

5E

AB  
ABYSSAL BREWS



# **THE** **ACERBAK**

Acid spitting, underground dwellers that want nothing more than to turn your party into food.



# ACERBAK

The depths of dwarven mines in Bharzul are never to be considered fully safe. Though advancements in technologies have been swift, creative, and useful in mitigating many of the dangers of the deep delvings they pursue, the underground holds many surprises for those that would venture into them for too long.

One such surprise started with the dwarves finding carved out tunnels in solid rock. Now, creatures that can carve through rock are not unheard of. There are many worm species that are known of, that can chew their way through given enough time. What was concerning is that the walls of these tunnels were pocked with small holes and the rock face had taken on a glasslike shine as if something had polished it. At the time, there were talks of it possibly being something that used extreme heat to bore its way through, but no evidence could be found of the kind of expansion one would expect in the rock surface when great heat was applied.

It wasn't until an exploratory mining party went missing that a more thorough investigation was launched into these odd tunnels. Eventually the mining party was found, flesh burned away from their bones leaving little behind but skeletons and half melted armor with a similar pocked appearance to the stonework they had previously seen in the tunnels. As the expedition pushed deeper, they came across

odd environs deep underground. A tangle structure of interweaving tunnels that lead to a central hub where dozens of eggs lay in acrid smelling sulfuric pits.

The awe of discovery lasted only a moment before they were beset by fast moving lizard like creatures with bulbous acidic glands protruding from their necks. They fought and fled, few making it back to report on their findings. Over the years, more has been understood about these creatures dubbed "Acerbaks". Their nests are fiercely guarded by their colonies. It's known that they often hunt in small packs preferring to take a numbers advantage over being individualistic. It's also known that their societies are matriarchal clusters similar to honey bees, though a queen has never been seen by someone that lived to tell about it.

When a cluster is found, they are often marked in documentation and the entry tunnel is closed. Due to their rapid rate of multiplication, clearing a cluster is a difficult task unless one is able to kill their queen and destroy their nesting grounds. Adventurers who would take up such a task are hard enough to come by and their return is never guaranteed.

**Matriarchal Clusters.** Acerbaks operate similar to honey bees in that most of the colony is centered around protecting and maintenance of their queen and nesting grounds. They naturally build around sulfuric hot pools found deep underground as they maintain the proper heat and acidity needed to nurture the eggs of their young. Clusters can vary

## ACERBAK

Medium beast, neutral

**Armor Class** 16 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 61 (9d8+21)

**Speed** 40 ft., 30 ft. burrow, 30 ft. climb

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)

**Saving Throws** STR +4, DEX +5, CON +5

**Skills** Acrobatics +5, Stealth +5, Perception +3

**Damage Immunities** acid

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 13

**Languages** -

**Challenge** 4 (1,100 XP)

**Proficiency Bonus** +2

**Spider Climb.** An acerbak can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

**Tunneler.** An acerbak burrow through solid rock at half its burrowing speed and can leave a 5-foot-diameter tunnel in its wake.

## Actions

**Multiattack.** Acerbak makes one Bite attack, and one Claw attack.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8+3) slashing damage plus 10 (3d6) acid damage.

**Claw.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d8+3) slashing damage.

**Acidic Spray (Recharge 5-6).** The acerbak opens its mouth and unleashes a torrent of sticky, stinging acid in a 30 foot cone in front of it. Creatures within the cone must succeed on a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw, taking 28 (6d6+7) acid damage on a failed save or half as much on a successful one. The area becomes difficult terrain for the next 1 minute and creatures moving through the area take 3 (1d4+1) acid damage for every 5 feet they move.

