

INTRODUCING THE ROCBORNE

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THE ROCBORNE

The mighty Rocborne are an eons-old culture of world-traveling nomads who live on the backs of gargantuan rocs. The various Homes of the Rocborne are tenacious in preserving the history of their people.

Due to their nomadic nature, the Rocborne place great importance on skillful hunting and foraging, as they cannot cultivate agriculture upon the Roc's back. They also have a great love for commerce, story-swapping, and competitions of athleticism whenever they land. The Rocborne are a diverse people and their appearances and behaviors can vary greatly from Home to Home, and from person to person.

AMBIENT MOOD

A Rocborne Home, whether in flight or landed, is a lesson in serenity and balance with nature. All aspects of their lives are designed with practicality and respect, from their buildings and tools to their arts and music.

- The expansive back of the Roc is dotted with small, squat buildings made from natural materials, designed to provide flexibility in wind and minimal weight. Rugged quilts and woven blankets help to keep away the cold during flight, while hanging baskets and hammocks ensure protection for their contents. Even when camping on land, their architecture and respectful behavior towards nature are evident.
- Most clothing among the Rocborne is designed for sturdiness and warmth, given the altitudes they travel. They make use of various leathers and furs, dyeing them in beautiful patterns based on their Home, family, and profession. The Rocborne place the most importance, however, upon feathers, painstakingly collected from the ground without harming the birds. Spiritual leaders in particular are known to utilize feathers when channeling or communing with wind spirits.
- The Rocborne are renowned for their exquisite craftsmanship, and there is no shortage of demand for their art wherever they land. They are most known for their unique style of hand-shaped and smoke-fired pottery, their intricately shaped and painted beads, and woven baskets and blankets. They also take great care in the crafting of their tools and dwellings, using bone and leather to ensure their hunts are not wasteful or disrespectful.
- Though each Home has different preferences on the specifics, they all share an appreciation for music and dance. Beyond the making of music for entertainment, Rocborne instruments are also used to aid in spiritual ceremonies: typically appealing to a specific ancestor through their preferred song or musically-supplemented story.
- Especially when landed, many of the youth and adults among the Rocborne take great joy in contests of strength, agility, and teamwork in the form of various sporting events. Those individuals who excel in these displays of athleticism can earn additional responsibilities and community acknowledgement, though they always take care to keep these events safe and fair. Those who do not excel at these sports are not considered less

important, and losing is not punished, for all can bring something of value to the Home.

SOCIETAL BALANCE

Rocborne society has a clear division of labor between hunter-gatherers and crafters, but don't assign roles or societal expectations based on gender. They also place a great deal of importance on the skills of oral storytelling and memory, ascribing these most respected positions of leadership to the individuals that preserve their Home's genealogy and traditions.

Part of the closeness of the Rocborne society is due to the overt importance they place upon relationship bonds and love, both familial and interpersonal. They understand that nature's balance both requires and encourages strong bonds for survival. As a result, it's not uncommon for Rocborne to enter fluid or same-sex romantic relationships just as readily as any other, to such a degree that most adopted Rocborne join in order to gain that freedom of expression.

ROCBORNE ANCESTORS

The Rocborne revere and gain wisdom from nature spirits as well as the spirits of their ancestors. Through generations of interaction and symbiosis, the Rocborne have come to believe that rocs are the ultimate expression of the very wind itself, and when a Rocborne passes, they are cremated and their ashes are spread to the wind. Fallen Rocborne become the smaller, peaceful breezes and gusts that provide comfort and warmth to those they visit. As such, windy days are often treated as good omens or a sign that their ancestors are watching over them.

Contacting the spirits of nature and their ancestors requires ceremonies, in which the spiritual leaders tell stories of the spirit, meditate, and seek its guidance. Sometimes these ceremonies are accompanied by music, depending upon the desired contact. The Rocborne are fairly open about allowing observers, especially trusted allies, but are adamant that only their shamans perform the rituals, lest a malevolent spirit be called forth.

You can use the following table to help determine the blessings bestowed by Rocborne ancestral and nature spirits.

EXAMPLE ROCBORNE BLESSING TABLE

3d8	Result
3	The wind lightly tussles your hair for 1d4 hours.
4	You gain a flying speed of 30 feet for 24 hours.
5-6	You duplicate the effect of the <i>augury</i> spell.
7-8	You duplicate the effect of the <i>divination</i> spell.
9-10	The story of the ancient warrior: you gain the effect of the <i>enhance ability</i> (bear's endurance) spell for 24 hours.
11-12	The story of the ancient leader: you gain the effect of the <i>enhance ability</i> (eagle's splendor) spell for 24 hours.
13-14	The story of the ancient shaman: you gain the effect of the <i>enhance ability</i> (owl's wisdom) spell for 24 hours.

