



# WEEKLY CRITTER CRATE

This creature is a squat, orange- and white-mottled four-foot fish. From several ridges of striated fins—the same fins it seems to use as legs to propel its slick body—protrude many long spines, like the quills of a porcupine.

Dreadspine sculpins are the much larger cousins of the smaller, spiny fish that can be found on rocky shorelines everywhere. Dreadspine sculpins have adapted to breathe both water and air, and they protect their homes viciously, slamming right into enemies with their spiny bodies.

## DREADSPINE SCULPIN

Small natural beast (amphibious)

LEVEL 12 SKIRMISHER

XP 700

**Initiative** +15      **Senses** Perception +12; low-light vision

**HP** 128; **Bloodied** 64

**AC:** 24; **Fortitude** 26, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 22

**Immune** poison

**Speed** 8; Swim 8

⚔ **Spine Slam** (standard; at-will)

+17 vs. AC; 2d6+3 damage and ongoing 10 damage (save ends).

🔥 **Spinefire** (standard; at-will)

Ranged 10/15, +17 vs. AC, 1d8+3 damage and ongoing 10 damage (save ends).

🐉 **Squirming, Lurching Slam** (standard; recharge ☞☞)

The dreadspine sculpin moves up to its speed +2 and can move through enemies' spaces, provoking attacks as normal, and making a spine slam attack against every enemy whose space it enters. The dreadspine sculpin's movement doesn't affect the position of its enemies, and it must end its turn in an unoccupied square.

↔ **Full Spine Volley** (standard; encounter, and the dreadspine sculpin can no longer cause poison damage)

Close burst 3; +15 vs. Reflex; 3d8+3 damage and ongoing 10 damage (save ends).

**Alignment** Unaligned

**Languages** /

**Str** 16 (+9)

**Dex** 25 (+13)

**Wis** 14 (+8)

**Con** 26 (+14)

**Int** 4 (+3)

**Cha** 7 (+4)

## DREADSPINE SCULPIN TACTICS

Dreadspine sculpins lair in areas with pools of water, be they swamps, subterranean lakes, or simply shallow tide pools. When interlopers approach they burst from their hiding places with a squirming, lurching slam, then use spine fire from the relative safety (and cover) of their pools. If close to death (less than 15 HP remaining), they will use a full spine volley before trying to finish off their foes, or escape, depending on the odds.

## DREADSPINE SCULPIN LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful Nature check.

**DC 15:** It can be very dangerous to wander into the territory of a dreadspine sculpin, a spiny fish that can charge out  
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from the water to attack enemies on land.

**DC 20:** The dreadspine sculpin is deadly at range, able to fire its poisonous spines quite a distance. They can be just as bad in melee, however, when they can put the strength of their bodies behind slamming their spines into enemies.

**DC 25:** When badly injured, a dreadspine sculpin will fire all of its spines in a close volley, dealing massive damage. This leaves the dreadspine sculpin without its spines, however, and it will likely try to escape after firing the volley.

## ENCOUNTER GROUPS

Dreadspine sculpins do not actively seek out allies, but they do tolerate many sea creatures, and are occasionally tamed or pressed into service by others.

### Level 10 Encounter (XP 2,500)

- ✦ 1 dreadspine sculpin (level 12 skirmisher)
- ✦ 2 bog hags (level 10 skirmisher)
- ✦ 2 bloodfire harpies (level 9 soldier)

### Level 12 Encounter (XP 3,550)

- ✦ 2 dreadspine sculpins (level 12 skirmisher)
- ✦ 1 sahuagin baron (level 10 elite brute [L])
- ✦ 1 sahuagin priest (level 8 artillery)
- ✦ 4 horde ghouls (level 13 minion)

### Level 15 Encounter (XP 6,000)

- ✦ 2 dreadspine sculpins (level 12 skirmisher)
- ✦ 1 yuan-ti malison sharp-eyes (level 13 artillery)
- ✦ 1 yuan-ti incanter (level 15 artillery[L])
- ✦ 1 yuan-ti malison disciple of zehir (level 17 controller)
- ✦ 1 yuan-ti abomination (level 14 soldier)