

Monster ENCyclopedia: Ixitxachitl

This is a series of articles about specific monsters from D&D's history. Each entry takes a look at the origin of one D&D creature, and tracks its appearances and evolution across different editions. The ENCyclopedia series is busy with an alphabetical browse through the creatures of Dungeons & Dragons, with an article on one monster for each letter A-Z. For the ninth letter of the alphabet, we are examining the ixitxachitl.

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Origins

The ixitxachitl's first appearance was early in D&D's history in *Supplement II: Blackmoor*, which was released in September 1975. Although Dave Arneson was the author of *Blackmoor*, Steve Marsh contributed all of the underwater encounter monsters in the book, including the ixitxachitl, and he was kind enough to provide some additional information on its origins for this article. According to Marsh, the inspiration for the ixitxachitl came from one of Fritz Leiber's Fafhrd and Grey Mouser stories, in which they travel to the bottom of the sea in search of treasure, only to find that it is a trap laid by Cthulhoid monsters who like to dine on human treasure seekers. The name ixitxachitl was lifted directly from a Mormon pamphlet titled *Christ in the Americas* which touched on Aztec history.

Blackmoor was only the third D&D product ever published, and like the original D&D boxed set and *Supplement I: Greyhawk*, most of the monster descriptions it contains are quite sparse. Curiously, nothing in this initial appearance specifically mentions that ixitxachitl are aquatic creatures. It seems to be assumed that the reader will figure this out from the context, since most of the creatures detailed in the monster section of *Blackmoor* dwell underwater.

All of the main statistics for the new monsters are presented across two tables, with just eight columns, excluding ones for the name of the monster. From these tables we learn that ixitxachitl occur in groups of 90-150 and are encountered in their lairs 75% of the time. They have an armor of 5, a move of 9, and hit dice of 2(-1). Ixitxachitl have a bite attack which does 3-18 points of damage. They don't have a tail attack, which is something that, in retrospect, Marsh thinks he should have included. Ixitxachitl are listed as having a fairly generous quantity of treasure — thousands of silver and gold coins, a score or more of gems and jewelry, and a 40% chance of four miscellaneous magic items or maps plus a scroll.

The text description of the ixitxachitl deals mainly with their societal structure, and provides only a limited physical description of the creatures as resembling manta rays, with a flat blanket-like form. They are noted as a race of chaotic clerical philosophers. Marsh notes that the reference to "philosophers" was to a class which did not make it into the final rules. Almost all ixitxachitl are clerics with 80% of them being 1st-level and the remainder varying from 2nd to 11th level. Additionally, about 2% of the total population are magic users of 6th-11th level. The presence of high level spell-casters in a group increases the amount of treasure

typically possessed by an ixitxachitl colony. Marsh's intention was for encounters with ixitxachitl to be with a mass of spellcasters, and the prevalence of magic in their society is also the reason for their large treasure hoards. The text clarifies that magic items requiring hands cannot generally be used, but Marsh notes that were he to revisit the ixitxachitl's description in *Blackmoor* now, he would have clarified that they could use a single ring, by wearing it on their tails. This is also the approach later taken in *The Ecology of the Ixitxachitl*.

This initial description also introduces the “vampiric” variant — a full tenth of all ixitxachitl are said to be vampiric. Exactly what special abilities vampiric ixitxachitl have is not clear, but the text notes that they are affected by any holy or blessed items, so at this point it sounds as if they are vampires in the traditional undead sense. As we'll see later, that turns out not quite to be the case.

1st Edition

The *Monster Manual* made the ixitxachitl a fixture in Advanced D&D, and gives us the first picture of one. The illustration does indeed resemble a manta ray, as *Blackmoor* stated, but with more prominent eyes, a barbed tail and a mouth full of sharp fangs. The large eyes and overbite give it a rather goofy appearance.



Monster Manual (1977)

The creature's statistics have been overhauled here. Encountered groups now number a reduced 10-100, and are in their lairs only 60% of the time. Ixitxachitl have average to high intelligence, are medium-sized and have a single attack which does 3-12 damage (less than before). The description here doesn't specify if this is a bite or a barbed tail strike, but a bite can be assumed from the *Blackmoor* entry, and this is later confirmed in *Dragon* #71. Ixitxachitl are very rare monsters with an armor class of 6, 1+1 hit dice, and a movement rate of 12". They are of chaotic evil alignment and have standard magic resistance.

The *Monster Manual* description is a little more specific about their habitat than *Blackmoor*. Ixitxachitl now dwell in shallow tropical seas, with lairs typically made in coral reefs with a hidden secret entrance. As they progressed through different editions and settings, they would also be placed in deeper waters, which is closer to Marsh's original conception of ixitxachitl as a race not scared to build on the ocean floor, under the guidance of strong leadership. He also felt that they would not be out of place as residents of the Plane of Water.

As was the case in *Blackmoor*, a large chunk of the *Monster Manual* text deals with societal structure. One in every 10 ixitxachitl is a 2nd-level cleric, one in 20 is a 3rd-level cleric, and one in 50 is a 5th-level cleric. Groups larger than 50 gain an 8th-level cleric as a leader, plus two 6th-level guards, all of whom have boosted hit dice (quadruple for the leader, triple for the guards). It would be easy to assume that the balance of all ixitxachitl should be treated as 1st-level clerics just as they were in *Blackmoor*, particularly since “evil clerical spells” is listed as a special attack. Later, *Monster Cards, Set 2* clarifies that this is not the case, with only some of the race chosen at birth to become clerics. Exactly which spells are considered evil isn’t specified (yet).

Ixitxachitl still have pretty decent treasure hoards, usually consisting of silver, gold and platinum coins as well as gems and jewelry. The text notes that leaders (and their guards) are likely to possess a variety of additional magic items which can be worn or used without hands. These personal treasures exclude potions and scrolls for obvious reasons, but potions may still occasionally be found in the community hoard.

The concept of a vampiric variation is retained, but their frequency drops from one-in-ten to one-in-forty, and they no longer sound like undead creatures. Instead, vampiric ixitxachitl are described as “similar to their fellows”, but with three changes: they drain an energy level when they strike, they regenerate 3 hit points per round, and they have double hit dice. The index of monsters in the *Monster Manual II* implies that this variation is sometimes known as a “vampire fish”. When asked about his original intentions for the vampiric ixitxachitl, Steve Marsh indicated that it was the intention for them to share some of the abilities of vampires, but without having a communicable form of vampiric infection. He notes that the later *Ecology* article’s presentation of the vampiric ixitxachitl is close to what was originally intended, but he suggests that the original frequency in *Blackmoor* of one-in-ten was correct, with the vampiric variation being relatively common.

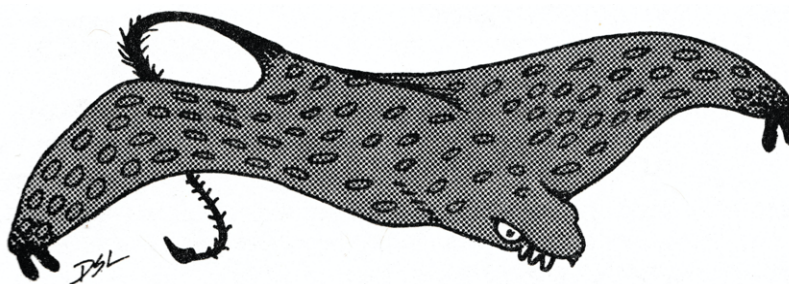
In the AD&D *Dungeon Masters Guide*, the ixitxachitl appears not only in the encounter tables, but also in the monster summoning tables (Appendix M). There aren’t very many low-level aquatic creatures in the game at this point, so an ixitxachitl is one of only two possibilities for a *monster summoning II* spell cast in salt water. For perhaps the same reason — not many alternatives — ixitxachitl appear in several 1st Edition adventures which have an underwater component.



C2: The Ghost Tower of Inverness (1977)

C2: *The Ghost Tower of Inverness* includes an ixitxachitl lair encounter, which stresses that their attacks should be “logical and cunning” given their high intelligence. Despite the *Monster Manual*’s specific prohibition on magic items which require hands, the leader of this group is wearing a *ring of protection*, apparently on “one of his finger-like appendages”. Perhaps this refers to the tips of the fins, as illustrated in the *Monster Manual*, because rays do not generally have any other appendages which could substitute for a finger.

Ixitxachitl pop up again in Q1: *Queen of the Demonweb Pits*, but indirectly. They are included on the encounter tables for The Great Ocean, one of the alternative Prime Material planes accessible through doorways in Lolth’s web. The other place they appear is in a “Chart of Chaotic Evil Monsters” for the *reincarnation* spell. Four full pages of this 32-page adventure are spent listing changes to magic spells and items while in the Abyss, and this includes a replacement table for any characters who have the misfortune of being reincarnated by the party druid. We also get another pretty goofy-looking picture, complete with those convenient finger-like appendages.



