

Monster ENCyclopedia: Peryton

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. For the letter "P" we're taking a look at a creature with as many origin stories as it has letters in its name—the peryton.

Contents

[Origins](#)

[1st Edition](#)

[2nd Edition](#)

[3rd Edition](#)

[4th Edition](#)

[5th Edition](#)

[Peryton parts](#)

[Perytons and other monsters](#)

[Perytons and gods](#)

[Perytons and magic](#)

[Birthright](#)

[Dark Sun](#)

[Dragonlance](#)

[Eberron](#)

[Forgotten Realms](#)

[Greyhawk](#)

[Jakandor](#)

[Kingdoms of Kalamar](#)

[Mystara](#)

[Nerath](#)

[Planescape](#)

[Ravenloft](#)

[San Citlán](#)

[Strixhaven](#)

[Miniatures](#)

[Video games](#)

[Peryton names](#)

[Comparative statistics](#)

[References](#)

Origins

The peryton was created by the Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges for *El libro de los seres imaginarios* (1967), which was based on his earlier *Manual de zoología fantástica* (1957), and first translated into English as the *The Book of Imaginary Beings* (1969). In the original Spanish the peryton appears as "el peritio", in the first English translation as "the peryton" and in a later (2005) English translation as "the peryton".



Peryton, *The Book of Imaginary Beings* (2005)

The Book of Imaginary Beings collects descriptions of mythical beasts from folklore and literature, and its influence on the selection of monsters appearing in early Dungeons & Dragons is clear. So closely do some of the descriptions match that it seems almost certain that Gygax had a well-thumbed copy to hand when preparing the *Monster Manual*. In his [ENWorld O&A](#) Gygax noted that he had also encountered the peryton on some heraldry.

So what does *The Book of Imaginary Beings* have to say about perytons? Originating from Atlantis, perytons have the head and legs of a deer, but the body and wings of a large bird. They have dark green or light blue feathers and fly in flocks, swooping down to kill. Perytons like to mangle their victims and wallow in the resulting gore, but strangely, they have also been observed eating dirt.

Normal weapons have no effect on a peryton. Uncannily, a peryton casts the shadow of a man. Some suggest that this means they are the spirits of travelers who have died far from home. Others say that they are the mortal foes of humans, and only once they kill a man does their shadow become that of their own form.

1st Edition

Compare Borges's version to the *Monster Manual's* peryton, which is depicted as a cross between a deer and a giant avian. Its upper body and head is blue-black, with jet black horns. The peryton has dark green feathers on its wings and back, and either blue (males) or drab (females) chest feathers. The D&D version has avian feet ("claws too weak to use") and not the legs of a deer. The text doesn't mention the peryton's shadow at all, but if you look carefully at the picture, it does indeed have a humanoid shadow.

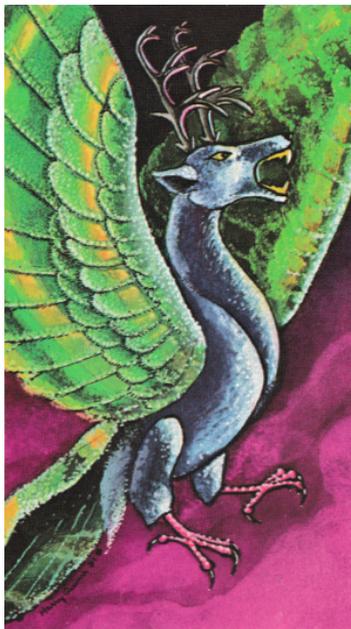


Monster Manual (1977)

Perytons live in mountainous regions, in caves or on cliffs. (*Dragon #54* adds that they also lair in ruins.) They attack using their sharp horns, and focus on a single opponent at a time. Once that target is dead, the peryton rips out its heart with its teeth. The heart, it is said, is needed for the creature to reproduce, and perytons will sometimes take captives to fulfill their future food and reproduction needs.

It is suggested that perytons are created by magical experimentation, much like an owlbear. They have their own language. Perytons are chaotic evil, and of average intelligence. They are encountered in groups of 2-8.

They are 4 hit dice creatures with a single, powerful horn attack (4-16 damage). As in *The Book of Imaginary Beings*, they are immune to damage from ordinary weapons; a +1 or better magical weapon is needed to fight them. The *Dungeon Masters Guide* notes that they have class C maneuverability, which means they can turn up to 90° in a round, and that they take a round to reach full speed. *Dragon #118* reveals that a peryton has a similar pain threshold to a warhorse, in case that's something you ever need to know.



Monster Cards, Set 3 (1982)

The picture of the peryton in 1982's *Monster Cards* gives them more colorful plumage, adding bands of yellow to their wings and tail. Perhaps because the illustration doesn't include a shadow, the card expands the *Monster Manual* description, to specify that perytons cast human shadows. No explanation is offered for this phenomenon.

The Ecology of the Peryton by Nigel Findley was published in *Dragon #82*. It adds only a little to what we know of the peryton's appearance (its body and wings are vulture-like, they are more intelligent than they look) and abilities (clumsy on the ground, a wonder to be feared while airborne) but it provides a far more detailed back story.



Dragon #82 (1984)

Perytons are revealed not to be the result of magical experimentation, but rather natives of another plane. In the history of their home world, the perytons overcame their naturally chaotic and independent nature to subjugate or destroy all other denizens. Then they began to expand to other worlds. In a clear reference to *The Book of Imaginary Beings*, Atlantis is mentioned as one of the other worlds threatened by peryton conquest.

