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 8

While aboleths work their ways through various waters across Golarion, they congregate in the Arcadian Ocean, where they once manipulated the Azlanti Empire. Still residing in the waters below the ruins of that once-great civilization, they fiercely protect their magical tunnels linking the Arcadian Ocean above to the Sightless Sea deep in Orv, which holds the largest concentration of these creatures on Golarion. From their underwater cities they plot and wait for the day when they can rise again and conquer the humanoids of the surface, but for now, they largely wait, sending their skum thralls to the surface to snatch specimens for twisted experiments.

#### **ADAROS**

Storm-worshiping and carnivorous sharklike humanoids

Favored Environment: Warm oceans, seas, and coasts
Areas of Influence: Arcadian, Embaral, Obari, and
Okaiyo oceans; Fever and Valashmai seas

Allies: Grindylows, sahuagin, scrags, sharks

Enemies: Cecaelias, gillmen, humans, locathahs, merfolk Additional Information: Pathfinder #38 80; Pathfinder

RPG Bestiary 37

Aggressive and brutal, adaros keep to small tribes, but that doesn't make them any less dangerous. They attack ships' crews with their poison spears, then dive back into the protection of the waves. Adaros love storms and often coordinate attacks on ships and coastal communities during these times. A particularly large and violent nation of adaros makes the turbulent waters of the Valashmai Sea its home, calling the place the Womb of Storms. These adaros worship a creature they call the Tempest Wife, and claim they breed storms with her and send them across all the oceans and seas of the world to gather sacrifices. Since the formation of the Eye of Abendego, some tribes of adaros have also migrated to the Fever Sea, where they watch the great storm with patient expectation.

#### AQUATIC ELVES

Elves of the storms and waves

**Favored Environment**: Warm oceans, seas, and coasts **Areas of Influence**: Arcadian Ocean, Steaming Sea

Allies: Elves

Enemies: Aboleths, gillmen, humans

Additional Information: Pathfinder Campaign Setting: The Inner Sea World Guide 25, Pathfinder Player Companion: Elves of Golarion 13

Even more aloof than their land-dwelling brethren, the amphibious elves of the Arcadian Ocean care little about the lives and desires of surface dwellers. They claim to have renounced the limited perspectives of the land in favor of an environment brimming with life and added dimensions of mobility and possibility. While some live nearly as hermits, others defend their families behind the coral palisades of living estates. In the rare cases of settlements like Irim and Quolonrihil, sea elves unite in more traditional communities, largely for shared defense against persistent threats and not out of any particular feelings of brotherhood. The strange surface elves of the Mordant Spire are among the only land dwellers to maintain regular, cordial contact with aquatic elves, who prove invaluable allies in exploring the ruins of Azlant. More than raiders, the aquatic elves have vast knowledge of submerged Azlanti ruins, but also occasionally bring elven artifacts of incredible age to the surface—much to the delight of their Mordant Spire cousins.

#### CECAELIAS

Unpredictable aquatic traders and mercenaries

Favored Environment: Warm waters and coasts

Areas of Influence: Arcadian, Embaral, Obari, and Okaiyo oceans; Inner and Steaming seas

Allies: Humans, locathahs

Enemies: Devilfish, grindylows, iku-tursos, krakens

Additional Information: Bestiary 3 49

Proud to the point of arrogance and prone to exaggeration, cecaelias claim to be the heirs of a vast aquatic culture that



once spanned the depths of the Embaral Ocean, centered around a great nautiloid city known as Sihuw. Why their empire ended they don't deign to say, but cecaelias suggest they grew bored of ruling the depths and willingly descended into the nomadic groups they now favor. Regardless of the truth of these claims, cecaelia bands roam the depths of the sea, where they load their pack rays with salvage and curiosities, then swim back to the coast to trade tales and wonders with the pitiable land dwellers. Some bands adopt the life of brigands and mercenaries rather than traders, conducting all manner of submarine piracy. Cecaelias tend to elicit strong opinions from land dwellers, most of whom think of them as liars and bandits, though some find their bravado charming. Despite their similar cephalopodic physiologies, cecaelias loathe krakens and are quick to point out the differences between their own handsome octopoid forms and the disgusting shapes of squidlike krakens.

#### CERATIOIDI

Dual-minded rulers of the deep trenches

Favored Environment: Deep ocean trenches

**Areas of Influence:** Arcadian Ocean, River Kingdoms (Outsea)

Allies: Aboleths, merfolk, skum, tritons

Enemies: Gutaki, sahuagin

Additional Information: Bestiary 3 50, Pathfinder Adventure Path #32 80, Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Guide to the River Kingdoms 34

The strange humanoids called ceratioidi bear many similarities to deep-sea anglerfish, including both the fleshy forehead lure that they use to draw in prey and their singularly unusual mating habits. Highly sexually dimorphic, ceratioidi females are huge, 300-pound humanoids, while the males are rat-sized intelligent fish. When it's time to mate, the female invites a male to affix himself to her back, where he is slowly absorbed into her body, linking his organs to hers and creating a single entity with two distinct but inextricably interwoven minds. This dual nature allows a ceratioidi to specialize in several different pursuits, and their legendary witch/wizard combinations are so powerful that few dare challenge them in the forbidding ocean trenches where they build their mysterious cities. Ceratioidi have little concern for the activities of other races, and thus are willing to deal with almost any race that respects their privacy.

#### GILLMEN

Servitor descendents of a shattered empire

Favored Environment: Temperate waters

Areas of Influence: Arcadian Ocean, Inner and Steaming seas

Allies: Some aboleths, humans, and merfolk

Enemies: Some aboleths, humans, and merfolk; sahuagin

Additional Information: The Inner Sea World Guide 310, Pathfinder Player Companion: Guide to Absalom 11

Known in some circles as Low Azlanti, these former Azlanti were "saved" by their aboleth controllers and repurposed for slave stock. Because of this shameful past, gillmen keep isolated and surround themselves in mystery. Most gillmen encountered by surface races are proud they have thrown off the yoke of their creators, but others are simply thralls spying on humanity for their deep masters. Without a doubt, sinister gillmen still live below the shattered continent of Azlant.

