

ANACONDA



**Eunectes
murinus**

size
Up to 30 feet long and
more than 550 pounds

habitat
Rivers, streams and lakes
in South America

Creature Profile

primary skill ▶▶ Constriction

Anacondas use their powerful bodies to squeeze their prey. They tighten their grip every time the animal exhales, until it cannot take another breath.

other strengths ▶▶ Size, power & stealth

The anaconda is the largest snake in the world and is built for power. These giant snakes also use their camouflage to hide.



prey ▶▶ Small & large mammals, reptiles, birds & fishes

The anaconda can even kill and eat an adult jaguar.

weaknesses ▶▶ None

enemies ▶▶ Humans & large predators

Anacondas are most threatened by human activities, including rainforest destruction. Some people may kill anacondas out of fear or hatred. Young anacondas are also hunted by large predators, including adult anacondas.

danger to humans ▶▶ Low

Anacondas are powerful and could be dangerous. But since most anacondas live in the deep jungle, they rarely encounter people. Anacondas do not seek out humans for food. Humans are much more dangerous to anacondas than they are to us. As people continue to destroy rainforests, these giant snakes have less space to live.



S. Chang

GREAT BARRACUDA



Sphyraena barracuda

size
Up to 6 feet long

habitat
Coral reefs, mangroves and sea grass beds in tropical and subtropical oceans worldwide. Sometimes found in the open ocean.

Creature Profile

primary skill ▶▶ **Speed**

Barracudas have a streamlined, torpedo-shaped body and can reach speeds of 35 miles per hour or more.

weaknesses ▶▶ **Vary by species**

While an adult great barracuda is almost enemy free, smaller barracudas are preyed on by many creatures.



enemies ▶▶ **Large fishes & humans**

Sharks, tuna and large groupers hunt small barracudas, but adult barracudas are not bothered by natural predators. Humans target barracudas for sport fishing.



other strengths ▶▶ **Sharp teeth & excellent eyesight**

Barracudas hunt during the day and find their prey primarily by sight. They use their two rows of razor-sharp teeth to catch and eat small and large fishes.

prey ▶▶ **Fishes**

Everything from mackerel and herring to young tunas and groupers.

danger to humans ▶▶ **Low**

Barracudas rarely attack people. Most attacks happen when the barracuda tries to take a fish from a fisherman, or confuses a shiny object on a swimmer for scales on a fish. It is much more dangerous to eat a barracuda than to swim with one—these fish are known to carry the toxin that causes ciguatera poisoning.

ELECTRIC EEL



Electrophorus electricus

size

Up to 8 feet long and more than 40 pounds

habitat

Calm, muddy water in South American rivers and streams

Creature Profile

primary skill ▶▶ Electrocutation

Electric eels stun or kill their predators and prey by generating powerful electric shocks.

prey ▶▶ Small fishes, mammals & aquatic creatures

Large electric eels will even eat smaller electric eels.

other strengths ▶▶ Air-breathing

Unlike most fishes, electric eels can breathe air, which helps them survive in stagnant, oxygen-poor water.

weaknesses ▶▶ Poor vision

Electric eels find their way through dark or dirty water by producing a mild electrical current. They learn about nearby objects or animals by sensing changes in their electrical fields.



enemies ▶▶ None

Electric eels can produce shocks of up to 600 volts—more than enough to deter any possible predators.

danger to humans ▶▶ Moderate

A large electric eel can produce enough voltage to kill a person, although this is very rare. Most are too small to produce a fatal shock. Humans are much more dangerous to electric eels than they are to us. When people clear-cut, mine and ranch in the rainforest, the runoff enters the rivers and streams where electric eels live. This makes it harder for electric eels and their prey to survive.