The perytons originally traveled between planes using natural psionic abilities. It is unclear if those dwelling in this world lost this ability gradually over generations or if some event triggered an instantaneous, species-wide loss. The article speculates that some unconscious manifestation of these long lost abilities is what causes the peryton to project a human shadow until it kills its prey.

The otherworldly origins of the peryton give it an unusual physiology, demanding a diet that includes meat, plants and even some minerals. Consumed minerals are used to strengthen the peryton's horns, making them as lethal as sharpened steel. Although these mineral deposits could be an explanation for the peryton's magic resistance, a more likely reason for this is its other-planar origin.

The eggs of perytons have a metallic shell, the composition of which includes iron, potassium, sodium and nitrogen. It is because of this that female perytons eat human hearts, as they are a rich source of these minerals in exactly the right combination.

Did you notice that the illustration accompanying the *Ecology* article shows a peryton with hooves instead of claws? At least one *Dragon* reader did, causing editor Kim Mohan to explain this discrepancy in the letters column of issue #84. He references the original description in *The Book of Imaginary Beings* — “legs of a deer” — to justify the art choice.

Perytons appeared in several 1st Edition adventures. They are part of Lolth's forces invading the dwarven kingdom of Maldev, one of the gate worlds in *Q1: Queen of the Demonweb Pits*. Perytons are also one of the types of chaotic evil monsters someone might be *reincarnated* into while in Lolth's Web. In *RPGA4: The Elixir of Life* (and again when the adventure was reprinted in *C4: To Find a King*), a group of four perytons attacks from their lair near the summit of Dadga's Thumb. Another peryton quartet lives in the Dragonteeth Mountain in *N2: The Forest Oracle*. A pair of perytons can be encountered while traveling through the province of Andevar in *N3: Destiny of Kings*.



UK2: The Sentinel (1984)

Nesting in a lake-side villa in *UK2: The Sentinel* is a family of five perytons, two adults and three juveniles (pictured above). After defeating the adults, the adventurers stumble into a room with four mutilated corpses. In the rafters above, the hungry young perytons prepare to swoop down and attack.

After remaining relatively quiet for the last hundred years, a group of perytons living in Darkmantle Mountain has been struck by the urge to reproduce. They have been preying on travelers in the region, and

are intelligent enough to hide the heartless bodies to prevent alerting the local population to their presence. An encounter with these perytons is detailed in *REF4: The Book of Lairs II*. Perytons also dwell in the mountains between Vynald and the caves of Zeccas in the adventure *The Eyes of Evil* in *Dungeon #5*. Another pair hunts adventurers in the peaks of Crydemon Mountain in the adventure *Ravager* in *Polyhedron #31*.



I13: Adventure Pack I (1987)

I13: Adventure Pack I includes an adventure titled *Terror in Skytumble Tor*. The rakshasa villain of the story is accompanied by a flock of perytons, and groups of them interfere with the adventurers' progress several times as they investigate the Tor.



I13: Adventure Pack I (1987)

2nd Edition

In 2nd Edition, the peryton was more closely linked to the Forgotten Realms, appearing for the first time in *MC11: Monstrous Compendium Forgotten Realms Appendix*. TSR was releasing four new *Monstrous Compendium* appendices each year at this point, so even though this was the eleventh in the series, it was released a mere two and a half years after *Volume One*.



MC11: Monstrous Compendium Forgotten Realms Appendix (1991)

Not only does the peryton get a full page to itself, it is also one of the monsters featured on the cover. That picture places the peryton's foot in an odd position relative to its head, so it isn't surprising that the foot was cropped out when the art was recycled for card #738 of the *1992 Trading Cards*.



1991 Trading Cards (1991)

The peryton's 2nd Edition stat block is lifted directly from 1st Edition, but the expanded text in the *Monstrous Compendium* entry embellishes the existing lore for the peryton slightly. They are said to now have glowing red-orange eyes, and they give off a subtle odor that makes them either smell like a human, or instills irrational fear in someone catching the scent. Perytons do not use weapons, nor wear clothes or jewelry. Their language is described as a collection of enraged roars and screeches.



MC11: Monstrous Compendium Forgotten Realms Appendix (1991)

In combat, perytons obsess over a particular target, and will not change prey even if that would make more tactical sense. If forced to retreat, a peryton will continue to stalk its prey until it can repeat the attack. As well as a dangerous high-speed swooping attack, which the peryton only uses in desperation or as a surprise attack, the creature will also grab human-sized targets and drop them from heights of 100 feet or more, causing considerable damage, if not instant death.

Socially, each nest of 2-8 perytons is usually several miles away from any other peryton nest, and completely independent. Their habit of occasionally taking captives for food or breeding purposes means that some residual treasure may be found scattered between unhatched eggs in the nest. The text implies that eating a heart is a requirement for both male and female perytons to become fertile, and that they remain so for less than a day. The article *Adventure Among the Clouds* in *Polyhedron #28* indicates that perytons sometimes have breeding areas set aside on specific cloud islands.

The *Monstrous Compendium* entry was reprinted in the *Monstrous Manual* with a new color picture of a peryton. The text and stat block remained unchanged.



