

Yinrih article on Frathwiki

I spent WAY too much time on this considering it doesn't say anything new, but here it is, an article on the yinrih for Frathwiki.

Edit: and here's a link to the [article](#)

The yinrih (/ˈjɪn.ri/), commonly called the monkey fox, is an arboreal animal native to the tropical rainforests on the continent of Damsback on the planet Yih. It is notable for being the only other species besides humans to achieve sapience.

Name

The English word **yinrih** (plural **yinrih**) comes from the Commonthroat word **sfqjgq** (/yip, short high strong whine, huff, long high weak growl, huff, short low weak growl/), meaning *a person from the planet Yih*. Some yinrih reject the use of the word to refer to the species as a whole. Many residents of Yih regard it as diminishing their unique identity, while others who oppose the cultural and economic hegemony of the Yih-led Allied Worlds see the name as an example of cultural imperialism. Nevertheless, the word is used by most yinrih themselves with no intended ideological meaning.

The crew of the *dewfall* introduced themselves to the small group of humans gathered around their landing site with the phrase **h sfqjql** (*we are people from Yih*), which was imitated onomatopoeically by the humans as **yinrih**. The Commonthroat word **sfqjgq** carries a similar connotation to English terms encountered in science fiction such as **Terran** or **Earthling**, and so was deemed a fitting self-designation by the crew despite none of them being Yih-natives.

The word **monkey fox** is a common name for the species, which has inspired the honorary scientific name ***Vulpithecus fidelis***. The genus name comes from Latin *vulpes* (fox) and Latinized Greek *pithecus* (ape), which in turn has given rise to the adjective **vulpithecine**. ***fidelis*** (Latin *faithful*) is a reference to the Claravian missionaries who made First Contact with Earth.

Other names include **cynoid** (dog-shaped), popular among yinrih fans of human science fiction; **dog possum**, now rare; and **tree doggo**, used affectionately or as an insult.

Appearance

Yinrih are often described as having the head of a fox and the body of a new world monkey. They weigh between 50 to 80 pounds on average, with males being larger than females. They stand about 30 inches at the withers, and are about 6 feet from the tip of the nose to the tip of the tail.

Fur and Skin

Yinrih bear fur in a variety of patterns, including solid black, piebald (white with black or brown patches), solid white (with or without biscuit pointing), blue (either a diluted black or black with white ticks), fawn (tan with or without a black face mask), fox red (either solid red or red with black ears and black socks), and liver (brown).

The underside of the paws as well as the distal portion of the digits is furless, revealing grayish-black skin underneath. The skin of the muzzle is also grayish-black. The skin across the rest of the body is ruddy, though piebald yinrih also have patches of gray skin under their brown or black fur.

Head

The head is variously compared to that of a fox, wolf, or coyote, with a wet nose, whiskery muzzle, and erect ears. The brain-case is surprisingly small, with the yinrih's high intelligence achieved through nerve density rather than brain size.

While yinrih possess normal eyelids suggesting eyes with a size, shape, and placement similar to Terran canids, their eyes are unlike those of Terran animals. When fully open, the eyes appear completely black, giving the impression that yinrih have empty eye sockets. This appearance is due to the structure of the eye, which consists of an array of millions of organic nanoantennas on a shared ground plane. The eyes function like radio receivers rather than cameras. Electromagnetic waves induce a varying voltage in these nanoantennas. This voltage is converted to nerve signals that are processed by the brain.

Behind their primary eyelids are four pairs of nictitating membranes that function as bandpass filters. These membranes have a specular appearance and are usually colored red, blue, silver, and gold, though may vary in color depending on ethnicity. Hearthsiders, in particular, are noted for possessing a pair of deep glossy blue bandpass membranes.

Body

The back and shoulders are broader than those of Terran canids. The limbs are dense with musculature, and the rear feet are plantigrade. All four paws have six digits, with the lateral-most and medial-most digit of each paw being an opposable thumb. The distal end of the digits possesses a sharp orange-red claw used for climbing and combat. The digit next to the inner thumb on each forepaw is known as the **writing claw**. The claw itself is flatter and broader than the other claws, shaped like the nib of a fountain pen, and is connected to a duct leading to an ink sac located near the knuckle.

