

The Saurians

A new race for STAR FRONTIERS[®] campaigns

by Jeffrey Bouley

[The Saurians are presented here as an NPC race, though players may use them as player characters if the campaign referee so allows it. It is assumed that the Saurians are very rarely seen, so they have little overall impact on events in the Frontier. The Saurians' history may be altered to fit the circumstances of a particular campaign. — Editor]

The Saurians hail from the planet Kischen, an oceanic world many light-years from the Frontier. For a time they lived in peace, enjoying profitable trade with nearby races. Soon, however, the Sathar became aware of the Saurians and regarded them as both a threat and a challenge to be overcome.

The Sathar descended in waves on the unsuspecting planets, destroying whole populations in the process. The Saurians, unused to full-scale war, fought bravely against the worms, but to no avail. With their defenses decimated and racial destruction imminent, the Saurian governments prepared dozens of starships to transport hundreds of thousands of citizens on a large-scale exodus to new worlds. To save as many beings as possible, all of the starships were filled to capacity with passengers placed in stasis.

The majority of the computer-guided vessels were launched in the direction of the Frontier, although ships were sent out in many other directions. The Saurians had earlier intercepted radio signals from the Frontier that were part of a plan by the Pan-Galactic Corporation to contact other sentient races, in hopes of developing more interstellar trade. The Saurians did not send all of their ships in that direction, though, lest the signals prove to be a Sathar trick.

The main body of Saurian starships eventually entered the Theseus system and were boarded by alerted UPF vessels. Only a few thousand Saurians were brought out of stasis at first, until space could be found on other worlds on which they could settle. At present, two

hundred thousand Saurians now live and work throughout the Frontier, but nineteen Saurian starships (with over five hundred thousand colonists aboard, in stasis) remain in solar orbit at Theseus. Finding space for these beings is still a problem, though plans are underway to ship them to Lossend (Timeon).

Appearance and structure

Saurians are bipedal reptilian humanoids that stand **2.1** meters high. Each of them has two hands, each with three fingers and an opposable thumb. Each foot has four toes; feet, as well as hands, are webbed. Saurians have small scales, as per their reptilian ancestry, but they are warm-blooded as mammals are. Saurians are omnivorous and have rather flat teeth.

Being semi-aquatic creatures, Saurians feel at home both above and below water. As part of their aquatic adaptations, Saurians have a gill slit on each side of their throats which filter oxygen out of fresh and salt water. Saurians also possess underwater vision of exceptional quality.

Saurians still have certain physical defenses inherited from their prehistoric ancestors. One of these is the set of claws on fingers and toes. Although these claws have degenerated, they can still be used to some effect. When a Saurian uses its claws, consider the attack to have punching damage but add **1** hp extra damage. The tail can also be used as a weapon; it has a **-10** to hit any target, but it does **2d10 damage** on a strike.

The internal structure of a Saurian is similar to that of a Human, with the functions and positioning of a Saurian's organs approximating those of a Human's. The respiratory system is adapted for air and water breathing, and no Saurian organ corresponds to a Human appendix.

Saurian races

The Saurians evolved from a highly adaptive creature that Humans have called a land dragon. This creature was found in a variety of habitats on Kischen and developed into the four known races of Saurians: the Kavak, the Kamier, the Talsoi, and the Vanar.

The Kavak: These Saurians have green scales, a long tail, and a short, curved horn protruding from the top of their skulls. The horn varies in color from one Saurian to another, from white to green; it is light-colored at birth and darkens gradually as the Saurian grows older. This horn can be used as a weapon, causing **1d10** damage. However, for every **.1** meter by which the opponent is shorter than the Saurian, reduce the chance to hit by **5** (to a minimum of a **10%** chance).

The Kavak evolved from a grasslands-dwelling dragon that used the horn for defense and the green coloration for camouflage (allowing them to approach prey more easily).

