



# Chapter 1: Races



The world of the UnderDeep brings an entirely new set of races into the AD&D game realm. If you are familiar with the game, you will probably recognize some of them from the pages of the *Monstrous Compendiums*. Other races are entirely new, created specifically for the *Fathoms* setting.

Along with the new PC races comes new skills and abilities. For those races who already existed in the standard AD&D game, the abilities of these species have been converted over to the player characters as best possible. Some abilities have been added from legend and mythology (such as the charming song of the merfolk), while others have been expanded upon from limited information available in the *Monstrous Compendiums* (such as the enhanced memory of the Hai Nu).

In the *Fathoms: Aquatic Adventures* setting, there are some skills and innate powers that the PC's acquire upon reaching a certain level. Examples these skills are triton's conch ability as well as the locathan's bonding with a giant eel. These abilities surface once the player character reaches that level, regardless of what character class they belong to.

Another new ability unique to the *Fathoms* setting is the *animal bond*. This is the unique relationship that the races have with specific sea creatures. This bond automatically gives that race the ability to speak the animal's language, as well as a +8 reaction adjustment. Creatures that have a bond with an aquatic race are always found in and around that race's villages and cities. They will almost always help each other when a need arises. Members of a PC race should always treat a species they are bonded to with respect and caring.

## Aquatic Elves

One of the most common races in the UnderDeep, aquatic elves are very similar to their surface cousins. Their skin is typically silver-green, matching the seaweed near their territory. Some possess a bluish tinge to their skin, although this is quite rare. Aquatic elves' hair complements their skin and is also green or blue-green. The overall effect is one that makes them difficult to discern underwater, especially near kelp beds. Because of

their coloring, they gain the typical elven ability to camouflage themselves in their natural environment.

Aquatic elves have gills similar to those found in fish through which they extract oxygen. They can also survive out of water for a short time by breathing air.

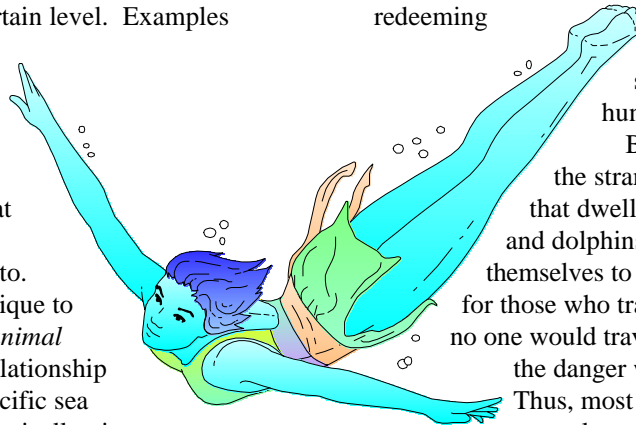
Although their lives seem spent in frivolous activity, these elves play an important role in the underwater ecology: They serve to keep the seas safer for inhabitants. Sea elves keep the devastation of such creatures as sahuagin and ixitxachitl to a minimum. The sahuagin are to the aquatic elves what orcs are to land elves.

Sea elves have a strong dislike of sharks. Although they accept them as natural part of the ecological cycle, elves dislike any creature that is rapacious and cruel. In fact, any beast that the sahuagin identify with closely (as they do with sharks) is considered to have few redeeming qualities to an elf. Since sharks relish the taste of sea elf, the elves organize hunts against them.

Because land dwellers fear the strange and terrible monsters that dwell in the sea, the aquatic elves and dolphins have taken it upon themselves to keep at least some of it safe for those who travel on it. In many realms, no one would travel on the sea otherwise, for the danger would be far too great. Thus, most seaside communities severely punish those who incur the wrath of sea elves. Reprisal for their murder is always swift and brutal; the elves do not tolerate the killing of either brethren or friend.

Although they may survive on land, aquatic elves prefer not to do so, for it causes them immense pain. They can walk on land for a number of days equal to their initial Constitution score. As they endure increasing pain as time spent out of water wears on, their ability scores and proficiencies are affected. Every two days, their physical ability scores (Strength, Dexterity, Constitution) decrease by 1 point until the elves return to water. If any physical score reaches 0, the elf dies.

In salt water, the sea elf's attributes return to normal within 15 minutes. In fresh water, an elf merely stops losing his or her scores; they do not revert to normal until the elf enters salt water. The time spent in fresh water does not count against time





# Chapter 1: Races



away from the sea, and these elves may dwell in fresh water indefinitely. If they enter fresh water before their attributes are to decrease again, the water acts as a revitalizing force; the suffering period begins anew when they emerge from water.

Obviously, the sea elves do not lightly leave the sanctuary of their oceans. The harsh environment of the surface world discourages any sea elf who foolishly wishes to leave the soothing waves. This does not mean that the sea elves have no dealings with those who breathe air. Any elves (excepting drow) are welcome to visit the land of the sea elves, and they will be greeted royally. Trade delegations are common between land and sea elves, although it is usually the land elves who must travel, for they have magicks more suited for the foreign environment of water.

Sea elves commonly travel with elven ships, defending those aboard from attacks beneath the waves. Since they are accomplished at scuttling the ships of evil humans and humanoids, aquatic elves are feared by pirates and those who would prey on elven craft.