The palms and digits have pads, with the palmar pads of the forepaws being sexually dimorphic. Males have three large pads, two near the thumbs and one along the base of the other digits, while females have the same two large pads near the heel of the paw, the distal area of the paw has several smaller pads surrounding a lactation patch which sweats milk when exposed to saliva. The rear paws are slightly longer than the forepaws, and both males and females have the same

pattern of several large palmar pads.

Tail

The highly prehensile tail is slightly longer than the rest of the body. It contains no bones, but is strong enough under tension to support the entire body, and has enough torque and compressive strength to lift small objects. The tail is often held erect, with the end curled up, and is laid across the back when carrying burdens and when eliminating waste.

Reproduction

The yinrih's reproductive strategy resembles that of Terran salmon. They are semelparous (only reproducing once in their lives). While often described as oviparous, they are more accurately termed exovoviviparous. Both females and males lay very large unfertilized eggs. When two to twelve eggs are combined into a clutch, with an equal number of male and female eggs, the eggs merge together to form a complex egg sac known as a womb nest. This womb nest possesses a simple heart and circulatory system. An artery runs down the ventral interior of the womb nest, with branches feeding individual amnions in a bus configuration. The dermal layer is highly vascularized to aid in gas exchange. Gestation takes around 144 days. The process of emerging from the womb nest is informally referred to as **hatching**, though the term **yeaning** is preferred.

A single yinrih may have between two to twelve biological parents divided evenly between males and females. Mothers are called **dams** and fathers **sires**. A group of parents is called a **childermoot**, and a group of offspring is called a **litter**. Offspring are called **kits** from the time of conception until they are weaned. From weaning until reaching sexual maturity the term **pup** or **puppy** is used. All yinrih cultures reckon age from the time of conception, with the entire litter considered to be the same age. It takes roughly 53 years for a pup to reach sexual maturity.

Because yinrih are semelparous and because reproduction does not involve physical contact, yinrih completely lack a libido in the human sense. The drive to reproduce manifests as broodiness, which is the desire to raise children. Sires and dams do not feel romantically attracted to one another. The relationship among parents in a childermoot is frequently compared to teachers in a school.

Childrearing strategies have varied widely through place and time, but three strategies are common at the time of First Contact. The entire childermoot and litter may share a single home, with all parents contributing to the litter's upbringing. Parents may live singly, watching small groups of pups in rotation. Parents may also live alone while caring for the same few pups throughout their puppyhood, with other parents and siblings being viewed by the pups like very involved aunts, uncles, and cousins.

Behavior

As sapient creatures, yinrih cannot be pigeonholed into a neat set of behaviors any more than can humans. However, some comparisons are useful.

Humans are bipedal, largely furless, social, persistence hunters adapted to a tropical savannah environment. Yinrih are quadrupedal, arboreal, and built for strength rather than speed or endurance. With a coat of fur and no libido to give rise to the concept of modesty, yinrih do not wear clothing. The communicative function played by human clothing is instead filled by perfumes.

While humans rely almost exclusively on vision, yinrih perception is divided more evenly among the senses, with smell and hearing being exceptionally keen. Touch is also prevalent, but taste is fairly weak compared to humans. Yinrih cooking emphasizes mouth-feel, aroma, and visual presentation rather than flavor. When taste is the centerpiece of a dish, compounds analogous to menthol and capsaicin are used liberally.

Yinrih are omnivorous, and diet varies widely from culture to culture. Alcohol is just as prevalent as it is among humans, both as a social lubricant and as a drug of abuse. Food and drink-based stimulants such as caffeine are much rarer due to the absence of sleep, but stimulants in the form of drugs, both legal and illegal, are very common as a means to improve concentration and reaction time.

Drug and alcohol abuse, gambling addiction, and thrill-seeking behavior, is far more common in yinrih than in humans. This is thought to stem from yinrih hedonists having to substitute their lack of libido with other indulgent activities. "There are more than enough drug dens at Focus to make up for the nonexistent brothels" is a common human comment on the matter.

Bathing and eliminating waste are not considered private activities. Yinrih restrooms are optimized for hygiene but not privacy. Most yinrih cultures consider bathing to be just as much a social occasion as eating, and public baths are as common as restaurants. Since yinrih lack sweat glands, bathing is less frequent but more involved than in humans.