#### GRINDYLOWS

Violent aquatic abominations

Favored Environment: Any shoreline or shallows
Areas of Influence: Arcadian, Embaral, and Obari
oceans; Inner, Ivory, Songil, and Steaming seas

Allies: Octopuses

**Enemies**: Cecaelias, giant eels, sharks, squids, other aquatic races

Additional Information: Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2 148 In terms of both appearance and behavior, grindylows are the goblins of the seas. They are eternally hungry, cruel, and sadistic. Grindylows delight in causing mayhem and attack ships and other seagoing vessels with no reservations. Under cover of thick fog or heavy thunderstorms, whole warbands of grindylows surge into port cities, breaking as much as possible and killing anything in sight. As they crash through the community, they take as much as they can hold and then, like a wave, retreat back into the sea.

#### GUTAKI

Demon-worshiping descendants of evil

Favored Environment: Deep ocean trenches

**Areas of Influence**: Arcadian, Embaral, and Obari oceans; Inner, Ivory, Songil, and Steaming seas

Allies: Devilfish, krakens

Enemies: Aboleths, cecaelias, ceratioidi

Additional Information: Bestiary 2 88, Pathfinder Adventure
Path #7 81

Barbed, seven-tentacled sadists descended from kraken stock, the gutaki are an advanced breed of devilfish that inhabit the lightless depths of the ocean. There they release air and blood in the name of Dagon, their foul demonic patron. In unsettling cities built vertically along deep-sea trenches and within geothermal vents, the gutaki live lives of cloistered fanaticism, reading their monstrous lord's will in omens that drift down from the surface, or serving the plots of krakens, which they view as Dagon's chosen. Gutaki rarely leave the deepest parts of the ocean, as their bodies are well adapted to the incredible pressures there, meaning they rarely come into contact with surface dwellers.

#### 1ku-Tursos

Sadistic aberrations delighted by disease and torture

Favored Environment: Cold and temperate deep waters
Areas of Influence: Embaral, Obari, and Okaiyo oceans;
Ivory, Shining, and Songil seas

Allies: Aboleths, sahuagin

**Enemies:** Surface races and most other aquatic races

Additional Information: Bestiary 3 153 The eel-like iku-tursos live in small citic

The eel-like iku-tursos live in small cities scattered across Golarion's sea floors. There they have air-filled chambers housing thousands of captives who they torture for news of the surface, new knowledge, and entertainment. They maintain a slave trade with nearby aboleths, swapping humanoids like collectables. A slave of a rare race or ethnicity can be worth as many as 20 average slaves.

The largest iku-turso city rests just inside the Sintos Trench where the Songil Sea merges with the greater Okaiyo Ocean. Thousands of these evil creatures raid coasts and torment sailors, sometimes dragging away whole villages in the night or plucking ships clean of crew in a flash.

#### KRAKENS

Fearsome lords of the depths

**Favored Environment:** Temperate or warm deep waters **Areas of Influence:** Arcadian, Embaral, Obari, and Okaiyo oceans; Songil, Steaming, and Valashmai seas

Allies: None

Enemies: All coastal, surface, and deep-sea creatures and races

Additional Information: Bestiary 2 179

Most krakens live in the deep sea along fathomless rifts in the sea floor, yet sometimes they come to the surface. These ancient and massive creatures use their keen intellects and special abilities to bend humanoid races to their whims and machinations. Some demand tributes to stay their wrath, and when the flow of tributes cease, they batter the negligent seaside settlements with storms and tentacles alike. Other krakens lurk along shipping lanes and pull entire vessels to their watery graves, sucking the flailing sailors from the sea as tasty morsels.

#### LOCATHAHS

Unpredictable piscine people of the deep

Favored Environment: Temperate or warm waters

Areas of Influence: Arcadian and Obari oceans, Inner and Steaming seas

Allies: Cecaelias, dolphins, giant moray eels, humans, humpback whales, some merfolk Enemies: Aboleths, grindylows, merrows, sahuagin Additional Information: Bestiary 2 179

Locathahs may be monstrous in appearance, but they are also inquisitive creatures eager for contact with other races—though they not are necessarily interested in maintaining such contact if those they find prove boorish or have nothing interesting to offer. Stories tell of whole tribes of locathahs aiding ships stalled in doldrums and taking on water by surrounding the vessels and swimming them to shore. In some versions of the story, though, the fish-folk demand the ship's cargo after saving the crew—and when refused, push the vessel back out to sea to sink. Locathahs actively trade with those plying their wares through the ocean's shipping lanes, bringing up rare corals carved into elaborate pieces of art, and exchanging such treasures for what their communities

need, not necessarily valuable trade goods. Some captains seek locathah crew to serve as ship guards and navigators, granting the captain awareness of dangers below the surface.







Most ship captains do well to avoid the merfolk, as entering merfolk territory without permission brings sinister retribution.

#### SAHUAGIN

Cruel and prosperous fishlike humanoids

Favored Environment: Temperate and warm waters

Areas of Influence: Arcadian, Embaral, Obari, and Okaiyo oceans; Songil, Steaming, and Valashmai seas

Allies: Some adaros, but sahuagin rarely ally with others

Enemies: Aboleths, merfolk, other aquatic humanoid races

Additional Information: Bestiary 239, The Inner Sea World Guide 32

Fiercely territorial, sahuagin fight an endless war with all other undersea races for power and territory. They see aboleths as one of their greatest enemies, as the slimy puppet masters are always seeking to enslave other races. Sahuagin's expansionist attitude has led some of them to emigrate to the Plane of Water, where they maintain a blossoming empire. Sahuagin society establishes a king or queen who rules over each ocean, granting seas and other territories to various barons, dukes, and vassals. Yearly, during the summer season, a worldwide council of sahuagin kings and their trusted advisors and

dukes meet and hear each other's experiences from over the past year. There they plan their domination of the waters beneath the waves.

As sahuagin are prone to mutation, various forms of sahuagin exist, and entire communities of these offshoots may find themselves in positions of power in the sahuagin empire. Two of the most prevalent are the four-armed behemoths and the elflike malenti; the latter are used as spies and saboteurs in establishing new territories, while the former serve as specialized fighting forces in sahuagin armies and elite protectors of sahuagin cities.