Aquatic elves often consort with dolphins and hippocampi, and the latter are bred as mounts. Dolphins and sea elves are usually on the best of terms and easily befriend one another. They serve each other's needs, giving mutual protection and aid.

Aquatic elf society consists mainly of those sea elves who dwell in a five-mile area. There is a titular king or queen to whom they pay homage, but he has no real power over daily life. Sea elves live as they please, coming together under a ruler only in times of undersea emergency or great trouble for the world in general. The lords and ladies of the ocean cities do little other than escort visitors and conduct the trade that aquatic elves find so enjoyable. The rest of the population consists of artists, hunters, and farmers, all concerned with making survival possible and life pleasant for the rest of the community.

These elves have cities of living coral, supplemented with glittering crystal domes. Aquatic elves are very close friends with most quirden, and these gnomes can often be found living in their cities as well.

**Natural armor class:** 9

**Languages:** sea common, aquatic elvish, kuo-toa, sahuagin, siren, surface common

**Bonus proficiencies:** none

**Movement:** swimming 15, land 9

**Animal bond:** dolphins

**Senses:** standard vision, aquatic infravision 360'

**Special abilities:**

- Aquatic elves have a 90% resistance to *sleep* and all *charm*-type spells.
- Like their surface-dwelling cousins, aquatic elves gain a +1 bonus to their attack rolls when wielding a shortsword (longswords are ineffective underwater, as are all other slashing weapons).
- Elves are especially skilled at detecting secret or concealed doors. An aquatic elf has a one-in-six chance (a roll of 1 on a d6) to detect the presence of a concealed door just by passing within 10 feet of it. If actively searching for the secret door, the aquatic elf has a one-in-three chance (1 or 2 on a d6 roll) to discover a secret door and a one-in-two chance (roll of 1-3 on a d6) to find a concealed portal.
- *Optional rule:* The sea elves on the world of Krynn in the Dragonlance™ setting are able to shapechange into an aquatic animal three times per day. The Dargonesti elves are able to change into a dolphin (AC 5; Sw 30; # AT 1; Dmg 2d4), while the Dimernesti can transform into an otter (AC 5; MV 12, Sw 18; # AT 1; Dmg 1d3). The transformed elf retains its hit points and THACO, but gains the movement and special abilities of its new form. The elf cannot use the items (magical or otherwise) it possesses in elven form or cast spells while transformed. This transformation takes one round. When an elf changes into animal form, all their belongings change with them. At the DM's option, species of Dargonesti and/or Dimernesti may exist as player character races in realms other than DragonLance™.

## Hai Nu

The hai nu are a rare humanoid race of intelligent aquatic creatures originating from the Elemental Plane of Water. They have lean, but





# Chapter 1: Races



solidly muscled bodies that are covered with soft fur in shades of green, blue, and yellow. The durability of their skin gives the hai nu an excellent natural armor class of 4. Their hands and feet are webbed, with short, blunt claws extending from their fingers and toes. Bony ridges encircle their sunken black eyes. Rows of thin gill slits extend the lengths of their necks. Although many have dark hair on the top of their heads, an equal number are naturally bald.

Hai nu are carnivores who eat nearly all types of sea life, favoring oysters, crabs, fish. They occasionally eat seaweed if other food cannot be found.

Most hai nu are peaceful in nature and prefer to be left alone. They are rarely seen by surface dwellers, and seldom attack sea vessels. Hai nu are territorial, but only when they feel the trespassers will cause them harm or steal and defile their realms. In these cases, they will defend their homeland vigorously, and will even fight to the death.

Ordinarily, hai nu avoid direct confrontations. They prefer to discourage trespassers and other potential enemies by subtle means. For example, fishermen who ply the waters of the hai nu may find their lines cut and their nets fouled. Sailors may find small leaks in the bottom of their ships. Undersea explorers may find themselves trailed by a school of huge sharks.

Hai nu have excellent relationships with porpoises, whales, and especially sharks. About a dozen sharks always defend a hai nu community. These simple communities are in warm, shallow seas of sub-tropical and tropical regions, and are usually located in the hulls of sunken ships and amid strands of thick seaweed on the ocean floor.

Of all the UnderDeep races, hai nu are the least sociable. They do have regular contact with other races for trade and information, but do so only because of necessity. Although most hai nu who take up a career in adventuring are considered to be more open-minded than others of their race, it still usually takes a long time for a member of another race to gain the trust of a hai nu. While not enemies, many hai nu have a dislike of aquatic elves. They consider their constant contact with surface life unwise, and feel that the carefree life of a sea elf is foolish. The aquatic elves hatred of sharks and the hai nu's bond with them does not help, either. Hai nu will adventure with elves, but very rarely will

they develop a close friendship.

Most hai nu worship a deity they call the Sea Lord. Since the connection with the Sea Lord can be traced back to the hai nu's origins in the Elemental Plane of Water, they have brought the worship of this deity with them to many worlds among the Prime Material Plane.

