Speed of the cheetah, eyes of the eagle, strength of the elephant, courage of the lion... the powers of the animal kingdom are vast, and the Animal Powers profile looks at them for themed characters with animal-like powers or those able to adopt any of the powers of the animal kingdom!

**ANIMAL DESCRIPTORS**

The following are important descriptors for animal powers.

- **Animal:** A key question for animal powers is: “What constitutes an animal?” After all, humans are animals, too, right? As a descriptor, animal generally excludes humans, as it focuses on traits humans do not have. Animal generally does include insects, jellyfish, worms, sponges, and other invertebrates. It’s largely up to the Gamemaster whether or not the animal descriptor is limited solely to earthly animals; in settings with inhabited alien planets, there are all kinds of extraterrestrial animals. If it does include alien creatures, the GM should consider the impact this may have on any modifiers associated with the descriptor.

- **Natural:** A reference to “natural” animals generally means the creatures: 1) originate on Earth; 2) are not genetically altered or enhanced, and; 3) are not supernatural (such as dragons or unicorns). Depending on the handling of the animal descriptor, item 1 may not apply.

- **Morphic:** A common descriptor for animal powers, morphic refers to the theory of a “morphic” or “morphogenetic” field, an invisible field of information linking all members of a species and—to a lesser degree—all forms of life. If such a field exists, then the ability to access it may be a source for obtaining animal powers, particularly for characters able to access multiple powers or to vary their animal powers. Similarly, the morphic field may be the basis for animal shapeshifting or conditions like lycanthropy.

- **Totem:** In the context of animal powers, a totem is a supernatural spirit associated with a particular animal, which may grant animal powers to human allies. So a wolf totem, for example, might grant wolf-like powers to a mortal. Totems can have their own agendas, and their gifts of power may come with strings attached (see Animal Complications).

- **Countering:** Animal powers as a general descriptor do not have much use in countering; specific powers may counter other effects, such using Webbing to smother a fire, for example. Most animal powers modify the user’s body or abilities in some way and are similarly difficult to counter, except with a Nullify effect directly aimed at one of their descriptors (such as magic, in the case of magical animal powers).

**ANIMAL FEATURES**

Feature effects associated with Animal Powers include the following:

- A minor, but still useful, animal trait like a coat of fur able to provide some protection from the cold, or a
reduced need for food and water (or the ability to store it), stretching out the time before the symptoms of starvation and dehydration set in or useful for a circumstance bonus in some situations.

- **Animal Harmony**: Natural animals are favorably disposed towards you, having an initial attitude of favorable unless circumstances dictate otherwise. Predators tend not to see you as prey, while prey species tend not to perceive you as a threat. Animal Empathy is a common advantage for characters with this trait.
- You have an innate ability to know the traits of an animal upon seeing or touching it (useful for those looking to mimic those traits).
- You have a keen sense of animal behavior. Upon seeing an animal, you automatically know its attitude towards you (*Hero’s Handbook*, page 73).

### OFFENSIVE POWERS

The struggle for survival in nature equips many animals with offensive capabilities, which offensive animal powers duplicate.

#### CRUSHING GRIP

Whether it’s like a powerful bear-hug or a python’s constricting coils, you have a mighty grip able to hold and squeeze an opponent. The Enhanced Strength granted by this power is still limited by power level. Crushing Grip is often accompanied by advantages like Improved Grab and Improved Hold.

**Crushing Grip**: Enhanced Strength, Limited to Grabs • 1 point per rank.

#### FEROCIOUS CHARGE

With a rush of movement at your opponent, you can hit with considerable force, like a charging rhino or bull. Protection or Immunity 2 (Own Slam Damage) is common with this power, as is the Improved Critical advantage.

**Ferocious Charge**: Strength-based Damage, Limited to While Charging • 1 point per 2 ranks.

#### NATURAL WEAPONS

Nature equips animals with weapons ranging from sharp claws and teeth to fangs, horns, spines, and mandibles. You possess similar natural weapons; some may be Penetrating, while others have a Linked venom effect (see the Venom power, following) or ranks of Improved Critical.

**Natural Weapons**: Strength-based Damage • 1 point per rank.

#### QUILLs

You have a coat of sharp quills or spines, making it dangerous to grab you and allowing you to inflict additional damage in close combat.

**Quills**: Reaction Damage (to being touched) • 4 points per rank.

#### SHOCK

You can deliver a powerful shock by touch, like an electric eel. If you can generate the shock by reflex whenever someone touches you, apply the Reaction modifier.