3d8	Result
15–16	The story of the ancient crafter: you gain the effect of the <i>enhance ability</i> (cat's grace) spell for 24 hours.
17–18	The story of the ancient hunter: you gain the effect of the <i>enhance ability</i> (bull's strength) spell for 24 hours.
19–20	The story of the ancient historian: you gain the effect of the <i>enhance ability</i> (fox's cunning) spell for 24 hours.
21	You duplicate the effect of the <i>scry</i> spell on a target of your choice.
22	You duplicate the effect of the <i>commune with nature</i> spell.
23	You duplicate the effect of the <i>legend lore</i> spell.
24	Once a day for the next 7 days, you can replace one attack roll, ability check, or saving throw you make with a 20. You must choose to use this effect before making the roll.

LANDING SITES

The Rocborne don't need to land often, but in their circuitous travels they have taken to landing in certain locations each year for reasons steeped in tradition. Some landing sites are ideal locations for commerce with the surrounding region, whose residents regard the Rocborne's yearly arrival is a holiday of sorts. Other sites are chosen for their ideal hunting grounds, or rich gathering. The most important landing sites are those areas chosen for multiple Homes, or Rocs, to land, so that the Rocborne can trade crafts, genealogies, resources, and stories with one another. These areas often include arenas set aside for large athletic contests between Homes, the winners earning more favorable trading rights for the event's duration. When it's time for a Home to leave a landing site, a Rocborne elder or chief is typically the one to communicate with the roc and decide where to travel next.

You can use the following table to randomly determine what type of landing site the Rocborne are presently at or are journeying towards.

EXAMPLE LANDING SITE TABLE

1d10	Result
1	This site is near a cosmopolitan city, and includes a week-long festival of arts and commerce.
2	This site is surrounded by rural farms, and allows trading for grains and other food staples.
3	This site is near an elven society, and is primarily used for exchanging fine crafts, music, poetry, and herbs.
4	This site is on the mountainside of a dwarven keep, where the Rocborne can obtain metal tools and weaponry.
5	This landing site is in a dense jungle, known for its plentiful game.

1d10	Result
6	This landing site is a meadow surrounded by forested hills, rich with wild grains, berries, and fruits.
7	This landing site is beside a wide and fast-flowing river that is swollen with freshwater fish.
8	This landing site is along a coastline or island burgeoning with large fish and crustaceans.
9	This landing site is a hidden valley nestled deep within treacherous mountains, and is the secret source of the Rocborne's most precious clay, used for their renowned pottery.
10	This landing site features a grand arena for the Homes to compete in, a large number of stalls for trade, and amphitheaters where storytellers can exchange lore and stories.

EXAMPLE ADVENTURE HOOKS

Consider including the following scenarios if you wish to include the Rocborne in your campaign:

Ancient Insight for Ancient Evils. In search of guidance for how the party can triumph over their current foe, the adventurers seek out the Rocborne, famed for their long memories. But precious knowledge and trust must always be earned.

Trial of Strength. The Rocborne have offered boons to whichever adventurers can impress the spirits of nature and their ancestors. Many would-be heroes are clamoring for the prize, resulting in fierce competitions of strength, valor, and wisdom.

The Stormwinds. The next leg of the Rocborne's yearly circuit across the world is fraught with perilous storms and malevolent spirits, so they are seeking brave adventurers to accompany them and ensure safe passage.

EXAMPLE AIRBORNE ENCOUNTERS

You can use the following table to help determine random encounters while your adventurers are flying through the upper echelons of the sky.

EXAMPLE AIRBORNE ENCOUNTER TABLE

2d8	Result
2	A flock of 1d8 hippogriffs (35%) , 1d8 griffons (35%) , or 1d6 wyverns (30%)
3	1d6 giant eagles (75%) or 1d6 giant vultures (25%)
4	1d2 air elementals , hostile (80%) or neutral (20%)
5	2d4 harpies (50%) or 1d3 swarms of rain hornets (50%)
6–7	1d4 swarms of bats (50%) or 1d6 stirges (50%)
8–9	1d3 lightning panthers (50%) or a skywhale (50%)

2d8 Result

- 10–11 A turbulent wind pattern blows strongly in a random direction. To determine the direction, roll a d8 and assign a direction to each number.
- 12 A **manticore** (75%) or 2 **manticores** (25%)
- 13 A **giant horned snake** (75%) or an **adult dragon** (25%); red (20%), blue (20%), green (20%), white (20%), or black (20%)
- 14 A crackling thunderstorm brews, brought on by a malevolent **storm spirit**.
- 15 A pleasant breeze brings gentle warmth and speedy travel, as the spirits of ancient Rocborne swirl around and guide your forward. You arrive at your next location 1d4 days early.
- 16 A **thunderbird** (50%) or a peacefully passing Rocborne Home (50%)

MAKING CUSTOM ROCBORNE NPCs

When populating the various Rocborne Homes with characters to interact with your world, consider using the following tables to determine their personality.