The Kamier: While the other races of Saurians have small but visible scales, the Kamier have the appearance of smooth skin, their scales being visible only under magnification. Coloration is green to green-brown, and this variety of Saurian also sports a large crest of red or orange skin that runs from the **base** of the neck to the tip of the skull. The claws of the Kamier are more developed than those of the other Saurians, doing **+ 2** hp damage to punching damage, as opposed to the **1** hp damage cited above. In addition, the tail of a Kamier is covered with horny spikes which add **2** hp damage to tail attacks (**4-22** hp). Another unique feature of the Kamier is its snout, which is much shorter than those of the other races, being almost flat.

The Kamier evolved from a swamp-dwelling land dragon that had to contend with particularly dangerous swamp predators. The head crest, which resem-

bles a native marsh plant, was used to help the Kamier with concealment.

The Talsoi: A Talsoi has beige to dark brown scales, a heavy tail (+1 hp to tail damage), and a horny ridge running from its extended snout to the tip of the tail. They developed from the forest- and plains-dwelling land dragons, that used the coloration for camouflage to improve their hunting skills. Tolsi enjoy freshwater rivers, seas, and lakes.

The Vanar: Vanar are bright to dark green and have a very narrow, whiplike tail (1d10 + 1 hp damage). They are descendants of the land dragons that were native to the jungles and rain forests of Kischen. Vanar have thin limbs and are lighter than other sorts of Saurians.

Senses

Saurian senses are roughly equivalent to those possessed by Humans. They have a slightly more acute sense of vision and, as noted before, can see well underwater. Saurians do have a more acute sense of smell than humans, about equal to a Vrusk's.

Speech

Saurians are able to speak in the same manner as Humans, and many can communicate in Pan-Galactic, Human, and Yazirian languages with ease. Saurians tend to lisp, though their hissing voices are distinctly unlike those of the Sathar. When angered, Saurians hiss loudly and bare their teeth.

Society and customs

Saurians stress two beliefs above all others in their society: individuality and the freedom of choice. Saurians detest dictatorships and prefer very loosely structured governments, having an uncaring attitude for authority, though they will obey it if convinced it is for the common good. Their belief in self-reliance made it hard for the Saurians to accept the aid of the UPF at first, though they really had little other choice. Saurians in the Psycho-Social field will not hypnotize unwilling beings; only the most evil and vile of Saurians would do so.

Saurians have large extended families. Because their young develop so rapidly (reaching adult size in five years), "nuclear families" would be short-lived. Education and socialization of the young are handled within each clan, or *svik*, which may consist of hundreds of individuals living within the same general area. Saurians are interfertile despite



Kavak

Talsoi

their racial types, and a *svik* may have members of all four races within it. *Svika* may compete with each other over business or personal matters, but violent crime among them is almost unknown; they are too aware of their own near-extinction as a race from the Sathar's attacks.

Saurians are extremely touchy about comments regarding them as a species. Any insult against a single Saurian is easily taken as a slur against the race as a whole, even if the Saurian in question belongs to another *svik*. Saurians tend to be overprotective of their fellow clan members, even as they recognize the importance of standing on one's own two feet. This causes such stress for them that they will not willingly discuss it with someone of another species, such as a Human or Yazirian.

Saurians are something of a paradox to other races, as they are both gentle and kind as well as vengeful and brutal. Among friends and their *svik*, a Saurian is pleasant, cheerful, and absolutely loyal. But in the presence of a hated enemy such as the Sathar, a Saurian's rage and fury can be frightening (although Saurians do not receive any

bonuses for rage in combat). A wrong done to a Saurian will not be forgotten by any of them, and making amends can be difficult (or impossible, depending on the offense). Should the offending party make an appropriate apology, the Saurians will grudgingly accept it and continue with the business at hand — though forgetting about the incident will take months or years.