A hai nu school typically consists of 4-40 adults. Their society is matriarchal, with 75% of any school is female. Each school is led by a matron. The school's female adults make decisions by consensus, but the matron reserves the right to veto any judgement with which she disagrees.

Hai nu love bright treasures and have a particular affinity for gems and statuary. Half of all acquired treasure is deposited in crevasses in the ocean floor as a tribute to the Sea Lord. Hai nu gather their treasure from sunken ships, but when a tribute to the Sea Lord is overdue, they have been known to attack passing ships with the express purpose of stealing cargo.

These creatures are extremely susceptible to the surface air. Hai nu can breathe underwater as well in the air above, but they cannot tolerate long periods on land. Dehydration sets in upon them after six turns, and they suffer one point of damage for every subsequent round they spend completely out of water.

**Natural armor class:** 4

**Languages:** hai nu, sea common

**Bonus proficiencies:** special

**Movement:** swimming 15, land 6

**Animal bond:** sharks

**Senses:** lateral line system, standard vision, enhanced olfactory

**Special abilities:**

- Hai nu are immune to all forms of water-based attacks, including water-based spells. They suffer twice the normal damage from fire-based attacks, including fire-based spells. From cold-based attacks, they lose 1 additional hit point per die of damage.
- Members of this race have exceptional memories. Hai nu have an uncanny ability to remember faces, names, phrases, etc. They are also able to retain more skills due to their enhanced memory. A hai nu gains an additional non-weapon proficiency every three levels, starting at first. (This is in addition to those gained by class level increases or character points.)



# Chapter 1: Races



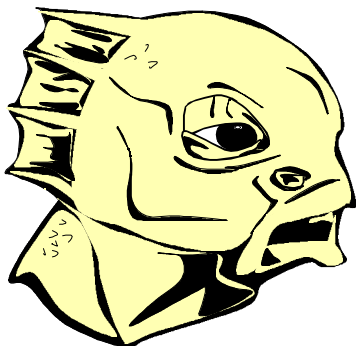
## Locathan

Locathan are a fish-like humanoid race of aquatic nomads that roam warm coastal waters. Their fascination with discovery and travel makes locathan ideal adventurers.

The skin is covered in fine but tough scales. The scales vary in color from a ivory yellow on the stomach and neck to a pale yellow on the rest of the body. The fins of their ears and spine are ocher. The ear fins enhance hearing while the large eyes are designed to enhance underwater vision. The only way to distinguish males from females is a vertical ocher stripe marking the egg sac. On the surface, locathan have a typically fish-like smell.

Locathan are omnivorous. They have both aquatic farmers and hunter-gatherers that provide a varied diet for their clan brethren. The locathan race in general is at a stone-age technology level and is limited to manufacturing weapons, tools, and ornaments from available materials. More advanced or magical items are scavenged from sunken wrecks, invaders, and drowning victims. Although they defend their territories against hostile invaders, locathan cooperate with non-hostile visitors, especially traders. Locathan coral carvings and jewelry are highly valued by art collectors and are traded for forged metals, ceramics, and durable magical items.

Locathah can be hired to assist travelers in their undersea realm. They also collect tolls from fishermen using locathah territorial waters. Locathah never voluntarily leave the water and they are almost helpless on land. They are limited to slow crawls because they are unused to supporting their own weight. The use of magic to fly or levitate will negate this helplessness. They risk swift suffocation as their gills dry out; after 10 turns, a surfaced locathah suffers 1 point of damage each round. If the



locathah immerses itself in water, the damage is halted.

Locathah always try to recover captive locathah or their bodies. If such are detected aboard a ship, other locathah might first demand the return of their kin or simply sink the boat by carving into its bottom.

Locathah have developed a society similar to that of surface humans. They have a well-developed hunter-gatherer society and a strong sense of territory. Locathan make their lairs in rocks carved into castle-like strongholds. These aquatic castles are very similar to their surface counterparts. Openings are protected by stout doors, shutters, or coral bars.

**Natural armor class:** 6

**Languages:** locathan, sea common, merman, koalinth

**Bonus proficiencies:** alertness

**Movement:** swimming 12, land 1

**Animal bond:** eels

**Senses:** lateral line system, standard vision, enhanced olfactory

**Special abilities:**

- Locathan are experts at fighting in groups. When more than one locathan is attacking a single target, each receives a +1 to hit bonus for every locathan over 1, to a maximum of a +4 bonus. The locathan must have fought side by side in battle at least three times before they can take advantage of this ability.
- As stated above, locathan have excellent vision and hearing. They can see 400 feet in total darkness, and have double the visual acuity of humans on land. Note that this is not infravision, but a type of light gathering vision unique to locathan that combines elements of infravision, ultravision, etc. Their hearing is advanced to where they are able to hear a noise and listen at doors with 35% success. A thieves chance of moving silently is reduced by half when trying to sneak around a locathan. When a locathan takes up thieving as a character class, they gain a bonus of 20% chance to *hear noise*.
- Locathan have above average regenerative abilities, and they heal naturally at twice the normal rate of hit points per day.
- At 5th level, locathan bond with a giant eel as a mount and ally. This is more than just the standard animal bond all locathan have with eels, but rather is a bonding with a particular eel. This relation is similar to a wizard and a familiar, and the locathan and eel have an empathic link up to a distance of one





# Chapter 1: Races



mile. As with familiars, the locathan lose one point of Constitution if the eel is killed, until another is bonded with. Once an eel companion is killed, the locathan must advance 3 levels before they can gain another one. While bonded, the eel gains the same saving throws as the locathan player has.