PERSONALITY TRAITS

1d6 Result

- 1 I'm constantly thinking of and sharing esoteric, sometimes tangential stories of my ancestors.
- 2 I prefer the solitude of nature over talkative humanoid company.
- 3 I've spent so much time attuning to one of my ancestors, that I have adopted their older speaking patterns and phrases.
- 4 I'm intensely competitive in sports, hunting, and everything I do.
- 5 I've become exceptionally precise in my movements as I've perfected my art.
- 6 I'm full of boundless curiosity and energy, desperate to know what turn life will take next.

IDEALS

1d6 Result

- 1 **Exploration.** The world is just waiting for you to discover its secrets. (Chaotic)
- 2 **Honor.** The Rocborne have survived by staying true to their word at all times. (Lawful)
- 3 **Community.** Only by protecting each other and shoring up individual weaknesses can we remain strong. (Neutral)
- 4 **Nature.** Balance with the wilds must always be maintained. (Neutral)
- 5 **Freedom.** The sky's the limit, and opportunities don't wait for the indecisive. (Chaotic)
- 6 **Tradition.** It is our duty to never forget the ways of our esteemed ancestors, lest we upset the balance of life. (Lawful)

BONDS

1d6 Result

- 1 At a young age, I was contacted by a specific ancestor with unfinished business, who charged me with completing it.
- 2 I was adopted into the Rocborne in a time of crisis, and owe everything to my new Home.
- 3 I have found my life partner, and we complete each other.
- 4 I must work hard to defend my athletic accomplishments and accolades from challengers.
- 5 I find peace in my craft and owe much to my teacher's patient tutelage.
- 6 Only while enveloped in the blessed hunt am I at peace with myself and one with nature.

FLAWS

1d6 Result

- 1 I'm so dedicated to our traditions that new ideas are difficult to accept.
- 2 I fear that my life will not be good enough to ensure my spirit is welcomed by the winds.
- 3 My fervent focus on the stories of my ancestors has caused me to miss out on my actual life.
- 4 I've devoted my life to the Rocborne, and fail to see why others do not see as we do, making me distrustful of outsiders.
- 5 My fierce competitive nature leads to anger and frustration when I fall short of my expectations.
- 6 I'm absolutely enthralled by flight, and am almost despondent when forced to walk on solid ground.

EXAMPLE TREASURE

Adventurers interacting with the Rocborne and the skies can be rewarded with wind-themed items like the *windswept wyvernplate*, bird-related items like the *bird of a feather*, or other nature or spirit-based items such as the *dryadleaf*. Of course, any item with Rocborne in its name, like the *Rocborne rod*, is perfect for rewarding highly favored heroes. If you have a storm-themed character in your party, consider including *Nimbus, First Staff of the Thunderbirds* in your campaign as well (detailed at the end of this document).

NIMBUS, FIRST STAFF
OF THE THUNDERBIRDS



ROCBORNE STAT BLOCKS

GIANT HORNED SNAKE

Revered among the Rocborne for their regal bearing, close connection to nature, and hypnotic flight, giant horned snakes have a complicated relationship with other creatures in the skies given their considerable intelligence. Crafty combatants, many Rocborne Homes choose to negotiate with these creatures rather than face them with hostility.

LIGHTNING PANTHER

Known as the best ambush hunters of the sky, lightning panthers can travel at great speeds in the form of a lightning bolt before striking with the force and intensity of their namesake. Many hunters have fallen prey to these mighty beasts, but those that can return with the corpse of a lightning panther are celebrated, often incorporating lightning into their clothing and crafts.

ROCBORNE CHIEF

Most Chiefs among the Rocborne are respected for their skill with words, spells, crafts, and weaponry in equal measure and are considered balanced representatives of each aspect of Rocborne society. Charged first and foremost with the protection of their Home, a Chief whose Home is threatened can be a force of nature. Each era, one Chief is blessed by their ancestors and the sky itself with *Nimbus*, becoming a representative of the environment and all Rocborne.

VARIANT: Rocborne Chief with Nimbus

A chief in possession of *Nimbus, First Staff of the Thunderbirds* is revered, for they have been blessed by the spirits of their ancestors. Such a chief is considered a 13th-level ranger for the purposes of this item, and uses the Rocborne chief stat block with the following changes:

- They have a challenge rating of 8 (3,900 XP).
- They know the *shillelagh* cantrip.
- They have the *Nimbus, First Staff of the Thunderbirds* trait, as well as the *Nimbus, First Staff of the Thunderbirds* and *Buffet (Nimbus Special Attack)* action options (all described below).

