

GREATER DEEP ONE

The Deep Ones are an ancient, non-human culture inhabiting the oceans of Earth. It is unclear if the Deep Ones are an alien species or are native to Earth. They interbreed with humanity, and they have infiltrated and corrupted many human communities, but their memory stretches far into the past, far beyond the dimmest recollections of human civilization.

Unbeknownst to most (including Delta Green), the Deep Ones are divided into two classes: Greater and Lesser Deep Ones. Lesser Deep Ones are the creatures most often encountered by humans, thick-bodied, frog-like, loping creatures. Greater Deep Ones are completely inhuman. They have no biological likeness to any of Earth's animals, though like the Lesser Deep Ones they *could* be compared to amphibian life. Greater Deep One physiology does not seem to be fixed in a way that is clearly understood by human science. One Greater Deep One might have chitinous prehensile crab-like limbs circling its mouth, while another might have one arm, four eyes or two separate mouths. The consistent facts seem to be these:

Their bodies are covered head to toe with large fanlike scales, as well as bony spikes of varying colors. Compared to an average human, they are large, often roughly the size of an African Gorilla. Their eyes are huge and globe-shaped, able to see in the dark of the oceans' depths. Their mouths are most often huge open gashes filled with tiny, razor-like teeth, incapable of human-type speech.

They have gill-slits which allow them to breathe salt water (but not fresh). Their native environment is the ocean, and they are almost completely aquatic, only able to venture onto land for short periods of time. Their bodies are built for the deep ocean, with self-regulating gas-bladders that expand and collapse to allow a shift from the shallows to the depths. (Mutation in these bladders may have made venturing onto land possible.)

Deep Ones of all kinds are *at least* as intelligent as an average human, and many are far more intelligent than the greatest of human minds. Their understanding of what humanity calls hypergeometry is extensive and seems to be genetic in nature, passed on from generation to generation through their odd, forcible form of procreation.

Deep Ones consider humanity, for all its own advances, nothing more than a primitive prey-species. When a Greater Deep One is confronted by humans, it is typically more than a match for them; or at the very least, it can very quickly escape back to the sea.

Their lifespan is effectively infinite, and their upward size limit is dependent wholly on feeding. The most ancient Greater Deep Ones are huge, some approaching the size of an elephant. However, since Deep Ones tend to feed on one another, many are sacrificed by a strong few so that they might grow in power and size. This very effectively keeps the Greater Deep One population in check.

Greater Deep Ones reproduce through asexual means, in a manner unlike anything else on Earth. Each Greater Deep One has a stinger that injects a parasitic genetic element which alters the host to incorporate as much of the injector's genetic material as possible. Often, this disease rewrites vast sections of the target's genetic code, slowly mutating the victim's body over days, months, or weeks until they express Deep One genetic traits.

When Greater Deep One mates with another Greater Deep One, this alteration often affects the target's mind more than anything else. When Greater Deep One mates with a human, the alteration is both physical and mental, leading to Deep One-human hybrids and the Lesser Deep Ones. Through this means the Deep Ones have bred with nearly every type of advanced aquatic life, leading to odd hybrids throughout Earth's oceans.

For at least the last 100,000 years they have preyed on humans as breeding stock, sacrificial victims, and food. Humanity has very effectively satisfied these Greater Deep One needs and has dramatically reduced the frequency of Deep One-on-Deep One violence. (Though that violence still remains far more common than would be acceptable in human

cultures.) Most Greater Deep Ones now prey almost exclusively on humanity for sacrificial needs, when once they preyed on their own species or other ocean-going creatures.

It should be noted that in the context of the immortal populace of the Deep Ones, the frequency of their contact with new human communities—which may be as low as once every 300 years—is quite high. As far as the Deep Ones' inhuman biological clocks are concerned, the current pace of intermingling with human populations is the equivalent of a breeding frenzy. To us, in our less temporally enlightened standpoint, it seems almost glacial in nature.

No one knows where the Deep Ones originated. It seems clear they have existed on Earth for far longer than humanity, and possibly longer than mammalian life altogether. In fact, the Deep Ones are the single oldest still-active civilization on Earth.

STR 26, CON 14, DEX 11, INT 16, POW 14

HP 20, WP 14

SAN LOSS 1/1D8

ARMOR 3-points of skin and scales

SKILLS

Alertness 30%, Swim 70%, Unarmed Combat 40%, Unnatural 80%

AMPHIBIOUS

The Greater Deep One is fully adapted to existence on land or in the ocean, at any depth. After a day on the surface, it loses 1 HP per day until it returns to the sea (immersing itself in salt water restores all HPs lost in this manner instantly).