Q1: *Queen of the Demonweb Pits* (1980)

There is a colony of ixitxachitl dwelling in the Water Node in T1-4: *Temple of Elemental Evil*. Unusually for their kind, these rays are placid and avoid other creatures, only attacking if threatened. The adventure *After the Storm* in *Dungeon* #6 details a smaller colony of ixitxachitl living in Bluewater Cover in the Acitoff Ocean. This group is more traditionally aggressive, attacking unless obviously outnumbered.

In 1982, TSR released four sets of *Monster Cards*. These provided some of the first color pictures of many D&D monsters, including the ixitxachitl in Set 2. The picture is almost as goofy as earlier ones, and still has those finger-like appendages at the tips of its fins. The ray is depicted as yellow and green, with pink shading on the underside; this is the only time the creatures were shown with such bright coloration.



Monster Cards, Set 2 (1982)

As well as clarifying that only some ixitxachitl are chosen to become clerics, *Monster Cards, Set 2* also provides both a pronunciation guide (Iks-it-za-chit-l) and a more precise indication of size than in the *Monster Manual*, pegging the rays as four feet in length. The damage from their attack is specified as 1d10+2 here, instead of just the 3-12 range given in the *Monster Manual*.

Dragon #85 contains *The Ecology of the Ixitxachitl*, penned by no less than Ed Greenwood. It provides insight into ixitxachitl senses, society, combat tactics, religion, lifecycle and magic. We learn that, like sharks, ixitxachitl have receptors on their backs and tails which allow them to sense vibrations over great distances underwater. They have infravision and a sense of smell good enough to detect other creatures at short distances, and more disperse substances such as lamp oil or blood at a slightly greater distance. The distances for these are given in inches, but from the context, this appears to use AD&D's movement rate scale, which translates to 90 feet for their infravision and 40 feet for their sense of smell. Their normal vision is comparable to that of a human. Ixitxachitl have color vision and can see up to half a mile in clear, sun-lit water.

Ixitxachitl have their own language, or rather two different languages. As well as a strange-sounding spoken language, the rays have a form of touch-telepathy, a limited form of mental exchange only possible when two creatures are in direct physical contact. Ixitxachitl usually use their tails to make this connection and it enables them to transmit only emotions or general thoughts. Groups of ixitxachitl sometimes swim in connected stacks to facilitate communications, and this behavior is sometimes mistaken for mating or courting behavior. The *Ecology* article indicates that the rays can use this touch-telepathy with some other marine creatures, including sahuagin, but this idea is not explored further in collected D&D lore.

Carnivorous in nature, ixitxachitl prey on anything they can kill, extending to giant octopi, whales and even dragon turtles. When hunting large creatures, they work in packs. Because they are numerous and voracious, ixitxachitl sometimes range far from their lairs searching for food, which brings them into conflict with other races. In battle, ixitxachitl approach rapidly from opposing directions seeking to confuse prey by striking from two or more sides. The vampiric variety of ixitxachitl often lead these skirmishes. Clerics hang back until the most powerful opponents are identified, and then attack with spells. They try to synchronize their spells with the attacks of others in their group to prevent the target from escaping.

Ixitxachitl can burrow into the ocean floor, leaving only their eyes uncovered. They use this tactic to ambush swiftly moving prey, and rarely to hide from foes more powerful than themselves. More commonly though, they fight to the death unless stunned or immobilized. They are not reckless in battle but fight fiercely, with cunning, and without fear.

The *Ecology* article finally provides a comprehensive list of "evil clerical spells", and it is pleasingly consistent with spells previously listed for ixitxachitl clerics in *C2: The Ghost Tower of Inverness* and, later, in *I13: Adventure Pack I*. The article clarifies how ixitxachitl employ touch-effect spells using their bite attacks (the spell is always used up on the first successful bite after it is cast), and expands the use of magic items to include rings worn on tails, and rods, staves, or wands held in clenched jaws.



Dragon #85 (1984)

Although other creatures cannot distinguish between males and females, ixitxachitl have no problem doing so themselves, even at a distance. Individual females initiate mating by choosing a favorable male partner, sometimes aggressively. Each female does so once per year, but at varying individual times rather than seasonally. A single young (1-1 HD) is born six months after mating. It grows to maturity in a single month if food is plentiful, but the process can take up to three months if it is not. Most ixitxachitl live for about thirty years, but some have been known to live as long as three hundred years.

Curiously, the *Ecology* article contradicts the *Monster Cards* and reverts back to all ixitxachitl having the abilities of at least a 1st-level cleric. Young ixitxachitl only gain any spell abilities upon reaching adulthood. Ixitxachitl with the potential to become higher level clerics or leaders gain one spellcasting level every six months, and one additional hit dice each year until they reach their peak. Ixitxachitl leaders tend to enhance their lifespans by delegating dangerous tasks to lesser ixitxachitl. This process of delegation also includes grudges, so an individual or organization that has made an enemy of a powerful ixitxachitl may be pursued relentlessly by whole communities of rays.

Not all potential leaders are accepted by their colonies. Individuals who are deemed unsatisfactory are slain by other ixitxachitl in a group. Quite how these strange creatures judge their potential leaders isn't clear, but a purpose which differs from that of the group, or disloyalty to Demogorgon are possible triggers for rejection. This communal process of eliminating many potential leaders may explain why ixitxachitl domination over the oceans remains limited.

The *Ecology* article supports the *Monster Manual*'s suggestion that vampiric ixitxachitl are not vampires of the undead sort. Despite having an energy-draining bite and regeneration, the text notes that they lack many of the common characteristics of vampires — aversion to running water, ability to assume gaseous form and the ability to infect new vampires. Young vampiric ixitxachitl are able to regenerate from birth, but only gain their level-draining ability upon reaching adulthood. Vampiric traits are not hereditary and cannot be transmitted to other ixitxachitl, rather they appear randomly in newborns.

Vampiric ixitxachitl are influential and envied individuals, often becoming powerful war leaders, greatly feared by neighboring races. In groups of 100 or more the leader is usually both a high-level cleric and has vampiric traits. In smaller groups the leader can be an ordinary, but senior cleric, perhaps guarded by more junior vampiric guards. For the first time in the ecology article, there is a sense that ixitxachitl are capable of building significant undersea empires, and indeed are said to already rule large coastal areas of many worlds.

The *Ecology* article concludes by providing a pronunciation which is quite different from that given previously on the *Monster Cards*. Here, ick-zit-sah-chittle is noted as generally accepted. Steve Marsh, creator of the ixitxachitl, confirmed that this is, indeed, the correct way to say the creature's name, and mentioned that when Greenwood's *Ecology* article appeared in print, Marsh wrote to him to ask how he'd known the correct pronunciation. Greenwood wrote back to say that one of the "old timers" at TSR had corrected his original proposal.

A few other *Dragon Magazine* articles from the 1st Edition era added some miscellaneous snippets to ixitxachitl lore. *Ay pronunseeAYshun gyd* in *Dragon* #93 offers a third pronunciation, but one which is at least similar to that given on the *Monster Cards*: ik-ZIT-za-chit-ul. The article *A Touch of Evil* in *Dragon* #126 revisits the undead nature of the vampiric ixitxachitl. It acknowledges that the energy-draining and regenerative abilities could be natural abilities, but also posits that there may be truly undead ixitxachitl animated by magical spells or by Demogorgon (the ixitxachitl's deity). A potential encounter with an ixitxachitl lich is also suggested.

2nd Edition

Ixitxachitl were included in the very first 2nd Edition monster release, *Monstrous Compendium Volume One*. They appear there as part of a combined entry also covering manta, pungi and stingrays. Their statistics have changed very little from the *Monster Manual*, although the variants (clerics, guards, leaders and vampiric) are given more attention. Some of the details from the *Ecology* article are confirmed; ixitxachitl dwell in shallow tropical waters and are carnivorous. Changes from 1st edition are a wider variation in individual sizes (3'-8' wingspan), and much smaller encounter groups of only 5-12 ixitxachitl. A community of ixitxachitl is now formally known as a tribe and individuals are given a morale rating of elite (13).

