

This document contains rules for including animal companions in to DCC.



Animal Companions

Description: Animal companions are a familiar trope in fantasy fiction, and vary wildly in shape, size and character. This article contains my attempt to create a set of general guidelines for the creation of animal companions for DCC, along with some quick start rules for creating such companions on the fly. Summoned animals and monsters are distinctly impermanent and expendable, and wizard's familiars are far too fragile to bravely aid their masters in combat. The rules below are intended for more combative companions.

Rather than introducing animal companions as a class feature, these rules assume that characters of any class may gain an animal companion during their adventures, and indeed searching for such a special friend is an excellent goal to quest for. Accordingly, the rules below leave much to the Judge's discretion, so that situational specifics can be easily taken into account.

Animal companion types: Much of these rules depend on what the companion actually is, for a panther and a horse are very different creatures from a hellhound. The tables below (Tables A, B and C) contain examples for potential companions, and Judges are encouraged to come up with their own creatures according to the guidelines set here.

Animal companions and their masters: For whatever reason, animal companions are linked to their masters, follow and obey them according to their temperament. If treated right, animal companions regard their masters as trusted friends, and will attempt to follow their commands to the best of their ability.

Most animal companions are incapable of communicating in any language but that of their species, and cannot "talk" with their master as such (unless of course the master takes the time to learn the language of their companion). Basic communication is however assumed to be possible, and animal companions are usually exceptionally intelligent members of their species. Judges may require Intelligence or Personality rolls to communicate with or to command animal companions, but it should be generally assumed that animal companions are glad to assist their masters.

Companion attributes and abilities¹: Regardless of type, an animal companion has certain defined attributes, similar to a player character or a monster. These attributes are determined based on the type of companion in question, and are affected by the level of their master.

Hit die: An animal companion's hit die ranges between d4 to d12, depending on its type. Larger, heavier or more predatory companions have a higher hit die, and so on. The number of hit dice is equal to its master's LVL - 1 (or 1, whichever is higher).

Initiative bonus: An animal companions initiative bonus is equal to its Ref save (see *Saving throws* below).

Attacks: An animal companions attacks are dependent on its type. An animal companion's attack bonus increases by +1 each time it gains a hit die. Its attack damage similarly increases by +1 until the companion's HD reaches 5, after which the damage stops increasing as the creature's natural limits have been reached. Some animal companions may have optional special attack types in addition to their basic natural attacks, any such attacks are also subject to these general rules.

Armor class: An animal companion's armor class depends on their type. It does not increase naturally, but of course the master may be able to acquire custom armor for their friend.

Action dice: Animal companions have 1d20 action dice. They gain a second 1d16 action die upon growing to 4 HD, and this secondary action die is increased to 1d20 when the animal companion reaches 8 HD. Animal companions may use their action dice for attacks and special abilities.

Movement: Animal companions have movement abilities depending on their type.

Special abilities: Animals have various abilities, attacks and skills, and these are represented by the companions special abilities. They vary based on the animal in question. An animal companion gains some abilities based on its type when it is generated, and may additionally gain new abilities or learn new tricks as it grows. An animal companion gains a new special ability when it reaches 3, 6 and 9 HD;

¹ **A note on attributes:** Generally, it is unnecessary to generate full statlines for animal companions, and this is left up to Judge's discretion. Based on the guidelines for familiars set on pg. 316 of the DCC rulebook, animal companions are intelligent members of their species, and as such their INT score can be rolled as 1d4+3 (to a rough median of 5).

these new abilities should be determined based on the animal's type and its master's choices, and are ultimately left to Judge's discretion. Any abilities granting a skill (such as tracking or sneak) add the companion's HD to the roll bonus listed below. Note that most if not all animals have better senses than humans, and most decisions related to these are left up to the Judge's discretion; however, the below descriptions have related abilities noted where appropriate (*danger sense, tracking and predator senses* in particular).

