

Roper, Ice

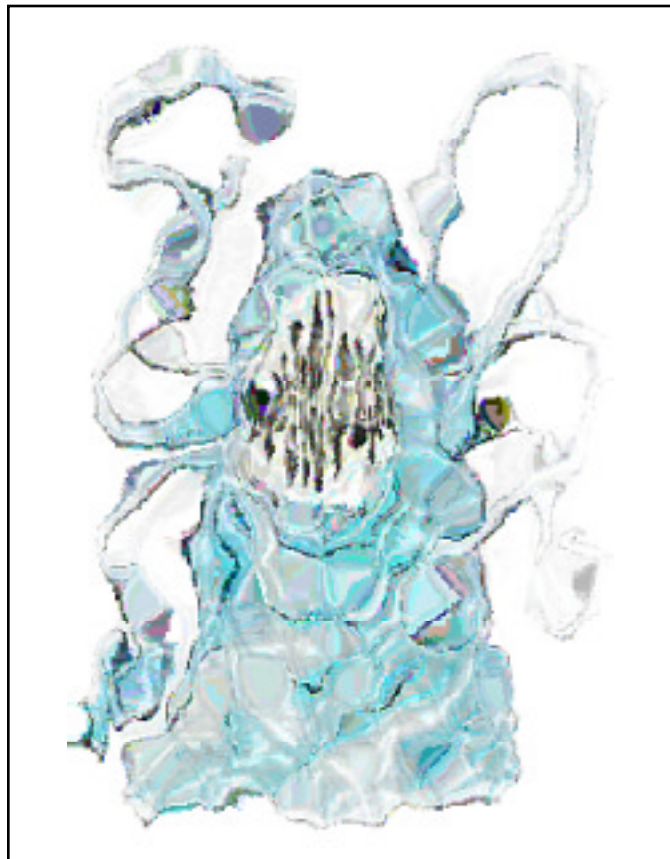
CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any arctic
FREQUENCY:	Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Pod
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Carnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Exceptional (15-16)
TREASURE:	See below
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic Evil

NO. APPEARING:	1-8
ARMOR CLASS:	-2
MOVEMENT:	3
HIT DICE:	15-17
THACO:	15-16 HD: 5 17 HD: 3
NO. OF ATTACKS:	2 or 1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	2d4/2d4 or 5d6
CRIT. HIT/FUMBLE:	15-16 HD: 80%(+80%)/ 20% 17 HD: 90%(+90%)/ 10%
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Strands, Strength drain, breath
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	See below
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	80%
SIZE:	L (9' long)
MORALE:	Champion (15)
XP VALUE:	15 HD: 17,000 16 HD: 18,000 17 HD: 19,000

A cousin to the common roper, the ice roper dwells in arctic climates, preferring icy mountainous regions where the temperature seldom rises above freezing. Somewhat larger and more aggressive than their subterranean cousins, the ice roper poses a danger to all who pass near its hunting territory.

The ice roper closely resembles the normal variety in form, a large pillar like stalk with several retractable tentacles and a single ice-blue eye. However, it does not bear the stony color of the smaller roper, instead it is icy-white and opaque enabling it to blend with its frozen environment easily.

Combat: The ice roper prefers to wait for its prey, hidden among ice formations and snow-covered rocks. It so aptly



blends with the surroundings that it easily surprises most of its victims, causing them to roll surprise at -6.

The roper usually attacks first with its special breath weapon, a cone of cold air expelled from its huge toothy maw. This cone of cold can be used every three rounds, three times a day. The cold blast causes 1d4+1 hp points of damage per hit die of the creature (save vs. breath weapon for half damage) to all within the 60-foot long cone which is 5-feet wide at its base and 30-feet wide at its end. In addition, creatures who fail their saving throw must roll an additional save vs. paralyzation at -4 or be frozen in place by the extreme cold for 2d4 turns.

The ice roper follows its breath attack by using its sticky tentacles to entangle and sap the strength from its prey (note it can breath and use its tentacles in the same round). The ice roper can shoot out up to six tentacles at the rate of one per round. Each tentacle can strike a creature up to (1d4+2) x 10 feet away and can pull up to 1,100 pounds. A creature struck suffers 2d4 points of damage from the impact and a sticky glue-like secretion common to all ropers causes the tentacle to adhere to the victim. A creature struck must save vs. paralyzation at -2 or lose half of its Strength after 1d3

rounds. Multiple hits cause a cumulative Strength loss and the loss lasts for 2d4 turns even after the victim is free from grip of the tentacles.

A creature caught in the grasp of a tentacle may break free by winning an opposing Strength check against a Strength 22. This action requires an entire round during which no other action may be taken. A tentacle may also be severed by inflicting at least 12 hit points of damage to it with a single attack from an edged weapon; the tentacles are AC -2. Prey that cannot escape the grasp of a tentacle is drawn toward the ice roper's fang-filled mouth at a rate of 10 feet per round. The roper automatically bites victims drawn to its mouth, causing 5d6 hp of damage per round.

The creature's adaption to colder climates makes it especially susceptible to heat. Therefore, it saves at -4 vs. fire-based attacks and such attacks cause an extra hit point of damage per die when used against an ice roper. Lightning has no effect on an ice roper and a cold-based attack causes the creature to regenerate one hit point for every point of damage normally caused by the attack.

Habitat/Society: Unlike their subterranean cousins, ice ropers almost always work together in family groups known as pods. The members of the pod are always offspring of the largest or *prime* ice roper. Ropers are fiercely attacked on the rare occasions when they stray into an opposing pod's hunting territory. No pod of more than eight ice ropers has ever been reported. It is believed that when a pod exceeds

this size the largest of the offspring wander off to form their own pods.

Ice ropers, like their subterranean cousins, reproduce asexually by shedding some of their natural material to form a seed. Nutrients and magical energies absorbed from the earth and the surrounding ice combine to form an infant ice roper. The infant resembles an ice boulder or icicle until it reaches maturity in 2d4 weeks.

Ice ropers move slowly using the numerous, spike-like nails on their underside. These nails easily pierce ice and stone, allowing the ropers to cling to ceilings and walls like their subterranean cousins. Like normal ropers, they seldom travel great distances, only doing so when food is scarce.

Ecology: Ice ropers eat any form of meat, but prefer the taste of demihuman flesh, especially that of dwarves, gnomes and uldra.

The ice roper has the same gizzard-like organ as the subterranean variety and it often holds undigested treasure. Platinum and gems cannot be digested and the gizzard often holds 5d6 platinum pieces and has a 40% chance to hold 6d4 gems.

Alchemists prize the glue from the ice roper's strands and its digestive acids which must be stored in platinum vials. Slivers of the ice roper's icy exoskeleton are sometimes used by wizards in the creation of a *wand of frost* and other cold-based magic items.