The horrifying losses that they took in their war with the Sathar have made Saurians a militant race. They tend to purchase large quantities of arms, and groups of them have expressed interests in creating their own military force, with which to raid Sathar bases and ships. Saurians hope to someday locate the Sathar homeworld and destroy it; they also wish to return to their old homeworld of Kischen and retake it from the Sathar. For cultural reasons, Saurians have a marked fondness for weapons that others see as archaic (swords, pole arms, crossbows, etc.).

Saurians have from three to four names. The first two are the common and *svik* names, comparable to a first and last name. If the Saurian performs an important deed, he or she may



Vanar

Kamier

receive an honorific to signify this accomplishment. The most important of all names, however, is the *tarish satimu* ("sacred name"). According to Saurian religious beliefs, the *tarish satimu* is a part of the owner's very soul. Only the individual Saurian and his *svik* will ever know the Saurian's sacred name. Should someone somehow discover a Saurian's *tarish satimu*, it is considered an insult of the most terrible kind, and the Saurian will try to regain his honor through a duel of some sort, often to the death. This practice has eroded under contact with the races of the Federation, though sacred names are still considered very important.

Attitudes

Saurians are respectful of the other races, but they particularly enjoy and are fascinated by Dralasites. They respect Vrusk for their drive, but find it hard to make friends with them; the Vrusk are too practical and structured. Saurians find Humans fairly easy to get along with.

Yazirians are another matter. Though Yazirians and Saurians are alike in cer-

tain social, political, and family matters, the Saurians find the former to be rude, insulting, and pushy. Fights between individuals of the two races have tended to turn into widespread brawls as clan members from either side are drawn into the conflict, and even in the short time that Saurians have been in the Frontier, several remarkable feuds have developed. When it happens that a Yazirian and a Saurian become friends, however, they become friends for life.

Saurians dislike S'sessu greatly (see DRAGON® issue #96), because of the latter's similarity to Sathar and amoral business practices. S'sessu dislike Saurians in turn. Other races are generally friendly toward the Saurians, despite their touchiness, but some Humans are slightly nervous around Saurians, particularly if they have an aversion to reptiles. This reaction is fortunately rare.

Special abilities

Because of their nervous structure, Saurians have a pronounced resistance to hypnotism or mind control of any

kind. A Saurian will receive a + 15 bonus in his favor to resist the control, depending on the exact nature of the mind-affecting power. In addition, a Saurian has a + 15 bonus to any roll enabling him to notice the control attempt (or to a normal Intuition roll if the noticing roll is not normally allowed). Note that if experience is used to increase this resistance, the bonus to notice the attempt will not automatically be increased (and vice-versa). Each ability must be given experience separately.

Miscellaneous information

Average size: 2.1 m tall
 Average mass: 100 kg (male), 90 kg (female)*
 Average lifespan: 240 years
 Reproduction: Heterosexual; oviparous
 Body temperature: 26°C

* – Vanar are 15 kg lighter.

Saurians have the following ability modifiers, regardless of sex and racial type.

STR/STA: + 10
 DEX/RS: -10
 INT/LOG: + 0
 PER/LDR: + 0

Saurians walk at 10 m/turn, run at 30 m/turn, and move at about 5 km/hour.

Racial reaction modifiers follow.

race	reaction to Saurians	Saurians' reaction to race
Human	-5	0
Dralasite	0	+20
Vrusk	0	0
Yazirian	-10*	-15*
S'sessu**	-5	-20
Zethra***	0	-5

* – If favorable reaction is gained, discard the use of this modifier on future rolls regarding the individuals in question.

** – See DRAGON issue #96.

*** – See DRAGON issue #84.

Concluding notes

All Saurians encountered in the Frontier will be able to speak Pan-Galactic, since they were hypo-trained in its use after they were released from stasis. They were also taught some of the common cultural idiosyncracies and customs in order to integrate them into society.

Some Saurians have remained aboard their old starships, which are hull size 16-20, and are using them as transports in their own commercial dealings.