Languages: Most animal companions simply speak the language of their species, although some smarter creatures (and certainly some of the monstrous companions) may learn to speak alignment tongues or even common. Treat learning additional languages as new special abilities as described above.

Saving throws: An animal companion's saving throws depend on its type. As a guideline, an animal companion has one strong save, one mediocre save and one weak save. Determine the values for these as HD + 3, HD + 0 and HD - 2, so that all saves are a minimum of 0.

Crits & fumbles: Use the appropriate die size and table for monsters (DCC rulebook pg. 385) to determine animal companion critical abilities. Fumble dies are determined based on the armor worn (d4 for unarmored).

Alignment: An animal companion's alignment often mirrors that of its master, but exceptions may be allowed at Judge's discretion.

Personality: All companions should have their personality described with a few suitable keywords, use Table 7-6 (DCC rulebook pg. 319) for aid and reference.

Types of animal companions: The below tables (Tables A, B and C) contain examples for possible animal companions, and can be used to generate companions quickly. Beast-type companions are various natural animals, both domesticated and wild. Predator-types are natural creatures that are generally dangerous to humans. Monster-type companions are magical creatures, and winning such a creature to be a companion is surely a rare occurrence indeed. Also, some of the animals listed here are giant or dire versions of the animal in question to increase the variety of animals to better suit the fantasy worlds of DCC and to better fit the utility of animal companions as combat assistants instead of simple pets.

It is up to the Judge whether animal companions physically grow as their HD increases, or whether their development simply represents increased skill and ability. Similarly, it is entirely up to the Judge to decide what abilities animals can learn as they develop alongside their masters (for example, a boar might learn to act as a mount eventually, whereas it is unlikely that an owl will ever learn such a skill).

The special abilities listed here are examples, and are generally self-explanatory. Additional notes have been inserted where appropriate, and Judges are encouraged to modify these notes as well as invent more skills and abilities.

