

Draken

Land Data

Area: Approx. 19 million sq.mi. (1450 mi. East/West, 12965mi. North/South)

Population: Estimated 6 million, colonized humanoid races.

Highest Point:

Lowest Point: The Silver Desert, 230 ft. below sea level

History

It is said that long ago the lands of Draken were lush and vibrant, with some of the most exotic wildlife in existence. From north to south, the land was covered by dense forests, rolling hills, and vast plains; though in time that would all come to change. While the stories and legends vary from the mundane to the supernatural, the end result was all the same; over sixty percent of land was reduced to desert. It was not be just the land that suffered, but countless species of wildlife were wiped from the face of the world.

Scorched Earth

While the stories of what caused the destruction of the land vary, the one that seems to be the most probable and seems to hold the most verifiable truth, dates back to the Reality War. It is said that in the time following the Black Gates, massive rifts opened to the Inner Plane, and the fury of it poured through. Beings like The Mad Marid and The Tempest stormed the lands, seeking to create a new domain to rule. One such being came to the continent of Draken: Sarfurus, the Tempered Flame. Followed by his legions of the Efreeti, they laid waste to the lushness, burning and charring everything until only cinders and ash remained. They sought to make the land a heat ridden waste, and in time would bring forth magma from deep in the earth, creating a new foothold for fire outside of the Inner Plane. From coast to coast they wrought destruction, leaving no trace of life in their wake, and the lower half of the continent was nothing but desert and wasteland when they were finished. At some point after the turning of the 4th age, the Felis and Desert Elves would make their respective homelands on Draken, bringing new life into the desert wastes.

The Waking Desert

Early in the 4th age, life outside the reaches of the desert returned to the normal cycle, cities grew, and life prospered; though the deserts remained vacant and dead. Over the centuries, explorers would attempt to traverse the desert looking for rare deposits or lost treasures. In the beginning they would return empty handed, though near the end of the first season that would change; as explorers began returning with tales of the growing wildlife, and of giant insects and reptiles ten to twenty times the size they should be. It would be near the end of the second season, however, when explorers would return as mad men, talking of strange humanoids deep in the desert near the ruins of a city long forgotten: Faeburn. For many years, those traveling into the desert would give the forgotten city a wide berth, in the hope to not lose their minds.

While it is unclear what event occurred in the third season, the outcome has become a scar on the desert, now named the Cursed Desert. It is said that those that had returned from the desert mad, no matter where they were, all took to the streets in the dead of night, screaming, raving, and murmuring nonsense, with the exception of "The eye has opened". By dawn they had all died from their affliction. Since that day the heart of the desert has changed, becoming almost untraversable; more so than a normal desert.

Indigenous Races

Desert Elves

The race known as the Desert Elves call Draken their home. While both Felis and Desert Elves tend to be somewhat nomadic, the Desert Elves are said to have grand places hidden in the ever moving dunes of The Silver Desert.

Felis

The Felis tribes roam the southern deserts of Draken, and it is said that some tribes trade with the Faharadi when they cross paths in the desert. Felis are known as savvy traders, and will often travel days out of their way to find the best deal on tradeable goods.

Terrain

The Thirsty Mountains

Along the southern coast lies a stretch of sand mountains; a unique phenomenon where the damp ocean air over the years has caused the dunes to harden and become almost as solid as stone. While the mountains can be traversed, it can be perilous, as they are more prone to collapse and landslide than stone mountains.

The Silver Desert

This region, known for its fierce heat and blinding sands, occupies most of the south-eastern corner of the continent of Draken. It contains the Cursed Desert and the cities of Silverrock, Bridgevale, and the lost city of Faeburn. It is said the Faharadi travel amongst the dunes of The Silver Desert, though few if any have seen their fabled cities. Traveling this area requires one to be experienced in desert survival, though some travelers are known to emerge speaking of an oasis at the heart of the desert.

The Cursed Desert

While the southern region of the continent is majority desert, and is safe enough for those skilled to travel, there is about half of the desert that is untraveled by almost any. For an unknown reason, the central forty percent or so of the desert is almost inescapable should you find your way into it. While studies of the perimeter can find nothing that would cause such problems, even the most skilled navigators give this area a wide berth. Constant sand storms, heavy winds, and a lack of landmarks make navigation virtually impossible. There are stories, however, of a people that manage to live in this area somehow. Traders will tell you that these

people ride the sands upon ships of glass, as if the desert were an ocean, and their skin's golden sheen could blend into the sands if they so chose. They are the Faharadi.

Hollowlyn

While the island is lush and could support growth, only two cities have ever been established and managed to survive. The region is home to a primitive reptiles that can be found nowhere else in the world. The only reason the cities have pushed to survive, is that the jungles grow rare fruits that are a prized delicacy in the Draken deserts.

Towns

Erihollow

Set at the heart of the rolling hills in the North sits a city that would be expected in the richest of kingdoms, however the city is made completely of hardened and aged vines. It is believed that in ages past, the city was built by powerful druids that used their power over nature to grow buildings, walls, even the grand palace. Whatever the truth is, the city is a site of wonder. Erihollow is also the home to one of the most expansive horticultural sites known; the gardens and fields around the city grow almost every known type of plant life, even those not accustomed to the terrain and climate.

