

GURPS<sup>®</sup> *Traveller*<sup>®</sup>

# ALIEN RACES

*Hivers, Droyne, Ancients, and Other Enigmatic Races*

3



By David Pulver, David Nilsen, Andy Slack, and David Thomas

**STEVE JACKSON GAMES**

## The Hivers Should Worry You . . .

Openly cooperative, apparently pacifistic, reportedly cowardly, the starfish-shaped **Hivers** don't seem to be empire-building material – but they hold one in a secure grip. They won the only interstellar war they've fought after losing every battle, but with this most alien of the major races, looks almost always deceive. Inscrutable, patient, and subtle, the Hivers puzzle their neighbors more than they worry them. It should be the other way around.



## The Droyne Should Awe You . . .

An insectoid race scattered across the Imperium like so many gypsies, the seemingly insignificant **Droyne** often fall beneath the notice of Humanity . . . and most Humans are foolish enough to think that's their own choice. A series of puzzles in their history and culture suggests that huge secrets lurk behind the compound eyes of these tiny sentients . . . and that the most awesome of the major races may come in the smallest package.



## Ancient Answers Await!

*Alien Races 3* offers an expose on the Ancients themselves, and examines in detail the biology, homeworlds, culture, and society of the enigmatic Hivers and cryptic Droyne. Included are racial and career templates, sample equipment and starships, Ancient artifacts, and much more.

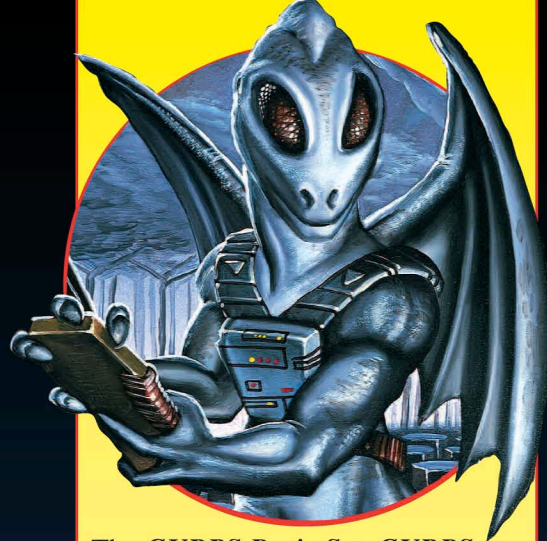
This book also includes a set of 36 Droyne “coyns” and instructions for predicting the future and making decisions, Droyne style.

Two new minor races are presented here as well:

- The **Inheritors**, a race of fluorine-breathers living on the shell of an ancient Dyson sphere and “improving” on the technology left behind;
- The **Lithkind**, a nocturnal species for which mating means death and death means rebirth, and who treat the opposite sex as taboo!



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The *GURPS Basic Set*, *GURPS Traveller*, and *GURPS Space* are required for full use of this book in a *GURPS* campaign. *Psionics*, *Ultra-Tech*, and *Ultra-Tech 2* are not required, but will be very useful. The background presented here will be of great value to any *Traveller* campaign, and will also serve as a source of inspiration for other SF games.

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The *GURPS Traveller Alien Races 3* web page is at [www.sjgames.com/gurps/traveller/alienraces3/](http://www.sjgames.com/gurps/traveller/alienraces3/).

### Page References

Any page reference that begins with a B refers to *GURPS Basic Set, Third Edition Revised*; e.g., p. B144 refers to page 144 of *Basic Set*. CI refers to *Compendium I*, CII to *Compendium II*, P to *Psionics*, S to *Space, Third Edition*, GT to *Traveller, Second Edition*, T:AI to *Traveller Alien Races 1*, T:BC to *Traveller Behind the Claw*, T:FT to *Traveller Far Trader*, T:SM to *Traveller Star Mercs*, and VE to *Vehicles, Second Edition*. For a full list of abbreviations, see p. CI181 or the updated web list at [www.sjgames.com/gurps/abbrevs.html](http://www.sjgames.com/gurps/abbrevs.html).

# Introduction

This book contains detailed descriptions of four important alien races for the *GURPS Traveller* milieu.

