

# The Bobtailed Hob

The bobtailed hob, bob hob, or just hob, is a vulpithecoid comparable in intelligence to a baboon. It is also roughly equal in evolutionary distance from the yinrih as baboons are from humans. The name is a human designation that refers to hobgoblins, but even more to Thomas Hobbes, as these creatures are nasty, brutish, and short.

It is fully bipedal, with feet optimized for a cursorial lifestyle. The feet are digitigrade, retaining the yinrih's paw pads and claws but with much shorter toes, of which it has only four compared to the yinrih's six. The structures homologous to the yinrih's inner and outer thumbs have become sharp dewclaws.

Its hands have similarly become more specialized for grasping. There is no writing claw, the fingers are tipped with flat primate-like nails, and while the hob retains a well-developed opposable inner thumb, the outer thumb has atrophied and its claw has become a sharp knife-like spur positioned somewhat further up the arm. The palms of the hands lack pads.

As its name suggests, it does have a tail, but a rather stumpy one. Its face is much flatter, with reduced whiskers but retaining a wet rhinarium. There is a prominent marking above the eyes that give the impression that the hob has a unibrow. The eyes have only one set of crimson-colored bandpass membranes that are fused shut, though like the yinrih the hob also has a set of "normal" primary eyelids.

Hobs can be found in a particularly volcanically active region similar to Yellowstone, although with much more frequent and less volatile eruptions. The area goes through cycles of eruption followed by repopulation by grasses and herbivores. The frequent eruptions have dotted the area with easily accessible surface deposits of obsidian. Hobs use obsidian shards as stabbing weapons. They lack the intelligence to make tools of their own, and rely on scavenging naturally occurring sharp flakes. Their tool use is instinctual rather than learned, like an otter using a rock to crack a shell.

They are quick pursuit predators similar to cheetahs, chasing down their prey and dispatching it with rapid stabs to large arteries. Curiously, they emit a high pitched, almost tuneful cry immediately prior to giving chase. It is thought that the cry is used to goad their prey into running. This cry is so recognizable and standardized that it has become a kind of leitmotif for the animal. They drink no water, getting all their necessary liquids from the blood of their kills, which they almost fully exsanguinate.

While the large knife-like spurs on their arms can be used as a weapon when in want of obsidian, it is more relevant as a display structure to attract mates, with sharpness being preferred over length. Hobs are strongly r-selecting, with a very small childermoot (usually a single male-female pair) producing a great many offspring which they abandon soon after weaning. Unlike yinrih, they are iteroparous and relatively short-lived.

Bob hobs are associated with fire in yinrih culture, similar to Salamanders on Earth. Legends say that their heads catch fire when angry, and their fused red bandpass membranes give the impression that they have glowing fiery eyes. Their prodigious quickness has also made them the byword for speed, much like Terran cheetahs. The hob's affinity for sharp objects is also frequently referenced.

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