Faeburn

The lost city of Faeburn is shrouded in mystery. Many adventurers who have traveled into the desert speak of a city whose outline appears as the sun sets, but if one journeys toward it, nothing is ever found. Numerous legends revolve around this lost city, most notably that when the curse that gave this area of desert it's name fell, the city itself vanished into the desert sands, never to be seen again.

Silverrock

The largest city in the southern half of Draken is Silverrock. Due to it's location at the end of one of the tributaries of the Dragonclaw River, it serves as a waypoint for those venturing into the Silver Desert. Because it is one of the only sources of water in the Silver Desert, you will find many of the nomadic clans of Desert Elves and Felis stopping here to refill their water reserves and supply stores before they venture back into the blinding dunes.

Shadowlea

The southernmost city in Draken is Shadowlea. Located within a natural bowl at the western end of the Thirsty Mountains, this city is home to a large number of Deep Elves who have chosen to venture out of their homeland. Direct sunlight only hits this city for around 3 hours a day during high summer, but as the seasons turn, that sunlight dwindles to a mere 42 minutes in deep winter. Because of its location Shadowlea is naturally fortified to invasion, having one of the only passes to the city running switchbacks down a sheer cliff.

Aldcoast

Aldcoast is located along the western coast of Draken, south of the Dragonclaw River. As a small fishing village, Aldcoast is almost self sufficient. Being a great distance from other cities with which to trade, necessity required the citizens to fend for themselves. Humans, being adaptable to the rough environment, make up the majority of this village's population.

Aelfort

Aelfort is located in the southwestern corner of Draken, south of the Goldash Desert. Like the name of the surrounding desert may imply, the powdery texture of the sand in this area has given nearly all natural stonework a golden sheen. Being understandably difficult to find, this city is popular amongst the Felis to desire to trade amongst outsiders. Rumor has it that the highly prized Goldash Diamonds can be found in some of the stalls of the market in Aelfort.

Edgeness

Seated along the the eastern coast of Draken, Edgeness sits between the twin lakes of Drachedge and Pinfort. Reported to be a city of fantastic elegance and beauty, Edgeness is the home of the Sidhe who walk the prime under the auspices of the Guardians of Essence. Containing the highest percentage of Sidhe population of any other city in Amaren, it houses some of the best artisans in the realm. The beauty of the works of the Sidhe are legend amongst the people of Draken, and their goods are prized by the wealthy and those to whom the Sidhe owe their friendship.

Hightown

The port city of Hightown is located at the western foot of the Oreholt Mountains, and sits just north of the Dragonclaw River, surrounded by lush hillsides that contrast sharply with the deserts to their immediate South. This city is known for it's tailored goods and is one of the handful of headquarters of the Merchants Guild. Many merchants of the guild use this city as a port of call on their journeys across the sea, and usually refer to it as the "Gateway to Draken".

Woodfort

Ironically named, Woodfort is a fortress city located deep beneath the Oreholt Mountains. The Dwarves of Draken built this city centuries ago as a mining site and research laboratory, so that they could continue to refine their crafts. Regardless of trade, master craftsmen are likely to be found here; in fact, some of the realm's most renowned Chemists, Artisans, and Smiths hail from the deep city of Woodfort.

Lochapple

Located at the southernmost tip of the Vertshadow Swamp and flanked to the west by Dracport Bay. Lochapple is a bustling seaport, and along with Hollowdell, is one of the two ports that provide trade and supplies to the capital of Erihollow. Due to it's location near a swamp, the sea, and the hills, Lochapple is a waypoint for many horticulturists, arborists, and biologists seeking to search out the huge diversity that Draken has to offer.

Hollowdell

In the rolling hills north of the Oreholt Mountains lies the city of Hollowdell. Located west of Dracport Bay and surrounded on three sides by water, this modest city plies a brisk fishing trade, as well as being a main port of trade for Erihollow and a gateway into the mountains beyond.

Greencrystal

The northernmost settlement in Draken, Greencrystal sits on the edge of the Vertshadow Swamp. Having been established by Humans after their arrival on the continent, the town plies a brisk trade in the resources the swamp has to offer. There are legends amongst the townspeople of large beings traversing the swamp in the night. Some say these are scaled beasts with long tails and keen eyes, while others say they are huge humanoids wearing furs and wielding clubs. Regardless of the stories, most inhabitants try to be indoors after the sun sets.

Important notes for traveling to the region

- Traveling in the deserts can be rough, always carry plenty of water, wear bright colors to help fight the heat; and you better have sharp navigation skills as the sands are barren of landmarks.
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Additional Notable (colorful) Local Lore/Legends

- Across the lands the stories of the Cursed Desert range from the slightly mundane of the giant sand scorpions to the more nightmarish of those poor souls who have wandered too deep and seen their comrades swallowed up by the sands itself, or by what lurks beneath.