Monstrous Manual (1993)

There are only a few peryton encounters in generic 2nd Edition sources. In *Heart's Hunters* in the *Deck of Encounters, Set One* there is a group of four perytons living in a nest hidden on a ledge in a sheer cliff. In *Wings of an Eagle* in *Deck of Encounters, Set Two*, the PCs first see human shadows, and then spot the group of perytons who attempt to unleash an avalanche on them.

The adventure *Wyrmsmere*, published in *Dragon Magazine Annual #1* takes place on the fringe of civilization near the edge of a great wilderness. Four perytons who live on nearby Scylla's Isle are territorial towards a nearby castle. These accidental guardians suit the castle's resident naga. Perytons might be encountered during the day in the Paradise Lake region that is the setting of the *Tale of the Comet* boxed set.

Dragon #266 explores an alternative origin of perytons as the undead spirits of human travelers murdered far from home. They first hunt down their killers, and then prey on other travelers. This sort of peryton can only be appeased if its original body is returned to rest in its homeland.

3rd Edition

Perytons remained primarily in the Forgotten Realms for 3rd Edition, appearing in *Monsters of Faerûn*, the first monster book after the *Monster Manual*. The illustration is as recognizable as its forebears, but in terms of lore and mechanics, this could easily be a fresh interpretation based on the description in *The Book of Imaginary Beings*.



Monsters of Faerûn (2001)

Physically, the peryton now has the head of a “demonic purple stag” and the body of a giant eagle. They no longer have feeble talons, and attack with two claws (1d4+3 damage), two slams that are likely intended to be the creature’s horns (1d3+1) and a bite (1d6+1). Resistance to weapons is still present, in the form of damage reduction, and the peryton has scent, flyby attack and multiattack. It is now a 5 hit dice creature, but can advance to as much as 15 hit dice, changing from medium-sized to large in size at 11 hit dice. These perytons are unable to speak, but understand Common and possibly other languages.

The perytons of third edition can be found in temperate forests as well as the hills and mountains they previously inhabited. They are typically encountered solo, in pairs or in a nest of four. They are classified as magical beasts and are always chaotic evil. Perytons have a walking speed of only 20 ft, but a flying speed of 60 ft. They have poor maneuverability when in the air and don’t generally spend much time soaring, preferring to hide over the crest of a hill or behind trees so that they can engage in flyby swooping attacks, repeatedly circling around if necessary.

No longer invaders from another plane, perytons are now the creation of an unnamed, twisted deity. They are miserable creatures who hate life, and believe they can ascend to something better by consuming the perfect heart. Some of them believe that the heart has to be harvested under specific conditions, leading them to keep humanoid slaves in order to achieve those conditions. The peryton’s unusual shadow is tied to this need—the shadow is always that of the last creature whose heart the peryton consumed.

Their obsession with eating the perfect heart spills over into combat. Although they do hunt in groups, perytons struggle to cooperate in battle, as each creature fears that another will find the perfect heart first.

Perytons have little interest in any creatures other than humanoids with hearts. For some reason, they will not eat the heart of an elf, although they will still kill the elf out of spite. Their special *heart-rip* ability means that the peryton consumes a heart if it makes a special coup de grâce attack. Someone killed in this way cannot be *raised*, but can still be *resurrected*.

The 3.5 rules update resulted in a few minor changes to the peryton, including the addition of darkvision (60 ft) and low-light vision as special qualities it possesses. *Dungeon #106* includes a stat block for a large 11 hit dice, advanced peryton. This will one day become the monstrous peryton found in the 5th Edition *Ghosts of Saltmarsh*.

4th Edition

The peryton made its 4th Edition debut in early 2011 in an adventure written for the D&D Experience convention. In *Kalarel's Revenge* the frost witch known as the Rime Mistress is accompanied by two of the beasts, but as a neutral party, she (and the perytons) are equally likely to end up as temporary allies as locked in combat with the heroes. The adventure borrows the details of the peryton from *Monster Vault: Threats to the Nentir Vale* which was published later that same year.

In color, the 4th Edition peryton matches its forebears, with glowing red-orange eyes, a blue-black head, black antlers, and either light blue (male) or drab brown (female) chest feathers. Sadly, in *Threats to the Nentir Vale* the peryton does not get a fresh illustration; instead the picture from *Monsters of Faerûn* is recycled.

This version reverts to some 1st/2nd Edition lore, but mirrors the mechanics of 3rd Edition, with the peryton having similar attacks, including a claw snatch using its talons, which are strong enough to carry off another medium-sized creature. The peryton is a level 4 skirmisher with 54 hit points. It has an antler bash attack (2d6+3 damage) and a claw snatch (2d8+6 damage) that it uses combined with a *flyby attack* ability. A peryton can choose one creature to be its prey, It does additional damage to, and can more easily carry away, any prey. The 4th Edition version has the tenacity of a 2nd Edition peryton, choosing a single target to attack and returning to stalk that particular prey even if driven away. A *feast* ability allows it to regain hit points when consuming its victims' hearts.

A completely different backstory is suggested here, with perytons said to be elves transformed by a hideous curse. One of the reasons for their desire to consume hearts is to remind themselves of what they once were. However, the write-up also confirms that female perytons must consume humanoid hearts in order to become fertile and be able to reproduce. This only works for fresh hearts, explaining their habit of taking captives for later consumption. Having overcome their 3rd Edition aversion to the taste of elf, perytons now prefer the hearts of elves, half-elves, and humans. The peryton's shadow is once more linked to the eating of hearts, with the shadow of a fertile female reflecting her true form, rather than the generic humanoid shadow the creatures usually cast.