#### SEA HAGS

Hideous crones cursing sailors and seafolk alike

**Favored Environment**: Cold, temperate, and warm coasts and waters

Areas of Influence: All oceans and seas

Allies: Other hags

**Enemies:** Sailors, nearby intelligent aquatic humanoids **Additional Information:** Bestiary 243

Siyokoy

#### MEREOLK.

Beautiful and graceful sea race embracing a dark mystery

Favored Environment: Temperate waters and coasts
Areas of Influence: Arcadian and Obari oceans, Inner
and Steaming seas

Allies: Aboleth

Enemies: Intelligent creatures entering their territories
Additional Information: Bestiary 204, The Inner Sea World
Guide 11

Rumors claim merfolk as a whole are just puppets of their aboleth masters, but some scholars believe their strings are pulled by a far more sinister source. Reclusive and suspicious creatures, merfolk keep to themselves and almost never ally with other races unless forced by circumstance, though they sometimes keep large fish and other sea animals for companionship and for hunting.

While solitary, these creatures wreak havoc on sailors and other denizens of the waves. Most creatures who know of a sea hag coven and the waters it claims steer clear of such places except in the most dire of circumstances. Some sea hags, through the use of disguises, find their way onto ships and turn the crews to mutiny before exploiting and eating the bulk of the sailors. Sister Scale, a strange hag plaguing sailors who sail too near her ruined island in the Arcadian Ocean, delights in spreading curses. Among her favorite punishments is turning a sailor's skin to scales or webbing his fingers and toes with thick mucous.

#### SIYOKOYS

Eel-like humanoids plundering sea ruins

Favored Environment: Cold, temperate, and warm waters Areas of Influence: Embaral, Obari, and Okaiyo oceans; Ivory, Songil, and Valashmai seas

Allies: Cecaelias, locathahs

Enemies: Aboleths, iku-tursos, evil aquatic races

Additional Information: Bestiary 3 246

Shaped like humanoid electric eels, these creatures live in two separate environments, each divergent of the other. Siyokoys generally possess more benevolent attitudes the closer they live to the surface. Those making their homes in great coral reefs seek a friendly relationship with those who live above and below the surface, while siyokoys living in the caves and rifts of the sea floor are generally more morose, somber, and aggressive. Scavenging sea captains sometimes pay hefty tributes to these creatures in exchange for directions to shipwrecks and submerged ruins to exploit.

#### TRITONS

Benevolent aquatic outsiders adapted to the Material Plane

**Favored Environment**: Any waters except the depths

Areas of Influence: Arcadian, Embaral, and Okaiyo oceans; Inner, Shining, and Songil seas; River Kingdoms (Outsea)

Allies: Locathahs, merfolk

Enemies: Aboleths, krakens, sahuagin, skum

Additional Information: Bestiary 2 270

Tritons are kind and cultured outsiders who long ago came to the Material Plane's oceans from the Plane of Water, and have since adapted to Golarion's largest bodies of saltwater. Though they maintain cordial relationships with other good undersea races, tritons have a strong hatred for evil creatures that would seek to despoil the bounty of the waters or spread their corrupting influence. Tritons train in tactical squadrons to fight their most disdained enemies, krakens and aboleths, and use dolphins and other aquatic creatures as mounts in their underwater wars. They distrust those land dwellers who venture too

far into the sea, taking them for trespassers more often than not—but any outsiders who prove their opposition to great evils such as aboleths or krakens quickly earn tritons' respect.

#### Underwater Structures

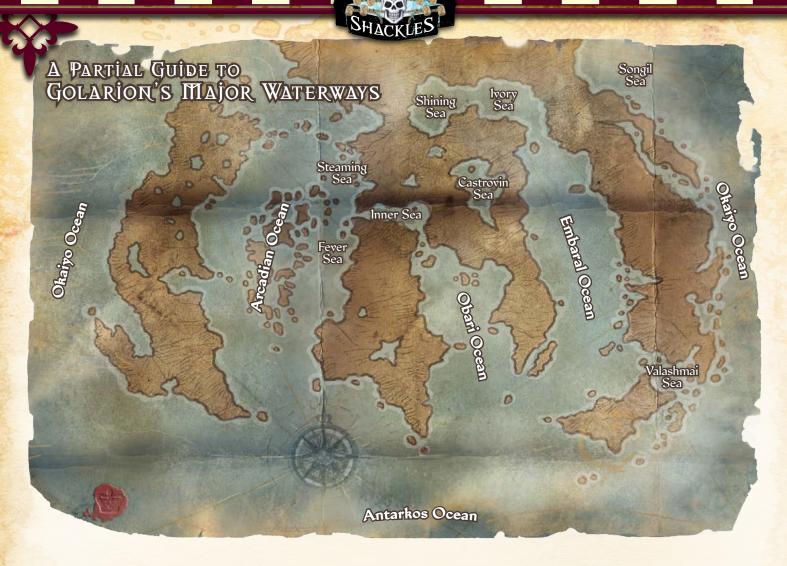
Just as the people of the dry lands cover their hills and fields with structures ranging from small villages and isolated temples to great sprawling metropolises, so too do the people of the seas and oceans make a corresponding mark on their world. Because of the differences in their respective environments, however, the architecture created by those beneath the waves can be significantly different from that of the lands above.

For the majority of land-bound adventurers, the most familiar underwater cities are those that once came from their own realm. Islands swallowed by earthquakes or cliff-side cities borne into the sea by terrible landslides, these locations are often ripe for scavenging and exploration by races from both sides of the waves. Such cities are often eerie, silent ruins, encrusted by barnacles and aquatic flora and guarded by everything from simple sharks to the greatest of krakens.

More common than these, however, are buildings constructed by native water-breathers, which may be wildly different from the structures terrestrial explorers are used to. At the very least, the buoying nature of the water and careful choice of materials allow for architecture that would be impossible to maintain in air, from gargantuan spires to delicate, sweeping spans over undersea trenches. Inside, these structures have none of the stairs or flat floors required by surface-dwellers—a hallway may slant at any angle, and ascending to a tower is as simple as swimming up an access shaft. Ironically, the same features that make underwater dwellings feel comfortable and convenient to their builders are often their greatest defenses against armor-wearing terrestrial adventurers who insist on stomping their slow way across the sea floor.

