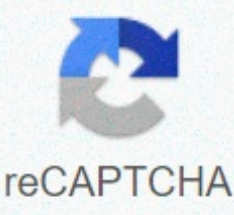




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The Inner Sea Monster Codex, a Pathfinder Campaign Setting sourcebook written by John Compton, Paris Crenshaw, Mike Myler, Tork Shaw and Larry Wilhelm, was released on June 24, 2015. The inner sea region of the Pathfinder campaign setting is full of monstrous enemies, and 10 of the most fascinating are detailed in pathfinder campaign setting: Inner Sea Monster Codex! From winged strix to aquatic guilds, Golarion offers no shortage of iconic and inspiring antagonists to challenge any group of adventurer-and-unexpected allies to help them. Each entry presents a trove of information about the nature, history, society, and habits of one of Golarion's monstrous races, and ready-made examples of roles found among each creature type, from kentauro foragers and cyclops lorekeepers to minotaur prophets and ogrekin looters. Inside this book you will find creatures such as: Charau-ka, violent simian humanoids who worship demons and have a thirst for bloodshed. Cyclopes, once part of a vast, ancient society but now reduced to a hunger satiated only by victims. Gillmen, amphibious humanoids who claim to be heirs to the fallen Azlanti Empire. Girtabillus, bold scorpion people guarding the mysterious ruins of Golarion's deserts. Strix, the scourge of the defence is intent on protecting his homeland from the human scourge. Sadistic deros, malevolent minotaurs, deviant wooden strolls and more! Content Introduction (2) Centaur (4) Charau-Ka (10) Cyclops (16) Derro (22) Gillman (28) Girtabillu (34) Minotaur (16) Derro (22) Gillman (28) Girtabillu (34) Minotaur (16)) Derro (22) Gillman (28) Girtabillu (34) Minotaur (28) 40) Ogrekin (46) Strix (52) Urdefhan (58) The Inner Sea Monster Codex is a 64-page post discussing ten different monstrous races for The Pathfinder. The write-up for each monster includes the background of the monster in the official Golarion campaign setting, a summary of regular meetings, and full state blocks and images for different members of the race. In addition, many of the breeds contain new features such as archetypes, traps, oracle curses, exploits, magical objects, spells, etc. The covered monsters are: * Centaurs. Everyone knows what these are, and centaurs in Golarion follow the fantasy tradition of being stubborn and xenophobic. This section contains a new archetype for centaur cavaliers called the Charger.* Charau-Ka. I had never heard of this kind of monster before. Charau-Ka are basically primitive monkey-men, violent and brutal scavengers in the jungles of Golarion. This section contains several Charau-Ka traps, many of which are quite creative and would be fun to use in a game.* Cyclops. In Golarion, cyclops have a strong diviner/oracle taste and are seen as quite rare. New oracle curses and a cyclopic oracle archetype, the Cyclopean Seer, are included here.* Derros. Favorite Crazy Evil Gnomes. I really like their portraits here as hidden threats lurking beneath urban areas and kidnapping surface-dwellers for strange experiments before before them to forget about it all. It would be pretty easy to get computers involved in investigating the mystery of missing persons. Several new alchemical discoveries are added.* Gillmen. Merfolk who have a special role in Golarion lore as descendants of the old Azlanti people. I guess Gillmen will get even more attention in the upcoming (at the time of this review) Ruins of Azlant adventure path. I've never done much with aquatic races, but for those interested, several Gillman magical items are included here.* Girtabillius. Another new one for me: basically, giant scorpions with human upper bodies (think centaurs but swap giant scorpions for horses!). In Golarion, they mainly appear in the desert settings and as guardians of ancient ruins. I wasn't very impressed, but your mileage may vary. Two new druid domains (Ruins and Vermin) are introduced here, along with a new oracle curse (Site-bound) and a Girtabillu-specific feat.* Minotaurs. In Golarion, minotaurs are the product of the demon goddess Lamashtu, but full the stereotypical role of guarding ancient mazes. There was nothing revealing here for me. Four new spells are introduced, all focusing on creating illusions to confuse travelers.* Ogrekin. Mutated, deformed and disfigured freaks. You get a The Hills Have Eyes vibe. I quite liked the two tables of beneficial and unfavorable malformations for the troll skin, and there is also a template for creating half-ogres.* Strix. Very cool looking winged humanoids living on remote mountain dwellers. I can definitely imagine doing something with them. Six new exploits for creatures with natural wings are included here.* Urdefhan. Creepy demond-inducing monsters from another plane living in the Darklands (Golarion's equivalent of Underdark). Nightmare fuel that's perfect for adding a little horror to a session. Six new exploits (Urdefhan-specific) are included. The artwork is evenly excellent – really, it's as good as it gets in fantasy RPGs. Although not every monstrous race presented here was my cup of tea, there's enough creativity and crunch mechanics to make the book worth buying if any of the creatures presented here appeal to you as GM. Note that this is primarily a GM's book; although some of the mechanics options (exploits, spells, etc.) could be used by pc, most have a prerequisite attached to being one of the monstrous breeds. [Note for Amazon customers: this book has a different cover, and is not part of the adventure path line] As I stated in my recent review of it, I really can't praise the Pathfinder RPG Monster Codex enough (so true that I