The Hivers are the most alien of the major races, from the Human standpoint. They are mute, six-limbed, and possess an amazing biology, but their most exotic features are psychological. They lack emotion, fear violent confrontations, and still are capable of manipulating entire races to serve their purposes.

The Droyne are a winged race existing on dozens of scattered worlds. They seem content to live placid, pastoral existences. Thus, researchers were shocked to discover that the Droyne were a major race, having had jump drives longer than any other race. Not only that, but they are currently believed to be the descendants of the all-powerful Ancients, who once reshaped the galaxy.

The two new “minor races” described in these pages, the Lithkind and the Inheritors, provide a pair of alien cultures strikingly different from Humans.

All these races are intended to serve both as NPCs and PCs. Previous books in this series portrayed the Aslan, K'kree, Vargr, and Zhodani. The fourth book will illustrate several minor races of note.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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## ABOUT THE LINE EDITOR

Loren Wiseman was one of the founding partners of GDW, Inc., original publishers of *Traveller*, and spent more than 20 years there as a game designer, developer, typesetter, and editor. After GDW closed, Loren freelanced for a time, and then came to SJ Games, where he is *Traveller* line editor and expert-in-residence.

## JOURNAL OF THE TRAVELLERS' AID SOCIETY

The long-running *Traveller* magazine is now online at [www.sjgames.com/jtas/](http://www.sjgames.com/jtas/), edited by Loren Wiseman. It supports all versions of *Traveller* with news, articles, discussion areas, and reviews. Subscriptions are \$15/year for 52 weekly updates and full access to archives.

The *Traveller News Service* is updated weekly, chronicling the life and times of the Imperium, and is viewable free at [www.sjgames.com/gurps/traveller/news.html](http://www.sjgames.com/gurps/traveller/news.html). The SJ Games *Traveller* page ([www.sjgames.com/traveller/](http://www.sjgames.com/traveller/)) links to the *Traveller* Web Ring, which includes most of the major *Traveller*-oriented web-sites. For information on subscribing to the *Traveller* mailing list, contact [traveller-owner@mpgn.com](mailto:traveller-owner@mpgn.com).

# The Hivers

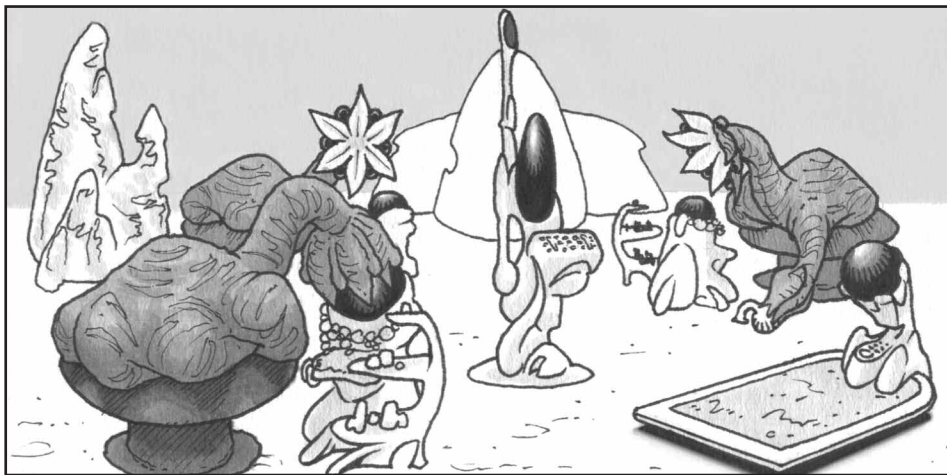
The Hivers are the most atypical of the major races. While all the other major races are vocal, bipedal, and bilaterally symmetrical, the Hivers are mute, squat, and hexapodal.

The radical difference in appearance between the five erect races and the ground-hugging Hivers is the least of the shocks to non-Hivers. To races used to communicating via sound, the silence that characterizes Hiver interaction is unnerving. For non-Hivers, it is easy to populate those silences with imagined conspiracies and sinister forces – but then it can be said that the Hivers themselves tend to imagine the same forces at work!

The Hivers dominate 10 sectors to the rimward/trailing of the Imperium. They share a border with the Solomani Confederation and maintain a narrow demilitarized zone between themselves and the Two Thousand Worlds of the K’ree. Their trailing frontier apparently holds little interest for them; they are more intrigued by exploring the potential of the races they have already met.