In many cases, aquatic buildings themselves may be partially or completely alive. Some patient races enjoy the quiet art of guiding and sculpting coral into living palaces, while the seemingly organic and utterly alien cities of the aboleths are enough to drive a human mad just looking upon their shapes. City walls and roofs may be carefully woven from thick stalks of still-living bull kelp, or their structures may be rambling, labyrinthine affairs stitched together from the cylindrical bodies of monstrous tube worms. In the case of the legendary trade city Alohmab, in the heart of the Embaral Ocean, the entire settlement is housed within the curving walls of the World Snail's shell; creatures of all races are welcome within its spire so long as they respect the city's peace and





do no harm to Belimehu the Blind Mother, the enormous gastropod who still pulls her home slowly across the ocean's floor, devouring the emerald-shelled crabs that are the city's chief export.

Many of the races who live on the sea bottom choose their city locations carefully, incorporating such natural features as bountiful and nutritious kelp beds, easily defensible undersea caverns, or life-giving geothermal vents that provide both heat and valuable nutrients in even the deepest trenches, as well as power easily harnessed by mechanical or magical means. Yet not all races are so sophisticated, and some undersea settlements—such as those of some savage sahuagin tribes—may be little more than the aquatic equivalent of huts, with a few air-filled domes to house prisoners.

To imagine all underwater structures sitting on the ocean floor, however, is a distinctly terrestrial mistake, and ignores the vast majority of the sea's usable space. For those used to the freedom to travel any direction, restricting themselves to the muck and the company of bottom-feeders seems needlessly barbaric. Instead,

many cultures take advantage of the principle of neutral buoyancy, and construct palaces or whole cities that float at a given depth, held there by pressure and density. These grand structures may be anchored to a given site, or may drift freely on the currents. Some cultures even harness great whales and other beasts to their floating settlements, actually towing their cities along with them. Certain nomadic tribes of sahuagin and merfolk have been known to create the aquatic equivalent of roaming caravans, their communal structures pulled by enormous sharks or giant turtles.

### OCEANS GAZETTEER

Trade is the lifeblood of civilization, and ships follow seasonal currents on their way to visit faraway shores. These ships follow the winds and currents as they wrap themselves around the world, and carry not only wealth and trade goods from shore to shore, but also the essence of diverse cultures. Sailors are among the most adventurous land-born creatures, risking life and limb on the lonely sea. They bring with them stories of their homes, along

with their best goods, and share the former freely even as they seek their fortunes. Foreign cultures absorb the stories or incorporate the goods and are forever changed, transformed and made stronger through exposure to new ideas. In this way, the ocean enriches a people's spirit and sense of community, in addition to granting and perpetuating life above and below the waters.

Numerous bays, gulfs, small seas, and waterways exist across Golarion, but this section focuses on the world's largest bodies of water.

#### ANTARKOS OCEAN

The great southern ocean
Temperature: Cold waters

Hazards: Dangerous currents, icebergs, storms

Resources: Ice, whaling

Thick ice covers much of the great ocean at the planet's southern pole. Dangers lurk below the ice shelf, and storms batter its surface. This ocean is the largest on Golarion, and is easily the most dangerous as well. As seasons change and ice breaks off from the frozen mass, immense icebergs float away, some barely perceptible above the turbulent waves. When moving too quickly into warmer waters, these icebergs are known to explode, sometimes throwing gigantic splinters of ice miles away. The captains of ice ships hook ropes to small icebergs and tow them to port, allowing the wealthy of southern Garund to enjoy harvested ice year-round.

The storms and unpredictable waters get stronger in the region where the Antarkos Ocean gives way to the Valashmai Sea. In this region, thunderheads hang low, clinging to the icy sea and hovering over the tops of massive icebergs.

The Antarkos Ocean is home to a large number of spirits, ghosts, and animate dreams, leading to its other name—the Ocean of Frozen Dreams. Many of the ghosts are neither from the area nor killed there, but still somehow prowl this frozen ocean and its permanent ice shelf. Sages agree that something draws spirits and dreams to the bottom of the world, but never agree on what is to blame. Some say a portal lies below the ice, accessible only to the incorporeal, while others posit a powerful magical device that is collecting the past lives and experiences of Golarion's sentient creatures.

When the heavens are not veiled by storm clouds or fog, colorful auroras dance in the sky and play upon the ice. Tribes of degenerate ice trolls revere these lights in the sky, and their shamans interpret the patterns and colors to determine the tribe's actions. In places near the edge of the central ice shelf, currents melt away holes in the ice. Here aquatic mammals come up to breathe, and surface predators dive into these holes to hunt in the deeps. In the seasons when there are no whales, the ice trolls and

other intelligent creatures trade with an enigmatic race of aquatic giants. It is said these aquatic giants can read minds and control a creature's thoughts and dreams. Many say they use this knowledge to provide the bounty of their hunts below the ice to the inhabitants above, but also that they take advantage of this situation and practically enslave the creatures of the surface.

#### ARCADIAN OCEAN

Dynamic ocean cradling a shattered continent

Temperature: Cold, temperate, and warm waters

Hazards: Aboleth schemes, lost magic, piracy on the western shores, shallow submerged ruins, unpredictable currents

Resources: Fishing, scavenging

The eastern and western shores of this ocean teem with life and activity, while the center, which contains the remains of Azlant, is largely unexplored. This once-calm ocean now has erratic seasonal surface currents due to the ruined continent. Beneath the waves, cities of aquatic elves, merfolk, gillmen, and sahuagin fight for space. Deeper below rests an old aboleth empire. It is there that the Sightless Sea flows upward into the Arcadian Ocean; the aboleths fiercely protect the area with powerful magic and a seemingly limitless number of enslaved soldiers.

The Arcadian Ocean is relatively shallow, and some sailors make a good, but dangerous, living scavenging shipwrecks and Azlanti ruins. These scavengers must evade the eye of the elves who protect these ruins and defend themselves against the creatures that make the ruins their dens. Despite the danger, strange and powerful artifacts from lost Azlant surface from time to time, and many a sailor has retired early from the proceeds of just a single find.