GENETIC HYPERGEOMETRY

The Greater Deep One can access vast genetic stores of hypergeometric information, allowing it to operate nearly any hypergeometrical effect (with the same costs and time restrictions as a normal use of that ability).

HUGE

The Greater Deep One's size ranges from slightly larger than the largest human, all the way up to a large bear (sometime, even bigger).

INHUMAN BIOLOGY

Although the Greater Deep One appears similar to earthly-life, it is not. Making called shots for "vitals" and other areas has no additional game effect. Firearm attacks always inflict minimum damage (2D6+4 would inflict 6 points of damage, for example). Attacks with Lethality ratings remain unchanged.

INHUMAN MOVEMENT

The Greater Deep One can move up to 20 MPH on land, and 40 MPH in the water.

INJECTOR

Greater Deep Ones can attack prone targets with a barbed stinger that, on a successful Unarmed Combat roll, injects the target with the Deep One Reproductive element (see below). This attack costs the target 2/1D8+1 SAN (Helplessness), and may, eventually, transform them into a Lesser Deep One.

LUNGE AND BITE

The Greater Deep One can lunge and bite any target in arm's length for 1D10+1 points of damage with its double rows of razor-sharp teeth.

TALONS

The Greater Deep One's claws are bone talons that inflict 2D6 points of damage.

LESSER DEEP ONE

In humanity, the Deep Ones have found an ideal species to impregnate. Human genetics and Deep One genetics have mixed in a "perfect storm" leading to a highly fecund sub-species which can reproduce far more often than Greater Deep Ones. Humans impregnated by the Greater Deep One Reproductive Element become Lesser Deep Ones.

Lesser Deep Ones are the "classic" Deep Ones as portrayed in H.P. Lovecraft's *The Shadow Over Innsmouth*. They vary from partially human to nearly completely inhuman—and still, the worst Lesser Deep One is far more tolerable and human-like than any Greater Deep One.

An average Lesser Deep One is human sized and is shaped vaguely like a man (though they tend to be more pot-bellied and awkward looking). Their musculature, skin, bones and sensory organs have undergone drastic alterations by the Deep One Reproductive Element (see below). Their skin texture has shifted from pores to scales, which range from super-fine to heavy and thick armored scales on their backs and areas which formerly possessed hair. Their coloring is usually grayish-green, with white or yellow bellies.

Their arms are longer than those of an average human, and their musculature has been extensively improved, allowing inhuman feats of strength. The spaces between their fingers are connected with thick, semi-transparent webbing. These muscular changes have also affected their legs, causing them to favor the ball of the foot as a balance surface. Their feet are webbed like their hands, and in the water, their legs allow fast movement, with swimming speeds in excess of 15 miles per hour. The lengthening of the arms and alteration of the legs also allows them to move on land at least as fast as the average human by loping about on all fours, something which becomes easier and easier as the taint takes hold.

The heads of late-stage Lesser Deep Ones are their most inhuman feature. Their skulls have undergone drastic alterations. Eye sockets have grown and shifted to the sides of the skull. The eyes have grown in size, and eyelids have become transparent and have found another use as a nictitating membrane. The lower jaw has shrunk and become more "trap-door" like. Teeth have multiplied in number and grown sharp. Worse still, their necks have swollen in size and bulk to allow space for fluttering gill slits.

These beings are, like many crossbred creatures, the best of both worlds, although of course, the results vary from subject to subject. Most enjoy immortality and, as the transformation passes through its final stages, the ability to exist indefinitely under the waves.

This transformation is dependent on the proportion of Greater Deep One genes in the hybrid's genetic makeup, as well as the capability of the hybrid's human system to adapt to the changes. Each successive generation improves the Greater Deep One "taint" on the hybrid's genetics. The older the genetic integration and crossbreeding, the better and more effective the transformation.

STR 17, CON 15, DEX 12, INT 13, POW 12, CHA 6 to 11

HP 16, WP 12

SAN LOSS 0/1D4

ARMOR 1-point of hardened skin

SKILLS

Alertness 30%, Athletics 40%, Persuade 30%, Swim 45%, Unarmed Combat 55%, Unnatural 10%

ALMOST HUMAN

For those unaware of the unnatural, or the Deep One threat, Lesser Deep Ones appear as deformed, inbred, humans. Only a full medical examination or their use of *inhuman* abilities will reveal their true nature.