Table A: Beast companions

D16	Beast
1	Ape: <i>HD:</i> d6; <i>Atk:</i> punch +2 (1d4+1); <i>AC:</i> 11; <i>MV:</i> 30' or climb 30'. <i>Special:</i> opposable thumbs (can use tools & simple weapons); sign language (can communicate with master); clever (can learn new skill on every second HD gain).
2	Badger: <i>HD:</i> d6; <i>Atk:</i> claws +4 (2d4); <i>AC:</i> 13; <i>MV:</i> 40' or burrow 20'. <i>Special:</i> tracking +2; danger sense +1; stubborn (roll Will saves on +1d)
3	Boar: <i>HD:</i> d10; <i>Atk:</i> gore +2 (2d4) or charge +6 (4d4, see special); <i>AC:</i> 14; <i>MV:</i> 40'. <i>Special:</i> charge attack (extra damage if able to run 30'); tracking +2.
4	Cormorant: <i>HD:</i> d6; <i>Atk:</i> dive +1 (1d4, see special) or peck +1 (1d3); <i>AC:</i> 15; <i>MV:</i> 10' or fly 50'. <i>Special:</i> perception +3; danger sense +2; dive attack (can dive and attack, staying out of reach of enemies).
5	Elk: <i>HD:</i> d8; <i>Atk:</i> gore +1 (1d8) or charge +4 (2d8, see special); <i>AC:</i> 14; <i>MV:</i> 60'. <i>Special:</i> charge attack (extra damage if able to run 30'); danger sense +6.
6	Emu: <i>HD:</i> d6; <i>Atk:</i> claw +3 (1d5+1); <i>AC:</i> 14; <i>MV:</i> 60'. <i>Special:</i> danger sense +4; stubborn (roll Will saves on +1d); aggressive (extra 1d14 action die for attacks).
7	Fox: <i>HD:</i> d4; <i>Atk:</i> bite +3 (1d4+1); <i>AC:</i> 15; <i>MV:</i> 40'. <i>Special:</i> sneak +2; tracking +2; danger sense +2; predator senses (infravision, great hearing and sense of smell).
8	Giant gecko: <i>HD:</i> d4; <i>Atk:</i> bite +1 (1d4) or tongue whip (disarm, see special); <i>AC:</i> 14; <i>MV:</i> 50' or climb 50'. <i>Special:</i> tracking +1; danger sense +4; hide +10; tongue whip (disarming attack, roll Ref save vs. Attack roll or disarmed).
9	Giant turtle: <i>HD:</i> d6; <i>Atk:</i> bite +1 (1d4+1); <i>AC:</i> 17; <i>MV:</i> 20' or swim & dive 40'. <i>Special:</i> danger sense +1; stubborn (roll Will saves on +1d), tough (roll Fort saves on +1d); great swimmer (can aid others in water).
10	Mule: <i>HD:</i> d8; <i>Atk:</i> kick +1 (2d4); <i>AC:</i> 12; <i>MV:</i> 40'. <i>Special:</i> stubborn (roll Will saves on +1d); haul (can carry extra weight); danger sense +4.
11	Horse: <i>HD:</i> d8; <i>Atk:</i> hoof +2 (1d4+1); <i>AC:</i> 14; <i>MV:</i> 60'. <i>Special:</i> mount (can carry a rider); danger sense +1.
12	Moose: <i>HD:</i> d12; <i>Atk:</i> trample +3 (2d4) or charge +6 (2d8, see special); <i>AC:</i> 15; <i>MV:</i> 60'. <i>Special:</i> charge attack (extra damage if able to run 30'); danger sense +2; stubborn (rolls Will saves on +1d).
13	Ocelot: <i>HD:</i> d4; <i>Atk:</i> bite +4 (1d4+1); <i>AC:</i> 15; <i>MV:</i> 40'. <i>Special:</i> sneak +4; tracking +1; predator senses (infravision, great hearing and sense of smell).
14	Otter: <i>HD:</i> d4; <i>Atk:</i> bite +1 (1d4+1); <i>AC:</i> 13; <i>MV:</i> 40' or swim & dive 40'. <i>Special:</i> tracking +2; danger sense +1; predator senses (infravision, great hearing and sense of smell).
15	Parrot: <i>HD:</i> d4; <i>Atk:</i> dive (1d4, see special) or peck +2 (1d3+1); <i>AC:</i> 14; <i>MV:</i> 10' or fly 40'. <i>Special:</i> danger sense +1, lucky (has 3 points of regenerating LCK to spend for master); chatty (speaks some Common); clever (can learn new skill on every second HD gain).
16	Warhorse: <i>HD:</i> d8; <i>Atk:</i> hoof +2 (1d4+1); <i>AC:</i> 14; <i>MV:</i> 60'. <i>Special:</i> mount (can carry a rider); war trained (does not spook easily); danger sense +2.

