



MEET THE BORAK

Superficially, the Borak appear to be reptilian, but they are more closely similar to avians. Biologically, the Borak are warm-blooded, but not mammalian. The Borak are oxygen-nitrogen breathers, although they are used to lower air pressure.

The Borak inhabit a Class-L planet, Borax, in the Hydran Off Map area. The planet Borak orbits the red giant Boreakon. It has a gravity of 1.02g and a surface air pressure of 0.86. The mean temperature is 54°F. The Borak homeworld has few standing oceans, with the surface being mostly arid land, but it has several extensive underground seas. It is also tidally locked, so the same side faces the sun at all times. This means one side of the Borak homeworld is too hot, and the other too cold; with the majority of any above-ground settlements being located along a (relatively) narrow band at the terminator. Fortunately, the planet Borak is large enough that this provided plenty of space.

The Borak evolved as cave dwellers; there are extensive cave networks on their homeworld of Borax. When they moved onto the surface of their world as their civilization advanced, they never completely abandoned the deep caves. Although modern Borak are not strictly nocturnal, and thus can see during the day (and in daytime light levels), they have a secondary set of sensory organs that detect and measure heat, which they used to find prey in the dark caves.

The Borak tend to prefer cooler temperatures, but can function in the hot depths of volcanic caves if necessary. Their natural habitat is in the deep earth surrounded by rock; thus there is not much "soft" about the Borak's physiology. Their skin is leathery with small scales over the back and many areas.

In pre-spaceflight times, the Borak had developed several large, independent "cavern states" that occasionally competed for resources and fought wars. As they advanced technologically, they formed a loose "league" of cavern-states in mutual self-interest towards common advancement and survival. As they reached for the stars, this loose league was strengthened and became the Borak Star League. Each major cavern system is autonomous but answers to the Council of the League. While there might be divisions on the ground (during peacetime), in space the Borak Star League Navy answered directly to the Council and therefore, the League, not to any single cavern system. Indeed, the Navy became almost a cavern-league unto itself.

As cave dwellers and hunters, the Borak have a strong territorial drive. They tend to think defensively and are more concerned about holding existing territory (or reclaiming it once lost) than they are in conquest.

The Borak are long-lived compared to humans, with a life span of around 300 years. This extended lifespan drives their attachment to territory. The Borak continue to grow throughout their lives. A young adult Borak (age 30-60) might stand six feet tall when on his hind legs; an elder Borak (200+) would tower at about 12 feet. The Borak can rear up like bipeds or walk as a quadruped, at their choice; they are a bit faster "on fours" than erect. The Borak are six-limbed, with two powerful "forearms" that are useful for combat or heavy lifting; two slender and dexterous "manipulator arms" useful for fine work; and two powerful back legs. They also have a long whip-like tail that ends in a bony spike. Their hands each have five digits including a thumb.

As an adult Borak ages (and therefore grows), his role in life changes as there are caverns he can no longer fit into. This was also true for starship duty. Young Borak were often used in board-

ing actions, whereas a senior Borak might not even fit (despite his flexibility) into a Hydran corridor.

Agoraphobia (the fear of wide-open spaces) is somewhat common amongst Borak who have not been specifically trained to function in such areas. Borak are no more (and no less) as prone to psychic abilities as humans or Klingons. —*Jeremy Gray*

GURPS DATA

45 points

Advantages: Arm DX+1 (upper arms) [16]; Damage Resistance 1 (tough skin) [5]; Extended Lifespan 2 (360 years) [4]; Extra Arms 2 (lower arms, foot manipulators, temporary disadvantage: lame, 1/2 move, -10%) [18]; Infravision [10]; Sharp Claws [5]; Striker (tail, piercing damage, long, clumsy, -1 to hit) [8]; Temperature Tolerance 4 [4].

Disadvantages: Obsession (territorial, 9 or less resistance) [-15]; Phobia (open spaces, 12 or less resistance) [-10]. Elderly Borak (~120 years): +1 Size Modifier, -10% to ST cost. Very Old Borak (~200 years): +2 Size Modifier, -20% to ST cost. —*James Goodrich*

PD20M DATA

Species Traits

Size: As Medium creatures, Borak have no special bonuses or penalties due to their size.

Ability Modifiers: +2 to Dexterity, +2 to Strength / -4 Charisma (treat their Charisma as -0 when dealing with other Borak).

Base Speed: 20 feet; when they are "on fours" they have a base land speed of 40 feet.

Darkvision: Borak can see up to 60 feet in total darkness, although individual colors cannot be distinguished.

Natural Weapon: Borak have a spiked tail [Tail Whip, +2 to hit, 1d6+1 damage, 5 feet range + 1 foot for each age category]

Saving Throw Bonuses: Borak have a +2 to all Fortitude saves versus cold and cold-like effects.

Bonus Feats: All Borak receive the Multidexterity feat regardless of the prerequisite.

Free Language Skills: Read/Write Borak, Read/Write Hydran, Speak Borak, Speak Hydran.

Other Languages: Any language the character can learn.

Agoraphobia: Unless specially trained, when exposed to open spaces the Borak must make a Will roll (DC15) or be paralyzed and unable to function. A paralyzed Borak may attempt a follow-up check (DC20) every turn to overcome the paralyzing fear.

Size Modifier: As the Borak continue to grow, a middle-aged (or older) Borak will be classified as a Large creature, with the appropriate bonuses/penalties for Large creatures.

Other Modifiers: Borak have a damage resistance equal to DR 5/- due to their tough skin. —*Tony L. Thomas*