PARTIALLY AMPHIBIOUS

The Lesser Deep One is partially adapted to existence in the ocean and can submerge for hours at a time. After a day below the surface, it loses 1 HP per day until it returns to dry land (surfacing restores all HPs lost in this manner instantly).

INHUMAN MOVEMENT

The Lesser Deep One can move up to 15 MPH on land, and 20 MPH in the water.

JUMPING, CLIMBING, AND LOPING

The Lesser Deep One can leap, climb and lope in a manner wholly unlike a human. With an Athletics roll, it can cross vertical distances and impassable obstacles that would stop a normal human.

TALONS

The Lesser Deep One's warped fingers end in thick, blackened, fingernails that each inflict 2D4 points of damage.

HANDLER'S EYES ONLY: THE DEEP ONE REPRODUCTIVE ELEMENT

While the genetic material underlying Deep One reproduction shares some aspects common to viruses, it is perhaps best described as a "mobile genetic element."

This genetic element is unusual in many ways. If isolated and publicized it will immediately gain the attention of the biomedical community, not to mention Deep One-related communities and cults and the few covert agencies that have had extensive experience with the Deep Ones in the past (such as Delta Green). Openly approaching the academic community with samples of the Deep One Reproductive Element is an extremely dangerous move on the part of any agent or Friendly of Delta Green. A suggestion to Group to do so will be met with a resounding and immediate "NO."

The Deep One Reproductive Element was first isolated by man at the YY-II facility in New Mexico by a team of scientists in the employ of MAJESTIC in the late 1970s. Due to the extreme secrecy of the project, this information is buried beneath miles of Top Secret DELTA GREEN/EYES ONLY red tape. More has been learned and then forgotten about it than any one agency knows.

The Element shares aspects of retrovirus and retrotransposon groups and has some characteristics of unusual RNA molecules such as ribozymes and viroids. In actuality, it is much, much odder than any of these.

The Deep One Reproductive Element is a complex and highly structured RNA strand with catalytic activities that attaches to the DNA of the host. It causes both the alteration of existing genetic traits and the activation, through promoter regions, of non-expressing genetic traits. In

other words, it rewrites the target's genetic structure in dramatic ways. Many of these changes are already in the target's DNA, but some are created by the RNA strand.

So far, this is not that unusual. But the Element takes it several steps further. The Element initially inserts itself onto host chromosomes, and when copied acquires short pieces of host genome sequence that allow it to insert itself again in a different position determined by the new host-derived genetic material. The RNA structure is complex and multi-staged, capable of many stepped insertions, allowing it to infect, re-infect, and re-infect again, causing multiple rewrites to the genetic structure of the target.

This "Chinese puzzle box" aspect of the Element is wholly unique, and that discovery alone is worthy of a Nobel Prize. Of course, those stupid enough to bring it to the attention of the public will soon find themselves blackmailed, victims of an assisted lone suicide, disgraced and removed from any position of authority, or undeniably proven a fraud in the public eye. This secret has remained hidden for 80 years since the "official" discovery of the Deep Ones; it will remain so for as long as conspiracies exist to suppress it.

It is possible to create—given many years, billions of dollars, and enough personnel—therapies that might halt or slow infection with the Element. Such treatments would rely upon developing a gene therapy to block the first stages of infection by the Element, preventing all consecutive changes from taking place and making Agents immune to further infection. But a conventional vaccine will likely be impossible. Of course, the horrors of getting infected inflict a different kind of damage altogether.

HANDLER'S EYES ONLY: THE INNSMOUTH "TAINT"

The infection of Innsmouth, Massachusetts by the Deep Ones was a textbook case of an attempted integration with a surface culture. Though the "taint" did not take as well as in other areas (such as Ponape and Black Cod Island's Children of the Fish-Wife), it did successfully find a foothold and infected nearly the entire town.

For 88 years this integration grew in complexity. Eventually, it was an open secret among the non-hybrid inhabitants that the town was in league with the creatures who lived off Devil's Reef. Obed Marsh and his compatriots brought much of the town over to the degenerate worship of the Deep Ones through *the Esoteric Order of Dagon*—a bastardized mix of Christianity and the unnatural—as well as the promise of immortality. For many, these promises proved fruitful. For others, the price of transformation was too high.