Table B: Predator companions

D16	Predator
1	Alligator: HD: d10; Atk: bite +4 (1d10+1) or deathroll (1d8+1 and grapple, see special); AC: 14; MV: 50' or swim & dive 30'. <i>Special:</i> deathroll attack (on successful attack grapples target, causes +1d8 damage on successful grapple); predator senses (infravision, great hearing and sense of smell); great swimmer (can aid others in water); tracking +2.
2	Bear: HD: d12; Atk: rend +4 (1d10+1); AC: 13; MV: 50'. <i>Special:</i> tracking +2; predator senses (infravision, great hearing and sense of smell); tough (roll Fort saves on +1d).
3	Boa snake: HD: d8; Atk: bite & constrict (1d6 + grapple, see special); AC: 18; MV: 30'. <i>Special:</i> constrict attack (on successful attack grapples target, causes +1d6 automatic damage each round while grappling); predator senses (infravision, great hearing and sense of smell); tracking +4.
4	Cougar: HD: d8; Atk: claws +4 (1d6+1) or pounce +6 (2d6+2, see special); AC: 15; MV: 50'. <i>Special:</i> sneak +4; tracking +2; pounce attack (bonus damage if backstabbing); predator senses (infravision, great hearing and sense of smell).
5	Eagle: HD: d6; Atk: dive +4 (2d4, see special) or peck +2 (1d3); AC: 16; MV: 10' or fly 60'. <i>Special:</i> perception +6; dive attack (can dive and attack, staying out of reach of enemies).
6	Hyena: HD: d8; Atk: bite +3 (1d8+1); AC: 12; MV: 40'. <i>Special:</i> tracking +4; predator senses (infravision, great hearing and sense of smell); clever (can learn new skill on every second HD gain).
7	Jackal: HD: d6; Atk: bite +3 (1d6); AC: 13; MV: 40'. <i>Special:</i> tracking +6; danger sense +1; predator senses (infravision, great hearing and sense of smell); clever (can learn new skill on every second HD gain).
8	Jaguar: HD: d6; Atk: claws +2 (1d5+1) or pounce +4 (2d5+2, see special); AC: 16; MV: 50' or 20' swim. <i>Special:</i> sneak +6; tracking +3; pounce attack (bonus damage if backstabbing); predator senses (infravision, great hearing and sense of smell).
9	Lynx: HD: d4; Atk: claws +4 (1d4+1) or pounce +6 (2d8+2, see special); AC: 15; MV: 50'. <i>Special:</i> sneak +6; tracking +6; danger sense +3; pounce attack (bonus damage if backstabbing); predator senses (infravision, great hearing and sense of smell); cold resistant (cold damage reduced 50%).
10	Monitor lizard: HD: d8; Atk: poison bite +2 (d6+1 and poison, see special); AC: 14; MV: 30'. <i>Special:</i> poison attack (DC 12+HD Fort save or +d6 damage); predator senses (infravision, great hearing and sense of smell); tracking +1.
11	Owl: HD: d5; Atk: dive +4 (2d4, see special), peck +2 (1d3) or ambush dive +6 (3d4, see special); AC: 16; MV: 10' or fly 50'. <i>Special:</i> perception +6; tracking +4, dive attack (can dive and attack, staying out of reach of enemies); ambush dive (as dive, additional damage if backstabbing); predator senses (infravision, great hearing and sense of smell).
12	Terror moa: HD: d10; Atk: claw +4 (1d8+1); AC: 14; MV: 60'. <i>Special:</i> aggressive (extra 1d14 action die for attacks); predator senses (infravision, great hearing and sense of smell).
13	Tiger: HD: d10; Atk: claws +4 (1d8+1) or pounce +4 (2d8+2, see special); AC: 14; MV: 50'. <i>Special:</i> sneak +4; tracking +4; pounce attack (bonus damage if backstabbing); predator senses (infravision, great hearing and sense of smell).
14	Vulture: HD: d6; Atk: dive +1 (1d4, see special) or peck +2 (1d5); AC: 15; MV: 10' or fly 50'. <i>Special:</i> perception +4; danger sense +3; dive attack (can dive and attack, staying out of reach of enemies).
15	Wolf: HD: d6; Atk: bite +2 (1d6+1); AC: 12; MV: 40'. <i>Special:</i> tracking +8; predator senses (infravision, great hearing and sense of smell); clever (can learn new skill on every second HD gain).
16	Wolverine: HD: d8; Atk: claws +4 (1d5+1); AC: 13; MV: 40'. <i>Special:</i> tracking +5; predator senses (infravision, great hearing and sense of smell); aggressive (has an extra 1d14 action die for attacks).