## Octomen

These creatures are half octopod and half human mixture. They are human from the waist up, and from the waist down have the body of an octopus. They are related to octopods in the same way merfolk are related to fish. It is speculated by most that, like mermen, octofolk used to be humans that were magically transformed into their current state. Octofolk, however, are very proud of their octopod heritage. They tend to believe that mankind is a lower form of existence than the octopus, and that their own race is in the process of evolving into giant octopus. This form of thinking gives the octofolk a very high respect for giant octopus. The giant octopus, which have a very close relationship to the octomen, tend to agree with this evolution idea (of course). However, both species agree that the evolution is not complete, and the final race will be something far greater than either of them. With this in mind, octofolk and octopods treat each other as equals.

Octomen come in many colors. The human half is usually grey, light blue, green, brown, or flesh colored. The octopus half is always either black, brown, or grey. The males are usually hairless, while the females support long, flowing hair. The females hair ranges in color to that of humans - black, brown, red, blond, etc.

Octomen are carnivores that enjoy eating fish, lobster, and other small sea creatures. They do not have a parrot-like beak like most octopods, although their greater size and strength than the standard octopus allows them to break open the shells and exoskeletons of small prey with their tentacles.

Octomen move through the water by either swimming with their tentacles (Movement rate of 6), or using their exhalant siphons to provide jet propulsion. When using this form of movement, water is taken into the mantle cavity - the space between the outer body musculature and the internal organs - and is then expelled forcefully through the siphon (providing a swimming movement rate of 18). The tentacles are used to swim in enclosed areas and casual locomotion, while the siphons are

used in long distance traveling and times when speed is needed (like during an escape).

In octofolk society, all generations of a family live together as one unit. Their homes are usually made in caves or coral reefs, but they sometimes build structures. Octofolk families are matriarchal, the female being the head of the household. The eldest female rules the family, delegating the authority to the younger females. There are no so-called "fathers" among octomen, nor is there a formal marriage bond. When it is time to mate, the female finds a suitable male in another family, mates, and returns to her family afterwards with no bonds or emotional ties. Sometimes, the female will not even see the male again, though often the males are used occasionally as temporary consorts.

Females usually give birth to 2-4 infants at once. Three-fourths of the octofolk babes are male. As soon as the children are old enough, they begin training in an area decided by the mother. Females always train the females, and males likewise teach the male youths.

Although the females rule the family unit, the males are still highly respected. In general, the males grow larger and stockier than the females, and are considered to be the providers and protectors for the family. Each member of an octofolk family has an assigned job they perform for life, such as hunting, building, weapon-making, etc. When youths are old enough to take on a position, they are assigned to an adult as an apprentice. The youths remain the apprentice until their mentor dies or can no longer perform the job, at which time they take over their position. In positions where the teacher has many apprentices, most apprentices will never get the chance to excel beyond apprentice status. There are, however, many levels of apprenticeship, and rarely are octofolk unsatisfied with this arrangement. Octopeople have a high level of respect for their elders.

While each family rules itself, the families are still loosely joined together in a community, all reporting to an "administrator". This administrator is almost always a high ranking female. When a female becomes administrator, her family becomes the administrative family. The administrator is chosen through a vote by the females who are head of their households. An octofolk community usually covers all families within a large area, sometimes as large as hundreds of miles.

Octomen have a special relationship with



# Chapter 1: Races



octopus, and there will usually be hundreds of them in an octofolk family. Large families will also usually have 1-4 giant octopus living with them. Octomen and other octopod can communicate freely. Giant octopus often accompany octomen during special missions for the community.

Little is known about octomen by surface dwellers, since they are not suited to travel out of the water. Their only form of locomotion on the surface is crawling, with a movement rate of 1. Octomen suffer 1 point of damage per turn out of water due to dehydration. Once they are able to submerge themselves in saltwater, this damage stops immediately and they regain their hit points from dehydration at the rate of 1 per hour. Note that this only heals hit points lost through dehydration. Wounds from any other source must be healed naturally or by magical means.

**Natural armor class:** 7

**Languages:** octofolk, sea common, triton

**Bonus proficiencies:** none

**Movement:** swimming 18 or 6, land 1

**Animal bond:** octopods

**Senses:** standard vision, ultravision, enhanced olfactory

**Special abilities:**

- Due to the increase in appendages, all octomen receive a +4 bonus on all wrestling "to hit" rolls. If an octoman gets a hold on an enemy, they can attempt a strangulation attack on the next round, with another successful attack roll. If this roll succeeds, the victim automatically takes 2 points of damage per round until they can free themselves of the octoman. Due to the octoman's suction ability, this can be a near impossible task. The octoman can attack the victim with a weapon while they are strangling them, with a +2 bonus to hit (this is why so many carry daggers).
- Octomen have a natural ink sack which allows them to produce the effects of the *ink cloud* spell once every 4 hours.
- Octomen have the natural ability to recreate the effects of the *suction limbs* spell at will. Note that only the appendages on the octopod part of it's body can use the *suction limbs* ability.