#### EMBARAL OCEAN

The prize and power of the east

Temperature: Temperate and warm waters

Hazards: Doldrums, marine deserts, seasonal cyclones

Resources: Fishing, rich trade

In the open ocean, the Embaral falls dead. Few fish swim through the region and the winds die down, leaving miles of glassy ocean pulsing with low swells. Outside of this marine desert, strong currents move north and south along the shores of the continents. This pattern facilitates trade up and down the coasts of Tian-Xia and Casmaron, but presents difficulties for those wishing to cross the ocean east or west. Twice a year, in spring and autumn, the currents dig into the open ocean, stirring life into the marine desert and kicking up winds that make crossing the ocean through the middle more reliable. At these times, fleets of vessels take to the open seas, bringing the treasures of their homelands to foreign shores.



Though it is the second smallest ocean, the Embaral boasts varied climates and a vibrant ecology. Whales are common in its waters, and their great migrations bring fleets of ships trailing behind them for the hunt. Most whaling takes place in northern waters, as the creatures are protected in the equatorial region: an ancient dragon turtle named Calan attacks whaling ships that enter his warm waters. The cecaelias claim they once ruled an empire in the northern depths of these oceans, the discarded ruins of which might still exist today—if they ever existed at all.

#### OBARI OCEAN

Deadly ocean passage

Temperature: Cold, temperate, and warm waters

Hazards: Dangerous sea creatures, doldrums, sudden storms

Resources: Fishing, trade

Despite being the smallest of the oceans, the Obari may well be the richest. Exotic trade goods cross its waters to and from Casmaron and Garund, eventually making their way north to the Inner Sea. Trade vessels from Vudra and other nations hug the coasts, as sailors report that sea dragons, living islands, and aquatic fiends claim territories in the open ocean. The central region of this ocean is also prone to sudden cyclones and thunderstorms—the sky will be clear and bright one moment, then an hour later black as night and streaked with flashes of lightning. Only the foolhardy or those desperate to make good time point their ships across the Obari Ocean's treacherous expanse.

A powerful azi named Kasperi controls hundreds of square miles of the central Obari Ocean. Stories tell of this gandareva maintaining a dozen secret caches of treasures plucked from ships crossing his territory. For the past 900 years, Kasperi has worked this region, collecting fantastic wealth and generating a rich legend that draws treasure hunters to the Obari Ocean. While no one but Kasperi and his minions know the location of these caches, shady mapmakers frequently produce maps of the Obari Ocean with marked locations for the Twelve Vaults of Kasperi. These undersea vaults are certainly shrouded in magic and protected by powerful aquatic beasts.

#### OKAIYO OCEAN

Vast and mysterious sea lapping upon faraway shores

Temperature: Cold, temperate, and warm waters

Hazards: Cyclones, doldrums, sea monsters

Resources: Exploration, fishing

The Okaiyo Ocean is the second largest ocean on Golarion, after the frozen Antarkos. Because of the relatively sparse population along the western coast of Arcadia, this ocean is largely unexplored. Unpredictable winds make travel through the widest part of this ocean dangerous,

and many explorers and trade vessels have been lost to its waters—or worse, have perished and returned to their home shores as undead creatures to raid their own ports and terrorize the coastal waters. Some wealthy merchants and noble houses sponsor exploration fleets on a yearly basis, but few if any of these parties return to report on their journeys.

A deep trench splits the sea floor running nearly from pole to pole. Called the Sintos Trench, this massive rift supports thousands of undersea cities of varied aquatic creatures. Iku-tursos fight with siyokoys for territory, using merrows as soldiers, and both fight back against the everexpanding sahuagin empire.

Years ago, a fishing fleet witnessed a flumph seedpod crashing into the Okaiyo Ocean that nearly capsized one of the boats. With no recent sightings of flumphs in the area, sages wonder if the larval creatures even survived.

### SEAS OF GOLARION

When the vast oceans break along the continents, their world-spanning currents churn into gulfs and large seas. These are the waterways traveled most frequently by natives of Avistan and Garund, or spoken of by the most frequent visitors to those shores. Other more distant and mysterious waterways certainly exist.

### CASTROVIN SEA

Untamable heart of an ancient continent

Temperature: Temperate waters

Hazards: Keleshite navy, piracy, rocs, sea stacks, storms

Resources: Rich trade

This rough inland waterway pulses at the heart of the continent of Casmaron. Trading vessels from the glittering markets of Kelesh, the rugged frontiers of Iobaria, and stranger lands endlessly skirt the coasts, their bulging holds making tempting targets for pirates and ship wreckersespecially along uncivilized coasts. Many of these dangers could be avoided by sailing deeper waters, but only the most able and daring crews make the attempt. The interior waters of the Castrovin Sea prove notoriously treacherous, the brewing place for many dangerous storms, and the territory of many viciously rocky islets and difficult-tochart sea stacks like Casador's Maw, Citadel Allatro, and the Pillars of Trajheir. While the surfaces of many of these dangerous sea-bound structures appear smooth and featureless above the water, below they bear the icons, totems, and legends of tribes about territorial locathahs and pale-scaled merrows knowledgeable of many connections between the Castrovin's depths and the Darklands.

#### FEVER SEA

Hunting ground of pirate lords, sea monsters, and worse

Temperature: Tropical waters

Hazards: Dangerous creatures, piracy, storms

Resources: Ruins, trade

On the waters known as the Fever Sea, furious nature, canoe-bound cannibals, and the merciless greed of deadly pirate lords unite in a tidal crush of danger and despair. From the Eye of Abendego, these dangerous waters slither south along the jungle coasts of Garund, encompassing the whole of the Shackles and numerous islands beyond. Upon hundreds of treacherous islands and beneath uncaring waves sprawl the hunting grounds of primeval hunters, the ruins of foul Ghol-Gan, the secrets of strange and ancient magic, and the corpses of generation after generation of explorers, imperialists, and pirates who failed to claim the treasures of these rich waters. Upon the maps of leaders across Avistan, the Fever Sea looks like a path to incredible riches, choked only by the Shackles and the Eye of Abendego. Those who ply its waves, however, know it for what it is: a sea of ancient mysteries, hungry terrors, weird legends, unscrupulous sailors, and boundless ambitions-which is to say, a pirate's paradise.

Many of the most exciting locations, creatures, and inhabitants of the Fever Sea are detailed in *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Isles of the Shackles*.