The Hivers seem unlikely rulers. Openly cooperative, apparently pacifistic, reportedly cowardly, they are even less likely expansionists. Although they have the complete support of 170 allied races, including minor Human races and the Ithklur (reputedly the toughest troops in charted space), they have fought only one major war, which they won after losing all the battles. Inscrutable, patient, and subtle, they puzzle their neighbors more than they worry them.

It should be the other way around.



## PHYSIOLOGY

To Solomani observers, Hivers at rest look a bit like starfish: pinkish brown, pebbly-skinned creatures with six flexible arms radiating from a large dome-shaped central body. However, an active Hiver does not give this same impression. Although their gross morphology is a sixfold radial symmetry, the six limbs have evolved specialized uses so that the Hivers exhibit a bilaterally symmetrical functionality.

## Hiver Names

**E**ach Hiver has several names, one used only in its nest, and one or more for use with other races. A yearling is assigned a nest name when it is adopted by a nest, and keeps that name for the remainder of its life, even when it goes to another nest. These names are never revealed to non-Hivers, and are seldom revealed to non-nest members.

Each Hiver chooses several names for dealings outside the nest, one in Gurvin for use with non-nest-member Hivers, and one for each race the Hiver has dealings with (normally a single word, sometimes two, rarely three or more). Hivers often devote great care to the selection of their names, and most try to choose one that has relevance to their occupation; others simply choose a name at random. A merchant dealing with Solomani might choose to be called Marco Polo or Fugger. A Hiver traveling in the Imperium to study Human history might choose Herodotus or Toynbee; a botanist might choose Linnaeus or Rosebud. It is common for a Hiver to use several names for dealing with different races or linguistic groups. A Hiver known as Kigiisii to Vilani might choose to be called Sherman to Galanglic speakers and Helmut to Swordic speakers.

Characters from Hiver history will be assigned names where necessary. Sometimes these names will be relevant, sometimes not (M. Primus and M. Eneri are two examples of the latter). This is done by whatever nest translates a document first.

## Interesting Smell You Have

**O**nly half the Hivers have a sense of smell. The ancestral species had the sense, but the Hivers themselves lost the ability at some point. A working nose re-emerged following the ice age, but has yet to propagate throughout the gene pool. Until it does, those who possess it go to remarkable lengths to take advantage of their ability, collecting, recording, reproducing, and synthesizing interesting aromas. Hivers being Hivers, they waste no time telling their anosmic colleagues what they are missing, especially with regard to food.

# The Droyne

Rules are made to be broken.

Academics introduced the term “major race” to describe those species of sophonts that had independently discovered jump drive. Politicians (especially those who were members of major races themselves) spread the term, and used it to “prove” that major races were superior to minor ones. Since jump-drive technology gave its users an obvious and powerful advantage, the minor races found this classification hard to dispute.

So it came as a shock when researchers proved that the Droyne were a major race. By the standards of most species, the Droyne have no ambition; they are content to lead placid lives on bucolic planets. At first, people thought of the Droyne as many separate minor races. Once it became clear that the various Droyne communities were the colonies of a single race, they were still considered a minor one, perhaps spread by the Ancients like Humaniti.

It was most inconvenient to learn that the Droyne have jump drive, that they have had it for longer than any other major race, and they just don’t bother to use it much. The underpinning for a basic scientific and political definition was shattered, although the definition and the habits it engendered are still very much alive.

## PHYSIOLOGY AND PSYCHOLOGY

Droyne and Chirpers (see sidebar) seem to mutate readily, so their communities scattered across charted space show great external variation. Skin colors range from the usual grays to purples and greens; wing size varies; average height and weight differ from world to world; the ratio of trunk to leg to arm length shifts. Underneath the external differences, however, all Droyne share many traits.

Droyne and Chirpers have extensive psionic talents. Fortunately, the average Imperial citizen is not aware of this.



## EVOLUTION

The Droyne evolved from hexapedal omnivores – probably gatherers – on the lost world called Eskayloyt, a small planet with a dense atmosphere permitting the evolution of large flying creatures. Physiological and genetic evidence points to the proto-Droyne having been amphibious creatures, which moved to the forest floor and thence to the treetops. Some have speculated that the world had a high level of background radiation, causing a correspondingly high rate of mutation that became a racial trait. Other observers point out that existing Droyne communities also tend to reside on worlds with high background radiation, so the mutation is less a racial trait than a byproduct of the racial preference in habitat.

