

New Old Monsters - The Newtling

(*Andrew Wright*)

The lands of Legend are wide and vast, and much lore has been published about them and their many diverse denizens. But, occasionally, in the footnotes and asides, we find small fragments concerning obscure creatures otherwise ignored. Here's another one!

Deep in the reedy depths of the Trackless Ooze lurk the loathsome Newtlings, weird amphibious things with vaguely humanoid features that grow to the size of a large dog. They have a long-limbed upper body, whilst below the waist they have a flattened, powerful tail that enables them to swim through the mud and water of the Ooze. Newtling heads are wide and batrachian, with a vaguely comical expression and mottled brown in colour like the rest of their bodies. To allow the creature to suck in their diet of river-weed, their rubbery lips are continually parted as they swim (or thrash) along. Newtlings are not entirely defenseless, as their paws contain sharp retractile claws.

Attitudes to Newtlings vary. The barbarians, who live in stilted reed-huts along the inland waterways that cobweb the Trackless Ooze, call these creatures 'Mud Thrashers' and hunt them mercilessly for their tender flesh and leathery hide (with which they craft clothing). Some southern scholars of Selentium, however, sent to investigate weird things on the fringes of the Empire, have recognized that Newtlings are intelligent and communicate in a language of burbled murmurings that can be interpreted with the aid of sorcery. Furthermore, in a landmark dissection, the sage Erasmus of Tamor demonstrated that Newtling skeletal and muscular anatomy is similar to that of the Swamp Folk of Albion and Western Legend's fens and bogs.

Roughly one in ten Newtlings are a golden-yellow in colour, and imbued with magical power that it can use once per day. Roll 1d6 on the table below to determine what this power is.

1. Rain (Dragon Warriors p101)
2. Create Bog (Dragon Warriors p96)
3. Roots (Dragon Warriors p96)
4. Suspended Animation (Dragon Warriors p90)
5. Raise Fog (Dragon Warriors p88)
6. Camouflage (Dragon Warriors p107)

These special creatures are venerated as 'Swamp-Talkers' by their fellows and considered to be intermediaries between the Newtlings and the Cold Mother, a primordial deity who governs all who live within the wetlands. Newtlings will fight to the death to defend a Swamp-Talker, as many would-be-hunters have found to their cost...

| NEWTLING | | | RE 1 |
|------------------------|-----|----------------------|---------------------------|
| ATTACK | 10 | Claws (d4, 4) | |
| DEFENCE | 4 | None (AF 0) | |
| MAGICAL ATTACK | N/A | Magic Points | None |
| MAGICAL DEFENCE | 3 | Health Points | 1d6 +2 |
| EVASION | 4 | Movement | 10m (15m); Swimming (15m) |
| STEALTH | 16 | PERCEPTION | 6 (Normal) |

The Newtling originally appeared in the Dragon Warriors rulebook (pp 157-8). For a non-canon alternative, the Marshlings, from Golden Dragon Book 6, The Castle of Lost Souls, are similar.

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