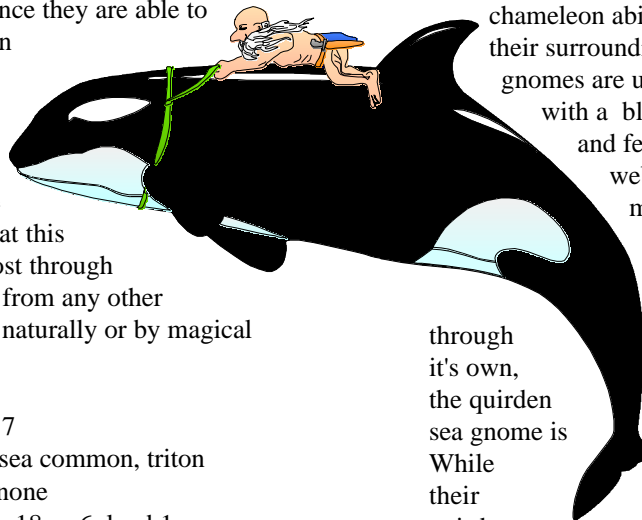
- Octomen suffer no damage from most water attacks, but double damage from fire attacks.

## Quirden

Quirden, or more commonly known as sea gnomes to those few surface dwellers who know of them, are one of the most playful, peaceful races in the UnderDeep. They are very similar to their surface gnome cousins, loving nature and nearly all sea animals. Their skin is usually a flesh color similar to humans, although they have a slight chameleon ability to blend into the colors of their surroundings. Because of this ability, sea gnomes are usually encountered underwater with a blue or greenish hue. The hands and feet of a quirden have a fleshy webbing in between the digits - much like that on a duck. They also have fleshy, muscled webbing on the sides of their legs that helps propel them through water. This leg "fin" moves on it's own, and folds up against the legs of the quirden when not in use. The hair of a sea gnome is nearly always silver or white. While surface gnomes usually trim their beards to be 1 foot or less, quirden males allow their beards to grow to great lengths. In quirden society, the beard is nearly as much as a status symbol as the size of one's nose.

When encountered, quirden will usually only be wearing enough clothing to remain modest (and sometimes not even that), wishing to remain as close to nature as they can. Quirden adventurers will occasionally wear some type of armor, but most often this armor will be shell, scale, or some other natural armor.

As with surface gnomes, quirden have a strong hatred or goblins (or *sea goblins* in the quirden's case). When fighting these creatures, sea gnomes fight with an unusual ferocity (see special abilities below). Sea goblins and quirden will always battle when given the chance, but since neither side wishes to bring heavy losses to their people, organized wars are seldom begun. Most of the fighting takes place as small scrimmages. Their hatred also extends to surface goblins, in those rare cases that they do venture onto land. Unlike rock gnomes, however, quirden have no real dislike for kobolds, since these creatures live underground and rarely have contact with the quirden. Sea gnomes also strongly dislike





# Chapter 1: Races



sahuagin, but not to the point that they gain combat bonuses.

When encountered away from their lair, sea gnomes will almost always carry some sort of weapon. They are especially fond of daggers, short swords, and nets. While they sometimes carry tridents and spears, the length of these weapons is sometimes awkward to the stout quirden.

Sea gnomes have a special bond with all types of whales. This relationship allows them to communicate with all normal type whales, and they will usually help each other when needed. The bond between quirden and whales is especially strong between orcas. In fact, killer whales will always be found guarding the sea gnomes lair. When traveling long distances, orcas are also used for mounts.

Quirden make their homes nearly anywhere, preferring to live in coral homes or among undersea forests. They are very much at home in the undersea caverns of aquatic mountains and gullots.

As with all gnomes, quirden are very magical creatures. They enjoy dabbling in all sorts of magic and illusions. These small folk also have a high resistance to magic cast upon them, as well as poisons.

A highly social race, the quirden calendar is subject to dozens of festivals, many of which last weeks at a time. New holidays are declared often, just for the sake of having a celebration. These festivals are filled with games, talking, feasting, etc. They are often used as a learning tool as well, with classes to learn new skills, history, and other things quirden find useful. Probably the biggest festival of the gnomes is the "Festival of the Stars", which is held under the stars at night on and around uninhabited islands and atolls. The sea gnomes are fascinated by the heavens, and the only times they usually come up to the surface of the water is at night, to wonder at the stars. This is also the reason that few sailors have seen them.

Quirden are very close friends with aquatic elves. Whenever a celebration occurs, the local elves are always invited - and the elves do likewise. The gnomes and elves often get together to have sporting competitions - another excuse to celebrate. The two races in these games usually do not even keep score. Many quirden villages will have aquatic elves living there as permanent residents. Quirden and aquatic elves sometimes marry, although they are unable to have offspring. These couples will often take on the orphans of either race to raise as their own.