The descriptive text accompanying the statistics block covers all the key points: ixitxachitl are intelligent, evil manta rays who hunt marine humanoids for food or sacrifice. They live in coral reef mazes in communities of up to a hundred. As in 1st Edition, there are a certain number of 2nd, 3rd and 5th-level priests in each tribe, and possibly an 8th-level priest leader with two 6th-level guards. Because demons and demon-lords were excised from early 2nd Edition products, these ixitxachitl do not specifically follow Demogorgon, but are simply said to "worship evil powers". The frequency of the vampiric variation remains 1 in 40.

The *Monstrous Compendium* helpfully provides a pronunciation guide. Unhelpfully, this turns out to be slightly different from all three previously offered pronunciations. Here, icks-it-ZACH-it-ul is correct.



Monstrous Manual (1993)

The *Monstrous Manual* was released in 1993, and collected many of the entries from the preceding fourteen volumes of the looseleaf *Monstrous Compendium* series. The ixitxachitl features twice, once under “Fish”, where it appears in a combined entry with almost two dozen other fish-like creatures, and once as its own full-page entry.

In the main entry, the only significant change to the statistics block is an adjustment to the XP values for some of the ixitxachitl variations. There is a new color illustration, which is less goofy than the 1st Edition versions, and no longer has “fingers” at the tips of its fins. (It will be a while until these strange appendages show up again.) The ixitxachitl is given more subdued black and white colors here, in contrast to the earlier *Monster Cards*.

Because there is a full page to fill, the description of the ixitxachitl has been expanded from the single paragraph in the *Monstrous Compendium* entry. Some of the lore from the *Ecology* article has been incorporated into the text, such as the tactic of burrowing into the ocean floor. The chances of priests and vampiric ixitxachitl occurring in a tribe remain unchanged, although a 6th-level priest is now called a “high priest”, and the accompanying guards are now “guardian priests”.

Slightly more detail is provided on ixitxachitl communities. We learn that large communities with strong leaders sometimes build on the ocean floor, rather than in the shallows. Apparently ixitxachitl favour pyramid structures in these settlements, presumably built by the community’s pool of humanoid slaves, of which they have a large number. Some of these settlements grow to city-sized, supporting tribes of ixitxachitl numbering in the thousands. The text notes that ixitxachitl occasionally dwell in rivers, and there is an example of such a river encounter in *Deck of Encounters, Set Two*, published the year after the *Monstrous*

Manual. This involves the PCs interrupting the sacrifice of an elven maiden to the river-dwelling ixitxachitl. In gratitude for her rescue, the elf insists that the heroes escort her home. The adventuring life can indeed be thankless.

The *Monstrous Manual* description of the vampiric ixitxachitl seems to support previous precedent that such creatures are not, in fact, vampires. However, the waters are immediately muddled again by the introduction of a new variation. Approximately one in a hundred of the normal vampiric variations is, instead, greater vampiric ixitxachitl. Greater vampiric ixitxachitl have 8+8 hit dice, and drain two levels from any creature other than their own kind. Although nothing in the text specifies that this variation is actually undead, greater vampiric status can only be passed on from one ixitxachitl to another by means of a bite, which seems to indicate a drift back to the school of thought that they are actual vampires. Large ixitxachitl cities tend to be ruled by a tyrannical greater vampiric ixitxachitl, who is worshiped by its kin as the incarnation of a greater power.

The *Monstrous Manual* presents three potential pronunciations of ixitxachitl, only one of which we've seen before. The two new options are ish-it-SHACH-itl and icks-it-zuh-chit-ul. In case you haven't been keeping count, we're already up to six different ways to say "ixitxachitl", and we still have three editions to go!



Of Ships and the Sea (1997)

There is a lone ixitxachitl in the adventure *Night of the Shark*. It has survived being tossed by sahuagin into the Temple of the Eater as a sacrifice, and now hides in a remote part of the temple. It will feign cooperation with visiting adventurers, but only until it sees an opportunity to slay them and take their stuff. Other notable ixitxachitl appearances in 2nd Edition sources include a mention in *DMGR7: The Complete Book of Necromancers*, where it is noted that hungry schools of ixitxachitl live in the seas around the Isle of the Necromancer Kings, and in *DMGR9: Of Ships and the Sea*, which claims that ixitxachitl are found in warm waters and usually only at fairly shallow depths, but then also places them in abyssal plains, continental shelves, oceanic ridges, coral reefs, and thermal vents.

Deck of Encounters, Set One has an encounter which bizarrely occurs when the adventurers are "deep in an underwater maze", as if that is a common occurrence. A nameless aquatic elf approaches the heroes and attempts to bribe them, not to help him to find a way out of the maze, but to drive away an entire tribe of ixitxachitl who have been slaughtering his kin. Helpfully, the encounter notes that it isn't necessary to butcher all of them to accomplish this goal; slaying a mere 72 ixitxachitl is sufficient to persuade the tribe to withdraw from elven waters.

Although not a 2nd Edition release, the *Spellfire* collectable card game was released during the 2nd Edition era, and card #55 of the *Powers* expansion set is an ixitxachitl.

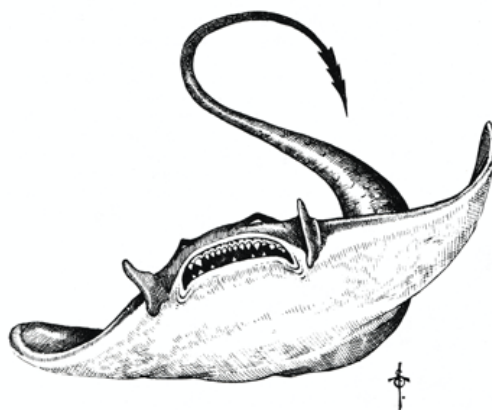


Spellfire, Powers expansion, card #55 (1995)

Ixzan

Introduced in *Night Below: An Underdark Campaign* and reprinted in *Monstrous Compendium Annual Volume Three* the following year, the ixzan is a very rare freshwater offshoot of the ixitxachitl. Ixzan are described as having barbed tails and mottled, brown-gray in color on their upper surfaces, with gray underbellies. They are otherwise similar in appearance to ixitxachitl but generally larger in size. The ixzan color scheme and barbed tail seem to have been carried over into the ixitxachitl genes in later editions.

Ixzan are semi-amphibious and can survive out of water for up to ten minutes before they start to suffocate. As they don't have legs, their movement across land is an awkward undulation, but their thick rubbery skin means that this does not cause them any discomfort. Ixzan have a swim speed of 12 and a fly speed of 3. They cannot navigate obstacles such as walls and boulders. These rays have slightly better infravision than ixitxachitl (90' range), and a form of sonar which they use to communicate. Unlike ixitxachitl, they cannot vocalize, and do not have a spoken language. Also unlike ixitxachitl, they are omnivorous. They have high-to-genius intelligence (13-18) and champion morale (16).



Ixzan, *Night Below: An Underdark Campaign* (1995)

In size, ixzan vary from medium sized (5' wingspan) to large (10' wingspan), with similar variations in hit dice (from 1+1 to 6+6), attack strength and bite damage (2d4 to 3d4). The stats block indicates that some ixzan have a second attack (doing from 1d8 to 1d10 damage depending on size), but the text isn't clear if this is intended to represent the creature's barbed tail.

Because ixzan communities are more isolated than those of their ocean-dwelling cousins, they have more variants. There are ixzan priests (10% of the population) and vampiric ixzan (3%), as with ixitxachitl, but some 5% of the population are wizards. These wizards do not have spellbooks and do not memorize spells. Instead they cast arcane spells as innate abilities. Ixzan wizards can cast spells from any school, but seem to favor divinations. In very rare cases, ixzan priest-wizards have been reported with access to both arcane and divine spells.

Further, approximately one in every fifty ixzan is a mutant, and has some minor physical change which gives it an advantage in combat. Examples given include natural magic resistance, tails with poisonous barbs, more than one tail, unusually dense jaw bone ridges providing a crushing bite, and skin which secretes a thick, corrosive slime.

Vampiric ixzan have a level-draining bite and regeneration. This causes them to have an extended lifespan and means that they usually rise to important positions of power within ixzan society. They have a higher than usual chance of being spellcasters (25% are priests, 25% wizards), but there are no vampiric ixzan with mutations, as these seem to be genetically mutually exclusive. Greater vampiric ixzan are rumored, but have never been confirmed.

Like ixitxachitl, ixzan prefer ambush tactics, and are usually encountered in small hunting parties of 3-10. They are active at all hours, but slightly favor daytime. Their primary attack is their bite, but spellcasters will also make full use of their magical capabilities. Ixzan gain a bonus to saving throws against illusions and water-based spells, and save against these spells even when there would not normally be a save. They have an armor class of 4, but their hard, rubbery skin means that they take only half damage from blunt weapons. Notably, ixzan spellcasters can cast spells even when *silenced* as they do not need to vocalize to cast.