A larger, more powerful variation known as an elder peryton is included in the *Threats to the Nentir Vale*. These are craftier than their smaller relatives, and prefer to stalk their prey and attack with a stealth dive. They also have a cursed bite which causes the victim to take additional damage if they target any opponent other than the attacking peryton. Unlike all previous versions, this peryton has no special immunities to non-magical weapons.

Earlier descriptions do mention that incidental treasures—possession of earlier victims—may be found scattered in and around peryton nests, but this is given more emphasis here as a source of “treasure galore”. This is potentially a good story hook to encourage adventurers to risk confronting the creatures.

5th Edition

The peryton made it into the 5th Edition *Monster Manual*, but was also previewed in the D&D Next adventure *Dead in Thay*, where there is a brief encounter with four adults and four young perytons. (This was later reprinted in *Tales from the Yawning Portal*.)

Comparing these two versions gives us some insight into the development of the most recent peryton. In D&D Next, it has 4 hit dice, a low armor class of 11 and attacks for 2d6+3 damage with either a claw or gore attack. In the *Monster Manual* the peryton has been made more resilient, with 6 hit dice and an armor class of 13, but it only does 1d8+3 gore damage or 2d4+3 damage with its talons.

The peryton’s special *dive* attack changed from giving it a free gore attack following a successful dive and claw attack to simply doing an additional 2d8 damage on any attack following a dive. While it has complete immunity to damage from non-magical weapons in *Dead in Thay*, in the final version the peryton only has resistance to such weapons.



Monster Manual (2014)

Dead in Thay doesn’t include any background information on the peryton, just the stat block. The *Monster Manual* goes into more detail. The broad strokes here match previous versions: perytons hunt humanoids (preferring elves, half-elves and humans) in a single-minded manner because females need to eat their hearts to reproduce. When she consumes the heart, a peryton’s shadow briefly reverts from humanoid to peryton in shape.

Comparing the peryton description to all previous versions, it matches 4th Edition most closely. However, despite these similarities, we are presented with yet another origin story for the creature. A scorned wife cut out the heart of her husband’s mistress and consumed it as part of a ritual. Although she was hanged for her crime, the carrion birds that consumed her corpse were warped by the residual ritual magic and became the first perytons.

Perytons make a limited appearance in *Princes of the Apocalypse* where they appear on the random encounter table. Presumably the gatewarden survived such an encounter, as there is a peryton head mounted in his quarters. *Xanathar's Guide to Everything* includes perytons on the random encounter tables for hills and mountains. *Domains of Delight* notes that perytons are also found in the Feywild. This is supported by *The Wild Beyond the Witchlight*, although the perytons encountered in that adventure are somewhat unusual.



The Wild Beyond the Witchlight (2021)

The group of eight perytons in *The Wild Beyond the Witchlight* were originally a troupe of actors known as the Greyhawk Mummies, they became popular performers in the realm of Yon but this popularity made them hard to control and the hag Endelyn Moongrave eventually turned them into perytons. Despite being unable to speak, they continue their theater performances.

One final peryton mention for the 5th Edition era is in the *Adventures Outlined Coloring Book*, which depicts a battle between the wizard Magnifico and perytons guarding the ruined tower of an evil lich lord.



Dungeons & Dragons Adventures Outlined Coloring Book (2018)

Peryton parts

According to *Dragon #137*, peryton horns are worth approximately 15 gp, while an egg or peryton young can fetch 110-200 gp. By the time we get to 2nd Edition's *The Complete Barbarian's Handbook*, prices for peryton antlers and eggs have changed. Antlers are now worth 25 gp, but eggs are only valued at between 10 and 120 gp. In *Dungeon #74*, three peryton eggs are given a value of 100 gp each. By 4th Edition's *Threats from the Nentir Vale*, peryton eggs had appreciated further, and could be sold for "several hundred gold pieces" to the right buyer. Despite this value, the adventurers in the 4th Edition novel *The Eye of the Chained God* eat the eggs of the perytons they encounter, perhaps not realizing their value as treasure.

Halaster's quaff, a powerful potion detailed in *Volo's Guide to All Things Magical*, requires six drops of blood from a peryton's heart as an ingredient. The potion—if it works, which is unlikely—grants permanent immunities to a variety of magical effects. In *Dungeon #195* it is hinted that peryton blood could also enhance the powers of *spellstop*, a concoction which inhibits the imbiber's ability to use magic.

There isn't a peryton in *The Rod of Seven Parts*, but it does have a lumpy mattress stuffed with peryton and giant eagle feathers. Feathers are used by some archers to create special fletching for their arrows, according to *Mordenkainen Presents: Monsters of the Multiverse*. There is also no peryton in *Lords of Madness*, but there is a human ranger with an antler hoarding problem. He has a whole room filled with antlers, including some from perytons. In the novel *The Black Bouquet*, Sefris Uuthrakt (the protagonist of the story) hides behind a stuffed peryton while in a dining club in the town of Oeble in the Border Kingdoms. The trophy room in Fistandia's mansion (an extradimensional location detailed in *Candlekeep Mysteries*) has a peryton head on display as one of several monstrous trophies, as does the duergar Nildar in *Icewind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden*.