Mutation is the leading theory as to why the Droyne became a race that forms castes, because DNA analysis (and the Chirper nature) suggest the trait isn’t inherent. The Droyne subject their children (heretofore identical to Chirper youths) to a casting ceremony when they are 12 years old.

## Chirpers: The Dying Races – Should We Help?

**C**hirpers, a semi-intelligent minor race native to many worlds, are in fact populations of Droyne who have for some reason lost the ability to caste. They therefore engage in two-sex reproduction, though often not at population-maintaining rates.

A typical Chirper weighs about 55 lbs. and has opposable thumbs and vestigial wings. Some populations retain the ability to fly, though rarely for long distances.

Most Chirper worlds have very low tech levels and primitive societies, though the occasional Chirper planet, like prehistoric Zhdant (see *GURPS Traveller: Alien Races 1*) exhibits relatively large and complex social organizations.

Adult Chirpers are as smart as Droyne workers – but the Droyne treat them as lesser sentients. Chirpers do seem to have a much harder time maintaining a high-TL society, for reasons not entirely understood. Chirpers can learn Human speech, often developing an impressive vocabulary, although their conversation always retains the sharp, chirping tones for which they are named.

The Imperium recognizes Chirpers as intelligent, and accords them the normal protections of sophonts. Within the Imperium, Chirpers mostly live on reservations, and have little contact with Humans.

Most Chirper worlds seem to show a slow but steady decline in numbers. Imperial authorities are currently debating whether or not the Droyne should be invited to teach their less fortunate cousins how to caste.

### Adventure Seed:

#### *Teach a Chirper to Caste . . .*

Authorities on a world with a small Chirper population have resolved to bring in Droyne to share the secret of casting. The PCs may be sent to find teachers and bring them back, or hired by powerful interests (perhaps a megacorp that covets the Chirper land) to prevent it. Several NPCs should present different, but convincing, views of which course is morally correct.



# The Ancients

## An Ancient Timeline

-3,000,000	First Droyne intelligence
-500,000	Droyne cities
-490,000	Droyne reach early TL6
-470,000	Ritual warfare adopted
-350,000	Grandfather born
-300,000	Ancients thrive
-300,000	Civil war destroys Ancients

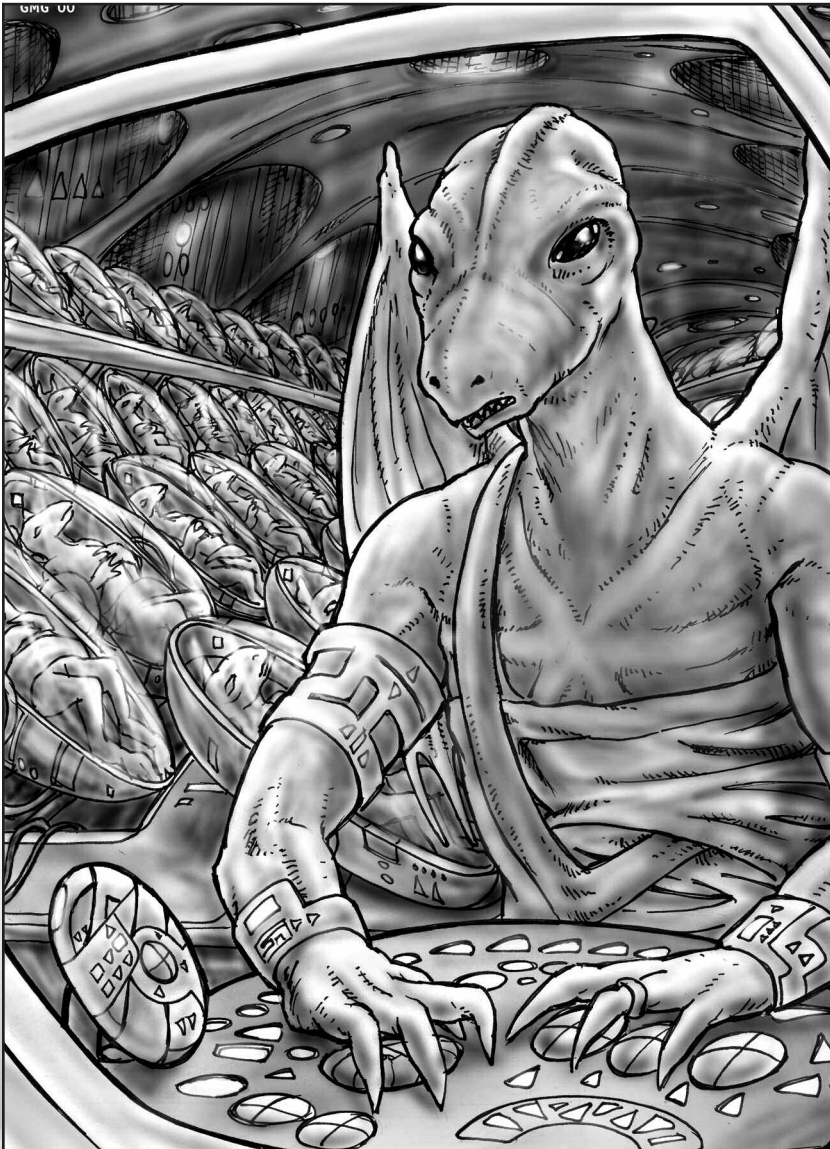
This chapter is intended for GMs only. Players who read it may end up spoiling the fun in their campaign.