Ixzan live in well-organized communities of 20-100 in large Underdark lakes where they use slaves and magic to construct their favoured pyramid structures. They are capable of modifying terrain to redirect watercourses and expand lakes to suit their needs. In *Night Below*, the ixzan have an entirely artificial floating island known as the Pyramid of the Ixzan. This community is commanded by a tyrannical vampiric priest, but ixzan communities are typically led by an oligarchy of powerful priests and wizards, rather than the single leader that ixitxachitl favor. Ixzan accumulate similar treasure to ixitxachitl.

Curiously, ixzan are born neutral, not chaotic evil. They become so as a result of grueling processes designed to weed out the weak and make the survivors ruthless. Because they are rare, young with wizardly potential get special treatment and are carefully protected, giving them an inflated sense of self-worth and a contempt for lesser creatures. The lifespan of a typical ixzan is 40-70 years, but mutants tend to have shorter lives, while spellcasting ixzan live longer. Vampiric ixzan are effectively immortal.

The ixzan significantly influenced future versions of the ixitxachitl, so much so that they can be viewed as a bridge between the 2nd Edition ixitxachitl and the demon rays of later editions. We'll return to the ixzan again when we look at the Forgotten Realms setting, where they continued to play a significant role in 3rd Edition.

3rd Edition

For its 3rd Edition appearance, the ixitxachitl was demoted to the *Monster Manual II* instead of appearing in the first monster book of the edition. According to *Dragon* #276 this was a decision made by *Monster Manual* compiler Skip Williams. He is quoted as saying (about the first *Monster Manual*), "And gone is the ixitxachitl. Not such a great monster, but I've always loved the name."

For their *Monster Manual II* appearance, the ixitxachitl received a size reduction, with all (non-vampiric) specimens being small instead of 1st Edition's medium-size, or 2nd Edition's small-to-large range. Their small size and individual weakness are turned into a feature, with the ixitxachitl's combat tactics indicating that they generally only attack in numbers, or when they are able to ambush their opponents from concealment beneath the ocean floor.

Most of the details of ixitxachitl society are maintained. They still create maze-like lairs in coral reefs, usually in warm, shallow waters. As we've seen previously, they are occasionally encountered in rivers, but here it is clarified that these are rivers which empty into the ocean, so presumably the river-dwelling rays are not specifically adapted for fresh water conditions. More emphasis is placed on their destructive habits and their tendency to accumulate slaves. They treat their homes badly, stripping them of all plant and animal life before moving on to find a new reef to despoil. According to the *Monster Manual II*, this lifestyle makes them universally despised by all other aquatic races, including merfolk, locathah, sahuagin and coastal-dwelling humans.



Monster Manual II (2002)

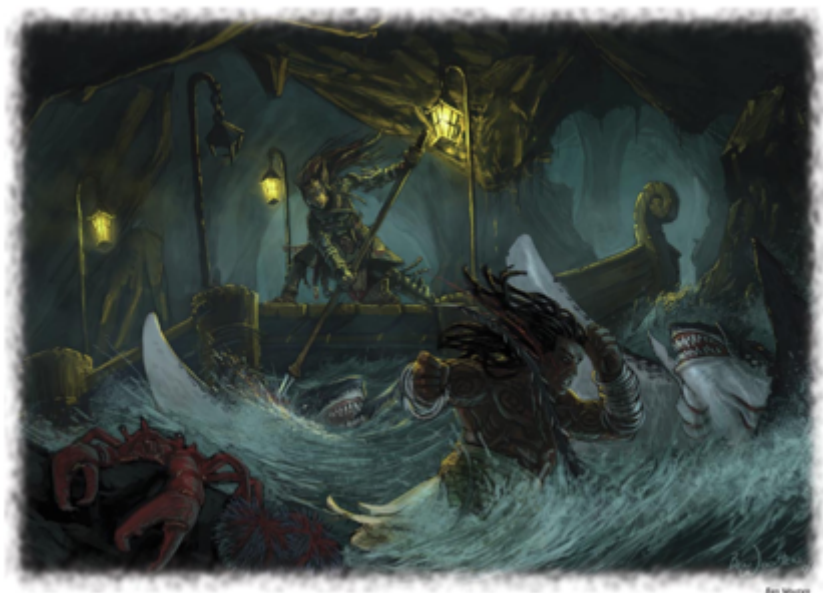
In appearance, the ixitxachitl of 3rd Edition have a brown or black topside, and a lighter colored bottom. These colors were probably inherited from the late 2nd Edition ixzan. Curiously, some of the elements which contributed to their goofy appearance in earlier artwork are turned into distinguishing features. Their mouths are filled with triangular, razor-sharp teeth, and they are said to have "intelligent and cruel" eyes.

Not too much has changed in the ixitxachitl stat block. They remain single hit dice creatures and have only a bite attack (a +2 melee attack dealing 1d6+1 damage), despite their dangerously spiky-looking tails (likely also inherited from the ixzan). They now have 60' darkvision, but there is no mention of any clerical or priestly spells as a standard ability. Instead, they have a favored class of cleric, and may serve any chaotic evil deity (Erythnul is suggested). Ixitxachitl have an armor class of 16, a swim speed of 30 ft. and the *dodge* feat. Unlike previous editions, they do not accumulate much treasure, with only wearable magic items indicated.

In 3rd Edition, the vampiric variety of ixitxachitl gets more space dedicated to it than the ordinary ixitxachitl, and it is here that we see some size variation, with individuals able to reach large size and 8 hit dice. The text is quite clear that vampiric ixitxachitl are not undead, and are thus immune to turning attempts. They have an *energy drain* ability which bestows negative levels and restores hit points to the creature, but they also gain *fast healing* so that they restore health even when not making attacks. As to be expected, the leaders of shoals are usually vampiric ixitxachitl, or failing that, have cleric levels.

The *D&D v.3.5 Accessory Update* booklet includes some changes to bring the *Monster Manual II* entry in-line with the 3.5 rules, but for the ixitxachitl these changes are limited to minor tweaks to its skills.

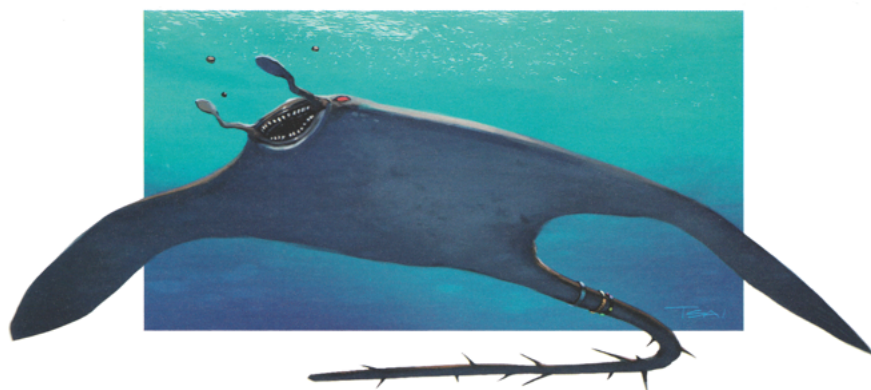
The environmental sourcebook *Stormwrack* contains many mentions of ixitxachitl, as might be expected for a book focussed on watery environs. The Wavekeeper prestige class is a kind of druidic defender for the ocean, and despite 3rd Edition's insistence that ixitxachitl are despised by all other aquatic races, one of the organizations associated with this class counts ixitxachitl amongst its members. The sample stat block for a Wavekeeper is for a merfolk, not an ixitxachitl, but one of his listed languages is ixitxachitl, so they still have their own language in 3rd Edition (even though that isn't mentioned in the *Monster Manual II*).



Dungeon #139 (2006)

In the adventure *There is No Honor* in *Dungeon #139*, the Lotus Dragons guild has recruited the aid of a tribe of ixitxachitl to assist them in their takeover of Sasserine's sea trade. The rays gnaw holes in the hulls of ships

owned by the guild's enemies and undertake any other aquatic missions assigned to them by the guild's leader.



Axihuatl, *Elder Evils* (2007)

Released towards the end of 3rd Edition, *Elder Evils* includes a chapter titled *The Leviathan*, which is all about a world-spanning creature that slumbers deep beneath the waves. One of the main protagonists in the associated adventure outline is a 290-year-old vampiric ixitxachitl named Axihuatl. Clocking in at a whopping 24 hit dice, Axihuatl is a 16th-level priest of Demogorgon. Thanks to a *wand of polymorph*, he spends much of his time masquerading as a human priest of the Leviathan. As unrepentantly evil as Axihuatl is, when his plans to awaken the Leviathan come to fruition, they go horribly wrong and he is forced to ally with the PC heroes to deal with this even greater threat.

