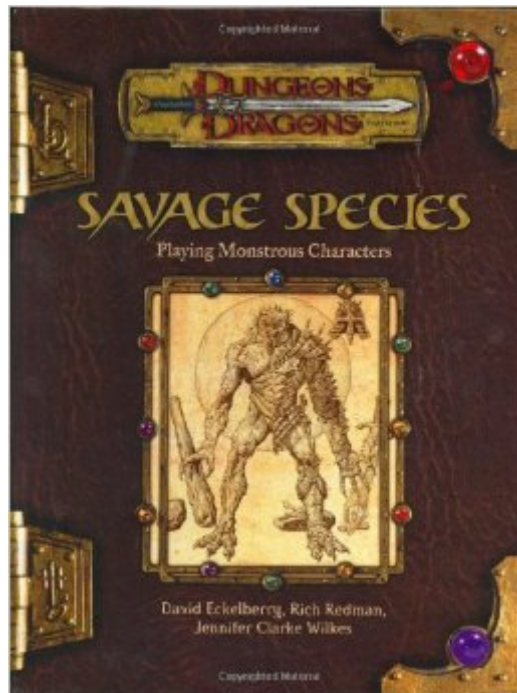


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Savage Species: Playing Monstrous Characters (Dungeons & Dragons Supplement)



Synopsis

A New Breed of Adventurer Whether wondrous or wicked, some monsters have a calling that reaches beyond the ordinary existence of their kind. Traveling alongside other intrepid characters, these heroic creatures carve their places in legend with sword, spell, tooth, and claw. This supplement for the D&D game provides everything you need to play a monster as a character or to make the monsters your heroes fight even more formidable. Inside are over 50 all-new monster classes that show how creatures develop their characteristics and abilities as they gain levels. Along with new prestige classes and monster templates, *Savage Species* also features new feats, spells, magic items, and more. To use this supplement, a Dungeon Master also needs the *Player's Handbook*, the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and the *Monster Manual*. A player needs only the *Player's Handbook* and the *Monster Manual*.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

And that's something you'll never, ever have heard a PC utter before, but you might now. *Savage Species* is, as the notes say, the D&D 3e sourcebook on playing monster characters. Not necessarily hideously evil psychopaths (that's where *Book of Vile Darkness* comes in), but non-standard races...anything from the bugbear up to a stone giant. Monster PCs have two things to concern themselves about...hit dice (i.e. how many hit dice they naturally start with) and level adjustment (having abilities that are worth a class level or two on their own). For example, our umber hulk friend has eight hit dice and a level adjustment of +6, for an ECL of 14...so an umber hulk is theoretically equivalent to a 14th-level *Player's Handbook* character. So, the authors go

through and list a chart of almost every existing monster in the game that has an ECL of 20 or below, along with official level adjustments for templates (lycanthrope, celestial, half-dragon, etc.) They also discuss letting a player start as a first-level monster, which must get to its base statistics before multiclassing...there's no using a minotaur's base stats at 1 HD, because they don't get them until they reach their final hit die. There's a 52-page appendix of sample monsters' ECL broken out into class levels, which is fairly nice. You'll also find feats suited to monsters, new prestige classes, new gear, a lot of new templates (my favorite's Gelatinous...a semi-ooze creature), and new and/or reprinted creatures, including a long list of anthropomorphic races, such as dog-men and wolverine-people, the desmodu and loxo from MM2, and the half-ogre starting race. There are also rules for transforming characters between races and adding templates. Something like this has been needed for a long time. Not only does it follow in the footsteps of AD&D2's Complete Book of Humanoids, but it answers rules questions that have popped up ever since the first PC got infected by lycanthropy. Some creatures will be less-playable than others, simply because their level adjustment is so high that they won't have the hit points to survive combat at their ECL. And there are a few questions, too...for dragons, do they require XP to gain hit dice, since they grow by aging? After all, 10 years can go by in a game fairly quickly, and that young dragon can become a juvenile and get stat and HD bonuses...This is a great supplement, and I highly recommend it. It's probably most useful if you're going to start a new game, but it'll be useful for everybody at some point.

I picked *Savage Species* up the first day it hit the shelves of my local bookstore. I've been wanting to throw monster characters into my campaign but all the PCs are under level 5 so my options for PC monsters are kind of limited. This book has provided a way for me to throw a child to that fire elemental they just killed without a thought---a mere innocent---into the game as an NPC that they somehow have to deal with. (Hopefully not by killing it) More importantly, if they so choose, they can adventure alongside a fire elemental as it grows into its powers. The book itself is well organized and has a little of everything and a lot of some things. For DMs who don't want to go through the work of interpolating an ECL 15 Mind Flayer into fifteen separate levels, each acquired at standard experience point intervals, or even *determine* the ECL for a Mind Flayer, you don't have to. Many monster races have entire monster class levels separated for you. For those that don't, there are guidelines both for determining level adjustments and breaking up effective levels into actual levels, i.e. "W00t, I'm now a level six Drider! I get spell resistance!" There's a lot of stuff in this book. New spells (some good for non-monster PCs, too), new equipment (Including the Gloves of Man, so your paws/tentacles can grip those pesky crossbows or lock picks), new feats (Area Attack lets your

colossal Mountain Giant smack a whole bunch of PCs when he swings a stone column), new prestige classes (Illithid Savant, for...well...eating brains for self-improvement), new templates (The illustration for the example Gelatinous Bear is great) and, of course, more. A lot of people are highly interested in the artwork in Dungeons & Dragons books, and if that's what they want out of the book, they'll be disappointed. I personally don't need illustrations to accompany descriptions for how an Ogre Mage advances to ECL 12 because I already know what they look like. This book is almost devoid of reprinted material, but much of it is being presented in ways far and beyond what Monster Manual I (or II) ever planned. This small paradox makes a great number of illustrations unnecessary relative to most books with so much new material. Drawings of all the weird weapons and equipment are comparable to those in the Player's Guide and other books. It's really pretty irrelevant, though, because if you took the pictures out of the second half of the book it would still be wonderful, if rather drab. One of the more reassuring touches is a tiny list at the beginning of the book that mentions a few changes from Monster Manual I that are/will also be in the revised Monster Manual I. No one wants a book that will be obsolete in just a few months. Savage Species is a great book, and has almost everything you could possibly want in it. What it doesn't have, it offers guidelines for working out on your own. Dungeon Masters who spend fifteen hours planning sessions will be able to do anything they want, but if you just want to create a poor little orphaned fire elemental, you can do it as quickly as any other NPC. As a player's book, the pre-made monster classes will help provide some variety, even if the game is starting from level one. Pre-made=easier DM approval, too. Of course, *buying* your DM the book would help your case, but I would *never* condone such bribery...Just...keep the fire elemental outta my bar, will ya?

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