CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

"But, gentle reader, you must consider that, since Adam went out of Paradise, there was never any that was able perfectly to describe the universal conditions of all sorts of beasts."
*– Edward Topsell, **A History of the Four-Footed Beasts**, 1607*

A bestiary is an encyclopedia of beasts. The earliest bestiaries included not only real animals, but mythical ones as well. They also included a lot of nonsense about the behavior of real animals – such as antelopes cutting down trees with their saw-shaped horns, snakes only biting tourists (we tell that one in New Hampshire, too) and remoras bringing ships to a dead stop. **GURPS Bestiary** is no exception; it contains not only real animals, but also mythical creatures and a lot of nonsense.

I have translated an incredible amount of ancient lore, biological fact, and speculation into gaming terms. I have tried to remain as true to the original material as possible, though this was not always easy. Often the original sources conflicted with each other.

GURPS tries hard to be a unified system, even in areas not subject to reality checking (such as magic). So I had to bend some legends – like the gumberoo, which hurls arrows back at its attackers – to fit the game. The gumberoo still repels missiles, but the mechanism has been defined in **GURPS** terms – which do not totally agree with all legends.

The GM may disagree with my treatment of certain animals. If so, he may change them freely, using what I've written as rumor – rumors abound in all ages. The GM can decide for himself exactly what the creatures do.

During my extensive research for this book, I came to know and love my subjects a little better (except for certain members of the order *Diptera*). Eventually, it occurred to me that I was writing a book about animals which, among other things, attack people. The truth is that few animals are any threat at all to humans. In fact, the opposite is far more true – we are pushing more than 100 species a year into extinction, a figure that experts feel can rise as high as 100 species a *day* by the year 2000.

For this reason, I dedicate this book to all animals in all universes . . . long may we thrive! I also commit 10% of any money I make from this book to the World Wildlife Fund (1250 24th St., Washington, DC 20037), which is devoted to saving as many species as possible. It will be a sad day when there are no more tigers or leopards, yet that day is rapidly approaching unless we act now to prevent it.

– Steffan O'Sullivan

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Steffan O'Sullivan lives in central New Hampshire. His other roleplaying books include **GURPS Swashbucklers, GURPS Fantasy Bestiary, GURPS Bunnies & Burrows, Fudge,** and **Sherpa.** He donates a portion of his royalties to organizations devoted to saving the environment, such as The Peaceable Kingdom Project (4353 East 119th Way, Thornton, CO 80233). You can read more about Steffan, and read his reviews of games, on his Web page at **www.io.com/~sos/**.

Hunter Johnson lives in Dayton, Ohio. His previous roleplaying book is **GURPS Japan**, *Second Edition.* He and his wife, Lori, have had a second son, Derek Scott Johnson, since the blurb in that book was written. You can find Hunter on the Web at **www.donet.com/~jhunterj/**.

For each hour of fishing, make a Fishing roll (Survival may be substituted). If the roll is successful, the fisherman catches 1/4 pound of edible fish, plus 1/4 pound per point below the needed roll. If fish are especially plentiful, or if a critical success is rolled, twice as much fish is caught. If fish are especially scarce, or if the initial roll to locate the fish is failed, only 1/2 as much is caught. Any critical failure results in no more fish being caught tha day.

Fish may be caught in a number of ways – using hooks and lines, flies or lures, spears, knives, trotlines, nets, or even bare hands. If equipment is not available, a Survival skill roll will allow the fisherman to improvise from available materials. The fishing roll may be at 2 or more depending on circumstances and availability of equipment.