**Shock**: Cumulative Affliction (electric shock; Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Dazed, Stunned, Incapacitated) • 2 points per rank.

#### TERRIFYING ROAR

You can emit a fearsome roar, cry, or other animal call able to shake and startle your foes. A truly terrifying roar might be a Hearing Area Affliction instead.

**Terrifying Roar**: Enhanced Intimidation • 1 point per 2 skill ranks.

#### VENOM

The animal kingdom is filled with a wide range of venomous creatures, most using fangs or stingers to inject their venom into a target (thus the use of Toughness for the initial resistance check).

Venom can be Linked with a Damage effect for more serious injection methods, like envenomed claws or dagger-like fangs. Vary the conditions imposed by the Affliction to suit different types of venoms: paralytics, for example, may hinder, immobilize, and paralyze.

**Venom**: Progressive Affliction (Resisted by Toughness, Overcome by Fortitude, Dazed, Stunned, Incapacitated) • 3 points per rank.

#### WEBBING

You can produce webbing like that of a spider, but scaled up to human size, giving your webs greater tensile strength and durability. In addition to using your webbing as an attack, you may be able to use it for the Movement (Swinging) effect as a regular power or power stunt.

**Webbing**: Ranged Cumulative Affliction (Resisted by Dodge, Overcome by Damage; Hindered and Vulnerable, Defenseless and Immobilized), Extra Condition, Limited Degree • 3 points per rank.

### DEFENSIVE POWERS

Animals have many defensive adaptations making them tougher or better suited to their environment. In particular, characters may have different forms of Immunity,
Movement (Environmental Adaptation) and even Enhanced Advantage (Favored Environment) to reflect an animal-like adaptation to an environment.

**PROTECTIVE HIDE**

Your skin is tougher than normal, being leathery or covered with armored scales, for example. For extremely tough or armored hides, add ranks of Impervious.

**Protection**: • 1 point per rank.

**REGROWTH**

Like certain lizards or worms, you can regrow lost body parts and heal quickly from injury, ignoring many of its complications.

**Regeneration**: • 1 point per rank.

**SQUEEZE THROUGH**

You can compress and shift your body to squeeze through small spaces an ordinary human could never fit through.

**Movement (Permeate)**, Limited to Small Spaces • 1 point per rank.

**MOVEMENT POWERS**

A number of movement effects make for good animal powers: Burrowing for moles or worms, Leaping for grasshoppers or gazelles, Speed for cheetahs, horses, and other swift land-animals, and Swimming for aquatic creatures of all types. Others include the following.

**Serpent Slither**

Like a snake, you can slide along the ground and climb head-first down surfaces your body can grip.

**Movement (Slithering)** • 2 points.

**WALL-WALKER**

You can stick to walls and ceilings like an insect (or some types of lizards and salamanders).

**Movement (Wall-Crawling)** • 2 points per rank (up to 2 ranks).

**WINGS**

You have fully functional wings: bird-like, bat-like, or even insect- or butterfly-like. You may be able to grow and shed your wings at will; if this takes any longer than a free action, apply the Activation modifier to your power. The fastest sustained flight for an animal is about speed rank 6.

**Flight**: • 1 point per rank.

**UTILITY POWERS**

These powers involve various animal-related abilities from communicating, controlling, and working with animals to taking on some of their useful traits.

**ANIMAL COMPANION**

You have an animal ally or companion able to understand at least simple commands and carry them out, and likely well-inclined towards you. Your companion may be an ordinary trained animal or an unusual specimen in some way, such as having greater than normal Intellect or unusual abilities. Create your companion as a character with 15 power points per rank, using the sample animals in the *Hero's Handbook* and *Gamemaster's Guide* as templates.

**Summon Animal Companion**: Heroic, Self-Powered (see Summoning Powers) • 3 points per rank.

**ANIMAL FORM**

You can transform into an animal or animal-like form. Common in-between forms are humanoid mixes of human and animal traits, like a classic therianthrope.

The default version of this power lets you assume a single animal form with no more power points than your normal (human) form. If you can assume multiple forms, increase Morph rank to 2 (for a general type of animals) or 3 (for all animals) and apply a rank of Metamorph for each individual form. See the animal archetypes on pages 133–136 of the *Gamemaster's Guide* for a list of potential animal forms. This includes the Swarm archetype, allowing you to transform into a swarm of insects (or similar tiny creatures) rather than a single animal.