Nimbus, First Staff of the Thunderbirds. The staff has 8 charges and regains 1d6 + 2 expended charges daily at dawn. While holding it, the chief can use an action to expend some of its charges to cast one of the following spells (save DC 15) from it: *lightning bolt* (3 charges), *shatter* (2 charges), *spirit guardians* (3 charges), or *wind wall* (3 charges).

ACTIONS

Nimbus, First Staff of the Thunderbirds. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit (+9 to hit with *shillelagh*), reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) bludgeoning damage, or 10 (1d8 + 6) bludgeoning damage with *shillelagh*.

Buffet (Nimbus Special Attack). *Ranged Spell Attack:* +9 to hit, range 30 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d8 + 6) bludgeoning damage.

GIANT HORNED SNAKE

Huge monstrosity, neutral

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 95 (10d12 + 30)

Speed 50 ft., fly 50 ft., swim 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	16 (+3)	17 (+3)	9 (-1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)

Skills Deception +3, Perception +5, Persuasion +3, Stealth +6

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Senses blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages —

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Amphibious. The snake can breathe air and water.

Charge. If the snake moves at least 20 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with its horns on the same turn, the target takes an extra 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The snake makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its horns. It can use its constrict attack in place of one other attack.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or take 7 (2d6) poison damage and become poisoned for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Constrict. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 17). Until this grapple ends, the creature is restrained, and the snake can't constrict another target.

Horns. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage plus 11 (2d10) force damage.

Hypnotize (Recharge 6). The snake causes its horns to begin flashing with a dazzling array of colors. Each creature of the snake's choice within 60 feet of it that can see it must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or be magically charmed by the snake for 1 minute. A charmed creature must spend each of its turns moving toward the snake by the shortest and most direct route. A charmed creature already within 5 feet of the snake doesn't move and takes no actions on its turn. While charmed in this way, the snake has advantage on attack rolls against the creature. If an affected creature takes any damage, or if another creature uses an action to shake the creature out of its trance, the creature can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success.

LIGHTNING PANTHER

Large monstrosity, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 14

Hit Points 75 (10d10 + 20)

Speed 50 ft., climb 40 ft., fly 0 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	19 (+4)	14 (+2)	6 (-2)	13 (+1)	9 (-1)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Cha +1

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +6

Damage Immunities lightning, thunder

Condition Immunities prone, stunned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages —

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Evasion. If the panther is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, it instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if it fails.

Feline Fall. When the panther falls and isn't incapacitated, it can subtract up to 100 feet from the fall when calculating falling damage.

Flashing Movement. Whenever the panther moves on its turn, it can instead choose to teleport to an unoccupied space it can see, including into the air, leaving a harmless streak of electrical energy in its path. When it teleports in this way, it must spend an amount of movement equal to the distance it teleported.

Keen Smell. The panther has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The panther makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d4 + 4) slashing damage.

Lightning Strike (Recharge 4–6). If the panther teleports at least 20 feet into the air as part of its movement, it can then use this action to fall into a space that contains one or more other creatures. Each of those creatures must succeed on a DC 14 Dexterity or Constitution saving throw (target's choice) or be knocked prone and take 9 (2d4 + 4) slashing damage and 21 (6d6) lightning damage. On a successful save, the creature takes only half the damage, isn't knocked prone, and is pushed 5 feet out of the panther's space into an unoccupied space of the creature's choice. If no unoccupied space is within range, the creature instead falls prone in the panther's space.

ROCBORNE CHIEF

Medium humanoid (any race), lawful neutral

Armor Class 17 (half plate)

Hit Points 150 (20d8 + 60)

Speed 35 ft., fly 35 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	18 (+4)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	19 (+4)	17 (+3)

Skills Athletics +4, History +4, Insight +7, Perception +7

Damage Resistances cold

Senses passive Perception 17

Languages Common plus up to three other languages

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Guiding Wind (1/Turn). The chief can deal an extra 3 (1d6) damage to a creature it hits with a weapon attack. Alternatively, when the chief misses with a weapon attack, they can reroll the attack roll against a different target; the new target must be within 15 feet of the original target and within range of the weapon.

