

# Fearsome Creatures of the Lumberwoods

by Mark L. Chance

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## Introduction

Back in 1910, the [Concatenated Order of Hoo-Doo](#) commissioned naturalist [William T. Cox](#), wildlife artist Coert Du Bois, and dendrologist<sup>1</sup> [George B. Sudworth](#) to embark on a quixotic quest to catalog rare, fearsome beasts native to North America.

Cox, Du Bois, and Sudworth interviewed numerous lumbermen and foresters in the United States and Canada. A sense of urgency encouraged them to labor quickly but carefully. As Cox explained in one of the entries in his tattered journal recovered from a strangely disturbed campsite in the region of British Columbia into which the team mysteriously vanished:

"Lumber regions are contracting. Stretches of forest that once seemed boundless are all but gone, and many a stream is quiet that once ran full of logs and echoed to the song of the river driver. Some say that old type of logger himself is becoming extinct."<sup>2</sup>

With the ever-expanding boundaries of civilization pushing farther into North American wildernesses, Cox and many others were concerned that the fearsome creatures of the lumberwoods would also become extinct. Today, it seems as if their fears have been realized, which makes Cox and company's work all the more important.

I discovered [Fearsome Creatures of the Lumberwoods](#) quite by accident on the Internet. Posthumously published in 1910 by Judd & Detweiler, Inc., these important excerpts from the recovered journals and sketchbooks of Cox, Du Bois, and Sudworth remain available to us today. Indeed, through the Internet and the public domain, this work is now more widely available than ever before.

Herein in portable document format, I've taken Cox's *Fearsome Creatures of the Lumberwoods* from the public domain into the fantasy domain, providing descriptions and game stats for the "dreadful beasts" that "frighten people unfamiliar with the woods."

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1 Dendrology is the science and study of wooded plants.  
2 From Cox's notes used in the introduction to the 1910 edition of *Fearsome Creatures of the Lumberwoods*.

When you use these creatures in your games, take a moment to reflect on what we've lost in our breathless rush into modernity (and perhaps beyond into postmodernity), especially if you game with children. Always think of the children, who today will almost certainly never experience the thrill of being pelted with rocks snorted from out of the snout of a tripodero.

As always, if you have any questions, comments, or criticism, please [e-mail me](#).

Mark L. Chance  
Spes Magna Games

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### Cover & Interior Art Credits

All creature art comes from *Fearsome Creatures of the Lumberwoods, With a Few Desert and Mountain Beasts*, written by William T. Cox, illustrated by Coert Du Bois, with Latin Classifications by George B. Sudworth (Washington: Judd & Detweiler, Inc., 1910). Pot of stew picture uploaded to Wikipedia by Magnus Manske under the terms of [CC BY 3.0](#). My company logo was done by Darren M. A. Calvert.

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## The Hugag



The hugag (*Rythmopes inarticulatus*<sup>3</sup>) is a huge animal that dwells in and around forest lakes. An adult hugag stands nearly 7 feet (210 cm) tall at the shoulder and weighs as much as 1500 pounds (680 kg), although females tend to be less massive. A hugag resembles a moose with "jointless legs, which compel the animal to remain on its feet, and its long upper lip, which prevents it from grazing." The hugag's "head and neck are leathery". It has "strangely corrugated ears", as well as "four-toed feet" and bushy tail and shaggy coat. A hugag has "a perfect mania for traveling, and few hunters who have taken up its trail ever came up with the beast or back to camp." This creature eats twigs and bark taken by "flopping its lip around trees". A hugag cannot sleep by lying down. Instead, it leans against a tree to rest. Should a hugag fall down, it is quite helpless to right itself.