Perytons and other monsters

The hundar ("horse-bat") from *Dragon #90* (later renamed "hendar" in *MC11: Monstrous Compendium Forgotten Realms Appendix*) is said to tolerate perytons in the same area.

The winged folk—humanoids with wings—from *Dragon #51* have been known to assist others in fighting peryton. One such battle is immortalized in a mural in *The House in the Frozen Lands* in *Dragon #110*.

Although perytons are invulnerable to most non-magical attacks, griffons have been known to prey on them, according to *Dragon #161*. Both perytons and griffons are known to eat whipstings, tentacled creatures detailed in *Dragon #197*.

The magical hybrids knowns as wolveraven (*City of Splendors*) show promise as a way to keep peryton numbers in check. Similarly, according to the *New Draconic Monsters* web enhancement, dragonnes serve a valuable role in keeping down populations of perytons.

Monster Vault: Threats to the Nentir Vale notes that mooncalves often find themselves at odds with perytons.

The D&D Next article [Wandering Monsters: Dragons Revisited](#) lists perytons as potential minions for green dragons.

The 5th Edition *Monster Manual* suggests that chimeras and manticores are the perytons' greatest rivals for territory. It also notes that cloud giants keep perytons, griffon and wyverns as hunting beasts, similarly to humans keeping hunting hawks.

Perytons and gods

According to the *Monster Manual II*, the demon lord Pazuzu is able to summon perytons.

In *Darkwell*, the second novel in the *Moonshae* trilogy, Tristan and his companions fight a flock of perytons. *Heroes' Lorebook* summarizes the origin of these perytons as being created by the god Bhaal, but the novel goes into slightly more detail. Bhaal uses the Darkwell, a corrupted version of one of the Earthmother's Moonwells, to kill and devour a number of wild animals. With these creatures as raw material, he created a number of Children of Bhaal, including a flock of perytons, presumably from a consumed eagle and a stag.

The Beastlord Malar of the Forgotten Realms is detailed in *Faiths & Avatars* and known to have an association with perytons. He is served by rare spellcasters capable of breeding such unnatural creatures.



Dungeon #74 (1999)

A late 2nd Edition adventure in *Dungeon #74*, *First People*, has perytons created by Verenestra, goddess of nymphs. When a forest nymph declares herself more lovely than Verenestra, the goddess transforms her into a dark nymph, and her faithful eagle serpents are transformed into perytons who continue at her side. They wield flasks of diluted *oil of fiery burning* and wreak havoc on the peaceful Nuncha folk who are the subjects of the adventure.

In *The Apocalypse Stone*, the avatar of Justice sends the heroes a sign in the form of a battle between a divine eagle and a peryton. Depending on how the avatar views their actions, either the eagle or the peryton wins the battle.

Perytons and magic

Perytons have powerful wings, which makes them immune to the *scatterspray* spell from *Dragon #97*.

The *lifeblend* spell from *FOR8: Pages from the Mages* is a powerful necromancy spell. It can be used to merge two different creatures to form a hybrid, and perytons are one of the types of creatures the spell can create.

The *adamantite mace* spell from *Player's Options: Spells & Magic* does damage to “magical avians” including perytons.

The *find minion* spell in *Dragon #228* is a more powerful version of *find familiar*, and the peryton is one of the creatures that may be called by the spell. When adopted as a familiar, a peryton's alignment changes to match its master, and its master's eyes become orange-red. A wizard with a peryton minion gains immunity to non-magical weapons for a limited period each day. Similarly, *Dragon #302* suggests that a peryton can be summoned using the 3rd Edition *summon nature's ally V* spell. In 5th Edition, the *find greater steed* spell from *Xanathar's Guide to Everything* can summon a spirit mount in the form of a peryton.

Acquisitions Incorporated suggests that an alternative arcane focus for a sorcerer might be the antler stub of a peryton, decorated with nymph hair and pixie dust.

Birthright

The *Birthright Campaign Setting* boxed set notes that perytons can be found in Cerilia. This is confirmed by reports of perytons in the Erebanien hills in the south of Roesone in *Player's Secrets of Roesone*.

Dark Sun

According to *Dragon #185*, perytons can be found on Athas.

Dragonlance

The only evidence of perytons in the Dragonlance setting seems to be in the *Key of Destiny* adventure, which mentions a wrecked merchant ship named *Peryton* in Port Balifor.

Eberron

Perhaps because the 3rd Edition peryton appeared exclusively in *Monsters of Faerûn*, it seems to be quite a rare creature in the Eberron setting. *Dungeon #175* mentions that the city of Fairhaven used to have an inn known as *Peryton's Pride*, so the creatures are likely known to the residents of the area.

More conclusively, the final adventure in the *Xen'drik Expeditions* series (*EXP-9: Endgame*) contains a sequence in which the adventurers are riding griffons, dire bats, pegasi, and/or hippogriffs and engaged in a bombing run on the ruins of Tir-Forel. A group of perytons is teleported into play by an enemy wizard to stop the heroes. These are not ordinary perytons though; there are four advanced (14 hit dice) perytons accompanied by a peryton priest (an 8th level cleric) and a peryton ravager (a 4th level multiclass barbarian/fighter).

Forgotten Realms

Even before being moved to the *Forgotten Realms* monster books in 2nd and 3rd Edition, perytons already had a strong presence in Faerûn. They are first mentioned in the *DM's Sourcebook* in the original boxed set, linked to rumors of a new Beast Lord in the North. *FR5: The Savage Frontier* follows up on this rumor, revealing the Beast Lord to be a scheming illithid, and placing it (and the accompanying perytons) in mines located in the ruins of Dekanter at the edge of the Lonely Moor.

