

# GURPS®

Fourth Edition

# FURRIES



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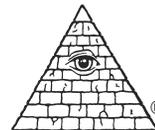
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# STEVE JACKSON GAMES

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# INTRODUCTION

*What animal do you want to be?*

People have been telling stories about animals since the dawn of history, and probably before. Almost always, those stories humanize their characters – providing them with motives and personalities, having them talk, often giving them technology or social organization. Some stories are told purely in words; some have illustrations; and some are told primarily visually – for example, as graphic novels or animated cartoons. *Furries* are characters defined by visual images of humanized animals, in a modern form of such stories.

Almost any genre of fiction or drama can have furry characters. Under the influence of classic cartoons, they're often associated with humor, even slapstick. But “funny animals” aren't always funny, any more than “comic books” are always comical. Humanized animals can appear in genres such as slice of life, mysteries, adventure stories, science fiction, and fantasy.

**GURPS** has been receptive to furry characters for a long time; the **GURPS** adaptation of the classic game *Bunnies & Burrows* was published in 1992. And as a universal roleplaying game, **GURPS** can support all of the different genres where furry characters appear. But until now, there hasn't been a general **GURPS** treatment of humanized animal characters.

**GURPS Furries** is that treatment. If you want to play a furry character in a **GURPS** campaign, or to run a furry campaign in **GURPS**, this book provides the tools. Chapter 1 surveys the furry artistic style and its sources, and suggests several possibilities for campaigns inspired by it. Chapter 2

provides game mechanics for character creation, martial arts, and equipment. Chapter 3 offers dozens of ready-to-play templates for furry races, from widely popular furry archetypes to some really unusual options. Find the humanized animal you want to play – or create it!

## RECOMMENDED BOOKS

At a minimum, you'll want the **GURPS Basic Set**, **GURPS Power-Ups 2: Perks**, and **GURPS Power-Ups 6: Quirks**. Racial design is informed by concepts from **GURPS Template Toolkit 2: Races**. Chapter 2 makes use of ideas and new traits discussed in **GURPS Martial Arts**. *Furry Superior* in Chapter 3 draws on **GURPS Powers**. If you want to design your own furry races, you can benefit from **GURPS Bio-Tech** and **GURPS Powers: Enhanced Senses**.

For a complementary topic – human beings with the souls or spirits of animals – see **GURPS Powers: Totems and Nature Spirits**.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

William H. Stoddard learned to read from *Walt Disney's Comics and Stories*. He went on to the *Jungle Books* and then to science fiction and anthropomorphic comics. He and his wife live in Lawrence, Kansas with their ginger tabby Macavity – and more books and art than their shelves and walls can hold. He started writing for Steve Jackson Games with **GURPS Steampunk** and has never looked back.

## ABOUT GURPS

Steve Jackson Games is committed to full support of **GURPS** players. We can be reached by email: [info@sjgames.com](mailto:info@sjgames.com). Our address is SJ Games, P.O. Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760. Resources include:

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*Pyramid* ([pyramid.sjgames.com](http://pyramid.sjgames.com)). For 10 years, our PDF magazine *Pyramid* included new rules and articles for **GURPS**, plus systemless locations, adventures, and more. The entire 122-issue library is available at Warehouse 23!

*Internet.* To discuss **GURPS** with our staff and your fellow gamers, visit our forums at [forums.sjgames.com](http://forums.sjgames.com). You can also join us at [facebook.com/sjgames](http://facebook.com/sjgames) or

[twitter.com/sjgames](http://twitter.com/sjgames). Share your brief campaign teasers with #GURPShook on Twitter. Or explore that hashtag for ideas to add to your own game! The **GURPS Furries** web page is [gurps.sjgames.com/furries](http://gurps.sjgames.com/furries).

*Store Finder* ([storefinder.sjgames.com](http://storefinder.sjgames.com)): Discover nearby places to buy **GURPS** items and other Steve Jackson Games products. Local shops are great places to play our games and meet fellow gamers!

*Bibliographies.* Bibliographies are a great resource for finding more of what you love! We've added them to many **GURPS** book web pages with links to help you find the next perfect element for your game.

*Errata.* Everyone makes mistakes, including us – but we do our best to fix our errors. Errata pages for **GURPS** releases are available at [sjgames.com/errata/gurps](http://sjgames.com/errata/gurps).

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the **GURPS Basic Set, Fourth Edition**. Page references that begin with B refer to that book, not this one.

# CHAPTER ONE

# GENRES

According to fannish historian Fred Patten, furry characters were recognized as a distinctive artistic category in 1980, during a discussion at the World Science Fiction Convention in Boston. Over the next decade, furry fandom emerged as a social group, leading to the first special-interest convention in 1989.