#### INNER SEA

Hub of western civilization and power

**Temperature:** Temperate waters

Hazards: Naval warfare between competing nations,

piracy

Resources: Fishing, trade

The youngest major waterway in the world—formed only a few thousand years ago by the same cataclysm that sank Azlant—the Inner Sea holds the City at the Center of the World and acts as a cradle for humanity. The nations ringing the shores of the Inner Sea are among the wealthiest and most powerful nations of the world. Many of these nations boast formidable navies, and conflicts at sea are common.

#### IVORY SEA

An icy inland sea rich with whaling

**Temperature**: Cold waters

Hazards: Icebergs, predators, weather Resources: Ivory, sealing, whaling

The changing seasons bring aquatic mammals like seals, walruses, and whales to the waters of the Ivory Sea to feed and mate. Humanoids and other opportunists hunt the waters and coastlines for meat, ivory, and blubber. In the winter, some whales find themselves trapped as parts of the sea freeze over with expansive ice sheets. Small melt holes in the ice bring whales to the surface to breathe while they wait out the spring thaw. In these vital places, they are most vulnerable.

#### **AQUATIC ARMAMENTS**

The weight and restrictiveness of metal, and the difficulty of forging it, significantly alter its usefulness as a material for crafting weapons and armor beneath the waves. While many cultures make use of volcanic vents and cold forging techniques to perform metalworking, others prefer to use naturally occurring materials in their crafts. Some races make fragile but still-deadly weapons from bone, stone, and obsidian (as detailed on page 146 of Ultimate Combat). Still others, like aquatic elves and merfolk, know ways to harden shells, coral, or even forms of flawed pearl to the strength of steel. These techniques allow for the creation of weapons and armor that are treated as being mithral (functioning and costing the same), though their appearances vary widely, with crustacean shells and specially grown corals proving popular among some of the more martial aquatic races. Some have also perfected methods that allow for the creation of armor similar to agile breastplates (400 gp) and agile half-plate (850 gp; see the Advanced Player's Guide) that impose only a -1 and -4 armor check penalty on Swim checks (rather than Climb and jump checks). Likewise, eel, ray, or squid leather might be used to create analogs of surface-made leather goods.

#### SHINING SEA

A strange icy sea where the auroras dance upon the ice in the long night

**Temperature**: Cold waters **Hazards**: Ice, weather

Resources: Fishing, fur trading, whaling

Erratic currents churn the waters of this small and turbulent sea. All-too-common storms make travel in these waters a treacherous experience in the spring and summer, and ice sheets choke the waterway in the winter. Polar bears prowl the ice, hunting fish and aquatic mammals.

Auroras give the sea its name as their wispy colors dance across the swells and glisten on the ice. Luminescent plankton seem to echo the aurora's display, and natives claim the colonies communicate with the cosmic colors in a strange, light-based language.

#### SIGHTLESS SEA

A vast underground waterway spanning the depths of Golarion's Vaults

Temperature: Cold and temperate waters, some pockets of thermally heated waters

Hazards: Dangerous creatures, harsh conditions

Resources: Strange artifacts

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This water-filled Vault of Orv covers nearly the same area as the Arcadian Ocean, but lies miles below the sea floor. In the center of this sea, a feature known as the Braid rises up to the ceiling of the cavern, where it pools slightly before emptying via a network of tunnels into the bottom of the Arcadian Ocean. Aboleths first used these tunnels to pass between the surface world and the Darklands, and fiercely protect the area and the magic used to keep the two bodies of water in equilibrium.

While aboleths certainly inhabit these dark waters, all manner of Darklands creatures live in and around the Sightless Sea. Urdefhans and drow sail these waters, and a small nation of sahuagin have established a toehold below the waves. As the Darklands are rife with horrific monsters, unearthly aquatic monstrosities surely dwell on the sea floor. Despite its strangeness and the dangers that lurk beneath its unpredictable tides, the Sightless Sea is the

lifeblood of numerous costal communities and facilitates trade between merchants from numerous shadowy ports and beyond.

#### SONGIL SEA

Rich northern sea

Temperature: Cold and temperate waters Hazards: Dangerous creatures, storms

Resources: Fishing, whaling

Few know where whales breed, but a number of species of whales are known to come to the Songil Sea to birth their calves. These waters make for rich fishing grounds, fed as they are by a warm current from the south that enriches the sea with nutrients, supporting abundant life in the upper latitudes. A teeming ecology exists here, and with it comes vicious predators.

Sharks prowl these waters, sometimes whipped into a frenzy by the sahuagin who hunt here. Giant squid stalk the same whales the surface races hunt, and every so often one of these horrors of the deep pulls down a whaling vessel instead of its intended prey.

Old sailors speak of the terrible kraken called Tupta-Wa, who they say surfaces every dozen summers and feeds voraciously. Fishermen and sailors know the legend and fear the outcome, and all but the most foolhardy sailors remain in port as much as possible every twelfth summer. Fishermen must work close to shore to provide food for their families during these periods, and rarely have enough to sell. But even on shore they are not safe from Tupta-Wa. One summer 36 years ago, the creature

destroyed an entire port town, plucking people from the streets as they fled.

#### STEAMING SEA

Cold and rocky sea

Temperature: Cold and temperate waters

Hazards: Dangerous creatures, storms

Resources: Fishing, light trade

Many mapmakers argue whether the Steaming Sea is truly a sea or simply a greater part of the Arcadian Ocean.

Some maps name the Ironbound Archipelago and the island

nation of Hermea, but
omit a name for the
body of water. Ice
creeping south
from the Crown
of the World
creates a belt

of ice called Thremyr's Shield that separates the Songil Sea from the

Steaming Sea for most of the year.



Mordant Spire elves operate out of the Steaming Sea, acting as protectors of the Azlanti ruins. While strange and harsh, their presence here helps police threats to the sea and results in relatively safe travels. Although the elves rarely overtly threaten those who travel through their territories, most northern sailors know to give their sleek vessels a wide berth and avoid their island homes. Rumors also tell of standoffs between treasure hunters plumbing half-sunken ruins and the Mordant Spire ships that come upon them seeking to drive them off, confrontations that are said to end with the sea's weed-shrouded assassins rising up from the deep to claim the intruding souls. Of course, human sailors aren't the only ones with tales, and among the Mordant Spire elves pass stories of the Mistmourn, a human-made ship from southern ports that raided elven vessels, taking both their hard-won relics and their crew members' lives. Fourteen elven vessels sank before the pirate ship finally joined them in the depths, but supposedly that briny fate didn't last for long. It's said the Mistmourn, its crew lost to the depths, hunts elves upon the Steaming Sea once more, seeking the plunder it was denied.

