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| CLIMATE/TERRAIN: | Tropical, sub-tropical/Damp jungle, riverside caves, marsh |
| FREQUENCY: | Very rare |
| ORGANIZATION: | Pack |
| ACTIVITY CYCLE: | Any, especially nights of the full moon |
| DIET: | Omnivore |
| INTELLIGENCE: | Average (8-10) |
| TREASURE (1E): | (C) |
| ALIGNMENT: | Neutral evil |

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|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| NO. APPEARING: | 3d6 |
| ARMOR CLASS: | 7 |
| MOVEMENT: | 15 |
| HIT DICE: | 2+3 |
| THAC0: | 17 |
| NO. OF ATTACKS: | 1 (weapon) or 1 (bite) |
| DAMAGE/ATTACK: | By weapon or 1d8 |
| SPECIAL ATTACKS: | Lethal venom, lycanthropy |
| SPECIAL DEFENSES: | Silver or magic to hit, see below |
| MAGIC RESISTANCE: | Nil |
| SIZE: | M (4-7' long) or M (10-11' long) |
| MORALE: | Elite (13-14) (See below) |
| XP VALUE: | 975 |

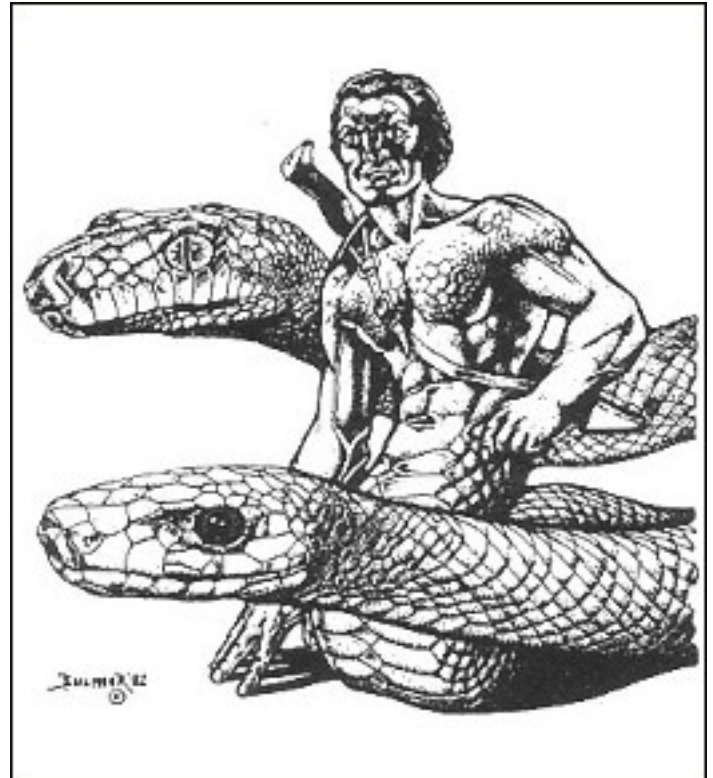
Lycanthropes are humans with ability to transform into animal-like creatures. Most sages recognize three different categories of lycanthropes: *true lycanthropes*, for which their condition is a genetic trait; *infected lycanthropes*, which have incurred their affliction through wounds that were inflicted by a true lycanthrope; and *induced lycanthropes*, humans with the ability to assume an animal-like form because they have been affected by some curse, spell or magical item.

True weresnakes – also known as *serpent-men* – are humans with the ability to assume a form that combines aspects of a human and a giant poisonous snake. They have full control of their shape-shifting abilities, which allows them to appear in any of the forms below, as desired and as long as they are alive. The first form, known as the *natural form* or the *human form*, is always that of a human, which over time becomes more and more reminiscent of a snake (*e.g.*, snake-like eyes, forked tongue, exceptionally smooth skin). In human form, the true weresnake does not normally wear any armor, since this would interfere with its transformation.