Fan publications were the first to offer furry material. Starting in the mid-1980s, furies showed up in comics that were self-published or from smaller publishers. Webcomics began appearing in the mid-1990s and have become a major venue for furry material.

Over roughly the same time span, a variety of roleplaying games devoted to furies have appeared, starting in 1983 with *Other Suns*, a science-fictional setting where most of the races visually resembled Earth mammals. Among these are games inspired by single series, original furry games, and furry sourcebooks for general-purpose games. *GURPS Furies* is such a sourcebook, applying *GURPS* character design and game mechanics to furry characters in a variety of settings.

## IS THIS A GENRE?

When we talk about “genre” in roleplaying games, it’s usually in the literary or cinematic sense. Science fiction, murder mysteries, and romantic comedy are examples of genres. Stories or games about furies aren’t a genre in this sense. Some genres, such as beast fable (p. 6), characteristically have furry characters. Furry characters can appear in almost any fictional genre, as a look at the *Bibliography* (pp. 35-37) illustrates.

In art criticism, “genre” means a type of visual subject matter, such as history paintings, seascapes, or still lifes – or animal paintings. “A type of subject matter” is exactly what furies are! Furry material is a genre of *visual art*. It can stand on its own, as drawings, paintings, or web pages; accompany stories as illustrations; or *tell* stories, through sequential images such as graphic novels or animation. Furry games are about characters who fit this artistic genre, no matter what genre of stories or drama they belong to.

## WHAT IS A FURRY?

Early in the emergence of furies and furry fandom, several different labels were used for what they were about.

- *Anthropomorphics* explicitly focused on a humanoid body plan. It also suggested a science-fictional approach, as in Steve Gallacci’s “Erma Felna, EDF” (the lead series in his

anthology comic *Albedo Anthropomorphics*, first published 1983), with biologically realistic characters or, more broadly, systematic worldbuilding.

- *Funny animals* evoked cartoon characters – in animation from the Walt Disney and Warner Brothers studios, and in comic strips such as Walt Kelly’s *Pogo*. It sometimes suggested a humorous or over-the-top approach without serious plots or settings.

- *Furry* was originally used in the phrase “furry fandom.” It came to refer both to the fans themselves and to the characters they were fans of. It’s more identified than the other two terms with a specific community, but it’s also a more generic term, compatible with everything from serious speculative fiction to cartoon humor.

### FURRIES AND OTHER ANIMALS

Furries are animals – but not all animals are furries. Some stories about anthropomorphized animals also have animals that *aren’t* anthropomorphic. Disney cartoons had both Mickey Mouse’s dog Pluto (an animal and a pet) and his friend Goofy (an anthropomorphic dog). C.S. Lewis’s *Narnia* series had both ordinary animals and animals given the gift of speech by Aslan.

The two usually are obviously different. Pluto is a quadruped; Goofy is a biped with hands. But even if they look alike, as in *Narnia*, they’re treated differently. For example, animals may be food (even for anthropomorphic animals!), but eating an anthropomorphic animal may be shown as horrifying, like cannibalism (see *The Question of Carnivory*, p. 10). When they interact, the anthropomorphics act as “people” and the ordinary animals as “animals.”

The word “furry,” which this book will mainly use, has wider and narrower senses. Narrowly defined, furries are animals with humanoid body plans, sapient minds, and motives and cultures comparable to those of humans. “Humanoid” is a subset of “tetrapod,” referring to land vertebrates, and furries are characteristically based on animals with four limbs, which can easily be anthropomorphized. Humans are also land animals, and most furries are based on land or amphibious creatures.

## SKILLS

Furry races have the standard two options for skills. A *racially learned skill* costs however many points it takes to buy the skill at a certain level relative to its controlling attribute. If the skill is purely instinctive, and can't be improved by learning, the race has Fixed Skill as a feature (a type of taboo trait). If it's a universal base level that can be improved, the race lacks this feature. A *racial skill bonus* to one skill gives +1 per level, to a maximum of +3, at a cost of 2 points/level – but doesn't grant the skill itself; if a character hasn't spent any points on the skill, apply the bonus to the default, if the skill has one.

Some races (for example, mephitids, pp. 26-27) have a new specialty of an existing skill.

