



THE **FISSURE CRAB**

Massive, terrifying, fire spewing scuttlers making their home in aquatic, volcanic fissures.

FISSURE CRAB

Deep below the ocean's surface live all manner of beings from docile to demonic. The extreme living situations of the depths cause all manner of beings to call the ocean's their home, but few are as extreme as the fissure crab. Dwelling in the extreme heat of aquatic volcanic fissures, these beings are at home where others wouldn't dare to tread. With temperatures around these fissures rising to immense levels, few were sure how these massive creatures survived until more research was done on their origins.

Their ability to survive in such extreme conditions is thought to be due to two factors. First, and most obvious, their outer shells are extremely hard and thick. Piercing through this crustacean's outer shell is so difficult that many weapons simply bounce off as if striking against rock. Some observers have compared their shells to the hardness of volcanic rocks like andesite. It's an apt comparison as the few species that we have been able to examine have been extremely difficult to dissect without the use of extreme measures.

The second reason for their survival in such an extreme climate is the nature of their blood, or rather what is in place of their blood. Some have postulated that these creatures hail from an elemental plane rather than the material realm as the ichor in their circulatory system is superheated by a

complex chemical reaction in their body. This ichor seems to carry double duty as it transports nutrients and chemicals throughout their body, while also helping in their defense. Glands within their claws as well as near the joints of its legs seem to be able to excrete the ichor at will and the fissure crab uses this to subdue its prey with extreme thermal efficiency.

These massive behemoths prefer the deep waters of the oceans where large prey is plentiful to satiate their appetite. It's odd for them to make their way to inhabited shores, but environmental changes to their typical homes may see them venture further away from their preferred environments and into unwanted areas like populated shores. Some long distance ships have claimed to have seen them sunning themselves on particularly warm days on remote tropical islands.

Another reason for migration seems to be reproduction. While each individual fissure crab tends to be a loner, owing to their massive appetite choking out survivability for other fissure crabs, they do perform an odd migration pattern. Roughly every 50 years, hundreds of the creatures travel to a location of immense underwater volcanic activity where they stay for anywhere from 3-5 weeks insuring the future of their species. Young fissure crabs typically band together for survival until they are of a sufficient size to defend themselves, journeying off to find their own territories.

FISSURE CRAB

CREATURE 13

HUGE **ELEMENTAL** **FIRE**

Perception +23; darkvision

Languages Pyric

Skills Athletics +27, Intimidation +27

Str +8, **Dex** +5, **Con** +8, **Int** +4, **Wis** +5, **Cha** +4

AC 34; **Fort** +29, **Ref** +26, **Will** +23

HP 290; **Immunities** bleed, fire, poison, ; **Weaknesses** cold 15

Heated Aura (aura, fire) 40 feet. Any creature that enters or starts its turn in the aura takes 15 fire damage (DC 30 basic Fortitude save). A creature that fails its save is also enfeebled 1 until it's no longer in the aura.

Speed 40 feet, swim 40 feet

Melee ♦ claw slam +27 (reach 20 feet), **Damage** 3d8+11 bludgeoning plus 3d6 fire plus 2d4 persistent fire

Melee ♦ claw pinch +25 (reach 20 feet), **Damage** 3d8+8 bludgeoning plus 3d6 fire plus Grab

Constrict ♦ (fire) 3d6 fire, DC 30

Molten Shell ♦♦ (fire); **Frequency** once per hour; **Effect** The fissure crab retracts its claws and legs covering its vital areas. This gives it a +4 circumstance bonus to AC, removes its weakness to cold damage, and grants it resistance 8 to all damage types except force. The fissure crab can take no actions until the start of its next turn. At the start of its next turn, it erupts forth a superheated wave of air in a 30-foot-emanation. Creatures within the emanation take 10d8 fire damage (DC 30 basic Fortitude save) and are enfeebled 1.

Molten Stream ♦♦ (fire) **Frequency** once per minute; **Effect** The fissure crab spews superheated ichor in a 10-foot-thick and 60-foot-long line. Each creature in the line takes 7d6 fire damage (DC 30 basic Reflex save).

While it isn't common, reports of attacks on merchant and fishing vessels have been reported. It's thought that the creatures have confused boats to be a type of large prey and strike out without understanding what they're attacking. Another hypothesis is that these boats have journeyed too close to their spawning grounds where the creatures become immensely aggressive.

Combat with one of these immense creatures can be a nightmare as they are much faster than they appear. On land they can outpace most humanoids and in the sea, they are even faster, utilizing all of their legs to propel themselves through the ocean with ease. Their massive and powerful claws lash out with unbridled speed and their deadly spit coats areas in sticky, superheated ichor. If you do manage to get close, they have defensive measures to push others away and gain their own advantageous ground again. If you intend on facing one, you should come prepared with fire resistant gear and some devastating firepower of your own to try to get through their armor-like shells.

TACTICS

Fissure crabs are deadly in combat and tend to be much faster than people give them credit for. Use their mobility to dance around the battlefield spreading damage amongst the party and sending some of the softer characters fleeing for their lives. They are immensely tanky and can really take a beating. If you pit them against the party alone, don't hold back on damage as the party can often tear through them with proper spell usage.

- Heated Aura is a great reason for your party to want to stock up on fire resistance potions and other equipment before getting in a fight. Enfeeble can cause a lot of problems for melee fighters.
- Their claw attacks are particularly deadly as they can grab a target quite easily. Breaking free from these grabs is no small matter and they can deal fire damage each turn with their Constrict move.
- 40 feet is actually quite quick for something so large and their 20 foot reach will catch characters unaware. Use this mobility often in combat.
- Molten Stream is usable once per minute so use it early! Hopefully you'll have enough time to get a few off before the beast falls.
- Notice their immunity to bleed, fire, and poison.
- Molten Shell is a defensive measure and should be used when the crab gets to low health to provide a surprise.

SUGGESTED PAIRINGS

Fissure crabs are solitary creatures, but that doesn't mean you should use them alone!

- You could sprinkle in some giant crabs as fodder around this one. Perhaps they cling to the fissure crab, using it for transportation and warmth.
- If player characters are fighting in the ocean, consider opportunistic predators like sharks and similar creatures that may try to pick them off on the edges of combat.



MOLTEN CHELAE

ITEM 6

GRAPPLE | MAGICAL

Price 1,920 gp

Usage held in 1 hand; Bulk L

Fissure crabs dwell in extreme conditions, finding a way to live in deep ocean volcanoes due to their extremely heat resistant shells. This +2 flaming dagger has seemingly been forged from the pincers of one such creature, kept alive by unknown magics. It has the grapple trait in addition to its normal weapon traits.

Activate ♦ Interact; **Requirements** Your last action was a successful strike with this weapon, or you have a creature grabbed with this weapon; **Effect** The target is grabbed until the end of your next turn. A grabbed creature can use the Escape action to get out of the Grab, and the Grab ends for a grabbed creature if you move away from it. This functions as the Grab creature ability.

Activate ♦ Interact; **Frequency** once per round; **Requirements** You have a creature grabbed with this weapon; **Effect** The claw drips superheated secretions from it dealing 2d6 fire damage to the grabbed creature.

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