The second form, known as the *wereform* or the *half-snake form*, is a combination of the features of a giant poisonous snake and a human. It has a scaled human torso with two arms, a human head, and two snake-like fangs; the lower part of the body is that of a giant snake and about 9 feet long.

True weresnakes speak their own language and possibly some other languages as well, such as the common tongue or the languages of human societies in the vicinity of their habitat; some are also able to converse with regular (giant) poisonous snakes.

Combat: True weresnakes usually stalk their victims before attacking and will often strike from ambush. In any form, a weresnake may call 1d3 giant poisonous snakes to its side (once/day; *v. CMM, Poisonous Snake – Giant Poisonous Snake*). These must be within 1 mile when the summons is issued and will arrive in 1d4 rounds.



In human form, true weresnakes may use a weapon to attack, usually a scimitar; most that find themselves severely threatened in combat revert to wereform.

In wereform, true weresnakes attack either with a weapon or with their bite, which inflicts 1d8 points of damage and may inject lethal venom into the victim (poison type F; injected; onset immediate; death/0). Alternatively, it may opt not to use its venom, preferring to let its victim live and suffer from the lycanthrope-inducing effect of its bite. Any human that has suffered damage from a true weresnake's bites and still lives has a 1% chance per point of the damage inflicted to contract lycanthropy and become an infected weresnake (See below). True weresnake females protect their young vehemently, while males protect their females with equal fervor (+2 to hit and Morale 17-18 [Fanatic] in each case); combatant young fight to the death when all adult relatives have been slain (no Morale checks); non-combatant young will typically act in a subdued manner and flee at the first opportunity.

It takes a true weresnake but one round to change from one form into another, during which it cannot undertake any other actions. When a true weresnake returns to its natural form, 10-60% (1d6×10) of any wounds it suffered in wereform heal instantly. In wereform, a true weresnake can be damaged only by silver or magical weapons; wounds from any other weapon heal almost instantly and do not cause any actual damage. Because of their vulnerability to silver, some true weresnakes have a strong aversion to the metal and refuse to handle it; in some cases, the psychosomatic effect is such that touching silver actually burns them.

True weresnakes are repelled by wolfsbane and contact with even a sprig of it may cause them to flee. True weresnakes never possess psionic abilities. A slain true weresnake reverts to its natural form within one round of being killed; while this may mean that many of its wounds will disappear, it will still remain dead.

True weresnakes make their saving throws as 3-HD monsters.

Contracting Lycanthropy

Any human injured by a true lycanthrope and still alive has a 1% chance per point of damage caused by the natural attacks of the true lycanthrope (except in the case of true wererats, which may also transfer the affliction with weapons) to contract lycanthropy and become an *infected lycanthrope*. This is rolled for at the end of a fight with a true lycanthrope (e.g., a individual who has suffered a total of 24 points of damage at that time has a 24% chance to contract lycanthropy). After this, it usually takes 1d2 weeks before the first transformation can occur.

The victim can prevent the affliction by imbibing an infusion of belladonna (e.g., *Atropa belladonna*) within one hour of receiving his wounds, which has a 25% chance of success. Whatever the result, the infusion will incapacitate the imbiber for 1d4 days and there is always a 1% chance of the poison in it killing him. Note that the infusion must contain one, reasonably fresh, sprig of belladonna (e.g., picked within the last week); infusions containing too much belladonna may have even more serious consequences, ranging from incapacitation for 2d4 days to a greater chance of death. In general, creating the infusion will require the skills of an herbalist or healer.

Habitat/Society: Only little is known of the habits of true weresnakes, although it has been suggested that they lead a wandering existence in damp, dark places such as dense jungles, river caves, and Stygian marshes.