### Innate Attack

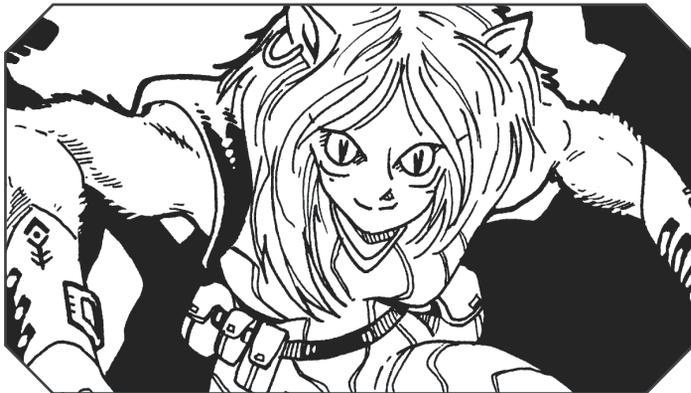
see p. B201

*Spray*: Similar to Breath, but the attack is emitted at the rear of your body – often under your tail, if you have one.

## TECHNIQUES

A further option is a *racially learned technique*. This represents a particular race focusing on a specific use of one skill; that action is performed at a reduced penalty or a natural bonus. In combat, furry races may have such techniques for *unarmed* attacks using the race's natural weapons, but not for weapon attacks.

*Example*: A race of pouncing carnivores might have Neck Snap +4, costing 5 points. Members of the race can make an unmodified ST roll to snap their prey's neck after grabbing it with both hands – or with teeth, if the race is good at biting. This would be written as Neck Snap (H) ST [5].



## FEATURES

Features are descriptive traits worth 0 points that help define a race. A feature doesn't make a race more or less capable overall, but defines more precisely what it looks like or how it does things.

*Born Biter*: A leveled feature. You have elongated jaws that give you +1 to +3 SM for biting (see *Mouth*, p. 16). The same bonus applies to attacks that target your face. (In a campaign that uses the added hit locations in *GURPS Martial*

## Signature Traits

In older stories, animals and other creatures are often shown as having *signature traits*: special physical, mental, or moral qualities that set them apart from other species – often reflected in proverbs. These aren't necessarily real biological traits; they reflect how humans see the animal. An elephant might have Eidetic Memory, or a cat might have Jealousy. Furry races are sometimes imagined with such traits – though not always the traditional ones for the species they're based on; for example, cartoon skunks such as Ma'm'selle Hepzibah and Pepé Le Pew are shown as French and romantic (see *Mephitid*, pp. 26-27). The races in this supplement often have such traits.

*Arts*, use the slightly different version of Born Biter on p. 115 of that book.)

*Digitigrade*: You walk and run on your toes rather than on the soles of your feet. Automatically included in Hooves.

*Four-Fingered*: The hallmark of many cartoon characters – your hands have only four fingers.

*Good and Bad Angel*: When you're in inner conflict, it manifests as two little spirits hovering to either side of you, encouraging you to take the "good" or "bad" option. This feature most often comes up when you're about to make a self-control roll; usually the "good" spirit will argue for self-control and the "bad" one against it, but this can be reversed for traits such as Honesty or Compulsive Generosity. This trait may accompany Split Personality (for some examples, see *Exotics*, pp. 29-31). The player, the GM, or even two other players can offer arguments for the two sides. This feature is especially suitable for funny animals and other "cartoon" characters.

*Gracile*: A leveled feature. Gracile 1 adds 5% to average height for a character's ST; Gracile 2 adds 10%. Weight is unchanged.

*Potential Form*: You have another form – but not an Alternate Form, because you can't revert; the change to the additional form is irreversible. The change may be a matter of time, or triggered by environmental conditions favorable to the new form, general stress (as from injury that requires a HT roll to avoid death), or injury that makes the old form nonfunctional (in this case, take Extra Life 1 as well). Each form has its own template. If the template for the new form has a higher point cost, Potential Form is an advantage whose cost is half the difference, rounded up; the balance must be paid when the change occurs.

*Robust*: A leveled feature. Robust 1 subtracts 5% from average height for a character's ST; Robust 2 subtracts 10%. Weight is unchanged.

*Sign Language*: You use sign language at Native level in place of a spoken language (p. B25).

*Tail*: You have a normal animal tail without special functions such as manipulation or striking; these can be bought separately as advantages. It can be targeted at -3. For effects of attacks on the tail, see p. B553.

*Zoomorph (Species)*: A feature found in classic "funny animals" (pp. 33-34). You're visually recognizable as an animal of some type – but it's a purely cosmetic trait. Any special abilities you possess have to be bought separately.

## Tek-Rat

-50 points

Created by advanced biotechnology (TL10) from human and several animal genomes and not subject to Stress Atavism, this artificially created race was engineered to provide maintenance services in settings such as spacecraft, while consuming minimal life support. Your shape is humanoid, but you have a rodent-like face, a marsupial pouch that can hold offspring or tools (up to 10 ounces), and a prehensile tail. You can squeeze yourself down to SM -3, giving you +1 to Escape rolls to fit through a narrow space. You have an obsessive streak, getting totally focused on whatever long task you're working on, for +1 to effective skill – but -3 to notice anything except the task.