Very rarely do quirden travel onto land. When they do, it is usually in disguise as a regular gnome. Quirden try very hard to keep their existence a secret from surface dwellers who may do them harm. Once completely out of water, quirden suffer penalties as their skin begins to dehydrate. Quirden can survive out of water for a number of days equal to one-half their Constitution score (round down) before they begin to suffer ill effects. After that time, they begin to temporarily lose 1 point from their physical ability scores (Strength, Constitution, Dexterity) for every day spent out of water. If any of these scores are decreased to 0, the quirden dies. If the sea gnome enters salt water before this time, their ability scores will return to normal within 2 hours. Although fresh water will not revitalize their ability scores, 2 hours spent within it will allow the sea gnome to spend another period of days equal to one-half their Constitution score on land before their abilities begin to diminish again.

*Example: Netrious is a quirden who must venture onto land for an extended period of time. His Constitution score is 13, allowing him to spend 6 days on land before he begins to suffer ill effects (13/2 rounded down = 6). At this time, he will lose one point from his Strength, Constitution, and Dexterity scores every day. After 5 days, all these physical scores are reduced by 5. If Netrious finds a body of salt water and spends 2 hours in it, his ability scores will be back to normal. Once he resumes his travels on land, the process of the depleting ability scores starts all over. If Netrious was able to find a fresh water lake and spend 2 hours within it, his ability scores would not return to normal, although he will once again be able to spend a number of days equal to one-half his Constitution before his physical ability scores drop any further.*

**Natural armor class:** 7

**Languages:** quirden, sea common, surface gnome, aquatic elvish, sea goblin

**Bonus proficiencies:** singing

**Movement:** swimming 12, land 6

**Animal bond:** whales

**Senses:** standard eyesight, echolocation

**Special abilities:**

- +1 bonus to all saving throws versus magic and poison for every 3.5 points of Constitution (round down)



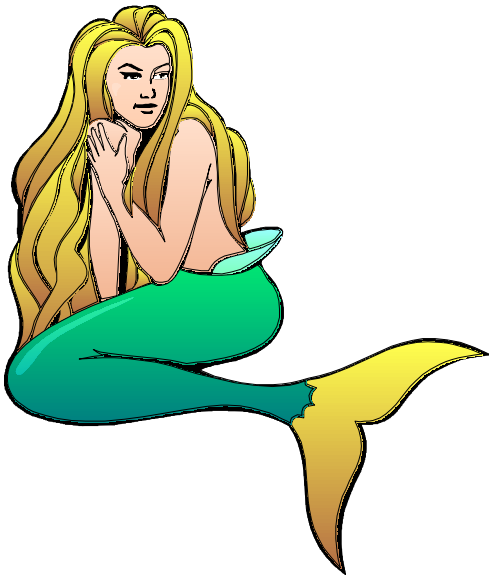
# Chapter 1: Races



- +1 to all melee attack rolls against sea goblins and surface goblins
  - +4 bonus to AC when attacked by humanoid creatures of giant class (gnolls, trolls, bugbears, ogres, and giants) when walking on land only
  - Detect sloping passages (1-5 on 1d6), flawed stonework (1-7 on 1d10), underwater depth (1-4 on 1d6) and direction (1-3 on 1d6) while underwater.
  - Change color to fit surroundings as chameleon.
- Quiriden have a 20% base chance of hiding in shadows. If the character is a thief, this 20% is treated as a bonus for hiding in shadows.

## Merfolk

Mermen, also commonly called sirens (not to be confused with the *sirene* of the *Monstrous Compendium*), are humanoids with the upper torso of a human and the lower torso of a fish. Males of the species are called mermen, while the females are commonly called mermaids. Their skin color on their humanoid half is fair to tan. The hair is usually brown, blond, or silver, although all human hair colors are known to exist within merfolk. The scale color on their fish half ranges from green to silver. Merfolk enjoy adorning themselves with coral and shell decorations. It is rumored that merfolk were once human, but were transformed into their current form by unknown powers.



Merpeople are omnivores, usually surviving on fish, lobster, crab, shellfish, and sea plants. They eat these creatures raw, although they must fillet

them first. Even though merfolk dehydrate quickly on the surface, they are very curious and enjoy going to the surface to sun themselves on large rocks. This is a practice that the females are especially fond of. These excursions are short however, as merfolk begin to dehydrate after one hour out of water. At this time, they lose 2 hit points per hour and will die when they reach zero. As soon as they immerse themselves in fresh or salt water, all lost hit points through dehydration are restored immediately.

Merfolk live in regular undersea communities. Their villages are usually located in a reef or cliff honeycombed with passages, but they will occasionally construct one from sea shells and coral. An average community has between 200-1200 adults, with about the same number of sub-adults.

The friends and enemies of merfolk vary, but most have a strong hatred for sahuagin and *ixitxachitl*.

As with many fish, merfolk have a swim bladder located in their bodies. These bladders are bags of gas the mermaid can regulate, allowing them to float at different depths. These bags double as lungs when they are on the surface. Because of the oxygen held in their swim bladders, merfolk find it uncomfortable to enter great depths in the ocean. The pressure on these swim bladders can be strong, and can cause damage if they go too deep. Mermen will usually not venture below 15,000. If they do, they will take 1 point of damage per turn for every 1,000 feet below 15,000 from the tremendous pressure. Spells such as *Deep Walking* can prevent this restriction. Due to this restriction, most merfolk communities are on the continental shelf.