Wisely, 3rd Edition seems to avoid providing any pronunciation guide for “ixitxachitl”. There is also no mention of the greater vampiric variation from the 2nd Edition *Monstrous Manual*.

4th Edition

One edition later, the poor ixitxachitl doesn't merit an appearance in any of the *Monster Manuals*, being instead relegated to the *Demonomicon* supplement. As has been mentioned previously in this series, comparing 4th Edition monsters to other editions is tricky, because the underlying math is so different, but the lore (what little of it there is) doesn't stray too far from what we already know.



Demonomicon (2010)

In 4th Edition, ixitxachitl are not only faithful servants of Demogorgon, but were created by him. More precisely, Demogorgon created manta rays when he was a primordial, and when their descendants followed him into the Abyss they were corrupted into ixitxachitl, fiendish creatures who hunger for mortal flesh. As well as controlling huge areas of the ocean in the mortal world, they also dwell in the Brine Flats, a shallow seabed in Demogorgon's Abyssal realm of Abysm. Ixitxachitl live in coral cityscapes, and are said to darken the ocean waters with "blood from a thousand sacrifices". They still despise sahuagin, but are now permitted to ally with aquatic undead, provided those undead are not beholden to Orcus.

Two types of ixitxachitl are presented in the book. The first, the ixitxachitl demon ray, is the equivalent of the normal ixitxachitl from previous editions. They are still low level creatures, but they do now (finally) get to use their tails, gaining a poisonous tail barb attack (a +6 melee attack doing 1d6+5 damage plus 1d6 poison damage and *slow*) in addition to a bite (a +8 attack for 1d8+6 damage). Creatures slowed by the poison cannot make opportunity attacks against the demon ray. They have 45 hit points, and an armor class of 17. Ixitxachitl demon rays are said to be cunning predators which strike from where they are hidden in silt clouds and beds of noxious weeds. Notably, these ixitxachitl gain a fly speed of 5 in addition to swim speed of 8, implying that they can function outside of their native aquatic environment. The language of 4th Edition ixitxachitl is Abyssal.

The second type is the ixitxachitl priest, which seems to be a blend of the vampiric and priestly sorts from earlier sources. They torture, kill and sacrifice for the glory of Demogorgon. Slightly more powerful than their demon ray brethren (66 hit points and an armor class of 19), the priest's normal bite also dazes their target (+8 attack for 1d10+7 damage plus the *daze*). This then allows it to use a *vampiric fangs* attack on the dazed opponent, which drains healing surges and weakens the target. The *vampiric fangs* take the place of the tail barbs, which this variation appears to lack. Priests have *Demogorgon's blessing* as an aura, which gives nearby allies a +5 bonus to damage.

Ixitxachitl don't seem to have been used much elsewhere in 4th Edition, although they do feature in the adventure *The Dawn of Night* in *Dungeon* #218, and again in *Lowdown in Highport* in the final issue, *Dungeon* #221. Interestingly, the latter adventure is actually a 1st Edition adventure, and the ixitxachitl only features in the 4th Edition conversion notes. Like 3rd Edition, 4th Edition avoids providing a pronunciation of ixitxachitl, but it does buck previous convention and uses "ixitxachitls" as the plural.

5th Edition

Almost exactly forty years after their first appearance, ixitxachitl made their 5th Edition debut in *Out of the Abyss*. Here, we get statistics for both ordinary ixitxachitl, and the vampiric sort, and there is even a sidebar with information on ixitxachitl clerics. The early lifecycle of an ixitxachitl is a struggle, as the freshly hatched young measure only a few inches across. They grow throughout their lives, but most adult young remain small in size. Vampiric specimens can grow to medium size. Ixitxachitl may be small creatures, but they are filled with evil and cunning and have black eyes gleaming with sinister intelligence.

Remember those "finger-like" appendages in early ixitxachitl art? 5th Edition makes those an official body part, with ixitxachitl now having small, clawed hands at the end of their wings. Steve Marsh noted in correspondence that he liked this change to his original creation. Their colors here have reverted to the monochrome appearance of early 2nd Edition. Ixitxachitl still hollow out coral reefs to make maze-like lairs,

but have expanded their habitat to include bodies of both salt and freshwater. They are as destructive to their environment as they always have been, stripping the ocean of resources, enslaving those they can and regularly warring with other aquatic creatures over territory.



Out of the Abyss (2015)

Although they do still venerate Demogorgon, and consider him to be both their patron and creator, they are not restricted to worshipping him, and may serve other demons. A rivalry with merrow is introduced here, with the ixitxachitl and the aquatic ogres competing over which of them are the most favored servants of the Prince of Demons.

Statistically, these ixitxachitl are a little more powerful than previously, having 4 hit dice (4d6+4 hit points) and an armor class of 15. They have kept the barbed tail attack (+5 melee, 1d8+3 piercing damage) from 4th Edition but they can use it only for an opportunity attack. Ixitxachitl also have their more traditional bite attack (+3 melee, 1d6+1 damage).

The vampiric sort has 8 hit dice (8d8+8 hit points) and an armor class of 16. It has a vampiric bite (+4 melee, 1d8+2 piercing damage) which drains hit points: the target's maximum hit point drop until it rests and the ixitxachitl gains those hit points. Its tail opportunity attack is stronger (+6 melee, 1d10+4 piercing damage) and the vampiric ixitxachitl regenerates 10 points each turn.

The sidebar detailing an ixitxachitl cleric variant is for a 5th-level spellcaster able to cast the following cleric spells: *dispel magic*, *tongues*, *hold person*, *silence*, *charm person*, *create or destroy water*, *guidance*, and *thaumaturgy*. Ixitxachitl speak both Abyssal, and their own Ixitxachitl language. They have darkvision 60 ft. and a swim

speed of 30 ft. All ixitxachitl are chaotic evil. *Out of the Abyss* kindly provides a pronunciation guide for ixitxachitl, and — you guessed it — it isn't quite the same as any of the six previous suggestions. In their latest incarnation, they are ick-zit-zah-chit-ul, which is at least reasonably close to Marsh's original intended intonation.

Ixitxachitl gods

The demonlord Demogorgon has been the ixitxachitl's deity of choice consistently through most of D&D's history, but the closest he gets to ixitxachitl worshippers in his original *Monster Manual* entry is this line: "His appearance testifies to his command of cold-blooded things such as serpents, reptiles, and octopi". Then, quite suddenly, in *Deities and Demigods Cyclopedia*, we learn that ixitxachitl worship Demogorgon, and can progress to 8th-level clerics. Quite why the ixitxachitl revere a demonlord remains a mystery at this stage. *Monster Cards, Set 2* confirms that Demogorgon rewards certain ixitxachitl with spell-casting powers, and that this is decided at birth.

The *Ecology* article in *Dragon #85* expands a little on the ixitxachitl's fanatical allegiance to Demogorgon. It is said to be partly inborn, and partly learned. Their awareness that they owe their abilities to Demogorgon strengthens their commitment to him. It is sometimes said that no creatures are more fervently loyal to the demon-lord than the ixitxachitl.

In 2nd Edition, demons and demonlords were initially left out of the game entirely, in order to make the game more politically correct. It didn't take long for them to be restored to the game (albeit under the "tanar'ri" pseudonym), and by the time *DMGR4: Monster Mythology* was published in 1992, Demogorgon's relationship with the demon rays was restored. In that book he is viewed as a usurper-deity who has been adopted by the ixitxachitl "for reasons the other races can only guess at". Ixitxachitl myths present Demogorgon as a savior-power, who has brought them magic to fight their enemies (usually sahuagin) and strengthen them.

It is also suggested that the energy draining ability of vampiric ixitxachitl somehow transfers magical energy to Demogorgon. The fact that it is usually the vampiric rays who become the most powerful priests is said to support this hypothesis. In describing Demogorgon's priesthood, *Monster Mythology* notes that priests allow the young of captive slaves to reach adulthood so that they have more life energy to drain when they are sacrificed. This too, suggests that the demonlord benefits from the vampiric life draining.

As well as representing Demogorgon's interests in the mortal world, ixitxachitl are also found in the Abyss. 3rd Edition descriptions of Demogorgon's realm of Abysm in *Stormwrack* and *Fiendish Codex I* note that they roam its foul seas, along with aboleths and kraken. They carve out enormous tunnel complexes in the seabed of the Brine Flats, and these lairs occasionally hold lore, magical items, or prisoners crucial to Demogorgon's plans.