The Ancients had a vibrant, starfaring civilization more than a quarter of a million years before any of the present major races discovered jump drive. Their technology was centuries, perhaps millennia, ahead of anything known in 1120. Yet, they were wiped out in a war of unimaginable violence. The common view is that this was a civil war, mainly because the alternative – a race sufficiently advanced and warlike to destroy the Ancients utterly at the height of their power – is too awful to contemplate.

Much information about the Ancients is classified; wherever their sites are found in charted space, the local military takes a keen interest, mainly because of the potential for a find which will revolutionize warfare or space travel. The data that does reach civilian researchers and the general public has been carefully filtered to remove anything of military value.

In classic *Traveller* canon, the Droyne are the Ancients, and the Final War was a civil war. This was one of the Big Secrets of the original game, although it is now common knowledge, and explicitly stated many times in the *GURPS Traveller* line. Some GMs prefer to break this link, and have the Ancients be another race, perhaps many other races; some keep the link, but have players who are unaware of it. For this reason, the Ancients are presented as a separate race in a separate chapter; the individual GM (as always) decides how much is true for his campaign, and may present as much or as little of this to his players as he wishes.

This work is written from a *Traveller* canon viewpoint, but it is structured so that the GM can easily make the Droyne a transplanted client race of the Ancients, like Humans and Vargr. In this case, the GM must assign one or more races to the Ancients' role, and may wish to present the Droyne as a red herring – the race everyone *thinks* is the Ancients. If the GM chooses this approach, he must provide an explanation as to why many features of Ancient sites – doors, furniture, perches, balconies, and so on – seem perfectly adapted to Droyne use, or be prepared to modify this facet of *Traveller* canon.



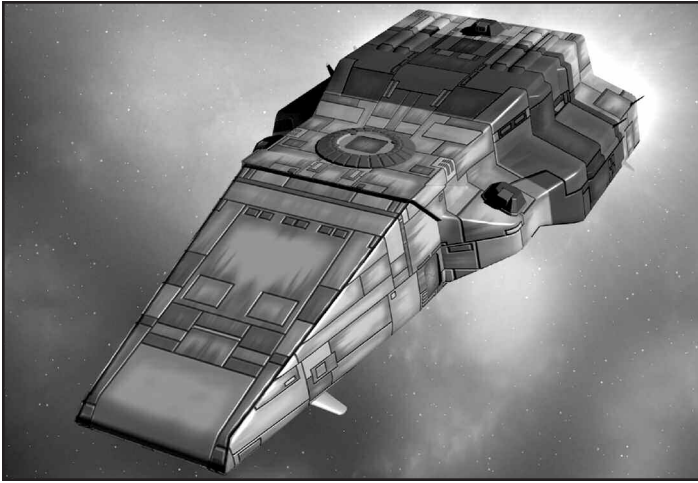
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