**Natural armor class:** 7

**Languages:** mermen, sea common, locathan, surface common

**Bonus proficiencies:** singing

**Movement:** swimming 18, land 1

**Animal bond:** barracuda

**Senses:** standard vision, echolocation, ultravision

**Special Abilities:**

- Merpeople have the ability to communicate with all types of natural fish. Note that this does not automatically mean they can befriend them - they can just speak with them.

- Since the entire lower half of the merman is designed for swimming, they are one of the fastest and most powerful swimmers of the player character races. Because of this ability, merfolk are able to





# Chapter 1: Races



jump very high out of the water, similar to dolphins. For every ten feet of water depth merfolk have to gain swimming speed, they are able to leap out of the water 5 feet, to a maximum of 20 feet high. This distance is measured from the water's surface to the tip of their tails.

- Upon attaining 5th level, merfolk gain a magical singing ability that is able to charm many surface humanoids, similar to the ability of their relatives, the sirene. Upon hearing the singing call of merfolk, all surface humanoids must make a save versus spell or be put under a charm. Those under this charm will go into a trance-like state and try to go in the direction of the singing. This trance will be broken once the charmed persons come within 50 yards of the singing merfolk. Although individuals will do most anything to reach the singing, they will not become violent, and will be unable to think clearly and cast spells. Note that this ability works only on the surface humanoid races (elves get their normal 90% charm resistance in addition to the save). All undersea races are immune to this effect. In order for this ability to function, there must be at least 3 merfolk singing simultaneously. The range of the singing effect is 1 mile.

- Due to their powerful swimming ability, merfolk are able to stop sailing ships when they number 10 or more. They use grapples to attack ships; the grapples can be thrown up to 50 feet. Each grapple held by 10 mermen slows a ship by 1. Once stopped, the ship can be attacked and a hole knocked in its hull in 4d4 rounds, after which the ship slowly sinks. Merfolk often use this strategy to loot ships.

- Merfolk suffer double damage from fire attacks.

## Tritons

Tritons are humanoid creatures who's head, torso, and arms appear human, while their lower half ends in two finned legs. They have silvery skin that melds into silver-blue scales from the waist down. Their hair is usually deep blue or blue-green. Tritons usually live in temperate waters, and their villages can be found at almost any depth.

Since they have the ability to regulate their internal pressure and gases, triton have the ability to dive to any depth of water with no ill effects.

Tritons are omnivorous who live on fish, shellfish, and sea plants. They have no natural enemies except for cephalonoids and the giant squid. They are generally peaceful and keep to themselves, although there are many triton who do not have this

attitude. Triton often seek revenge on those who have wronged them. Most are suspicious of outsiders and have no love for surface races.

Most triton communities are located in either great undersea castles or in finely sculpted caverns. Triton are very territorial over their homes and defend them rigorously from trespassers. They often clash with mermen over territory. They do not hold a strong dislike of aquatic elves or quirden, although they feel they have foolish priorities and do not take life seriously enough.



While they are friendly to most aquatic races, triton have a high opinion of themselves, believing they are the superior race. Triton society relies very heavily on social status. Their families are structured much the same way surface human families are, with a mother, father, and their own children. The parents raise the children until they reach the *Age of Independence*, when they are allowed to leave home on their own. This is usually 14 years old for most Triton societies, but may vary in different locations.

Triton are originally from the Elemental Plane of Water. Many triton cities are built around portals to the elemental plane of water, allowing them to return often. They also feel it is their duty to regulate who or what enters the elemental plane.

**Natural armor class: 5**



# Chapter 1: Races



**Languages:** triton, sea common, locathan, aquatic elven

**Bonus proficiencies:** none

**Movement:** swimming 15, land 6

**Animal bond:** hippocampi, giant sea horses

**Senses:** standard vision, ultravision

**Special Abilities:**

- Tritons are nearly impervious to magic, having a 90% natural magic resistance. While this is a tremendous benefit, it is also a strong disadvantage in some situations. Their magic resistance affects all spells, both harmful and beneficial; triton have no control over this ability. Therefore, helpful spells from other spellcasters, such as healing spells, teleport, invisibility, etc. all have a 90% chance of failing. This resistance does not affect spells cast by the triton if it is a spellcaster. Spells cast by a triton on himself/herself are not negated by their magic resistance.

Another drawback of their magic resistance is most magic items will not work for the triton. Whenever a triton finds a magic item, he/she must roll percentile dice. If the roll is 91 or higher, that magic item will always function for the triton normally. On a roll of 90 or lower, that magic item will not function as a magic item for that triton, ever. A check is made for each *individual* magic item, not each *type* of magic item (i.e. a triton who is unable to use a dagger +1 he just found can roll again when he finds a different dagger +1. If successful, the triton can use that particular dagger +1). A triton can only roll once for a magic item in their lifetime. The item will then either function normally for them forever, or never work for them. Note that this does not affect weapons which are used against them. For instance, a sword +2 will always function as a sword +2 against a triton. There is no chance their magic resistance will negate any bonuses from enemy weapons.