In 1846 the first "plague" struck, killing off half the population of the town. This plague was simply the misfiring of genetics in the population infected by the Deep One Reproductive Element. These individuals died horrible deaths as the element twisted their forms and biology, moving them away from human but no closer to Deep One. Throughout the history of Innsmouth, there have been reports of genetic deformities, disease, and monstrosities which were once human—these incidents represent the poor assimilation of the Deep One Reproductive Element into Innsmouth genetic stock. Over the decades the disease made greater and greater genetic inroads in the population.

With the federal raid in the winter of 1928 and the government seizure of nearly two hundred townsfolk for study, the U.S. government thought it had gained a strong grasp of the situation: the town was communing with an underwater culture, crossbreeding with them to produce horrific entities known as the Deep Ones. The government men believed they had in their possession examples of the creatures which had founded the ancient city in the depths near Devil's Reef. They believed that the torpedo attack on the underwater city had decimated it.

They were wrong.

The raid on Innsmouth failed to capture or kill even a single Greater Deep One.

The first few infections in Innsmouth were indeed from Greater Deep Ones (though who was the first human “vessel” for the Deep One Reproductive Element remains unknown). Their human victims themselves infected the town, creating a self-sustaining blight that moved from parent to child, gaining more and more ground in altering their genes as time went on. By the early 1840s, Greater Deep Ones only rose to the shallows off Innsmouth for rituals, and never strayed far from the sea.

Although Delta Green has had various contacts with the Deep Ones over the decades, and prominent Delta Green leaders have studied the Deep Ones obsessively, they have very rarely encountered a Greater Deep One. And when they have encountered one and overcome it, its corpse was in no shape to be properly identified.

Instead, nearly all human contact with the Deep Ones has been through the much more common Lesser Deep One, the mostly-human hybrids or the more fully transformed creatures of the sea. This is a very conscious choice on the part of the Deep Ones. Hybrids are expendable tools to influence the surface world, spread Deep One seed, and bring tribute. Very few Greater Deep Ones ever venture onto land. Fewer still interact with humanity.

THREAT MATRIX: PORTRAYING THE DEEP ONES

To many players, the Deep Ones are old hat. In Delta Green, they are the oldest and most-persistent *identified* threat to human civilization. How do you maintain a feeling of fear when Deep Ones are encountered in an operation?

It’s easy. The Deep Ones become boring when they become *familiar*. Players who are certain they understand the situation, the creatures, their motivations, or their stats are *bored*. A predictable threat is not a threat, and something understood and quantified cannot play upon your fears. As a Handler, how do you breathe new life into the same old fish-men to make them something to fear?

- ▲ **Hybrids are people:** They live their lives just like us, until the taint takes them. Likewise, they use vehicles, cellphones and guns just as readily as any agent. They’re not all hobbling, deformed monsters. Most are slightly off-looking people who are a little more than mad, and are eager to do anything to return to the sea. But they also have to pay the T-Mobile bill and buy groceries.
- ▲ **The Secret of the Greater Deep Ones:** Even Delta Green, with all its experience in the Deep One threat, is completely unaware that hybrids *are not* Deep Ones, only a vessel to carry the Deep One taint. Completely inhuman Greater Deep Ones, unlike any other Earthly life, exist in the oceans, and occasionally surface to commune with their infected offspring. Revealing this during an otherwise “pat” situation is a great way to make the players rethink everything they might think they know.
- ▲ **No Upward Limit:** Deep Ones have no upward limit in size. Father Dagon, Mother Hydra and *He-Who-Swims-With-Corpses* are but a few. An Agent might use a hypergeometric ritual to call a Deep One to the surface only to face a Deep One that weighs *tons* and stands twenty feet tall.
- ▲ **They are alien:** The further along in the process of the taint, the more in-tune with the alien nature of the Deep Ones the hybrid becomes. To truly become one with the Deep Ones is to abandon any semblance of human order and sanity. Violence is the most expedient answer to any Deep One question. Morality, sanity and truth are as meaningless to an immortal Deep One as the ticking of a clock.
- ▲ **Deep One plans are long:** The Deep One threat does not operate in years or decades but *epochs*. Immortal entities have time to think and re-think their bizarre plans. What might appear to be their main goal (interbreeding with all humans on the surface, for instance) could be nothing but a 1,000-year feint to cover their actual, unknown, purpose.