



Fig. I: The island that was not an island, sounding at last. House-style plate.

CRYPTID № 12

THE KRAKEN

The biggest monster in the guide, and the one that turned out to be real. Norse sailors' island-that-moves and ship-drowning whirlpool, and the giant squid that finally answered for it. Real folklore, a full 5E stat block, and a system-neutral card.

"Every other monster in this book might be nothing. This one was the sea telling the truth."

THE LEGEND

The Kraken is the largest monster in this entire field guide, and it is not close. It lives in the deep cold water of the North Atlantic. It lies out past sight of land, between Norway and Iceland. It is so vast that sailors have moored on its back and lit cooking fires there. They believed they had found a new island. Then the island moved. Everything else about the Kraken follows from that one fact of scale.

When the Kraken rises to feed, it floods the sea around it. Shoals of fish gather in the churn. When it sounds again, diving back to the deep, it pulls the whole ocean down after it. That descent opens a whirlpool wide enough to swallow a ship whole. A vessel too close is simply drawn down

into the dark with everything aboard. The Kraken never has to attack a ship at all, though its arms can crush one if it chooses.

It is one of the oldest monsters we have written down. It swims through the thirteenth-century Norse sagas as the hafgufa, the sea-mist. It was a beast so large it was mistaken for a chain of islands. It surfaces again in the medieval King's Mirror, a wonder of the northern deep. Six centuries later, a Danish bishop named Erik Pontoppidan wrote it into his Natural History of Norway, in 1752. He called it round and flat and full of arms, the largest and most surprising creature in the world. For most of its life, the Kraken was the name sailors gave to an ocean too big to explain.

And then, almost alone among the monsters in this guide, the Kraken turned out to be real. Naturalists laughed it off as a fable, until the deep began handing up the evidence. Arms as thick as a mast washed onto beaches. A carcass was hauled up by the French ship Aleuton, in 1861. And finally, in 2004, came the first photographs of a living giant squid. It was far down in the black water off Japan. Architeuthis is real, and it is enormous. It has the largest eyes of any animal that has ever lived. And it lives exactly where the sagas said the Kraken did. The monster was a real animal the whole time, waiting at a depth no one could follow.

So the Kraken is the fear of scale itself. It is the fear of an ocean deep enough and wide enough to hide something bigger than your ship. Bigger than the island you thought you were standing on. It has no need of malice. It is simply too large for the world you can see, and it belongs to the one you cannot. Keep it in mind as a corrective to every other entry here. Most of these monsters are almost certainly nothing. This one was the sea telling the truth, and the sea is not finished talking.

For D&D 5E

STAT BLOCK

The Kraken

Gargantuan monstrosity (titan), unaligned

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 279 (17d20 + 102)

Speed 20 ft., swim 80 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
30	11	22	5	14	10
(+10)	(+0)	(+6)	(-3)	(+2)	(+0)

Skills Perception +8

Senses blindsight 120 ft. (in water only), darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 18

Challenge 15 (13,000 XP) **PB** +5

Island-Back. While the Kraken floats at the surface with its back exposed and still, it is indistinguishable from a rocky islet. A creature can walk, land, or moor on it, and only a successful DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check, or the Kraken moving, reveals the truth. When the Kraken sounds, diving for the deep, any creatures on its back fall or are carried under (see Sounding Maelstrom).

Sounding Maelstrom. When the Kraken dives from the surface, every ship and swimming creature within 120 feet is caught in the whirlpool it leaves. Each must succeed on a DC 18 Strength saving throw or be pulled 30 feet toward the vortex and dragged underwater; a creature or vessel pulled to the center is submerged and begins to drown or founder. The pull persists for 1 minute or until the Kraken surfaces again.

Deep Dweller. The Kraken can hold its breath indefinitely, is immune

**For Every Other
Game**

**CREATURE
CARD**

The Kraken

No stat lines. Just what it is and how to point it at your players, whatever system you run. A creature so large it is mistaken for an island, that drowns ships not by attacking them but simply by diving, and that, alone among the monsters here, turned out to be a real animal waiting in the deep. Where the Squonk cannot be held, the Kraken cannot be fled, because the ocean it owns is the road you are already on.

HOW IT BEHAVES AT THE TABLE

- **Its weapon is scale, not spite.** It has no grudge against the party. The danger is that it is too big for the world they can see, and they are in its water.
- **The ground is alive.** The signature beat is the island that turns out to be the monster: let them land, build a fire, get comfortable, and then feel it move.
- **It drowns you by leaving.** When it sounds, it opens a whirlpool that takes whatever is near. Often the party never trades a single blow with it and still nearly dies.

to the pressure and cold of the deep, and cannot be surprised while in water. It has advantage on saving throws against being moved or knocked prone.

Siege Monster. The Kraken deals double damage to objects and structures, including ships.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Kraken makes three tentacle attacks, each of which it can replace with one use of Fling.

Tentacle. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +15 to hit, reach 30 ft., one target. *Hit:* 24 (3d10 + 10) bludgeoning damage. The target is grappled (escape DC 20) if it is a Huge or smaller creature, and is restrained until the grapple ends. The Kraken has ten tentacles, up to three of which can grapple at once.

Rend. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +15 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature grappled by the Kraken. *Hit:* 27 (4d8 + 10) piercing damage. If this reduces the target to 0 hit points, the Kraken swallows it.

Fling. One creature grappled by the Kraken is thrown up to 60 feet in a direction of the Kraken's choice, into the water or into the air, and lands prone, taking 14 (4d6) bludgeoning damage if it strikes a solid surface.

Capsize (Recharge 5-6). The Kraken heaves against one ship within 30 feet that is Gargantuan or smaller. The vessel's crew must each succeed on a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw or be pitched into the sea; the vessel capsizes on a failed DC 20

WAYS TO USE IT

- **The island that wakes.** The party is shipwrecked or resting on a small rocky island. It is the Kraken. Now the encounter is about getting clear before it sounds.
- **The crossing that should have been routine.** A sea voyage the party has to make. A whirlpool where the last ship vanished. Something enormous moving under the hull in the dark.
- **The thing the smaller monster hints at.** Fishermen keep hauling up single arms as thick as a mast. Something down there is shedding pieces of itself, and it is not small.
- **Cut it loose from the North Atlantic.** Any water deep enough to hide it will do: a bottomless lake, a flooded chasm, the void between stars for a spelljamming table. Keep the false island, the drowning whirlpool, and the scale.

DIFFICULTY DIAL

- It spans the whole range by DISTANCE. Far off it is pure dread, a sounding on the horizon and a story about the ship that did not come back, no combat at all. Up close it is a campaign-ending leviathan.
- Make it *survivable* by making escape the win: the goal is to get off its back or out of the whirlpool, not to kill it. Make it *final* by letting the party

Strength (or Dexterity) save by its pilot.

Running it. The Kraken is a capstone, and the star of the block is not the tentacles, it is Island-Back and Sounding Maelstrom: the horror is realizing the ground under your feet is alive, and the sea itself is now trying to pull you down. Run the reveal first and the fight second. It is deliberately CR 15, a real threat to a high-level party, but the Codex is a toolbox at every tier, so scale it freely: at low levels it never fights at all, it is a distant sounding on the horizon, a whirlpool that took the last ship, an island the party must get OFF before it wakes; at high levels it is the drowning, ship-cracking capstone above. Do not let it read as evil. It has no more malice than the tide. And remember the entry's twist at the table: unlike almost everything else in this guide, this one is real, so a party that survives it has met an actual animal, not a ghost story.

choose to hunt the thing that ate the coast, and giving them one desperate, ship-cracking fight in the deep.

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