*Group, Large*

Kick (w[2d6]+1 damage); 10 HP; 1 Armor

*Close, Reach*

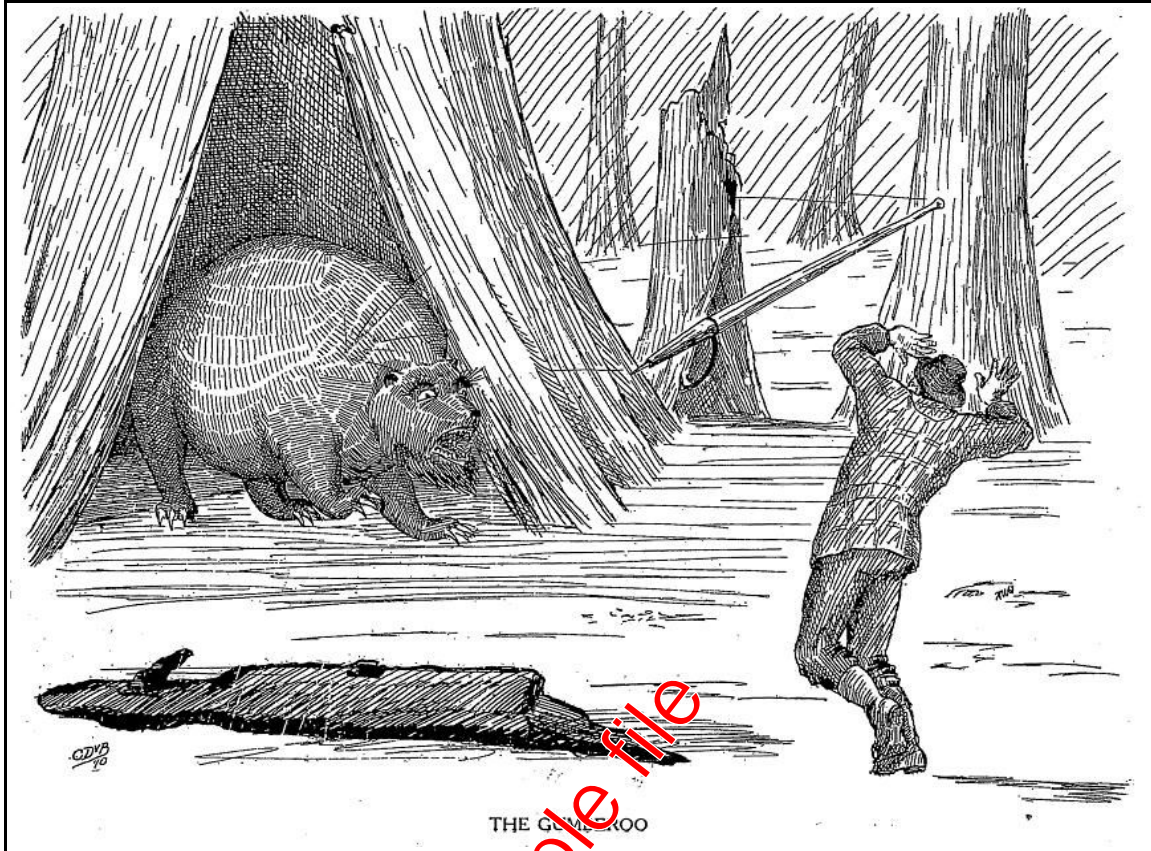
**Instinct:** To lead astray

### Moves

- Leave a useless trail
- Trample what's in its way

3 All Latin names and quotes come from *Fearsome Creatures of the Lumberwoods, With a Few Desert and Mountain Beasts*.

## The Gumberoo



The gumberoo (*Megalogaster repercussus*) lives in foggy regions, especially near wooded ocean coasts in northern climes. Fortunately, gumberoos seem to be rare, but this might be because this beast prefers "to remain in hiding most of the time in the base of enormous, burned-out cedar trees, from where it sallies forth occasionally on frightful marauding expeditions." A gumberoo is always hungry and attempts to devour anything that appears to be food. "A whole horse may be eaten at one sitting, distending the gumberoo out of all proportions, but failing to appease its hunger or cause it the slightest discomfort." A gumberoo resembles a coal-black, almost hairless bear. Its skin is "smooth, tough, and shiny and bears not even a wrinkle." In fact, a gumberoo's hide has amazing elastic properties. "Its elastic hide hurls back with equal ease the charging elk and the wrathful hornet." Fire, however, proves to be a particularly effective weapon against a gumberoo, but care must be taken, for these beasts tend to explode when burned.

*Magical, Solitary*

Claws and Fangs (1d10 damage); 12 HP; 4 Armor

*Close, Messy*

**Special Qualities:** Elastic hide

**Instinct:** To devour

### Moves

- Explode if set on fire
- Hurl back an attack

## The Roperite



Despite its comical appearance, which resembles a plucked fowl with a whip-like tail and a rope-like beak, the roperite (*Rhynchoropus flagelliformis*) proves itself to be a fearsome predator native to piney foothills. Scholar debate this beast's origins. Is it "born, hatched from eggs" or did it "come into existence spontaneously from some mountain cavern"? Some legends claim roperites are the spirits of an earlier, now lost race of ranchers. Whatever the truth, some things are known. A roperite moves with amazing speed. It "seemingly half flies, half bounds across the rugged country which it inhabits." A roperite's "leathery skin is impervious to thorn and its flipper-legs uninjured by the sharpest rocks." Its whip-like tail "has a large set of rattles". It vibrates these rattles when pursuing prey, which it brings down by means of "its marvelous rope-like beak".