- When a triton reaches 5th level, they are able to use normal conch shells with special effects once per day. Although not magical, their sounds are well known to all marine creatures. When blown properly, the conch summons 5d4 hippocampi, 1d10 sea lions, or 5d6 giant sea horses. These creatures swim to the aid of the summoning triton, arriving 1d6 rounds after the conch is first sounded.

The conchs can also be sounded to frighten aquatic animals as the *fear* spell once per day. This latter noise causes all marine creatures within 60 feet and with animal Intelligence or less to flee in panic.

Creatures are allowed a saving throw vs. spell to avoid the fear effect, but even those who succeed with their saving throws have a -5 modifier on their attack rolls against the tritons. This fear affect only works on standard sea creatures (those found in the real world), and the giant versions of these animals. Giant squids are immune to the effects of the conch shell.

## Racial Ability Adjustments

While each character will have a wide variety of ability scores, some races are naturally stronger or weaker, some are more or less dexterous, others are hardier, etc. These differences are accounted for with modifiers on ability scores. These modifiers work just as the racial ability modifiers described in the *Player's Handbook*.

**Table 1: Racial Ability Adjustments**

Race	Adjustments
Aquatic Elf	+1 Dexterity, -1 Constitution
Hai Nu	+1 Intelligence, +1 Wisdom, -1 Strength, -1 Charisma
Locathan	+1 Dexterity, +1 Strength, -2 Charisma
Octofolk	+1 Dexterity, -1 Constitution
Quirden	+1 Intelligence, -1 Wisdom
Merfolk	None
Triton	+1 Intelligence, -1 Charisma

## Languages

Like the surface world, the UnderDeep is a world of many races and languages. Each intelligent race has it's own language. Speech underwater commonly consists of high pitched squeaks, whistles, and chirps. These sounds are much more effective underwater than the bulky, slow language of surface dwellers.

The primary language in the UnderDeep is undersea common. This form of speech is known by nearly all intelligent races, and is the standard for communicating in a mixed racial environment. Undersea common has the same function for aquatic races as surface common does for land races, in that many races know at least enough undersea common to communicate.

In addition to undersea common, many intelligent



# Chapter 1: Races



UnderDeep races also know surface common. Although not normally used to communicate underwater, this language is very useful when communicating with surface races. Races such as sirens and sea elves, who have contact often with surface races, often know surface common. Note that since water does not carry the sounds of surface common as well as air, one must be within five feet of someone speaking surface common to understand them. Races with enhanced hearing increase this distance to 20 feet. Note that undersea languages, which consist entirely of high pitched squeaks and whistles, are not limited to this range, and can be heard at about the same distance humans can understand land race's languages on the surface.

Listed below is a list of possible languages available to Fathoms characters. Dungeon Masters may edit this list as desired to customize it with their particular campaign.

## UnderDeep Languages

Aquatic Elven	Cephalonoid
Dolphin	Hai Nu
Ixixachitl	Kelpie
Kuo-toa	Locathan
Marrow	Morkoth
Octoman	Quiriden
Sahuagin	Sea Goblin
Selkie	Mermen
Surface Common	Triton
Whale (specify type)	

## Allowing Other Aquatic PC Races

While this chapter goes over many of the common races in the UnderDeep, there are many other intelligent races in the oceans. At the DM's option, creatures such as the sirene, shark-kin, sahuagin, sea goblin, and the kna are a few examples of races which could be converted into PCs. The DM is encouraged to carefully evaluate the campaign before allowing such a race to be run by a player, to avoid upsetting the fragile game balance.



## Other Characteristics

Each new race possesses its own standards for height, weight, and aging. Consult the following tables for details on the UnderDeep races:



# Chapter 1: Races



Table 2: Height and Weight

Race	Height in Inches		Weight in Pounds	
	Base	Modifier	Base	Modifier
Aquatic Elf	55/50	1d10	90/70	3d10
Hai Nu	62/60	1d10	110/100	3d12
Locathan	60/58	1d12	140/120	6d10
Octoman	64/60	2d10	150/110	5d10
Quirden	38/36	1d6	72/68	5d4
Merman	60/54	1d12	150/90	7d10
Triton	72/70	1d10	160/100	6d10

Table 3: Age

Race	Starting Age		Maximum Age Range
	Base Age	Variable	(Base + Variable)
Aquatic Elf	100	5d6	350 + 4d100
Hai Nu	25	3d4	100 + 1d100
Locathan	30	4d6	120 + 3d20
Octoman	15	2d4	100 + 2d20
Quirden	60	3d12	200 + 3d100
Mermen	20	1d6	120 + 6d10
Triton	80	3d12	300 + 3d100

Table 4: Aging Effects

Race	Middle Age*	Old Age**	Venerable***
Aquatic Elf	175	233	350
Hai Nu	55	70	100
Locathan	70	110	140
Octoman	55	70	100
Quirden	100	133	200
Mermen	70	110	140
Triton	150	200	300

\* -1 Str/Con; +1 Int/Wis

\*\* -2 Str/Dex; -1 Con; +1 Wis

\*\*\* -1 Str/Dex/Con; +1 Int/Wis