TRAPPING

Trapping animals is another way to gain food. Most traps can be set in only 15 minutes by a skilled trapper. The traps should be checked at least hourly, as predators and scavengers will empty them if given the opportunity. A successful Naturalist (or appropriate Survival) skill roll will pick up the signs of an animal's presence – tracks, runways, trails, dens, and feeding marks – that tell a trapper where best to set his traps. If this initial roll is failed, the trapper will be at a penalty to his Traps skill for catching animals. Assess a penalty equal to the amount by which the initial roll was missed.
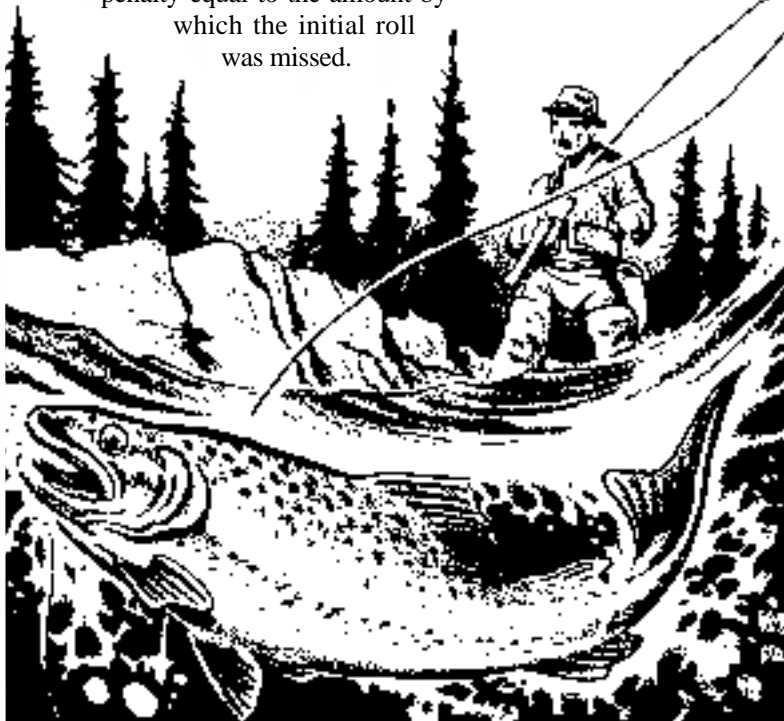
Each time a trap is set, the GM should roll in secret to determine whether anything is caught. Roll against Traps (Traps-5 if the trapper is city-bred) or the appropriate Survival skill of the trapper, and note how successful the roll is. The trapper must have the Traps skill at a TL appropriate to the trap, or take the appropriate modifier. A failed roll means that nothing is caught – but don't tell the player that; let him check the trap to find out for himself. Critical failure means that the trap goes off while being set, possibly injuring the trapper.

If the trapping roll is successful, the degree of success will influence both the type of animal caught and the timing. The better the roll, the "tastier" or more valuable the animal, and the more opportune the timing. The most opportune time for an animal to be trapped would be just before the trap is next checked. The least opportune time depends on the situation – it might be many hours later if the PCs are in a hurry, or it might be just after they check a trap, giving a carnivore more time to raid it.

Any animal has a chance to notice a trap – roll a Contest of Skills between the trapper's skill and the animal's IQ, with the following modifiers: none if the animal is running; +3 if the animal is reasonably alert (the normal condition); +5 if the animal has cause to be suspicious. A cagey beast, such as a wolverine or an old, man-eating tiger, will *always* be suspicious.

TYPES OF TRAPS

Box Traps

Box traps are of many types – cages, boxes, sacks, even natural caves. The basic idea is that the animal is lured into an enclosure, after which the opening is shut behind it, blocking it in.

A primitive cage can be built out of saplings and vines with one end left open (4 hours to build a cage large enough to hold a lion, or 2 hours with appropriate Survival skill or Carpentry; these times assume the builder has access to tools). Bait is attached to a trigger set at the back of the cage. The trigger can be a bent sapling (or a rope) barely secured by a cross-stick which releases a solid or barred door.

Another type of box trap is the box propped up on a "figure-four" trigger; the box simply falls down over whatever set off the trap. This type of trap is limited to animals no bigger than large dogs – the weight of the box makes it impractical for creatures any larger.