**Attribute Modifiers:** ST-6 [-60]; DX+1 [20]; IQ-1 [-20].

**Secondary Characteristic Modifiers:** SM -2; HP+1 [2].

**Advantages:** 3D Spatial Sense [10]; Acute Hearing 1 [2]; Acute Taste and Smell 1 [2]; Payload 2 [2]; Prehensile Tail [10]; Sharp Teeth [1].

**Perks:** Compact Frame [1]; Fur [1]; No Degeneration in Zero-G [1]; Pressure-Tolerant Lungs (Thin) [1].

**Disadvantages:** Disturbing Voice [-10]; Increased Consumption 1 [-10]; Unnatural Features 2 [-2].

**Quirks:** Attentive [-1].

### Source Notes

This version of the Tek-Rat is slightly modified from **GURPS Bio-Tech**, largely to better fit the description given there. New traits are Attentive, Compact Frame, Disturbing Voice, No Degeneration in Zero-G, and Pressure-Tolerant Lungs (Thin).

# A DIVERSITY OF CREATURES

Mainstream furry material is about *anthropomorphic* characters: animals with humanoid body plans and humanlike minds. Templates for many such races are presented here. These versions are cinematic furries: not only human-shaped, but also capable of doing nearly everything humans can do, whether or not this is anatomically realistic. Appearance, minor functional differences, and aspects of temperament and motivation represent their “animal” traits. The templates use the cinematic rules for scale (p. 11).

Races derived from exclusively carnivorous or herbivorous animals have some form of Restricted Diet. If a campaign setting has all its furry races eating human food (*The Question of Carnivory*, p. 10), omit Restricted Diet from the templates.

## Accipiter

0 points

Could represent many different birds of prey, such as eagles, hawks, and kites, but this example is based on the red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*). You look like a hawk, with feathers, wings, a tail, and a beak, but you use your wings for manipulation (perhaps with “feather fingers”) rather than for flight. You don't grasp things with your feet, though you can use their claws to kick for cutting damage. You're a classic example of having “the right stuff”: not easily frightened, self-assured, and quick to make up your mind.

Some accipiters function more like actual birds of prey. Several added traits help them do this. Good Grip, Grasping Feet, and Sure-Footed (Tree branches) let them use their feet to hold things. Flight (Cannot Hover, -15%; Temporary Disadvantage, No Fine Manipulators, -30%; Winged, -25%) lets them take to the sky with air Move 10. Telescopic Vision 2 grants the ability to observe targets on the ground from a height. An added DX+1 is worth considering, as it improves maneuverability and Basic Speed, raising air Move to 11.

**Attribute Modifiers:** ST-3 [-30]; DX+1 [20].

**Advantages:** Acute Vision 2 [4]; Damage Resistance 1 (Flexible, -20%) [4]; Fearlessness 2 [4]; Sharp Beak [1]; Sharp Claws [5]; Temperature Tolerance 1 (Cold) [1].

**Perks:** Feathers [1]; Penetrating Voice [1]; Robust Vision [1].

**Disadvantages:** Restricted Diet (Fresh Meat) [-10].

**Quirks:** Confident [-1]; Decisive [-1].

**Features:** Gracile 2; Tail.

## Big Cat

27 points

Several closely related large catlike species (genus *Panthera*) are similar enough to share a basic template. Big cats are carnivores who function well at night.

Different types of big cat each have their own set of traits (see below), though they have some measure of interfertility. The options can be treated as analogs of human races or cultures.

**Attribute Modifiers:** DX+1 [20].

**Secondary Characteristic Modifiers:** Per+1 [5].

**Advantages:** Night Vision 3 [3]; Sharp Claws (Switchable, +10%) [6]; Sharp Teeth [1]; Temperature Tolerance 1 (Cold) [1].

**Perks:** Deep Sleeper [1]; Fur [1].

**Disadvantages:** Restricted Diet (Fresh Meat) [-10].

**Quirks:** Attentive [-1].

**Features:** Digitigrade; Tail.

## Jag

+19 points

Based on the jaguar (*Panthera onca*). You're short, massively built, and able to endure discomfort. You'll often be the exotic figure in a group.

To take advantage of their powerful jaws, jags may take the Biting Mastery perk and Karate skill.

**Attribute Modifiers:** ST+1 [10].

**Advantages:** Lifting ST 1 [3]; Striking ST 2 (One Attack Only, Bite, -60%) [4].

**Perks:** Limited Camouflage (Jungle) [1]; Patience of Job [1].

**Features:** Robust 1.

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