Spellcasting. The chief is a 13th-level spellcaster. Their spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 15). They know the following ranger spells:

1st level (4 slots): *feather fall, hunter's mark, jump, speak with animals*

2nd level (3 slots): *animal messenger, gust of wind, lesser restoration*

3rd level (3 slots): *call lightning, daylight, wind wall*

4th level (1 slot): *freedom of movement, ice storm*

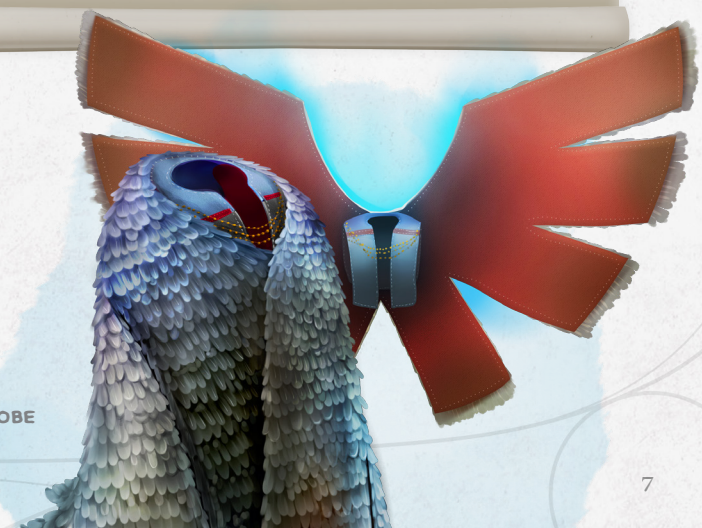
Windswept. The chief ignores any movement penalty caused by strong wind and they can't be pushed because of strong wind against their will.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The chief makes two attacks.

Quarterstaff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) bludgeoning damage, or 5 (1d8 + 1) bludgeoning damage if used with two hands.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage.



SKYWHALE

Peaceful denizens, skywhales typically travel over vast oceans, feasting upon the fish below and other small creatures above. Very few Rocborne hunt skywhales, instead preferring to count sightings as omens of good weather ahead. Unfortunately, these sightings are rare, as rocs consider skywhales a delightful delicacy.

SKYWHALE

Gargantuan monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 174 (12d20 + 48)

Speed 0 ft., fly 60 ft., swim 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	10 (+0)	18 (+4)	4 (-3)	14 (+2)	5 (-3)

Skills Perception +5

Damage Resistances lightning, thunder

Senses blindsight 120 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages —

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The whale makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its tail.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (3d6 + 6) piercing damage. If the target is a Large or smaller creature, it must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or be swallowed by the whale. A swallowed creature has total cover against attacks and other effects outside the whale, and it takes 3 (1d6) lightning damage at the start of each of the whale's turns.

If the whale takes 25 damage or more on a single turn from a creature inside it, the whale must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw at the end of that turn or regurgitate all swallowed creatures, which fall prone in a space within 10 feet of the whale. If the whale dies, a swallowed creature can escape from the corpse by using 20 feet of movement, exiting prone.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (3d6 + 6) bludgeoning damage plus 10 (3d6) thunder damage.

STORM SPIRIT

Believed to be the product of numerous corrupt and villainous souls, a storm spirit is the worst possible denizen of the sky a Rocborne Home can encounter. Capable of laying waste to the unprepared, storm spirits are cruel, destructive forces of nature. Many of the Rocborne's stories warn that incurring nature's wrath will lead a storm spirit towards the offender's home to lay waste to all they hold dear.

STORM SPIRIT

Huge elemental, unaligned

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 105 (10d12 + 40)

Speed 0 ft., fly 60 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	18 (+4)	18 (+4)	3 (-4)	15 (+2)	7 (-2)

Saves Int +0, Wis +6

Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire

Damage Immunities lightning, poison, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities deafened, exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, stunned, unconscious

Senses blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages —

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Air Form. The storm spirit can enter a hostile creature's space and stop there. It can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

Flyby. The storm spirit doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when it flies out of an enemy's reach.

Magic Resistance. The storm spirit has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The storm spirit makes two Spirit Surge attacks.

Spirit Surge. *Melee Spell Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 0 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (4d6 + 4) lightning damage.

Storm Burst (5-6). Each creature within 30 feet of the storm spirit must make a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw, taking 22 (4d10) lightning damage and 22 (4d10) thunder damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

SWARM OF RAIN HORNETS

A constant nuisance for the Rocborne and other travelers of the upper echelons of the stratosphere, rain hornets are elementals attracted to rain and dense clouds. They are almost never encountered alone, preferring to travel as large swarms.

SWARM OF RAIN HORNETS

Medium swarm of tiny elementals, unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 33 (6d8 + 6)

Speed 5 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
5 (-3)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	1 (-5)	9 (-1)	2 (-4)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, slashing

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained, stunned

Senses blindsight 10 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages —

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Downpour. If the swarm moves at least 20 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with an attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 7 (2d6) piercing damage.

Freezing Rain. If the swarm takes cold damage, whenever it hits a creature with an attack before the end of its next turn, the attack deals cold damage instead of its normal damage type.

Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Tiny hornet. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

ACTIONS

Stings. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 0 ft., one target in the swarm's space. *Hit:* 14 (4d6) piercing damage, or 7 (2d6) piercing damage if the swarm has half of its hit points or fewer.