### VALASHMAI SEA

Sea of strange creatures and savage storms

Temperature: Cold and temperate waters

Hazards: Deadly creatures, erratic currents, savage storms

Resources: None

Easily the most dangerous waterway in all of Golarion, the Valashmai Sea is wracked with persistent storms and fantastic creatures. Its waters threaten to claim the life of any sailor who dares venture far from the coastline of southern Tian Xia. People crossing this violent body of water must hug the southern coastline of Tian Xia if they hope to pass from the Okaiyo Ocean into the Embaral or Obari Oceans.

Seafarers in southern Tian Xia sometimes venture into the Valashmai to pass through to the lost lands of Sarusan. These skilled sailors, who live their whole lives on the water, charge a hefty rate for such passage. Any vessel straying too far into the churning sea of storms not only risks destruction from wind and waves, but also risks falling victim to a plethora of sea creatures. While many of these beasts are unknown to the civilized world, sailors report a large population of fanatical adaros who relish the stormy weather. Sailors also claim the sea is full of whirlpools—including one so large you cannot see the other edge.

### THE PLANE OF WATER

Gates to the planes, while exceeding rare, appear across Golarion at "thin points" in reality, areas of intense planar influence, and magically opened tears. Beneath the waves, at the bottoms of eternal whirlpools and abysses of crushing depths, open several planar rents leading into the endless oceans of the Plane of Water. The portals typically appear as torrents of water, gushing into or out of nothingness. In many cases, they open near areas of particular interest and danger in the vast planar sea.

Floodships: Travel and trade prove just as important to life on the Plane of Water as they are upon the seas of the Material Plane. Ambitious air-breathing traders long ago discovered ways to reach the submerged markets of the plane, creating what have come to be known as floodships. These floodships employ ornate figureheads permanently imbued with the effects of the submerge ship spell (see page 70). This practice has led to bustling shipping lanes winding in three dimensions through the eternal sea, which in turn encourages whole fleets of subaquatic pirates. The pirate fleets known as the Scaldsoul Covenant, led by the human Auradonna and her ship the Mooncalf, and privateers from the Plane of Fire, commanded by the efreeti Grand Admiral Razinnazul from his vessel, the Burag, pose the greatest threats to interplanar trade.

Fulgurate Marble: This moon-sized sphere of glass drifts through the Plane of Water, a mystery to all who encounter it. Those who look within can clearly see the vast vineyards and silver-gilded cities of a paradisiacal civilization of strangely masked humanoids, yet little more has ever been discerned. There appears to be no entrance into the great marble, attempts to shatter it leave not even a scratch, and magical efforts to intrude fail. For their part, the isolationist residents pay no heed to those outside, being far more concerned with their own eerie leisure and daily visits to great domed temple-spires that flicker with strange electricity.

Jungle of Worms: Corals and sea anemones of incredible size, shade, and splendor cluster in this gigantic, three-dimensional forest of symbiotic creatures. Aimless paths wind through the jungle's weird strata, the twitching boughs of one level forming the floor of the next. Hungry things make up the entire wilderness, and what the tentacled and polyp-covered wildlife can't consume hunts amid the vibrant undergrowth. Numerous luscas (see *Isles of the Shackles*), sea cats (see page 86), and other aquatic megafauna prowl the jungle, but still several tribal merfolk communities make pleasant lives for themselves, hidden from the greater dangers of the vast open sea.

Kelizandrika, the Brackish Empire: The domain of the foul elemental lord Kelizandri, the Brackish Emperor, this is a realm of aquatic ruins and buoyant bits of long-shattered continents, which float through the black



seas like asteroids through space. Upon many of these drifting islands sprawl whole sahuagin kingdoms, which rise, war, and regularly face destruction at the whim of Kelizandri himself and his hordes of elemental slaves. The elemental lord appears as a sea serpent of incredible size, with scales like dark crystal and a maw capable of creating vast whirlpools. He spends decades at a time basking among his servants and riches held in Vorarro, the City of Salt, which floats in the middle depths, an amalgam of colossal buildings of countless styles dragged from disparate Material Plane worlds.

Vialesk: Neutral ground for numerous planar races, the vast trade city of Vialesk climbs the sides of a submerged island of floating coral. This exterior holds populations of marid seers, iku-turso air-takers, and tojanida traders. The city's foundations hold numerous pockets of air, where the undines who rule the city and compose its largest population encourage air-breathers from across the planes to visit and do business.

#### UNDERWATER ADVENTURING

Going on quests and adventures beneath the surface of an ocean or sea can be an exciting but somewhat complicated affair. What follow are some considerations and important tips to keep in mind while exploring the watery depths.

Deep-Sea Equipment: Various apparatuses both mundane and magical exist to make underwater adventuring easier, from the practical and relatively inexpensive bottle of air to the exotic apparatus of the crab. Everburning torches and fishing nets provide light and access to seafood, and sunrods and fishing hooks can prove just as useful beneath crashing waves. A folding boat can be a lifesaver in a pinch, and anyone wearing a cloak of the manta ray would be hard pressed to find a more convenient garment. Helms of underwater action are highly prized among travelers who frequent the ocean floor, as are necklaces of adaptation, pearls of the sirines, and rings of freedom of movement.

Oceanic Magic: Spells are a requirement for most adventurers going underwater for extended periods, and anyone visiting the briny depths should have access to at least a few of the following spells. Water breathing is an obvious choice for anyone who can't breathe water already, while endure elements staves off the icy chill of colder oceans. At extreme depths, the inky blackness of a large body of water can be utterly impenetrable, making light spells invaluable to creatures without darkvision. PCs with access to planar adaptation and touch of the sea (see the Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide) will benefit greatly from these spells, as well as any others that grant swim speeds, and characters in need of a quick escape would do well to prepare teleport or water

walk. The following new spell, submerge ship, also proves helpful for exploring the ocean depths, but its high level means that few explorers will have access to it—and even then, it only allows travel underwater for a few hours per casting at most.