A humanoid “in-between” form counts as a separate Metamorph rank and mixes humanoid and animal traits allowing you to, amongst other things, speak and have hands while gaining many of the animal’s other traits. The various difficulties of function in animal form are covered by complications (see Animal Complications).

If you can assume any animal form, see the Shapeshift power from Morhing Powers, with the Limit “Only Animal Forms”.

**Animal Form**: Morph 1 (Animal Form), Metamorph • 6 points per rank.

**ANIMAL MIMICRY**

You can temporarily mimic the traits of different animals. See the Meta-Powers profile for more on mimicry in general.

**Animal Mimicry**: Variable (physical traits), Limited to traits possessed by animals • 6 points per rank.
**ANIMAL SENSES**

Animals have a tremendous range of sensory abilities compared to those of normal humans. Some of the Senses effects Animal Senses may grant include:

- **Acute Olfactory:** Many animals have an acute sense of smell (1 rank), able to distinguish individuals by scent alone, or even an analytical sense (2 ranks total) able to pick up subtle scents and clues. Tracking Olfactory abilities are also common for predators (1 rank).
- **Extended:** Some animals have extended senses compared to humans, notably the vision of some predatory birds (1 rank).
- **Heat-Sensing Pits:** Various reptiles have heat-sensing pits, granting them the benefits of Infravision (1 rank).
- **Multifaceted Eyes:** Insects often have multifaceted eyes (or multiple eyes) granting them the benefits of Radius Vision (1 rank).
- **Navigation:** Birds and some fish appear to have an innate sense for navigation (Direction Sense, 1 rank).
- **Night Vision:** Nocturnal animals have considerably better night vision than humans, providing Low-light Vision (1 rank).
- **Sonar:** Animals like bats and some cetaceans use echolocation, providing them with a kind of sonar (Accurate Hearing, 2 ranks).
- **Survival Sense:** Prey animals often have a preternatural sense for danger, perhaps providing the benefits of Danger Sense (1 rank).
- **Ultra-Hearing:** Animals like dogs and some of the aforementioned sonar-using creatures have hearing ranges into the ultrasonic (1 rank).

**Animal Senses:** Senses • 1 point per rank.

Generally, characters have a fixed set of animal senses, or gain the senses of a particular animal form (see Animal Form). Those able to gain any animal sense, may have a limited version of Animal Mimicry. This power can grant any 5 power points in animal senses as a sustained effect, taking a standard action to re-allocate points.

**Animal Senses:** Variable 1 (physical traits), Limited to Animal Traits, Limited to Sense effects • 5 points.

**ANIMAL SUMMONING**

You can summon animals to do your bidding. The default version of this power works on natural animals in your nearby surroundings; the animals come in response to your summons under their own power and fulfill your commands to the best of their abilities. The GM determines what animals (if any) are nearby and how quickly they can respond.

You can communicate with animals and they can respond to you. This power does not necessarily give animals any greater degree of intelligence, so their communication may be limited to fairly simple concepts and sense-impressions. If you can “speak” with animals without speaking aloud (you simply think your responses), apply the Subtle modifier. If others can understand animals when you are around, apply the Affects Others modifier. To communicate with animals over greater distances, use the Communication effect (or Summon, if you simply “call” animals to aid you).

**Animal Summoning:** Summon Animals 3, Broad Type (Animals), Horde, Multiple Minions 5 (32 animals), Self-Powered (see Summoning Powers) • 42 points.

**Chameleon Camouflage**

You quickly shift your color and pattern to match your surroundings, allowing you to blend into the background like a chameleon, although this power is far more adaptive and efficient.

**Chameleon Camouflage:** Concealment (Visual) 2, Blending • 2 points.

**Create Chimera**

You have the unusual power to “merge” two or more different animals, creating a combined creature with a mix of their traits—a chimera—able to carry out your commands. Your rank in the power sets the limit of the most powerful chimera you can create. Once you no longer sustain the power, the animals forming the chimera return to their normal forms (and likely to their normal habits and habitats as quickly as possible).

**Create Chimera:** Summon Chimera, Broad Type (Mixed Animals), Heroic, Limited to Available Animals • 4 points per rank.

**Multiple Limbs**

You have additional limbs, like many members of the animal kingdom. This power ranges from a prehensile tail (able to function like a hand) to feet adapted to work as hands, or additional arms (or tentacles).