As true lycanthropes, true weresnakes likely behave much like others of their ilk. First, they are not affected by darkness, phases of the moon, or any of the other situations that traditionally affect infected lycanthropes, but many may still be about during those times. Second, they likely gather in close-knit, family-based groups known as packs, comprising true weresnakes alone, which may include infected or induced varieties of weresnake in rare cases and are likely to live in close harmony with regular or monstrous poisonous snakes, which usually cooperate with the pack (e.g., 60% chance per member of the pack of 1d3 giant poisonous snakes being present). Third, true weresnakes are not very likely to dislike their condition, seeing themselves as being like any other species, with the same right to survival.

True weresnakes breed with other true weresnakes to produce their own, lycanthropic offspring.

Note that treasure found in a true weresnake lair is not likely to contain many silver items.

Ecology: Although omnivores, true weresnakes tend to favor a diet of meat, especially when in wereform. Under normal circumstances, true weresnakes tend to avoid humans and humanoids unless they have a specific reason to enter their settlements (e.g., on an errand or attacking). Some animals (e.g., horses, dogs, cats) do not like the smell of true weresnakes and will react to them fearfully or alarmed. Such animals may bolt, look 'spooked', paw at the ground, try to get away and hide, make noise, and so on.

While lycanthropy may once have been regarded as a magical disease – and perhaps still is in some settings – scholars of today usually assume that it is not. Some consider true lycanthropes to be a separate human species with the ability to transfer their 'affliction' to regular humans, while others believe that they are actually humans that acquired their shape-shifting abilities in ancient times, perhaps as a result of some curse, perhaps as a result of some ritual aimed at gaining these abilities. Whatever the truth, true weresnakes cannot be 'cured' like infected lycanthropes.

Lycanthropes and Lycanthropy

The word "lycanthrope" is derived from the Greek words *λύκος* (wolf) and *ἄνθρωπος* (man) and could thus be considered somewhat of a misnomer considering the wide range of animals the lycanthropes of the AD&D multiverse can change into. Perhaps a more correct term would

be "therianthrope," from *θηρίον* (wild beast, animal) and *ἄνθρωπος*. On the other hand, the DM could rule that, since werewolves are probably the most common of all therianthropes, the term lycanthrope has gained much more popularity than the term therianthrope and therefore more common usage among sages.

True Lycanthropes: True lycanthropes are humans who can assume an animal-like form at will and possess the ability to transmit onto humans the affliction known as lycanthropy, a condition that alters the biological structure of victims so they become what is known as *infected lycanthropes* – the dreaded lycanthropes of folklore. True lycanthropes cannot transform others into true lycanthropes – true lycanthropy is hereditary and limited to those species born with it. True lycanthropes are neither diseased nor cursed and they cannot be 'cured'; they cannot contract lycanthropy. True lycanthropes are not affected by the phases of the moon, darkness, or any other limitations on their shape-shifting abilities associated with lycanthropy.

Infected Lycanthropes: Infected lycanthropes are humans who suffer from lycanthropy as the result of having been wounded by the natural attacks of a true lycanthrope. They usually have human form during the day and may even lead relatively normal lives. It is only when darkness falls on the night of a full moon – and sometimes even on the nights immediately preceding and immediately following a full moon – that they transform into animal-like creatures. In some cases, this transformation also occurs during periods of severe stress (e.g., when the afflicted suffers damage equal to more than one-third of his hit-point total) and it has even been known to have occurred as the result of powerful *monster-* or *animal-summoning* spells being cast in the vicinity of an infected lycanthrope. It has been suggested that the transformation can be halted, or at least postponed, by experienced or extremely virtuous individuals or those who take certain precautions. For example, according to certain ancient tomes, ingesting a vial of *holy water* or bathing with its contents will postpone the transformation for 1d4 turns; also, individuals who are constantly watched over by a loved one or lock themselves into a chapel and pray devoutly and constantly all night may be able to delay the transformation (assume only a base 10% chance of success in these cases).

