

# Basilisk

## Basic Information

**Species Name:** Basilisk **Native Planet:** [Valaad \(An Rhy\)](#) **Classification:** Nonsentient, intelligent reptile

## Biological Information

**Average height:** 3.9 meters from ground to shoulder **Average length:** 7.2 meters from tail to snout  
**Average weight:** 2.2 tons

## Appearance and Anatomy

The basilisk is a scaled predator of the reptilian sort, adapted to Valaad's desert environment. It is tall but slender, and capable of moving in bursts up to 14 kph, though it normally maintains a more sedentary pace of 5 kph. Its body is kept off the ground by long limbs, which are jointed in three places to allow it to scale near-vertical surfaces. Its feet are webbed but dextrous, equally suited to climbing and travelling through sandy terrain.

A basilisk's eyes are covered in a gelatinous mass that protects them without them having to resort to nictating membranes or closing their eyes; it has a long narrow snout with a detachable jaw for swallowing. The tail accounts for fully half the length of the basilisk's body, and has a hooked barb on the end which is used in place of claws on its hands and feet.

In addition their bodies are covered with iridescent blue scales which reflect sunlight to a degree, diffusing heat somewhat and letting them operate in the daytime without needing to spend large time periods resting. To supplement this they have a pair of crests running from neck to tail which further diffuse heat from their bodies.

Basilisks are endothermic, and possess an internal gland which stores water. Their hide is tough, resisting heat and abrasion as well as piercing (though to a lesser degree).

They enter a mating cycle once a year (according to Valaad's orbital cycle) during which time males will fight for dominance, the victor allowed to mate with the healthier females while the loser must settle for the weaker and sicker females.

## Hunting Patterns and Defensive Behaviors

Basilisks are primarily scavengers and oviraptors though they are equally capable of taking down other

native beasts or even another basilisk. They are nomadic, not maintaining hunting zones but instead following the clouds. If they cannot find any eggs to poach, or carcasses to devour, they will attack settlements, but this happens rarely. More common are attacks against travelers and prospectors searching for valuables in the desert.

In the wild, basilisks use their physical strength and agility to discourage opponents from attacking; their barbed tails are capable of damaging vehicle-grade steel. Often they will let threats escape with a broken limb or a large gash, but just as often if the basilisk can get away with it it will kill and eat a threat.

Basilisks travel in groups of up to twelve animals, but herds can grow to as large as fifty members if there are nests nearby or hatchlings in the crowd. Although not sentient they have been described as having a rudimentary social structure, and compared to fossil records modern basilisks are trending towards smaller animals with larger, more complex brains.

Basilisk herds have been known to attack moisture condensers and extractors, and also scavenge wrecked transports for edibles and water. During particularly dry stretches they will use their bodies to dig down towards cooler ground and potential water; they can smell hydration from several kilometers away, even through solid rock.

Even so there are often single basilisks found roaming; while in a herd they might be more prone to flee than to fight, a lone basilisk or a male encountered during mating season may be uncommonly aggressive, often chasing intruders for several kilometers before giving up. This behavior also extends to females who are preparing to nest or have already made a nest nearby.

A herd will in most cases stay with a nest until the last of the hatchlings emerges, then begin wandering again. The hatchlings will eat the unhatched eggs for nourishment and then attempt to catch up with the herd.

## Effect of Settlers on the Basilisk Population

One of the problems facing the native species and threatening their evolution is the presence of mammalian lifeforms building settlements on the planet. Humanoids use fully ten times as much water as basilisks do, and in their building of machines to extract as much moisture available from the surroundings they leach underground springs dry. This is in part due to the basilisks' own behavior where water is concerned. Since they can sense where water may be buried, settlers have learned therefore to drill for water where there are large numbers of basilisk skeletons.

Basilisks have also proven a threat to construction crews who erect water extractors upon the planet's surface; while they are prone to flight, the water sense again changes their behavior and prompts them to attack the settlers.

In response the settlers have tried various means of defending structures and crews from the reptiles; the most effective has been outright killing of basilisks. Though physically more powerful and in many cases more numerous than the people building extractors, the sight of a herd leader falling victim to a creature much smaller than it is sufficient to drive the herd away.

Although they have a thick armored hide well suited to defending themselves from pack hunters and

other basilisks, the animals are ill-equipped to handle complex weaponry. Their best defense, especially in sandy areas, is to burrow under the sand where the weapons can't penetrate, but either scenario results in the Basilisk herd losing its opportunity to gather water.

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