One of the booklets from the *Elminster's Ecologies* set (*The Great Gray Land of Thar*) provides quite a bit of peryton lore. In Thar, perytons dwell on the peaks of the West Galenas. Peryton eggs take up a month to

hatch, with mated pairs sharing the job of nest-sitting. Newly hatched perytons must be fed by their parents for their first month, and grow to maturity in three months. They stay with their parents for up to a year before departing to build their own nests. *Elminster's Ecologies* also offers an alternative origin story for peryton in the Realms. The Khala people of Imaskar served the god Bane so loyally that the gods of law visited a series of curses upon them. These curses transformed the physical form and nature of the evil human Khala race into the perytons we know today.

So, depending which edition and who you ask, perytons are either magically created hybrids, invaders from another plane, spirits of travelers murdered far from home, creations of a twisted deity, elves transformed by a hideous curse, birds warped after eating the corpse of a wicked heart-eating woman, monsters created by an evil god merging an eagle and a stag, eagles changed by the goddess of nymphs, or evil humans cursed by the gods of law. If there is a D&D creature with a less consistent origin story across editions, we have not yet covered it in the *Monster ENCyclopedia* series!

Elminster's Ecologies also lists perytons on the encounter tables for the Stonelands and Goblin Marches and goes into some detail on their impact on the humanoid populations of the area. Perytons are described as intelligent, crafty and patient hunters. They are reportedly able to eat anything, but prefer hearts. One group of perytons in the Stonelands is rumored to keep a group of humans, elves, orcs and ogres as slaves, bred to ensure a supply of hearts.

Perytons they can also be found in escarpments and highlands of the Moonshaes (*FR2: Moonshae*), in the Thunder Peaks between Cormyr and the Dalelands (*FRS1: The Dalelands*), particularly near Tilver's Gap (*Elminster's Ecologies*), in Aglarond and Rashemen (*Spellbound*), in the Serpent Hills (*Elminster's Ecologies Appendix II*), living in the Cloud Peaks on the border of Amn (*Dragon #232*), in the border kingdom of Hawkgarth (*Polyhedron #124*), and in the Starspire Mountains of Tethyr (*Lands of Intrigue*). Rumors say that a flock of perytons guards the southern face of Mount Adiiir (*Powers & Pantheons*).

Invisible perytons can be found in the Citadel of the Witch-King Zhengyi in Vaasa (*H4: The Throne of Bloodstone*) and terrorizing the streets of Arabel (*FRE1: Shadowdale*). Peryton bones, on the other hand, might be spotted in the kingdom of Delmyr on the eastern flanks of The Glittering Spires. The halfling residents of Delmyr place monster skeletons as warning markers around the edge of their woods (*Dragon #269*).



The halflings of Delmyr have an interesting warning system.

Dragon #269 (2000)

In Cormyr, the Horn and Spur tavern gets its name from the giant peryton antlers mounted over the bar (*Volo's Guide to Cormyr*). These may have come from an expedition to nearby Skull Crag, where perytons numbers are growing. The *Sea of Fallen Stars* mentions a superstition that carrying a peryton feather protects against death by shipwreck. The emerald dragon Raulothim often has to chase perytons away from his perches on small island on the northern Sword Coast (*Dragon #253*). *Secrets of the Magister* notes that perytons sometimes infest the ruins of Castle Endreth near Starmantle.

In the past, the Flying Plague (a horde of perytons, harpies, and manticores) reduced the Moonsea city of Lis to ruins (*The Moonsea*). *Forgotten Realms Adventures*, which updated the world for the Time of Troubles, includes an oblique suggestion that perytons may be survivors of a previous magical godswar. *Volo's Guide to the Dalelands* mentions that perytons were previously a problem in the Dun Hills of Glaun, but are no longer so.

Monsters of Faerûn notes that the orc King Obould has an arrangement with the perytons in the Spine of the World. They deal with intruders from the east, in return for slaves and prisoners, leaving the Many Arrows orcs to focus on the Silver Marches to the south. In the novel *Son of Thunder*, one of the characters mentions that his father fought perytons in the Lurkwood.

According to the 3rd Edition *Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting*, perytons can be found in the Giant's Run Mountains, the Starspire Mountains, the Walls of Halruaa, and the Lonely Moor. They also live in the Forest of Lethyr (*Unapproachable East*), the peaks of the Neth Stand (*Power of Faerûn*), the Channath Vale, Dustwall and Giant's Belt Mountains, the Great Rift, the Shaar, the Rathgaunt Hills and in the mountains known as The Walls which surround Halruaa (*Shining South*). Off the coast to the north of Waterdeep lie the Red Rocks islands, home to a few perytons (*Environs of Waterdeep*). They are also rumored to dwell in the Desertsmouth Mountains (*Dragon #286*). The Hulorn, ruler of Selgaunt, collects paintings of hybrid creatures such a perytons, according to a fiction article in *Dragon #297*.