Ixzan worship the evil Ilxendren, a lesser power depicted as a huge vampiric ray with flaming red eyes and a long, blue-tipped, barbed tail. The deity is an arrogant being, demanding of its worshippers and dismissive of other races, with the exception of aboleths which it admires and fears. The Ixzan revere Ilxendren as their creator and enjoy sacrificing sentient creatures to it. It is not clear if there are any ixitxachitl who follow Ilxendren instead of Demogorgon, except in the Forgotten Realms, as we'll see later.

Ixitxachitl and other monsters

Throughout D&D lore, the fairly poor relationship between ixitxachitl and other aquatic races is a recurring theme. As Steve Marsh puts it, ixitxachitl are “universally despised”. The rays will hunt, eat and sacrifice almost any creature, including whales, dragon turtles and giant clownfish (from *Dragon #250*). In *C2: The Ghost Tower of Inverness*, the ixitxachitl don’t pass up an opportunity to attack a nearby dinichthys.

The *Ecology* article in *Dragon #85* notes that they regularly battle with tritons, mermen and locathah. The superior tactics of these races has prevented ixitxachitl from dominating entire oceans, but influences the regions in which other species are active. Tritons prefer to dwell in deeper waters to avoid the rays, and the *Ecology* article concedes that the ixitxachitl have all but eradicated aquatic elves from some warm seas. Conversely, *PHBR8: The Complete Book of Elves* suggests that sea elves are sometimes able to keep the devastation of ixitxachitl to a minimum and *Dragon #116* suggests that ixitxachitl are too rare to pose a threat to most aquatic elves. *Dragon #41* notes that ixitxachitl also do not get on well with silkies, and *Sea of Fallen Stars* states that shalarin and ixitxachitl attack each other on sight.

When it comes to sahuagin, things seem to be more complicated. The *Monster Manual* states that sahuagin hate ixitxachitl. Conversely, the *Monstrous Manual* implies that ixitxachitl are one of the few underwater races that don’t hate sahuagin by default. The *Monster Manual* notes, and the *Ecology* article confirms that some sahuagin have learned the rudiments of the ixitxachitl language. However, it is clear that sahuagin and ixitxachitl don’t always get along. The sahuagin in *U3: The Final Enemy* have an ixitxachitl carcass in their larder, and in *I13: Adventure Pack I* ixitxachitl and sahuagin are skirmishing for control of shipwrecks, with enough casualties to stain the water dark with blood. *The Sea Devils* posits that the rivalry between the sahuagin god Sekolah and Demogorgon helps fuel the hostility between the two races. Because of their close relationship to sahuagin, sharks also tend to dislike ixitxachitl, except to eat, according to *Dragon #85*.

Despite their aggressive nature and voracious appetites, the ixitxachitl have a surprising number of allies. The ixitxachitl in *U3: The Final Enemy* are spies working for a vampire mage. *Dragon #85* notes that they sometimes cooperate with sea hags or even locathah for mutual gain, and that they have been known to hire or train creatures such as sea lions. Salt wiggles (from *MC7: Monstrous Compendium Spelljammer Appendix*) ally with ixitxachitl if they are paid, and *Lords of Madness* mentions oceanic aboleths as another common ally, especially for ixzan. In the *Dungeon Builder’s Guidebook’s* example of an underwater campaign, there is a monstrous kraken in control of an evil marine empire incorporating ixitxachitl. Ambitious Zakharan kraken (from *Dragon #198*) make pacts with ixitxachitl, agreeing not to destroy them in turn for servitude and tribute.

Ixitxachitl also seem to be on good terms with varrdig grue (*ALQ4: Secrets of the Lamp*), giant nautili (*Dragon #193*) and kopru (*PC3: The Sea People*). *Dragon #93* mentions ixitxachitl as one of the languages spoken by eyes of the deep, but it isn’t clear if this means they are allies.

Like ixitxachitl, ixzan have no natural predators. They do enjoy stalking Underdark creatures, especially svirfneblin and will happily snack on any type of gnome, given the chance. Ixzan do not have one particular racial rival, so their enemies vary from tribe to tribe. They are known to ally with aboleths, occasionally drow and most commonly with kuo-toa. When allied with aboleths, the ixzan are the junior partners, but

with kuo-toa allegiances the ixzan view their partners as stupid but strong servants. In battle, the kuo-toa form the front lines and take the risks, while the ixzan offer spellcasting support. Even when allied, kuo-toa and ixzan live in separate spaces. Some kuo-toa have a ritual to weed out the strongest of their spawn. This involves dumping their young into an underwater maze filled with ixzan, and celebrating the survivors who do not get eaten as worthy of the title of adult. Perhaps it was one of these underwater mazes that the adventurers in *Deck of Encounters, Set One* had stumbled into!

Ixitxachitl (and ixzan) are related to manta rays and other chondrichthyes. *Drizzt Do'Urden's Guide to the Underdark* notes that there is also a close physical resemblance between cloaklers, mantari, miners (forest trappers), and ixitxachitl.

Ixitxachitl and magic

Divine spellcasting is an integral part of ixitxachitl society. According to the *Ecology* article in *Dragon #85*, they are able to cast spells without requiring verbal, somatic or material components, but some more complex rituals do still demand movement and chanting. Although their spells are considered to be innate abilities bestowed upon them by Demogorgon, they are limited to casting each spell only once per day. They gain spell bonuses for wisdom as do clerics of other races. The *Ecology* article implies that ixitxachitl require magic to be able to communicate with anyone not familiar with their strange tongue.

Ixitxachitl spellcasters do pay a small price for their association with Demogorgon. Because of the deep-rooted enmity between him and Orcus, ixitxachitl are unable to magically control or influence undead, and intelligent marine undead will not aid or ally with them. The exception to this is undead raised directly by ixitxachitl clerics, over which the clerics are able to maintain limited control. When animating the dead, clerics prefer to animate their own kind. Ixitxachitl lack skeletons however, having only unconnected pieces of cartilage. This means that they cannot be animated as skeletons, but only as zombies. Clerics attempting to turn ixitxachitl zombies gain a +1 bonus to their efforts.

In the adventure *Grotto of the Queen* in *Dungeon #64* the ixitxachitl's cleric leader successfully casts *charm person* on a sailor to lure him into the ocean. According to *The Sea Devils*, sahuagin priests are able to charm ixitxachitl using the *charm person or mammal* spell. Because ixitxachitl have no means to function in a waterless environment, an *airy water* spell (or something similar) can be effective in keeping them at bay.

Ixitxachitl are prone to collecting treasure, especially magic items. As we already know, ixitxachitl can only use magic items suited to their anatomy (unless it's more convenient for an adventure writer to make up new finger-like body parts). The *Ecology* article clarifies this slightly, stating that they can use any magic items not specifically prohibited to clerics which can be worn and operated without hands. The article also notes that many magic items can be modified to be activated by mental commands instead of audible command words, thus making them more useful underwater. However, someone using *ESP* on an ixitxachitl while it is activating an item with a mental command will be able to pick up the command word from the creature's surface thoughts. An ixitxachitl community that comes into possession of a magic item that cannot be used, will hide it, both to keep others from using the item and for possible future use as a bargaining tool.

There are a small number of specific magic items with links to ixitxachitl. The *eidolon of Khalk'Ru*, from *Dragon #45* is a yellow crystal containing within it the image of a squid with twelve tentacles. It allows the

user to summon and *charm* a killer whale, giant squids, giant octopi or vampiric ixitxachitl. The eidolon comes with a downside though; if freed from the charm effect, the summoned creature will immediately attack the eidolon's user.

An item with a highly specific purpose is the *periapt of protection from vampiric ixitxachitl* (*Dragon#48*). It is made by tritons, and prevents vampiric ixitxachitl (and, oddly, lacedons) from getting closer than ten feet to the wearer. Brieme's *ring of ixitxachitl warding* (*Warriors of Heaven*) goes further, making the wearer entirely undetectable to ixitxachitl and other aquatic rays. The *vestments of Ehjax* are various ixitxachitl holy relics owned by the leader of the ixitxachitl of Serôs in the Forgotten Realms; they are mentioned in *Sea of Fallen Stars*, but the text doesn't detail their powers. Finally, the long sword used by the elven deity Deep Sashelas' avatar in *Monster Mythology* does double damage against ixitxachitl.

According to *Sea of Fallen Stars*, one of the many properties of the mythal in the underwater city of Myth Nantar was that it barred the entrance of some races into the city. Ixitachitl were one of the races blocked by this powerful magic. Unfortunately, in more recent times, the mythal has become unstable and no longer provides this protection (*DDAL-DRW-02: Blood in the Water*).