continue my praise here!). It's a book that has seen lots of use in my games. As such, I was quite excited by the release of the Inner Sea Monster Codex, a book that serves much the same purpose Monster Codex, but specifically for Pathfinder Campaign Setting. More More monster NPC can never be a bad thing! I must say it hasn't seen nearly as much use as the Monster Codex. In fact, I haven't used it at all yet, although I'm sure I will at some point. The Inner Sea Monster Codex includes 10 more monstrous breeds, several of which, such as charau-ka and guilds, are unique to Golarion. Most of these breeds are not quite as common as those covered by the Monster Codex, although some, like centaurs and minotaurs, are classic monsters in the game. Although I haven't used it yet (mainly because none of the monster types within have shown up in my games since its release and it's only been out for a few months), I still really like the book and look forward to using it in my games. It doesn't quite reach the accolades I have for the Monster Codex as it is much more limited in space and hence variety, but it still has a lot to offer GMs to make their games easier. Inner Sea Monster Codex has a similar layout to the Monster Codex. The ten monster races each get their chapter, the chapters that run in alphabetical order. Although it only has half as many monster races as the Monster Codex, it's also about a quarter length. As such every monster race gets only about half as many pages as those in the Monster Codex do. This means that there isn't that much room for as many NPCs or rules options in the Inner Sea Monster Codex, but despite this lack of space, the book does handle some impressively different characters and there are some very interesting new rules options. Each chapter begins with two pages of background information, meetings, and new rules. It is very much to fit into the small space, but the space is well used. The background information is, perhaps, the most disappointing, because there is so little of it and you don't really learn much new from it. Although the information is technically setup-specific, most of it is generic enough that GMs can easily adapt all the material in the book to other settings, making the book useful to all GMs regardless of the campaign worlds they use. The encounters section is a descriptive account of how computers can encounter different examples of the particular monster. It fleshes out background information a little more, and is not a list of groups of specific NPC meetings sections in the Monster Codex. The new rules options generally take up half to two-thirds of a page and include things like new archetypes, exploits, spells and magical objects. These options are tailored to suit each monster type, although many of them could easily be used by characters of other races. The cyclops chapter contains two new oracle curses (hunger and powerless prophecy) that could easily appear in other races, for example. I'm really glad to see these two curses (plus an additional curse, place-bound, in the girtabillu chapter) as the list of available curses for oracles is very short and have been surprisingly few expansions to the list in various supplements. My favorite new option, however, is the charger, a cavalier archetype for centaurs. This one is very specific to centaurs only because it allows centaurs to be their own strongholds. The archetype is a good example of how to tailor a class that has abilities that don't make sense for a particular race to that race. After opening two pages of information, each monster then gets four NPC examples, each with a full page of statistics and description. These NPCs are of different classes and cover a wide range of challenge ratings. Although this is primarily a book of antagonists, not all nnuses are necessarily evil. Quite a few have neutral adaptations and there are also a couple with good adaptations. Of course, it's always possible for GMs to tweak fluff descriptions and give NPCs all the customizations they want (within class boundaries, but there are no paladins in this book). Quite a few of the NPCs in the Inner Sea Monster Codex have classes from the Advanced Class Guide, a book I'm not too fond of, and one that I currently don't use any of the classes from. Three of the four strix NPC, for example, have classes from that book, so I'm not sure at the moment what to do if I find myself needing last minute strix characters—but this is a problem I'm going to run into any book that uses Advanced Class Guide classes, and I don't, by any means, consider it a strike against this book. One of my favorite parts of the Inner Sea Monster Codex is the introduction. These opening two pages are presented as an in-game report from Yllaria Aurnosa, council liaison for the Promise College of Enlightened Excellence in Promise, Hermea. The report provides an overview of all ten monster races in the book from Yllaria's biased point of view. Hermea is a region of Golarion that has not had much development, so this report gives just a little more insight into that country. I also love examples of in-world writing. They often pass over the character of a country's inhabitants much better than simple descriptive text can. Overall, the Inner Sea Monster Codex is an excellent and useful book. It doesn't really have the usefulness of the Monster Codex, due to more limited space. However, it gives GMs with ready-made NPC that they can let into their campaigns with just a moment's notice. Anything that cuts down on preparation time and makes GM's life easier is a clear success in my book. Book.

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