Table C: Monster companions

D16	Monster
1	Basilisk <i>HD:</i> d8; <i>Atk:</i> bite +2 (d10) or petrifying gaze (see special); <i>AC:</i> 16; <i>MV:</i> 40'. <i>Special:</i> petrifying gaze (DC 14 + HD Will save or paralyzed for 2d6 turns); predator senses (infravision, great hearing and sense of smell); tracking +1.
2	Chimera <i>HD:</i> d8; <i>Atk:</i> bite/claw/gore +4 (2d5) or fire breath +6 (1d10, see special); <i>AC:</i> 16; <i>MV:</i> 60'. <i>Special:</i> fire breath (breath attack, 60' cone 1d10 damage and set alight 50 %, HD/day); stubborn (rolls Will saves on +1d).
3	Cockatrice ; <i>HD:</i> d8; <i>Atk:</i> petrifying peck +4 (1d4 + petrification, see special); <i>AC:</i> 13; <i>MV:</i> 20' or fly 20'. <i>Special:</i> petrifying attack (DC 13+HD Will save or turned to stone); talky (speaks Common and Demonic).
4	Deceiver cat <i>HD:</i> d8; <i>Atk:</i> tentacle +3 (1d8+1) or pounce +6 (4d4, see special); <i>AC:</i> 18; <i>MV:</i> 60'. <i>Special:</i> pounce attack (bonus damage if backstabbing); danger sense +2; tracking +2; predator senses (infravision, great hearing and sense of smell); deceiving aura (DC 18 Will save or attacks miss).
5	Demon snake <i>HD:</i> d10; <i>Atk:</i> bite +4 (1d12) or horn stab +4 (1d10 + bleed); <i>AC:</i> 19; <i>MV:</i> 40'. <i>Special:</i> horn attack (DC 14+HD or 1d6 bleed damage until saved); talky (speaks Infernal); predator senses (infravision, great hearing and sense of smell); immune to fire.
6	Dragonling <i>HD:</i> d10; <i>Atk:</i> bite +2 (1d8) or elemental breath +6 (1d8, see special); <i>AC:</i> 15; <i>MV:</i> 50' or fly 50'. <i>Special:</i> elemental breath (breath weapon, elemental damage, HD/day); talky (speaks alignment tongue); predator senses (infravision, great hearing and sense of smell); clever (can learn new skill on every second HD gain).
7	Giant spider <i>HD:</i> d6; <i>Atk:</i> bite +3 (2d4) or web +6 (grapple, see special); <i>AC:</i> 14; <i>MV:</i> 50' or climb 50'. <i>Special:</i> web attack (grapple attack at range of 30', target can only struggle until free); predator senses (infravision, great hearing and sense of smell).
8	Griffon <i>HD:</i> d10; <i>Atk:</i> bite +2 (1d12) or dive +6 (2d8, see special); <i>AC:</i> 17; <i>MV:</i> 40' or 80' fly. <i>Special:</i> dive attack (can dive and attack, staying out of reach of enemies); mount (can carry a rider); perception +4.
9	Hellhound <i>HD:</i> d10; <i>Atk:</i> bite +4 (1d8+1); <i>AC:</i> 13; <i>MV:</i> 40'. <i>Special:</i> tracking +6; predator senses (infravision, great hearing and sense of smell); very aggressive (has two extra 1d14 action dice for attacks).
10	Jackalope <i>HD:</i> d4; <i>Atk:</i> gore +3 (1d+1) or impale +6 (2d6 + bleed, see special); <i>AC:</i> 16; <i>MV:</i> 40'. <i>Special:</i> impaling attack (extra damage if able to leap 10'); danger sense +8; illusory (50% physical damage resisted).
11	Owlbear <i>HD:</i> d10; <i>Atk:</i> beak +3 (1d6+2) or rend +4 (2d4 + bleed, see special); <i>AC:</i> 17; <i>MV:</i> 40' or climb 20'. <i>Special:</i> rend attack (DC 10+HD Fort save or 1d4 bleed each rnd); magic resistance (25 %); predator senses (infravision, great hearing and sense of smell).
12	Pegasus <i>HD:</i> d8; <i>Atk:</i> hoof +2 (1d6) or dive +4 (2d6, see special); <i>AC:</i> 15; <i>MV:</i> 60' or 60' fly. <i>Special:</i> mount (can carry a rider); magic resistant (25% resistance to all magic); dive attack (can dive and attack, staying out of reach of enemies).
13	Phoenix <i>HD:</i> d4; <i>Atk:</i> dive +2 (2d4) or flame spout +5 (1d6 + fire, see special); <i>AC:</i> 16; <i>MV:</i> 10' or fly 50'. <i>Special:</i> dive attack (can dive and attack, staying out of reach of enemies); flame attack (10' ray attack, 1d6 + set alight), talky (speaks alignment tongue); continuous (reverts back to egg upon death).
14	Roc <i>HD:</i> d10; <i>Atk:</i> dive +6 (2d8, see special) or peck +6 (1d8); <i>AC:</i> 14; <i>MV:</i> 30' or fly 80'. <i>Special:</i> perception +6; dive attack (can dive and attack, staying out of reach of enemies).
15	Unicorn <i>HD:</i> d8; <i>Atk:</i> horn stab +2 (1d8+1 and bleed, see special); <i>AC:</i> 14; <i>MV:</i> 60'. <i>Special:</i> mount (can carry a rider); horn attack (DC 12+HD For save or bleed +1d6 damage until saved); danger sense +3; magic resistant (75% resistance to all magic); stubborn (roll Will saves on +1d).
16	Winter wolf <i>HD:</i> d8; <i>Atk:</i> bite +3 (1d8+1) or freezing breath (see special); <i>AC:</i> 14; <i>MV:</i> 40'. <i>Special:</i> tracking +8; predator senses (infravision, great hearing and sense of smell); freezing attack (breath weapon 10' cone, 1d8 cold damage and reduce action dice by -1d for 1d6 turns, HD/day).