#### SUBMERGE SHIP

School transmutation; Level cleric 7, sorcerer/wizard 7

Casting Time 1 minute

Components V, S, M/DF (a glass marble or piece of soap)

Range touch

Target 1 sailing vessel

Duration 10 minutes/level

Saving Throw Will negates (harmless); Spell Resistance no When this spell is cast upon a vessel, the ship is surrounded by a protective bubble of constantly replenishing, breathable air and sinks beneath the waves. For the duration of the spell, the ship can travel beneath the water as easily as it did above. While under the effects of this spell, the ship has magical propulsion that gives it a maximum speed of 120 feet and an acceleration of 30 feet (see the Skull & Shackles Player's Guide for details). The ship's pilot uses the normal sailing skill to control the ship while under this spell's effects, and can command it to dive and ascend as part of the vessel's normal movement. Despite the magical propulsion, the ship still requires its crew to perform its normal functions.

The spell protects the ship and all aboard from the dangers of drowning and pressure, but not from damage from outside obstacles or creatures. The bubble cannot be used offensively and prevents an affected ship from rising into a space that won't accommodate it (like a sea cave too small to contain it or under another vessel). Creatures can enter or leave the bubble at will, but those outside the sphere cannot be forced inside against their will, the sphere proving substantial enough that such creatures may choose whether to enter or to slip away along its sides. At the end of the spell's duration the bubble pops, causing a ship still underwater at that time to gain the sinking condition. This spell has no effect if cast upon a ship in water that cannot cover the vessel entirely.

Although largely beneficial, this spell can be cast on a ship whose pilot does not want to submerge her vessel. The ship itself uses its Will saving throw to resist this effect.

Underwater Combat: Creatures accustomed to maneuvering on land usually don't fight as well underwater, and must take several factors into consideration when doing battle with aquatic foes. Rules for aquatic terrain as well as underwater combat are detailed on page 432 of the Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook. In addition, creatures that have trouble swimming or that cannot breathe underwater face additional water dangers, as detailed on page 445 of the Core Rulebook.

### Wandering Monsters of the Oceans

The oceans are among the least explored and most dangerous places on Golarion. Presented below are but a few of the most common threats sailors might face. GMs eager to add some variety to their results should feel free to add threats from adjoining seas, or the various vessels detailed in the introductions to bestiaries throughout the Skull & Shackles Adventure Path. While this chart deals with the residents of the different oceans, any of these threats might also wash ashore and terrorize coastlines, or target vessels sailing above the waves.

Antarkos	Arcadian	Embaral	Obari	Okaiyo			
Ocean	Ocean	Ocean	Ocean	Ocean	Creature	Avg. CR	Source
	4-4	-14	01-05	-1	1 enraged hippocampus	1	Bestiary 2 155
_	01-05		a -	01-04	1d4 hanivers	1	Pathfinder #25 76
-	06–18	_	06-10		1d6 merfolk warriors	1	Bestiary 204
2.4	_	-	- 5	05-08	1 ningyo	1	Pathfinder #37 80
_	19–26	01–20	11-23	09–19	1 sahuagin	2	Bestiary 239
01–15	27-30	- 1	24-26	_	1 common shark	2	Bestiary 247
_		21–25	27-30	20-25	1 adaro	3	Bestiary 3 7
_	31-33	_	31-33		1 bunyip	3	Bestiary 2 50
_	34-36	_	-3-	26-31	1 ceratioidi	3	Bestiary 3 50
_	37-39	_	34-36	_	1d8 grindylows	3	Bestiary 2 148
16-25	_	_	37-39	32–36	1 crab swarm	4	Bestiary 50
_	40-43	26-29	40-42	_	1 devilfish	4	Bestiary 2 88
_	44-46		_	_	2d10 gillmen	4	Inner Sea World Guide 310
26–30	_	_	_	_	1 orca dolphin	5	Bestiary 88
_	_	30-36	_	37-41	1 giant moray eel	5	Bestiary 119
31–40	47-49	_			1 globster	5	Bestiary 3 131
_	50-54	_	43-46	_	1d10 skum	5	Bestiary 253
_	55-57	37-41	47-49	42-45	1 saltwater merrow	6	Bestiary 2 189
_	58-59	42-43	50-51	46-47	1 sea scourge	6	Isles of the Shackles 58
_	60-61	_	53-54	_	ı aboleth	7	Bestiary 8
_	_	44-46	55-59	48-51	1d4 cecaelias	7	Bestiary 3 49
41-50	_	47-51	_	52-57	1 huge water elemental	7	Bestiary 126
_	_	_	60-64		1 young brine dragon	7	Bestiary 2 94
_	_	52-56	65–68	58-61	1 giant octopus	8	Bestiary 219
_	_	57-62	69-71	62–65	1 dragon turtle	9	Bestiary 112
_	62-66	63-68	_	66–68	1 giant squid	9	Bestiary 259
_	_	69-74	72-73	_	1 marid genie	9	Bestiary 142
_	67-72	_	74-76	_	1 sargassum fiend	9	Bestiary 3 235
51-60	73-75	75-77		69-71	1 dire shark	9	Bestiary 247
	-	78-83	77-80		1 ghawwas	10	Bestiary 3 87
	_	84-86	_	72-75	1d4 iku-tursos	10	Bestiary 3 153
_	<u> </u>	87-89	81-84	76-79	1 siyokoy	10	Bestiary 2 246
61-70	76-79	90-93	-	80-82	ı whale	10	Bestiary 2 282
_	_	_	85-87	83-85	1 adult imperial sea dragon	12	Bestiary 3 96
_	80-84	- I		0,4	1 clockwork leviathan	12	Bestiary 3 55
_	85-88	<u> </u>	88-91	86-88	1 sea serpent	12	Bestiary 244
_		94-95	92-93	9 6-09	1 charybdis	13	Bestiary 2 56
71-80	89-92	- /	B = 0'	89-91	1 shipwrecker crab	13	Bestiary 3 60
81-90	93-94		_	09	1 great white whale	14	Bestiary 2 282
91-99		96-97	94-95	92-95	1 scylla	16	Bestiary 2 241
- 4	95-96	98-99	96-97	0 _ 0	1 lusca	17	Isles of the Shackles 53
- 0	97-99	100	98-99	96-99	1 kraken	18	Bestiary 184
	100		100	100	1 deep sea serpent	19	Bestiary 3 240