Forgotten Realms

Ixitxachitl have a long history in the Forgotten Realms — there is a vampiric guardian in the adventure included in the first *Forgotten Realms Campaign Set* — but they are particularly prominent in the underwater realm of Serôs. The *Sea of Fallen Stars* accessory covers this region in detail. Ixitxachitl are one of many races inhabiting the shallower areas of Serôs, particularly a region known as the Xedran Reefs. The rays have a theocracy ruled by a zealous vitanar named Ourqax from the capital of Xedras. The upper echelons of this theocracy are stacked with vampiric and greater vampiric ixitxachitl.

The ixitxachitl of Serôs are divided into a six-tiered hierarchy. At the lowest level are the common ixitxachitl, followed by priests (level 1-3) and vitans (level 4-5). The remaining three bands are made up of vampiric ixitxachitl, vitanar Guards (level 6-7), devitans (level 8-9) and finally the vitanar (level 10-11), who are greater vampiric ixitxachitl.



Sea of Fallen Stars (1999)

The deity Ilxendren was created by Carl Sargent in *Night Below* for the ixzan to worship, but appears to have been adopted into the Forgotten Realms as a lesser power worshiped by ixitxachitl in general. Centuries ago (prior to 875 DR), the ixitxachitl of Serôs worshiped demonic powers, but this changed with the coming of Ehjax, the First Prophet of Ilxendren and the First Vitanar of the Xedran Reefs. He was responsible for establishing the rules and strictures which govern the ixitxachitl of Serôs until today. Curiously, the ixitxachitl of the Xeran Reefs refuse to acknowledge that Ilxendren is worshiped by their freshwater cousins, as they cannot conceive that their god would have any followers other than themselves.

Sea of Fallen Stars mentions a type of white kelp known as 'chitl-bane because of the effect it has on the rays. Ixitxachitl, particularly the vampiric sort, cannot stand the smell and are forced to make an immediate morale check. Delightfully, *Sea of Fallen Stars* also offers yet another pronunciation of ixitxachitl (IKS-its-uh-chit-ul).

Cloak & Dagger tells the story of a rogue ixitxachitl priest named Vyqinak who fled the Xedran Reefs and abandoned his faith. He turned from Ilxendren to the worship of Demogorgon, who eventually led him to the harbor of Westgate. A chance encounter with the vampire Night King Orlak led to Vyqinak's transformation into a vampire, a status denied to him before he fled his own kind.

Ixitxachitl inhabit other areas of the Realms beyond Serôs, including the seas near Waterdeep (*City of Splendors*), the Fang Rocks in the Pirate Isles (*FOR3: Pirates of the Fallen Stars*), Lake Thaylambar and the Alamber Sea (*Spellbound*), and the coast of Turmish (*SPEC 3-3: Dance of the Sun and Moon*). Vampiric ixitxachitl dwell in the oceans far to the east of Kara-Tur's island nation of Kozakura, according to *OA1: Swords of the Daimyo*.

Dungeon #79 has an interesting adventure titled *The Akriloth*. Set in the underwater realm of Serôs, it features an ixitxachitl colony warring with a merfolk city (and some other factions). The leader of the ixitxachitl is named Xulkur. He is both a 9th-level priest and vampiric, but the most interesting twist in the adventure is that Xulkur has turned a mermaid into a velya — the mermaid equivalent of a vampire. Of course, given that (non-greater) vampiric ixitxachitl are not, in fact, undead, nor able to pass their vampirism on to other ixitxachitl, let alone turn other species into vampires, exactly how Xulkur created the velya is a mystery.



Dungeon #79 (2000)

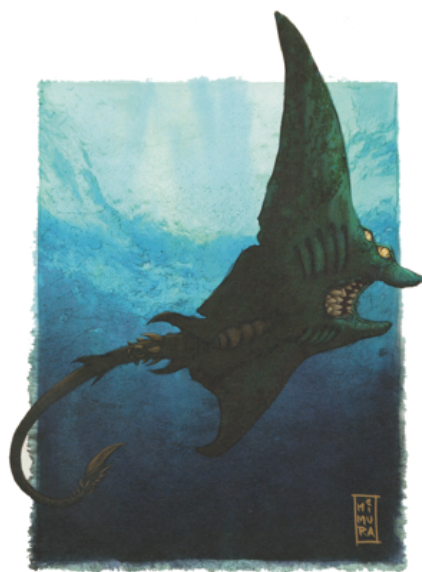
The Forgotten Realms novels *The Sea Devil's Eye* and *Queen of the Depths* both deal with conflicts between ixitxachitl and other aquatic races. Toril has at least one ixitxachitl expert: A human resident of Baldur's Gate, Ramazith Flamesinger is a sage of marine botany and zoology, in particular ixitxachitl and other intelligent sea life. He is detailed in *Forgotten Realms Adventures* and *Volo's Guide to the Sword Coast*.

Ixitxachitl feature in the 5th Edition adventure *Out of the Abyss*, set in the Forgotten Realms. They dwell in the Darklake, a network of connected water-filled caverns, chambers and rivers deep within the Underdark and play a key role in the ritual that lets Demogorgon loose.

After their initial appearance in *Night Below*, the ixzan were adopted enthusiastically into the Forgotten Realms. *Drizzt Do'Urden's Guide to the Underdark* covers them in some detail, as one of nine main civilizations of the Underdark. Most of the information here is recycled from *Night Below*, but an interesting alternative origin story is suggested. Instead of the ixzan being an offshoot of the ixitxachitl race, *Drizzt Do'Urden's Guide to the Underdark* theorizes that both began as a race of proto-rays in the Underdark, with the ixitxachitl descended from individuals who migrated from the depths to the surface and then made their way to the oceans. This explanation, it is said, is also more consistent with the theory that both ixitxachitl and ixzan share a common ancestor with other ray-like inhabitants of the underdark like the cloaklers and lurkers.

Drizzt Do'Urden's Guide to the Underdark also details Malydren, a city-state that rules the Lake of Radiant Mists. The rulers of the city are a council of powerful ixzan wizards and priests known as the Xendreth. There are nearly eighteen thousand ixzan dwelling in Mayldren, making this a fearsome location for non-ixzan to visit.

A 3rd Edition ixzan appears in *Lost Empires of Faerûn*. These ixzan are usually medium sized monsters (with 6 hit dice) but can grow to large size (15 hit dice). They have a swim speed of 40 ft, a "walking" speed of 10 ft., and can attack with a bite (1d8+1 damage) or a tail (10d10+3 damage). The tail attack comes with a poison which inflicts constitution damage.



Ixzan, *Lost Empires of Faerûn* (2005)

This version of the creature lacks the variety of the 2nd Edition version. There are no priests, wizards, vampires or mutants. Instead, all ixzan have a limited selection of spell-like abilities, damage reduction, and spell resistance. Ixzan spell-like abilities include *control water*, *darkness* and *levitate* at will, plus the following once per day: *charm monster*, *cure moderate wounds*, *fly*, *haste*, *inflict serious wounds*, *invisibility*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, and *slow*. As did their 2nd Edition ancestors, these ixzan gain bonuses to saves made against illusions.

Greyhawk

According to *Greyhawk Adventures*, ixitxachitl reside in the Turucambi reefs in the Oljatt Sea. They are also found in Woolly Bay and the Sea of Gearnat (*WGR3: Rary the Traitor*) and in Relmor Bay off the coast of Onnwal, where they inhabit an area near a sunken Irongate vessel, much to the distress of the local dolphin population (*From the Ashes*). The article on the *Isle of Dread* in *Dungeon #114* suggests that in the Densac Gulf koprus and ixitxachitl were ancient enemies pitting against each other for the amusement of Demogorgon, who is worshiped by both races.

Historical Reference

The article *Dinosaurs* in *Dragon #112* suggests ixitxachitl as appropriate creatures for a fantasy Cretaceous setting.

Mystara

In the Mystara setting, ixitxachitl are known as devilfish, although Steve Marsh indicated in correspondence that this was a long standing alternative name for them and not something unique to this D&D setting. They first appear in the *Master Rules*. Unlike their AD&D counterparts, devilfish get both a bite and a tail attack. They gain cleric spells and vampiric traits, but these are directly linked to each creature's hit dice, rather than occurring in a certain percentage of individuals. Most devilfish are single hit dice acolytes, and do only 1 point of damage with either bite or tail. Vampiric devilfish have at least 5 hit dice, and inflict more damage with both their tails (1-4 points) and bites (1-6 points).

However, the most significant difference is that Mystaran vampiric devilfish are actually vampires. They have regeneration and an energy drain ability, much like ixitxachitl, but they can also only be harmed by magic, silver weapons or holy items. They can be turned by clerics, and have a vampire's charm ability. About the only vampiric trait not gained by devilfish is the ability to change shape.