Located in the town of Quavarr, the Whistling Stag inn and hunting lodge has peryton antlers on display, and the inn's house guide, Huntmaster Quickleaf is willing to act as a guide to would-be peryton hunters for a fee of 10 gp per day. *Silver Marches* also details a peryton-infested stronghold in High Torog. The sorcerer Telkoun has allied with these perytons, and they serve him loyally, acting as his scouts and repelling intruders from Telkoun's Tower. According to *Lords of Darkness*, perytons are sometimes used by Zhentarim skymages as mounts. *The Grand History of the Realms* confirms that 1128 DR was the Year of the Peryton. It seems to have been a slow year as the only notable event was the death of the king of Aglarond.

Dragon #376 confirms that there are still perytons in Moonshae island Sarifal's Black Mountains in the 4th Edition era.

In the 5th Edition adventure *Hoard of the Dragon Queen*, perytons threaten the road between Baldur's Gate and Waterdeep. There is also a pair of perytons allied with Cult of the Dragon cultists living in a Hunting Lodge in the Greypeak Mountains. There are a few perytons in *Icewind Dale: Rime of the Frostmaiden*. One of the random wilderness encounters is a mated pair searching for a heart so that they may reproduce. Later, two berserkers are observed carrying a peryton corpse. Amusingly, the residents of Ten-Towns offer some advice to anyone spotting a peryton: 'hide under the snow and hope it didn't see you'.

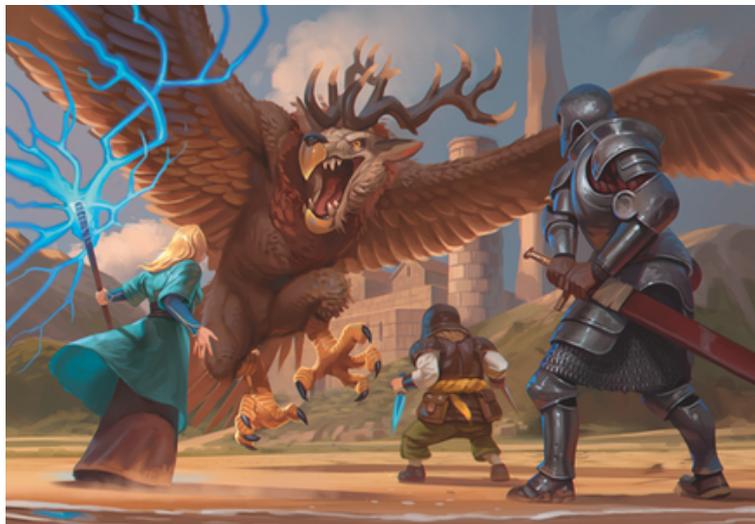


CCC-GHC-BK1-09: *Scavengers* (2018)

The *Adventurers League* scenario *CCC-GHC-BK1-09: Scavengers* is all about a peryton hunt sponsored by the small kingdom of Hawkgarth in the Border Kingdoms. It includes an alpha peryton variation, which is huge in size, has a strength of 18 (so +2 to attacks and damage), and gains advantage on attacks against injured targets.

Greyhawk

A pair of perytons can be encountered in the *Crypt of Lyzandred the Mad*. Three editions later, more perytons feature in *Ghosts of Saltmarsh*, in the updated version of *Tammeraunt's Fate* (from *Dungeon* #106). As well as ordinary perytons being listed as random coastal encounters, there is a monstrous peryton found in the skies above Firewatch Island. This beast is a rare example of a peryton with a name: Rasp. Rasp has established a temporary lair in the belfry of the island's hermitage.



Rasp, *Ghosts of Saltmarsh* (2019)

Jakandor

The random encounter tables in *Jakandor: Land of Legend* indicate that perytons can be found in the Jakandor setting.

Kingdoms of Kalamar

Peryton are listed on the random encounter tables for the Elenon Mountains in *The Lost Tomb of Kruk-Ma-Kali*.

Mystara

According to the encounter tables in *Mystara Monstrous Compendium Appendix*, perytons inhabit the world of Mystara. *Glantri: Kingdom of Magic* confirms that they can be found in great numbers in Glantri.

Nerath

Perytons are relatively common in Nentir Vale, roosting in the Dawnforge Mountains, the Cairngorn Peaks and the Stonemarch. Settlements located near these mountain ranges often fall prey to attacks, and hire adventurers to eliminate peryton nests. According to *Monster Vault: Threats to the Nentir Vale*, the dwarf champion Lun Stoneblade was snatched by a peryton and carried off to the Cairngorn Peaks. His magical axe was never recovered and might well still lie at the bottom of a nest. The protagonists of *The Eye of the Chained God*, set in Nentir Vale, have to deal with a flock of perytons led by an elder.

Planescape

Planes of Chaos includes perytons in the resident list for Pazrael's realm of Torremor in the Abyss. This is a layer consisting entirely of beams and perches for avians, and it has no apparent bottom.

The adventure *Dead Gods* features a strange traveling circus known as the Cynosure, on tour in Pandemonium(!). They keep perytons that have been enchanted to perform tricks during their shows.

According to *Tales from the Infinite Staircase*, the city of Blurophil is located on a huge metal disk floating in the elemental plane of Air. High above the city hovers a chunk of earth known as Sorrow's Roost, which is home to a rilmani (creatures who watch over balance in the elemental planes) named Vassilon and a peryton named Ert. The lone survivor of a peryton attack on Vassilon, Ert swore to serve Vassilon in return for sparing his life.

Ravenloft

In the trophy room of Heather House in *I10: Ravenloft II: The House of Gryphon Hill* there are heads of a gorgon, hell hound, lion, owlbear, peryton and black dragon.