THUNDERBIRD

Believed to be the product of an ancient Roc blessed or cursed by intense lightning energies, the thunderbird is both feared and revered by the denizens of the sky and the Rocborne. With intense grasp and control over various storm magics, the thunderbird claims vast swathes of the sky as its territory, especially areas like deserts that are prone to violent thunderstorms or monsoons.

THUNDERBIRD

Gargantuan monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 248 (16d20 + 80)

Speed 20 ft., fly 120 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
28 (+9)	10 (+0)	20 (+5)	3 (-4)	10 (+0)	9 (-1)

Saving Throws Dex +4, Con +9, Wis +4, Cha +3

Skills Perception +4

Damage Immunities lightning, thunder

Senses passive Perception 14

Languages Auran

Challenge 13 (10,000 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The thunderbird's innate spellcasting ability is Constitution (spell save DC 17). The thunderbird can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *call lightning* (as a 5th-level spell)

3/day: *control water*, *ice storm*

1/day: *control weather*

Keen Sight. The thunderbird has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Siege Monster. The thunderbird deals double damage to objects and structures (included in Thunderclap).

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The thunderbird makes two attacks: one with its beak and one with its talons.

Beak. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 27 (4d8 + 9) piercing damage plus 13 (2d12) lightning damage.

Talons. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 23 (4d6 + 9) slashing damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 19). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the thunderbird can't use its talons on another target.

Thunderclap (Recharge 5–6). The thunderbird flaps its wings, unleashing a powerful, concussive burst upon the surrounding area. The burst deals 100 thunder damage to all structures within 60 feet of the thunderbird, and each creature in the area must make a DC 17 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 39 (6d12) thunder damage and is pushed 30 feet away from the thunderbird and knocked prone. On a successful save, a creature takes half as much damage and isn't pushed or knocked prone.



ROCBORNE RANGER

NEW CHARACTER OPTION: RANGER

Rangers guard the realms against all manner of evil, both natural and unnatural. These intrepid hunters are as capable of felling great beasts as they are hiding in plain sight. Masters of tracking and survival skills, rangers are often the first to discover and warn others of impending danger, calling upon natural magics to aid them in their attempts to rid the world of corruption. Depending on their origin and focus, a ranger is just as likely to be seen traversing cursed swamps as they are to be leaping from rooftops in new and mysterious planes of existence.

ROCBORNE

The Rocborne are nomads of the sky who travel the world on the backs of ancestral rocs. These travelers understand that the air and wind aren't just one force but the collective effort of untold numbers of spirits that are carried along by it. By listening to the wind the same way a medium beckons to the dead, a Rocborne can learn more about the weather, their path forward, and even themselves. Many Rocborne grow up and live in this culture for their entire lives, but some have been known to begin their own journeys. Alternatively, your path may have been crossed by a powerful windborne spirit later on in life, allowing you to suddenly feel and heed the guiding wind inside you.

By calling on the spirits of the wind to aid them, rangers of this archetype can exert a degree of control over both wind and weather. These skills were passed down from the rocs to the first Rocborne and continue to live on through the dedicated instruction of Rocborne elders, both living and dead. You may be taught these skills or have them passed on to you through the guidance of Rocborne spirits in whispers, dreams, or in moments of deep meditation.

ROCBORNE MAGIC

Starting at 3rd level, you learn an additional spell when you reach certain levels in this class, as shown in the Rocborne Spells table. The spell counts as a ranger spell for you, but it doesn't count against the number of ranger spells you know.

ROCBORNE SPELLS

Ranger Level	Spell
3rd	<i>feather fall</i>
5th	<i>gust of wind</i>
9th	<i>call lightning</i>
13th	<i>ice storm</i>
17th	<i>legend lore</i>

GUIDING WIND

Starting at 3rd level, when you make an attack, you can whisper to the wind to have it aid your strikes. Once on each of your turns, you can choose to gain one of the following benefits:

- When you hit with a weapon attack, the target takes an extra 1d6 damage of the weapon's type. When you reach 11th level in this class, the extra damage increases to 1d8.
- When you miss with a weapon attack, you can change its trajectory to attack a different target up to 5 feet away from the original one and within range of your weapon. When you do, your attack roll against the new target is equal to the original attack roll plus your Wisdom modifier (minimum of +0). When you reach 11th level in this class, the new target can be up to 15 feet away as long as it's still within range of your weapon.

WHISPERS OF KNOWLEDGE

Also at 3rd level, you can seek knowledge through meditation by calling upon the spirits carried on the wind. You can spend 10 minutes communing with these spirits to gain proficiency in one skill or tool of your choice that you don't already have proficiency in, as a traveling spirit shares its knowledge with you. You lose this proficiency the next time you use this feature or finish a short or long rest.

You can use this feature a number of times equal to your Wisdom modifier (a minimum of once). You regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest.