**Corrosive Belch (1/Day).** The acerbak belches forth a cloud of corrosive acid in a 15 foot radius sphere around it that persists for 1 minute. Creatures that start their turn within the cloud or move into it for the first time must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, the creature takes 17 (4d6+3) acid damage and is blinded until the end of their turn. On a success, they take half as much damage and are not blinded. If a creature wearing non-magical metal armor ends their turn within the cloud that piece of armor begins to corrode taking a permanent and cumulative -1 penalty to the AC it offers. Armor reduced to an AC of 10 is destroyed. The acerbak is immune to the effects of its belch.

**Tail Sweep.** The acerbak swings its tail rapidly in a circle around it. Creatures that are within 10 feet of the acerbak that are not flying must succeed on a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or be knocked prone by the tail and take 10 (3d6) bludgeoning damage.



in size from smaller ones being in the dozens to larger clusters being in the hundreds. The queens themselves are often kept deep within the clusters near to the nesting grounds and are fiercely guarded by the colony.

**Pack Hunters.** Acerbaks often form small hunting groups that they remain with for the entirety of their lives. These bands of 3-5 work together to set up ambushes and attack from multiple angles to confuse and disorient their foes, sometimes even burrowing up from below their prey in order to catch them unaware. It's rare to find a lone Acerbak unless it has been separated from its pack. Lone Acerbak's are often the most hostile as they consider themselves to be vulnerable without their pack.

**Tunnelers.** These beasts carve labyrinthian tunnels with their acidic spit to confuse and disorient any predators that may try to encroach on their nests. It's not unusual for Acerbak nests to stretch out for a mile or more around their nesting grounds.

## TACTICS

Acerbaks are pack based hunters and they work together to draw in their prey, disorientate them, and attack from multiple angles all at once. They will often send one ahead as bait to get enemies to chase them before ambushing from several angles including from below.

- Their bite is a pretty ferocious amount of damage for the level especially when coupled with their multiattack claw. Consider sending them at softer targets to apply pressure.
- Their spider climb should absolutely be used to position them on the roof in ambush positions to send acidic spray downward.
- Acid spray has a recharge so make sure to use it early in the fight so it can come back up later.
- Corrosive Belch is a nasty ability with a once per day limitation. Make sure to describe the damage their gear is taking if they stay in the cloud.
- Tail sweep can be a good set up for an Acid Spew from another Acerbak close by. Knocking creatures prone will cause them to have a much harder time with their dex saves.
- Consider setting up impromptu pit traps by having Acerbaks dig tunnels below but leaving just a bit of the land above.

## SUGGESTED PAIRINGS

Acerbaks are pack hunters and should be treated as such. Keep them paired with other Acerbaks or put a scared one alone as an introduction.

- Large worm species treat the Acerbak as prey. Consider weaving in some of these creatures if you're looking to bring in some large worm enemy like a Purple Worm.
- Bulettes prowl a lot of the same areas as Acerbaks meaning that it wouldn't be uncommon to find several Acerbaks fighting a Bulette. This could be a great set up for a three way encounter.



## ACERBAK'S BITE

*Bracer, rare*

Fearsome tunneling beasts, the Acerbak are known for their powerful acid that cuts through stone and metal alike. Many unsuspecting miners have met a sudden and brutally painful demise when ambushed by these crafty hunters. The few that have managed to slip away often bear the scars of their encounter for the rest of their life. This bracer features two protruding spikes made from a special alloy that is resistant to the Acerbak's acidic saliva along with a magically sustained acid gland pulled directly from one of the beasts.

While wearing the bracer, you gain a +1 bonus to the attack rolls and the damage rolls you make with unarmed strikes. Such attacks are considered to be magical. When you hit with an unarmed strike while wearing this bracer, you can choose to deal acid damage instead of bludgeoning damage.

**Blistering Strikes.** For every unarmed strike you hit with during your turn after the first, you deal an additional 1d4 acid damage. If you successfully hit with 3 unarmed strikes in one turn against a creature wearing non-magical metal armor, that piece of armor begins to blister and melt away, taking a permanent and cumulative -1 penalty to the AC it offers. Armor reduced to an AC of 10 is destroyed.

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