Yinrih do not sleep, and are incapable of fully losing consciousness without dying. The regenerative function of sleep is instead filled by a period of torpor that lasts for around 24 hours every 12 days. Torpid yinrih are still aware, but experience dulled sensation and a feeling of detachment. Yinrih liken the experience to a human being sedated.

Natural Lifecycle

Yinrih are very long-lived compared to humans. The most often cited average lifespan is 724 years, with some individuals surpassing 8 centuries. Puppyhood lasts for about 53 years.

early in yinrih history, as well as among the yinrih's closest nonsapient relatives, the tree dwellers, several childermoots gather together into a larger group called a **shire**, which controls a defined territory and its resources. Sires instinctively guard the womb nest as kits gestate. After weaning, dams take charge of the kits, nursing them and carrying them on their backs. When the kits are weaned, responsibility is divided more evenly between the genders, with parents from other childermoots as well as older pups from other litters in the shire contributing to a litter's upbringing.

Upon reaching sexual maturity, young adults are ejected from their natal shire and enter an

interstitial group of nomadic maids and bachelors. These young adults are called “sojourners”, “wanderers”, or sometimes “teens”. Their parents remain in the shire as empty nesters, assisting new parents with their litters. Teens seek out others to form their own childermoot, and may join an existing shire, which may or may not be the natal shire of one of the parents, or may elect to become a **lone childermoot** unaffiliated with a shire. This group may or may not form the nucleus of a new shire.

Shires are led by the oldest males, who are called **sheriffs, reeves, or patriarchs**.

Males hunt while females forage. When pups are old enough, sires take their sons on hunts and dams will take their daughters to gather edible plants. The role of female as gatherer allowed presapient females to develop zoopharmacognosy behavior. As yinrih approached the threshold of reflection, females also learned to control fire. Upon achieving sapience, this role flowered into a shaman who tended a fire and served as a healer. This shamanate complimented the male-only patriarchs, with males in charge of worldly matters and females possessing spiritual authority.

Tree dwellers lack this spiritual component, indeed, the presence of religious ritual, along with language, are the two criteria used by most yinrih to determine whether a creature is sapient, as it indicates the creature is asking existential questions that go beyond survival and reproduction.

Early History

The single common ancestor of tree dwellers and yinrih diverged after the river running through their rainforest home widened, separating them into a northern and southern population. The northern population became the tree dwellers while the southern population became the yinrih.

Both tree dwellers and percipient yinrih deposit small amounts of their ink on surfaces as they walk and climb, passively marking a shire’s territory. In presapient yinrih this developed into a more complex active scent marking behavior, with shape, position, size, and orientation of markings carrying different meanings. Males would mark favorable hunting grounds, and females would mark plants bearing fruit that was safe to eat. Both genders would place marks to warn others away from potential predators, and teens would mark to indicate their desire to form a childermoot.

The dawn of sapience is referred to by many yinrih faiths as **the kindling of the fire of understanding**, and occasionally by humans as **crossing the threshold of reflection**. Sapience emerged polygenically, with sapient pups being born to nonsapient parents across the yinrih’s range. This event coincided with the emergence of behavioral modernity in humans on Earth.

Much like isolated communities of deaf human children, language developed very quickly, with sapient yinrih usually encountering one another after entering the nomadic young adult phase, improvising a simple written language from their scent marking behavior along with a spoken language from their vocalizations. If multiple pups from a single litter were born sapient, or if older sapient pups encountered younger ones in the same shire, they would develop these languages much earlier.

The effect that this innate ability to write has had on yinrih history and culture cannot be overstated. While a definitive time for the appearance of language, and thus sapience, is hard to establish due to the fragile nature of the writing surfaces used, the first extant samples of writing occur while sapient yinrih were still being born to nonsapient parents, meaning that yinrih have a written records stretching back to the very dawn of their species. The earliest extant samples of writing are dated to 100 thousand years before First Contact, around the same time humans started burying their dead.

While yinrih are not and have never been a true monoculture, they also never sundered completely into isolated populations as humans did. Distinct cultures and national identities emerge and grow, but all share a common baseline. This more cohesive culture allowed The Bright Way, the oldest existing and most historically powerful religion, to become nearly ubiquitous across the yinrih species, serving at times as a unifying presence and at other times as a center of power that superseded nation-states.

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