*Group, Small*

Drag with Beak (1d4+2 damage); 6 HP; 0 Armor

*Close, Forceful, Near*

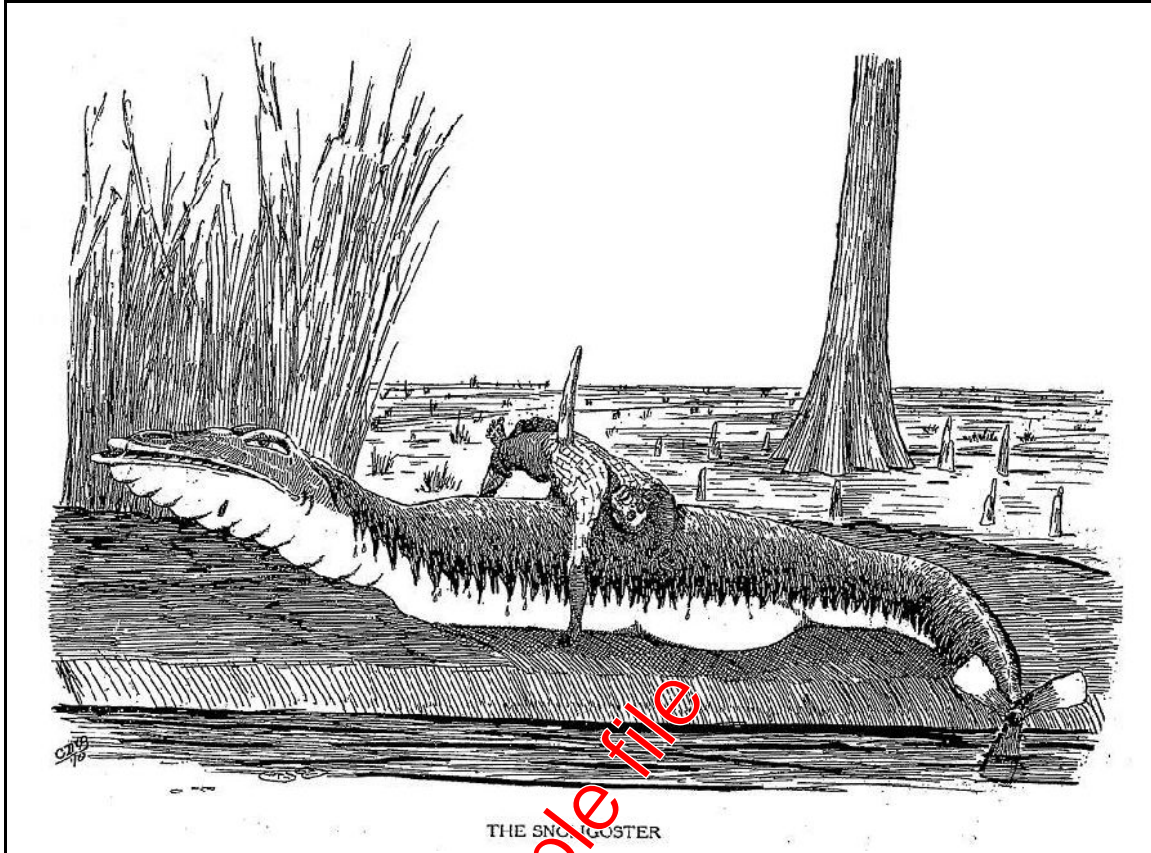
**Special Qualities:** Flesh cannot be pierced

**Instinct:** To hunt on the run

### Moves

- Drag prey through something hazardous
- Move with amazing speed
- Scarily rattle its tail

## The Snoligoster



This bizarre snoligoster (*Dorsobastatus caudirotulid*) is almost certainly the result of insane magical experiments, hunts semi-tropical cypress swamps.<sup>4</sup> "This animal is of enormous proportions and is credited with a voracious appetite. Worst of all, its appetite is only appeased by the eating of human beings" (which isn't to say it won't eat other creatures if humans aren't available). "In form the snoligoster resembles a huge crocodile, but is covered with long, glossy fur and has no legs or fins, except one long spike on its back." At the end of its tail grows three bony plates that greatly resemble a propellor. In fact, these plates "revolve at a terrific rate, driving the animal" with great speed through mud or water. In combat, a snoligoster attacks with its propellor. Victims struck are often hurled into the air to be impaled on the beast's spike fin. Despite its fearsome looking jaws, the bite of a snoligoster is quite weak. To feed, it uses its propellor to dig a hole in the ground, into which it deposits impaled prey. Then, it beats its prey "into a batter with its rapidly revolving propellor and inhales them."

*Large, Solitary*

Propellor (1d10+1 damage); 16 HP; 2 Armor

*Close, Messy*

**Special Qualities:** Amphibious

**Instinct:** To eat humans

### Moves

- Impale prey
- Move like a torpedo

<sup>4</sup> While Cox and company concerned themselves mostly with northern wooded regions, they also researched rare beasts native to southern climes as well as those that live in desert and mountain regions.