Once the transformation is complete, the victim has the alignment of the true lycanthrope that infected him and his actions will be similar to those normally taken by that type of lycanthrope (e.g., an infected werewolf will be chaotic evil and will be overcome by a bestial urge to hunt and kill, an infected werebear will be chaotic good and will seek out evil creatures to kill, a weretiger will be neutral, vain, extremely selfish, and prone to attack all that stand in its way). Unfortunately, most infected lycanthropes will select either personal friends or enemies as their 'victims', making no distinctions – all that matters is the strength of the emotion binding them and their targets. While this change in alignment is temporary at first (limited to each lycanthropic episode), the victim's alignment will gradually change to permanently become that of the true lycanthrope. This process takes 2d6 months and it may lead to all kinds of conflicts and even madness in case of distinct differences in alignment (e.g., a Paladin who has become an infected werewolf).

While transformed, the victim has Strength 19 (+3/+7) and conforms to the statistics, abilities, and weaknesses of a true lycanthrope of his type (e.g., Intelligence, silver or magical weapons required to hit, repelled by wolfsbane), the main differences being that he cannot transfer his affliction onto any other creatures, that he cannot willingly assume his natural form, and that he does not automatically speak any new languages. He can no longer use any abilities he has in his human form (e.g., class-related abilities, NWPs, psionics) and he cannot be affected by any curative magic during the entire episode (e.g., *Cure Light Wounds*, *Cure Disease*). When the episode ends, the victim reverts to his human form, upon which 10-60% (1d6×10) of any damage suffered in wereform (or hybrid form if such is possible) heal instantly, as is the case with a true lycanthrope of his type. Any spells memorized before the transformation are lost and must be memorized or replaced as normal again.

In general, an infected lycanthrope who has reverted to human form again has no memory of the events that occurred during the lycanthropic episode, although a feeling of having experienced something horrible may remain. Some may have hazy, haunting memories of performing terrible acts – much like they had nightmarish dreams. This does not

mean that an infected lycanthrope is always completely unaware of his condition: he will most certainly realize something is wrong should he wake up in some alley or wood lying in the mud instead of in his own bed, wearing torn and shredded clothes and covered with scratches and wounds. In similar fashion, his friends may realize that something is wrong when they see their companion's actions and outlook on life change over time.

There are precious few means to rid an infected lycanthrope of the affliction. Among them are taking refuge in a holy place (or an unholy place, as applicable) such as a monastery or an abbey, where he must remain confined for at least one month. Here, the clerics can administer *holy water* (or *unholy water*) prepared by the spiritual methods of their faith and laced with a goodly amount of wolfsbane (e.g., *Atropa napellus*) and belladonna (e.g., *Atropa belladonna*). This potion is to be consumed by the victim at least twice a day from a silver chalice, which should eventually cure him and make him somewhat poorer in the purse – the procedure is very costly. Another way is to subject the victim to *Remove Curse*, cast while he is in wereform (or hybrid form). In this case, the victim will fight violently to put as much distance as it can between himself and the patriarch performing the spell. If cast properly, the victim must pass a saving throw vs. Spell (as a true lycanthrope of his type!), with success indicating that the affliction is removed and failure that the spell has no effect and that the transformations continue to take place. *Cure Disease* and other healing spells and abilities have no effect against lycanthropy. However, it is said that, on some worlds, lycanthropy is a magical disease rather than a curse, in which case the victim must be subjected to *Cure Disease* cast by a Priest of at least 12th level within three days after he has received his wounds.

Infected lycanthropes can be encountered almost anywhere in the world. Some will attempt to continue to lead their lives as usual, while others will seek the solitude of the wilderness or even attempt to join packs of true lycanthropes of their kind. Infected lycanthropes remain, in effect, human and cannot transfer their affliction in any way. As such, an infected lycanthrope who mates with a human will only ever produce normal human offspring.

Although there have been examples to the contrary, infected lycanthropes are generally unhappy with their fate and many will attempt to seek cures or even try to hunt down the lycanthrope that infected them.