WINDSWEPT

By 7th level, the wind clears a path for you and ushers you forward. Your walking speed increases by 5 feet, you ignore

any movement penalty caused by strong wind, and you can't be pushed because of strong wind against your will.

In addition, you have resistance to cold damage, and you're acclimated to high altitudes, including elevations above 20,000 feet.

LEAP OF FAITH

At 11th level, you can use a bonus action immediately after you make a running jump to grow a pair of spectral, roc-like wings that last until the end of your next turn or until you touch the ground again. While the wings are present, you have a flying speed equal to your walking speed.

HURRICANE

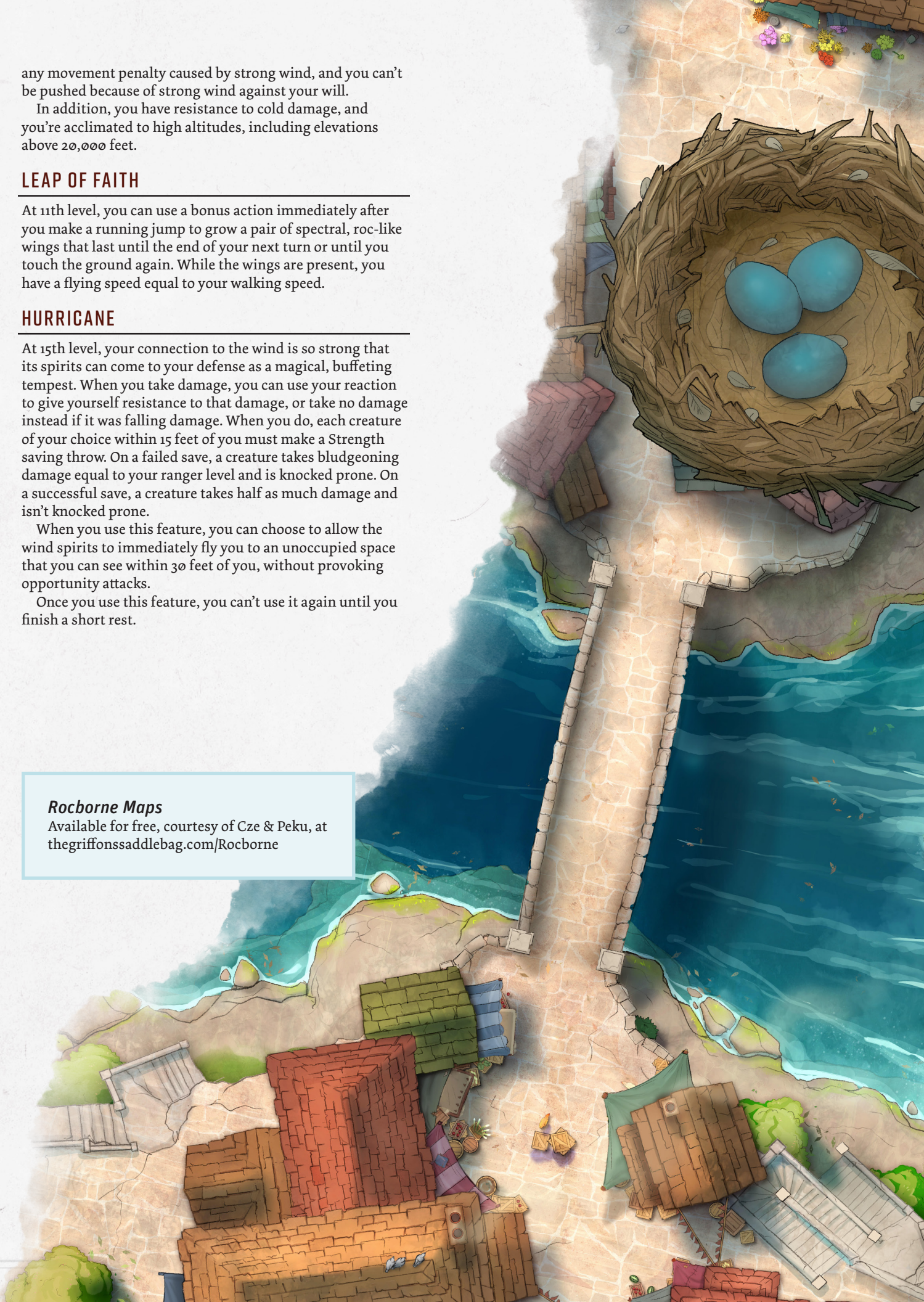
At 15th level, your connection to the wind is so strong that its spirits can come to your defense as a magical, buffeting tempest. When you take damage, you can use your reaction to give yourself resistance to that damage, or take no damage instead if it was falling damage. When you do, each creature of your choice within 15 feet of you must make a Strength saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes bludgeoning damage equal to your ranger level and is knocked prone. On a successful save, a creature takes half as much damage and isn't knocked prone.