**Multiple Limbs:** Extra Limbs • 1 point per rank.

**Speak With Animals**

You can communicate with animals and they can respond to you. This power does not necessarily give animals any greater degree of intelligence, so their communication may be limited to fairly simple concepts and sense-impressions. If you can “speak” with animals without speaking aloud (you simply think your responses), apply the Subtle modifier. If others can understand animals when you are around, apply the Affects Others modifier. To communicate with animals over greater distances, use the Communication effect (or Summon, if you simply “call” animals to aid you).

**Speak With Animals:** Comprehend 2 (Animals) • 4 points.
OTHER ANIMAL POWERS

For more on summoning and controlling creatures, see the Summoning Powers profile. Some Morphing Powers, particularly Shapeshift Limited to Animal Forms, can also be animal powers. Size & Mass Powers and Strength Powers are useful for giant-size and powerful animals while Sensory Powers provide additional sense ideas.

ANIMAL COMPLICATIONS

Animal powers come with a number of potential complications, usually tied into the animal mind-set and the physical limitations of animals as compared to humans.

DISABILITY

Just as they have abilities humans do not, animals also lack many human traits, particularly greater intelligence, language, and manipulative appendages (and the tool use that comes with them).

Characters who assume animal forms may run into some of these disabilities as complications, earning hero points for them. Just as with other complications, these disabilities only earn hero points when they actually come into play. Just because a hero cannot speak while in animal form does not earn the character an automatic hero point; a situation must arise where the inability to speak is a hindrance. Likewise not having hands or other animal disabilities.

Note that if you want you character to not have one or more of these disabilities—being able to speak normally in animal form, for example—just disregard the complication and the associated hero point award.

ENEMY

Animal powers tend to encourage two types of enemies. The first is the “natural enemy” associated with the character’s animal type. For example, someone with cat powers may have a dog-themed foe, or a mongoose-powered hero might confront snake-themed villains (cobra-themed, to be more specific). See the Nemesis and Opposite roles for villains in the M&M Gamemaster’s Guide for additional discussion.

The second type of enemy is the foe of animals or nature in general. Animal powers often come with a protective nature of the natural world, from heroes shutting down poachers and polluters (and earning their enmity) to vigilantes violently retaliating against those who commit “crimes against nature” or psychopaths looking to wipe out all humans to allow the natural world to thrive without them.

IDENTITY

Just like they sometimes have to deal with the limitations of animal forms, those with animal powers may also run into complications involving the animal mind-set. It’s common for animal powers to come with some measure of the animal’s attitude or personality, which can potentially overwhelm the character, creating complications.

So a character with the form or powers of a predatory animal might have to deal with violent tendencies or a desire to hunt prey animals, while someone with the form or traits of a prey animal may become skittish and more inclined to run than fight. Stereotypical traits associated with animals can also come into play: proud eagles and lions, stubborn mules, skittish and playful monkeys, cold and vicious sharks, and so forth.

IN Voluntary Transformation

Animal powers with a transformative aspect may sometimes prove outside the character’s control. The classic example is the lycanthrope’s transformation during the full moon; the character might have complete control the rest of the time, but lose it when the moon is full. A more whimsical version is the character who transforms when wet, posing difficulties in maintain a secret identity.

POWER LOSS

Various circumstances can cause the loss of animal powers depending on their source. Supernatural powers may cease to function in the presence of magical or religious wards, on consecrated ground, or in the presence of certain charms, from natural plants to magical diagrams.

Animal powers originating with supernatural beings like totems may also be revoked at the being’s whim, should the character misuse them or fail to follow a certain code of behavior. Regaining the lost powers could be as simple as returning to right behavior or as complex as seeking the totem out and asking for some type of penance.

TEMPER

A measure of animal bloodlust is a common complication for those with the powers of predatory creatures. See the Identity complication for more.

WEAKNESS

Mythological shapeshifters and therianthropes often have specific weaknesses, the most common being the legend of a silver bullet killing a werewolf, which is often extended to werewolves being vulnerable to silver in general. Other animal powers might be vulnerable to certain types of weapons, from jade and obsidian to cold iron or mythic metals.

Besides direct harm, certain things may also be able to ward off animal powers. Supernatural ones might be held at bay or forced to flee religious artifacts or symbols, rings of salt, iron, or certain herbs (like wolfsbane, for example), or the calls of other creatures.
Power Profile: Animal Powers

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Mutants & Masterminds Power Profile: Animal Powers

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