In the House of Lament in *Van Richten's Guide to Ravenloft*, there is an eagle statue that hatches into a wet, red peryton moments after someone enters the foyer.

The *Adventurers League* scenario *RMH-09: Ravenloft: Mist Hunters: The Deadliest Game* has a pair of peryton guarding a jungle bridge in the domain of Valachan.

San Citlán

Perytons are a common threat in the borderlands surrounding San Citlán, a setting from *Journeys through the Radiant Citadel*.

Strixhaven

According to *Strixhaven: A Curriculum of Chaos* there are creatures known as kites in the watchtowers of the Fortress Badlands. The kites that are similar enough to perytons to use the same stat block, but are described as hideous amalgamations of flesh and bone. When activated, a kite detaches the line of entrails that usually

connect it to its watchtower. The entrails slither into the kite's body and it attacks its target. Despite sharing a stat block, kites don't seem to be related to perytons.

Miniatures

The first peryton miniature was a metal figure released by Ral Partha towards the end of its *AD&D Monsters* line in 1996.



Ral Partha 11:530: Peryton (1996), image from the [Lost Minis Wiki](#)

Since WizKids began producing pre-painted plastic figures in 2014, they have released three different perytons. The first one, part of the *Elemental Evil* set in 2015 had a color scheme that disappointingly failed to match the peryton's 5th Edition description.



D&D Icons of the Realms: Elemental Evil #23: Peryton (2015), image from [Wizards of the Coast](#)

On the other hand, the second one, from 2021's *The Wild Beyond the Witchlight* set looks like it could have swooped right off the pages of the *Monster Manual*.



D&D Icons of the Realms: The Wild Beyond the Witchlight #23: Peryton (2021), image from [MinisGallery](#)

The most recent figure is part of the *Seas & Shores* set, released towards the end 2023. It returns to a much less vibrant uniform brown color scheme.



D&D Icons of the Realms: Seas & Shores #24: Peryton (2023), image from [MinisGallery](#)

Video games

The *Idle Champions of the Forgotten Realms* game has several adventures in which a peryton is the boss monster.

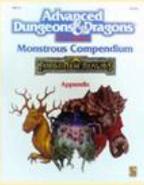


Idle Champions of the Forgotten Realms (2017)

Peryton names

Angara, Archillus, Carthasar, Ert, Gorgenal, Mauldower, Mortia, Rasp, Thornelia, Verna.

Comparative statistics

						
Edition	AD&D (1st Edition)	AD&D 2nd Edition	D&D 3rd Edition	D&D 4th Edition	D&D Next	D&D 5th Edition
Source	<i>Monster Manual</i>	<i>Monstrous Compendium Forgotten Realms Appendix</i>	<i>Monsters of Faerûn</i>	<i>Monster Vault: Threats to the Nentir Vale</i>	<i>Dead in Thay</i>	<i>Monster Manual</i>
Size	M	M (5' tall)	Medium-size	Medium	Medium	Medium
Type			Magical Beast	Natural beast	Monstrousity	Monstrousity
Alignment	Chaotic evil	Chaotic evil	Always chaotic evil	Chaotic evil	Chaotic evil	Chaotic evil
No. Appearing	2-8	2-8	Solitary, pair, or nest (4)			
Armor Class	7	7	16	18	11	13
Hit Dice/Points	4	4	5d10+5 (32 hp)	54 hp	26 (4d8+8)	33 (6d8+6)
Speed	12"/21"	12, Fl 21 (C)	20 ft., fly 60 ft. (poor)	2, fly 8	20 ft., fly 60 ft.	20 ft., fly 60 ft.
Abilities	Average	Int Average (10) Morale Champion (16)	Str 17, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 10	Str 18, Dex 15, Con 24, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 8	Str 16, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 10	Str 16, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 9, Wis 12, Cha 10
Senses			Scent	Perception +9	Perception +7, Keen Sight	Passive Perception 15, Keen Sight and Smell
Saves			Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +2	Fort 17, Ref 16, Will 15		
Attacks	1	1	2 claws +8 melee, 2 slams +6 melee, bite +6 melee	Antler Bash +9 vs. AC	Claws +6, Gore +6	Gore +5, Talons +5
Damage	4-16	4-16	Claw 1d4+3, slam 1d3+1, bite 1d6+1	2d6 +3 damage (+5 vs. designated prey)	Claws 10 (2d6+3) piercing, gore 10 (2d6+3) piercing	Gore 7 (1d8+3) piercing, talons 8 (2d4+3) piercing
Special Attacks	+2 to hit	+2 to attack roll	Heart-rip	Flyby Attack, Claw Snatch, Feast	Dive	Dive Attack, Flyby, Multiattack
Special Defenses	+1 or better weapon to hit	+1 or better to hit	Damage reduction 10/+1		Immune to damage from nonmagical weapons	Damage resistance to nonmagical weapons
XP	150 + 4/hp	270	CR 5	175		450 XP
Treasure	50% 1000-8000 copper 25% 1000-6000 silver 25% 1000-4000 electrum 25% 1000-3000 gold 30% 1-8 gems 20% 1-4 items of jewelry 10% sword, armor or misc. weapon	50% 1000-6000 copper 25% 1000-3000 silver 25% 100-1000 electrum or platinum 25% 200-2000 gold 30% 1-8 gems 20% 1-4 items of jewelry 10% armor or weapon	Standard			

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