A natural cave could be used as a box trap by blocking the entrance after the animal enters; removal of dangerous animals can be tricky, though! Sacks can be used for smaller animals – this becomes a safe type of snare trap.

Deadfalls

A deadfall consists of a large tree trunk or other heavy weight set up to fall on any animal that passes under it. The trap may be set in front of a den or across a game trail (sprung with a long string or rope; no bait is necessary). The deadfall may also be baited with a figure-four trigger setting off the trap. If properly constructed, a deadfall is very humane, killing the animal almost instantaneously. Deadfalls do crushing damage based on their weight (see p. B131).

TOTEMISM

Totemism reveres a mystical relationship between an individual or kinship group and a totem. Totemism is common in tribal societies that practice ancestor veneration, from the North American Pacific coast to South America to the Eurasian plains. This totem might be a crafted object that a spirit inhabits, or it might be a living entity such as a plant or animal. Harming a totem animal is often forbidden, even if one's life depends on it; slaying such an animal for food is unthinkable. Some animals are to be slain only in ritual sacrifice, and are eaten only by priests and other holy persons.

However, sometimes killing and eating a totem animal is considered a holy act of communion, establishing a link with the ancestor or the divine. This is thought to endow the participants with particular virtues, such as strength, courage, bravery, or wisdom. See p. R127 for more on totemism and other religious traditions.

SPELL COMPONENTS

In many campaigns that include magic use, rare components are required for the more powerful spells to work. Often these are from magical creatures – the *mana organs* described above – but equally often, spell components can be acquired from ordinary animals (eye of newt and wing of bat, anyone?).

Retrieving rare spell components is the stuff adventures are made of. For maximum effect, the animal parts should be both difficult and dangerous to obtain. For example, perhaps the *Might* spell requires the left incisor of a living female lion. Maybe *Bravery* needs the feathers of a plover – the bird that perches inside crocodiles' mouths!

FAMILIARS

Familiars are animals or spirits that attend and serve wizards and mages. Many different animals have been presented as familiars – so many that the mage can choose just about any type. Cats, toads, bats, lizards, crows, flies, hares, snakes, owls, and dogs have all been rumored familiars. Rules for creating and GMing familiars are covered on p. CI37. In traditional folklore, familiars fed themselves on blood suckled from the mage's fingers, moles, or warts. This did no real damage to the mage, but the character might take a Duty to the familiar for this service and possibly a Secret if the behavior would be viewed as vampiric in the campaign setting. If someone wants to play a familiar, use the rules in the Characters chapter, including the cost of higher IQ; the only additions (for a non-demonic familiar) will be a Duty (possibly Involuntary) and the option of a 5-point Mental Communication advantage (this must be taken by both the mage and the familiar if they are to communicate telepathically). The other abilities detailed in *GURPS Magic* are paid by the mage alone.

CASTOR (ELIXIR OF HORSE TAMING)

This potion (which appeared in *GURPS Magic Items*) grants the subject a +4 to any Animal Handling roll specific to horses and their relatives (mules and donkeys). In addition, it grants a +4 to any Riding, Teamster, or Packing skill roll made concerning horses in a *non-combat* situation. The effect will last for 2d hours. Unguent only – rub on hands. $50 in materials, 2 weeks. Cost $250/$500.

See p. M98 for rules for alchemical items, and p. M100 for other Animal Control elixirs. *GURPS Magic Items 2* has a section devoted to animal items as well (on p. 81).

CATALYST CREATURES

Catalyst creatures are animals that have the ability to bond with psis. A catalyst creature can be thought of as a psionic familiar. It is always a full-fledged player character or NPC. The creature and the psi it bonds to both have 4 levels of the Mindlink advantage (p. CI41) with each other as well as a Sense of Duty to the other. Full details can be found in *GURPS Psionics* on p. 54.