Non-Human Infected Lycanthropes: In some worlds, demi-humans and humanoids can also be infected with lycanthropy when wounded by a true lycanthrope. However, while their condition differs little from human infected lycanthropes, those affected are not considered lycanthropes in the strictest sense of the word. As an interesting aside,

certain ancient librams, especially those found in the Known World, seem to indicate that demi-humans and humanoids who suffer more than 50% of their maximum hit-point-total in damage from the natural attacks of a true lycanthrope must pass a saving throw vs. Poison or fall ill immediately, feeling feverish and weak for 1d6 days (-2 or +2 penalty to all die-rolls, as applicable; -10% or +10% for percentage rolls) until death follows – unless subjected to *Cure Disease* cast by a 12th-level Priest before that.

Induced Lycanthropes: Induced lycanthropes are humans, demi-humans, or humanoids who have become lycanthropes through some foul curse, magical item, or spell (e.g., *Curse of Lycanthropy*). Magical items causing the affliction are often *cursed magical items* – usually of such shape and size that they can be worn – and they cannot be removed without the application of *Remove Curse* or a similar spell or effect.

Induced lycanthropes may or may not dislike their condition, depending on their alignment and the reason for their affliction. Those who dislike their fate will behave much like infected lycanthropes, while those who are happy with it will be much more like true lycanthropes. Most induced lycanthropes transform like infected lycanthropes – i.e., on a night of a full moon and/or the nights immediately preceding and following one – but not all will transform into unholy killers. While most will have only a hazy recollection of their actions while transformed (like infected lycanthropes), sages believe that particularly foul curses allow victims to fully recollect their actions, aggravating their pain even more. In similar fashion, while the vast majority of induced lycanthropes cannot spread their affection, certain exceptions are known.

Freeing an induced lycanthrope from its condition depends much on the way the affliction was incurred.

Antherions: *Antherions* (for lack of a better term) are animals that can assume human form (e.g., *wolfwere*, *jackalwere*). They pass on their shape-shifting abilities genetically – i.e., by having offspring – not by biting and infecting other creatures. Antherions and lycanthropes typically greatly resent each other and usually attack their counterparts without much ado (e.g., *wolfweres* attack *werewolves*).

Other Shape-Shifters: Although other types of shape-shifting creatures that display behavior similar to that of lycanthropes may be referred to as lycanthropes, these are, in fact, not lycanthropes, even when human, and they cannot transfer their affliction. Examples can be creatures that can assume an animal-like form by means of magical items, usually out of their own volition (e.g., *swanmay*, *bird maiden*, an adventurer using a *cloak of the manta ray*). The magical items allowing these creatures to change their form are not generally cursed and some can be transferred to a new owner, usually accompanied by some ritual of initiation.

Table 1. True Weresnake Statistics

| Form | Damage | Notes | Size |
|------------|------------------|---|-----------------|
| Human form | By weapon | -- | M (4-7' long) |
| Wereform | By weapon or 1d8 | Lycanthropy, lethal venom; silver or magic to hit | L (10-11' long) |

Note from the Author

"I'd seen the 1973 film *Sssssss* and was trying to come up with monsters to write for *White Dwarf* magazine. I never really used these apart from on wandering monster tables. I wrote them around 1980... before I came across *Dwellers of the Forbidden City* (and hence Yuan Ti)."

Source/Origins: Cas Liber, *Fiend Factory*. In *Good (?) Company*, in: *White Dwarf 30* (GW, 1982); *Lycanthropy*: Gary Gygax, *Dungeon Masters Guide* (TSR, 1979); *Lycanthrope, General*: David Cook et al., *Monstrous Compendium Volume One* (MC1; TSR, 1989); *Lycanthrope, General*: Doug Stewart (ed.), *Monstrous Manual* (TSR, 1993); *Lycanthropy*: David Cook, John Pickens and Steve Winter, *Dungeon Master Guide* (TSR, 1995); Casimir Liber, *5E: Converting AD&D Monsters to Fifth Edition*, in: *EN World Forums* (www, 2022)

Filmography: Hal Dresner and Daniel C. Striepeke, *Sssssss* (Universal Pictures, 1973)