Animal companions in combat: Generally, animal companions act on the initiative of their master. Use the companions own initiative bonus when acting alone. The companion may use their action dice on attacks or other actions to help their master, and it is assumed that unless otherwise commanded, the companion acts to defend their master.

Animal companions, healing and bleeding out: The main difference between animal companions and summoned animals, monsters or familiars is that animal companions are more staunch and protected by a portion of the same fate that makes their masters exceptional.

Animal companions can be healed with magic (such as the cleric's lay on hands ability) and they are subject to the rules of bleeding out (DCC rulebook pg. 93) so that their number of HD equals the number of rounds they have before they permanently die.

Should an animal companion be permanently killed, the only way to save them is for their master to spend a number of Luck points equal to the companion's HD to revive them (the general terms for recovering the body must still be fulfilled, see DCC rulebook pg. 93).

Any animal companion who survives bleeding out (either by being healed or by recovering the body) suffers a permanent injury. Roll on the below table (Table D) for consequences of permanent injury on an animal companion. Healing some of these permanent injuries may be possible with magic or other means at Judge's discretion.

Table D: Animal companion injuries	
D6	Effect
1	Hampered: One of the companion's special abilities (roll at random if need be) is reduced by -1d3 points (in the case of languages or other abilities apply the penalty approximately).
2	Hamstringed: The companion's mobility is permanently damaged (roll at random in case of multiple types of movement), reduce their speed by -5'.
3	Hobbled: The companion's combat capability is permanently reduced by -1d3 (both attack bonus and damage are reduced, determine attack type at random if need be).
4	Handicapped: For whatever reason, the companion permanently loses one of their special abilities (roll at random if need be). They may be able to relearn the ability at Judge's discretion.
5	Hindered: The companion is permanently scarred and loses 1d3 HP. This damage is incurable and may kill the creature.
6	Held back: The companion is grievously injured and loses 1 HD permanently. This reduces their HP (roll HD for reduction) and all of the abilities determined through HD are reduced appropriately.