The *Master Rules* entry for devilfish is reprinted in the *Dungeons & Dragons Rules Cyclopedia*, and the 2nd Edition *Monstrous Compendium Mystara Appendix* later confirms that "devilfish" is simply the Mystaran name for ixitxachitl. (That source doesn't attempt to deal with the differences between the vampiric versions.)

There are several mentions of devilfish in *PC3: The Sea People*. The tritons of the Sunlit Sea arrived there after fleeing their devilfish enemies, but the devilfish followed them, leading to a brutal and protracted war spanning more than a century. Also detailed in *The Sea People* is Saasskas the Destroyer, a demonic Immortal who started life as a devilfish, before contracting vampirism. In her subsequent quest to become immortal, she sacrificed thousands of tritons on her altars deep below the waves. It is she who is the hidden hand driving the devilfish attacks on other races in the Sunlit Sea.



The Sea People (1990)

The Sea People notes that devilfish are usually carrion eaters, lurking in deeper waters and feasting on morsels drifting down from above, only rising to the lighter, warmer regions when their numbers swell. The ongoing threat that these creatures pose to other aquatic races is one of the forces driving the alliance between the tritons and the merrow of the Sunlit Sea. Devilfish lair in abandoned ruins, sunken vessels and deep cracks in the ocean floors. They make use of undead creatures to guard their lairs.

The Adventure Book in *The Sea People* introduces a new variation: devilfish warriors. In Mystara, devilfish dwell in the depths of the ocean, rather than in the shallows. Devilfish warriors never leave the depths, as the light of the sun causes their skin to burn and blacken. Consequently, the warrior caste is little known to land-dwellers. They are bred to fight and die for the glory of their species, and are slightly larger and more aggressive than the cleric caste. Even the smallest (1 hit dice) warriors inflict more damage (1-4 tail, 1-6 bite) than normal devilfish. The largest specimens (9 hit dice) pack a significant punch (1-12 tail, 2-16 bite) and are substantially faster swimmers (80' move).



The Sea People (1990)

Perhaps because it predates *The Sea People* by a few years, *M4: Five Coins for a Kingdom* features a group of devilfish that live in a more traditional hollowed-out coral reef. Curiously, the adventure advises that if this encounter proves too challenging for the PCs, the blood in the water sends the creatures into a berserk feeding frenzy, causing them to feast on each other.

AC1011: Poor Wizard's Almanac II & Book of Facts indicates that devilfish can be encountered in the Merry Pirate Seas of the Hollow World setting, as well as near the Pearl Islands south of Alphatia. According to *Wrath of the Immortals*, there are also devilfish residents in the multiverse dimensions of Entrem and Pyts.

GAZ10: The Orcs of Thar notes that the Oenkmarian currency includes small jade ingots called "ixitxachitl". Although *The Orcs of Thar* doesn't explain why they are called "ixitxachitl" rather than "devilfish", most likely this is to remain consistent with the quasi-Aztec culture of Mystara's orc nation.

Planescape

Planes of Conflict notes that itxitxachitl live and hunt in the waters near the town of Portico on the plane of Elysium. According to *Hellbound: The Blood War*, itxitxachitl live in the caustic, shallow seas surrounding the fortress of Carroristo on the Abyssal layer of the same name.

It predates the Planescape setting, but *OPI: Tales of the Outer Planes* places a dozen itxitxachitl in a water pocket on the Elemental Plane of Earth. They act as guardians for a coral castle belonging to a marid banished from his home plane.

Published after the end of the Planescape product line, but thematically linked to it, *A Paladin in Hell* features the unusual ship *Demonwing*. Originally commissioned by Demogorgon, *Demonwing* was constructed out of an entire layer of the Abyss. Within the ship, below decks, is a vast temple of Demogorgon dominated by a statue to the itxitxachitl god. More than fifty of the rays dwell in the pool at the statue's feet. They are led by a greater vampiric high priest.

Ravenloft

The accessory *Children of the Night: Vampires* dedicates five pages to Myxitizajal, a greater vampiric itxitxachitl. Once the lord of an itxitxachitl city on an ocean world, the possession of an artifact known as a *pearl of enthrallment* gradually corrupted him. Over time he developed an irrational hatred for his own kind. One day, when one of his advisors dared to criticize his hunting technique, the vampire drained him dead. This began a period of Myxitizajal's rule punctuated by rampant cannibalism. Eventually his subjects revolted, and during his flight, Myxitizajal was claimed by the mists of Ravenloft.



Myxitizajal, *Children of the Night: Vampires* (1996)

Myxitizajal has some features of true vampires, including two extended upper fangs, and slitted eyes which glow faintly orange. He is only active at night and takes damage from sunlight.

In March 1998, *Dragon* #244 ran a “Terror From Above” contest, which encouraged readers to submit new flying monsters for the Ravenloft setting. With TSR’s blessing, these submissions were compiled into the *Terrors From Above* Netbook, published on the official Ravenloft fan site. One of these submissions was the kyryn. These flying beasts are said to be derived from ixitxachitl, but are neither aquatic, nor intelligent. Swamp dwellers, they have scorpion-like stingers on their tails and psionic powers.

Ixitxachitl and ixzan names

Axihuatl, Bhylqex, Ehjax, Erqynak, Myxitizajal, Oksakex, Ourqax, Phiaqiv, Qaxdivak, Qyxas, Revlopar, Rhykdeq, Shex, Vourdaque, Vyqinak, Wrazzala, Xulkur, Yzil, Zekaqux.

Comparative statistics

							
Edition	Original D&D	AD&D (1st Edition)	BECMI	AD&D 2nd Edition	D&D 3.X Edition	D&D 4th Edition	D&D 5th Edition
Source	Supplement II: Blackmoor	Monster Manual	Master Rules	Monstrous Manual	Monster Manual II	Demonicon	Out of the Abyss
Size		M		S-L (3'-8' wingspan)	Small	Medium	Small
Type					Aberration	Elemental magical beast	Aberration
Alignment		Chaotic evil	Chaotic	Chaotic evil	Always chaotic evil	Chaotic evil	Chaotic evil
No. Appearing	90-150 (75% in lair)	10-100 (60% in lair)	20 (20-120)	5-12 (1d8+4)	1, 2, 6-13, or 17-107		
Armor Class	5	6	6	6	16	17	15
Hit Points	2 (-1) HD	1+1 HD	1 to 6 HD	1+1 to 4+4 HD	1d8+1 (5 hp)	45 hp	18 (4d6+4) hp
Speed	9	12"	Swimming 120' (40')	Swim 12	Swim 30 ft.	0, fly 5 (hover), swim 8	0 ft., swim 30 ft.
Abilities		Int Average to High	Morale 8	Int Average to High (8-14) Morale Elite (13)	Str 12, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 7	Str 16, Dex 18, Con 13, Int 15, Wis 15, Cha 10	Str 12, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 7
Senses					Darkvision 60 ft.	Perception +3, Darkvision	Perception +1, Darkvision 60 ft.
Saves			Cleric level		Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +3	Fort 12, Ref 18, Will 15	
Attacks		1	1 Tail/1 Bite	1	Bite +2 melee	Bite +8 vs. AC	Bite +3 melee weapon
Damage		3-12	1/1 (or 1-4/1-6)	3-12	Bite 1d6+1	Bite 1d8 + 6	Bite 4 (1d6+1) piercing
Special Attacks		Evil clerical spells	Spells	Spells		Tail Barbs	Barbed Tail
XP		28 + 2 per hit point	10 - 950	35 - 4000	CR 1	150	Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)
Treasure	10% 2-20 1000 silver 45% 1-12 1000 gold 25% 3-18 gems 25% 1-10 jewelry 40% 4 magic items + 1 scroll	30% 1-6 x 1000 silver 25% 1-2 x 1000 silver 40% 2-8 x 1000 gold 50% 10-60 x 100 platinum 55% 4-32 gems 45% 1-12 jewelry 40% 2-8 potions Leaders have additional gems, jewelry and magic items	25% 2-12 x 1000 copper 30% 2-12 x 1000 silver 20% 2-8 x 1000 electrum 35% 4-24 x 1000 gold 25% 2-4 x 1000 platinum 50% 12-72 gems 50% 12-72 jewelry 30% any 6 magic items Additional treasure for larger groups	10-60 silver 1-20 platinum or electrum 2-20 gold 10-60 platinum or electrum 2-8 gems 1-3 art objects 1-8 potions (only in lair)	No coins, no goods, double items (wearable items only)		

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