When you use this feature, you can choose to allow the wind spirits to immediately fly you to an unoccupied space that you can see within 30 feet of you, without provoking opportunity attacks.

Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a short rest.

Rocborne Maps

Available for free, courtesy of Cze & Peku, at thegriffonsaddlebag.com/Rocborne



NIMBUS, FIRST STAFF
OF THE THUNDERBIRDS



NIMBUS, FIRST STAFF OF THE THUNDERBIRDS

Staff, artifact (requires attunement)

This ancient staff was created when a piece of driftwood was struck by lightning, fusing it to a twisted length of glass made from the sand on which it laid. Revered by the Rocborne nomads and other worldly travelers, this one-of-a-kind crook carries with it the power of storms, tempests, and the wind spirits that control them. When it appears, it falls from the sky in the eye of a storm or a flash of lightning.

This staff can be wielded as a magic quarterstaff that grants a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with it. In addition, when you attack with the staff, you can choose to make a special ranged attack with it instead. This attack is a ranged spell attack with a range of 30 feet. You are proficient with it, and you add your Wisdom modifier to its attack and damage rolls. On a hit, it deals 1d6 bludgeoning damage as a gust of magic wind batters the target.

Variant Properties. Some properties of this artifact are locked behind layers of dormant magic. As you grow stronger and reach certain milestones, these properties may become available to you. This staff can have up to 3 of the following properties active at a time. When you attune to *Nimbus*, you can choose to activate up to 3 of its variant properties whose prerequisites you meet. Whenever you finish a long rest, you can replace any of the activated properties with another one.

- The staff can be used as a broom of flying.
- (Prerequisite: 5th level) While holding the staff, you can use a bonus action to cast the shillelagh spell with it.
- (Prerequisite: 5th level druid or ranger) The staff gains 8 charges and regains 1d6 + 2 expended charges daily at dawn. While holding it, you can use an action to

expend 1 or more of its charges to cast one of the following spells from it, using your spell save DC: *create or destroy water* (1 charge), *fog cloud* (1 charge), *misty step* (2 charges), *sleet storm* (3 charges), or *thunderwave* (2nd-level version, 2 charges). If you activate another property that causes the staff to gain charges, the total number of charges and regained charges are cumulative.

- (Prerequisite: 9th level) Your bonus to attack and damage rolls with this weapon increases to +2, and the special ranged attack's damage die becomes a d8. When you reach 17th level, the bonus increases to +3, and the ranged attack's damage die becomes a d10.
- (Prerequisite: 9th level) The first target hit by the staff on each of your turns takes an extra 1d6 cold, lightning, or thunder damage (your choice).
- (Prerequisite: 13th level druid or ranger) The staff gains 8 charges and regains 1d6 + 2 expended charges daily at dawn. While holding it, you can use an action to expend 1 or more of its charges to cast one of the following spells from it, using your spell save DC: *lightning bolt* (3 charges), *shatter* (2 charges), *spirit guardians* (3 charges), or *wind wall* (3 charges). If you activate another property that causes the staff to gain charges, the total number of charges and regained charges are cumulative.
- (Prerequisite: 13th level) While holding the staff, you have resistance to cold, lightning, or thunder damage (your choice). When you finish a long rest, you can change this resistance to a different one.
- (Prerequisite: 17th level) While holding the staff, you can take the Dash action as a bonus action on your turn, as wind spirits help usher you forward.
- (Prerequisite: 17th level druid or ranger) The staff gains 8 charges and regains 1d6 + 2 expended charges daily at dawn. While holding it, you can use an action to expend 1 or more of its charges to cast one of the following spells from it, using your spell save DC: *chain lightning* (6 charges), *cloudkill* (5 charges), *cone of cold* (5 charges), *control weather* (8 charges), or *fly* (3 charges, or 6 charges to cast at 6th level). If you activate another property that causes the staff to gain charges, the total number of charges and regained charges are cumulative.
- (Prerequisite: 20th level druid or ranger) You gain the benefits of all of this staff's variant properties. In addition, if you are a ranger, you can summon a roc to your location by spending 8 hours performing an ancient Rocborne ritual. The roc is friendly toward you and your companions, its Intelligence becomes 6, and it gains the ability to understand one language of your choice that you speak. Once this property of the staff has been used, it can't be used again until you dismiss the roc using an action or until the roc dies. If the roc dies, this property can't be used again for 30 days.

Destroying Nimbus. The only way to destroy *Nimbus*, *First Staff of the Thunderbirds* is to keep it in a vacuum for 10 years, depriving it of any air, at which point the staff cracks open to release the swirling storm inside it. If the force of the released storm causes the vacuum to end, the storm escapes and continues to rage above that location for 1 year.