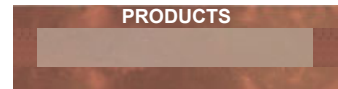


Home > Games > Magic > Magicthegathering.com > Columns



# Beast Cubed

Jay Moldenhauer-Salazar  
House of Cards  
Thursday, November 21, 2002



PRO TOUR-VALENCIA

Until recently, I actually wasn't conscious of Beast as a creature type. After all, there's no Lord for Beasts like **Goblin King** is to Goblins, and no card gave particular benefits for using Beasts over other creature types. To me, Beast was just a generic name given to a critter that looked burly and ran on four or more legs.

Then came *Onslaught*. Ravenous Baloth, Aether Charge, Wirewood Savage, Snarling Undorak, Shaleskin Bruiser, Contested Cliffs, Vitality Charm, Krosan Groundshaker, Spurred Wolverine, and Thunder of Hooves charged onto my dining room table and planted their beastly fists on their beastly hips. Now, like a lot of people, I find it pretty hard to ignore Beasts as a genus (or phylum, or class, or whatever it is that **Magic** creature types are).



What I hadn't realized is that a lot of my favorite creatures in previous expansions are, in fact, Beasts. I hope you'll indulge me in a day of nostalgia as I look back at ten Beasts that hold a special place in my heart. They may not be the most *powerful* Beasts \*cough\*Blastoderm\*cough\*Spiritmonger\*cough\* but they're sure fun to build decks around . . .

## 10. Fylamarid

Fylamarid always struck me as an amazingly freakish creature. It's a flying blue antiblue-Beast that can turn creatures blue for blue mana. Freaky.

It may be obvious, but Fylamarid just screams to have a deck built around it in which having blue creatures is a detriment to your opponent and/or a benefit to you. **Circle of Protection: Blue**, along with protection from blue creatures like **Voice of Reason** and **Bloated Toad**, come to mind as possible components of the deck. **Possessed Aven** and **Llawan**, **Cephalid Empress** are perfectly appropriate, too. Or for a rareless "lite" deck try the following:

**The Blue Zone Lite!**  
Extended-legal Fylamarid deck

Main Deck 60 cards		
4 <b>Crosis's Catacombs</b>	4 <b>Fylamarid</b>	4 <b>Curiosity</b>
13 <b>Island</b>	4 <b>Guma</b>	3 <b>Fact or Fiction</b>
5 <b>Mountain</b>	4 <b>Metathran Transport</b>	4 <b>Fire/Ice</b>
22 lands	4 <b>Razorfin Hunter</b>	4 <b>Parch</b>
	3 <b>Slingshot Goblin</b>	4 <b>Seal of Removal</b>
	19 creatures	19 other spells

I also think it's fun to use **Alter Reality** on Fylamarid to turn creatures red to benefit from **Absolute Law** or black to be punished by **Northern Paladin**. Oh the possibilities!

Final Wrap-up  
[Top 8 Video Archives](#)



## 9. Crater Hellion


Nothing says BOOM! quite like **Crater Hellion**. This is probably the most tournament-used Beast on this list (with the possible exception of #2), but I think most casual groups have giggled with glee when **Crater Hellion** drops onto the table. With **Aether Charge**, **Crater Hellion** might as well be named "Four to you! And you! And you! And you over there!" Or at least that's what I like to call him.

There's nothing particularly tricky about building a deck around **Crater Hellion**, unless you decide to use it with something like **Nature's Revolt**. Oh sure, paying the echo will be difficult when you've blown up all the land on the table, but if you happen to have another creature whose toughness is greater than 4 . . . who cares?

## 8. Glowing Anemone

For a very long time, I lugged a monoblue deck around with me that used **Glowing Anemone**, **Ankh of Mishra**, **Viseling**, **Iron Maiden**, and a lot of land-targeting bounce like **Boomerang** and **Hoodwink**. What was great about the Anemone was that it a) provided defense against cheap little creatures, and b) let me say "anemone," which is right behind "discombobulate" and "waffle" as my favorite word to say over and over.

If I were going to recreate the deck today, it might look something like this. And don't forget, if your opponent is using the new *Onslaught* fetch lands, **Ankh of Mishra** hits twice as hard.

Bouncy-Doodle-Do			
Casual Glowing Anemone deck 			
<b>Main Deck</b> 60 cards			
16 <b>Island</b>	4 <b>Aven Fogbringer</b>	4 <b>Ankh of Mishra</b>	
4 <b>Lonely Sandbar</b>	4 <b>Glowing Anemone</b>	4 <b>Boomerang</b>	
<hr/>			
20 lands	8 creatures	2 <b>Capsize</b>	
		4 <b>Chain of Vapor</b>	
		2 <b>Churning Eddy</b>	
		4 <b>Hoodwink</b>	
		4 <b>Iron Maiden</b>	
		4 <b>Sapphire Medallion</b>	
		4 <b>Snap</b>	
		<hr/>	
		32 other spells	

## 7. Lumbering Satyr

If playing with **Alter Reality** and **Fylamarid** is fun, playing with **Crystal Spray** (or **Whim of Volrath**) and **Lumbering Satyr** is equally fun. Having a bunch of green, unblockable fatties on the table is great. When you get to draw a card (thanks to **Wirewood Savage**) or sacrifice your Satyr at opportune times for life (thanks to **Ravenous Baloth**), things start to get a little ridiculous.

I should point out that it's relatively easy to make a monogreen Extended deck using **Lumbering Satyr** and not a single forest. Sort of silly, as giving an opponent forestwalk is irrelevant if they're already dead. But what the heck, it sounds like fun.

12 x 2GG			
Extended-legal Lumbering Satyr deck 			
<b>Main Deck</b> 60 cards			
3 <b>Centaur Garden</b>	4 <b>Blastoderm</b>	2 <b>Beast Attack</b>	
2 <b>Contested Cliffs</b>	4 <b>Deepwood Elder</b>	2 <b>Naturalize</b>	
1 <b>Gaea's Cradle</b>	4 <b>Leery Fogbeast</b>	<hr/>	
4 <b>Hickory Woodlot</b>	4 <b>Llanowar Elves</b>	4 other spells	
4 <b>Karplusan Forest</b>	4 <b>Lumbering Satyr</b>		
1 <b>Reflecting Pool</b>	4 <b>Ravenous Baloth</b>		
2 <b>Rith's Grove</b>	4 <b>Werebear</b>		
3 <b>Tranquil Thicket</b>	4 <b>Wirewood Savage</b>		
3 <b>Treetop Village</b>	<hr/>		
1 <b>Yavimaya Hollow</b>	32 creatures		
<hr/>			
24 lands			

## 6. Cavern Harpy

To my mind, **Cavern Harpy** is the least beastly of the Beasts. It seems like **Cavern Harpy** should at least be a "Bird Beast," which would differentiate it from those hulking, nonflying critters (and would add a lot of interesting possibilities to Bird decks). But, alas, at the time of *Planeshift*, R&D wasn't comfortable with multiple creature types. As a result, **Cavern Harpy** is the only blue-black Beast and also one of the smallest Beasts around (though we can thank **Sacred Prey** for that particular distinction).

Why is **Cavern Harpy** cool? Mostly because of all the fun you can have with comes-into-play creature abilities like **Ravenous Rats**, **Man-o'-War**, and **Nekrataal**. Also, think about the combination of **Wirewood Savage** and **Cavern Harpy** for a moment. Got it? Now add **Aluren**. Ooooooh . . . You're ready for the Pro Tour!


## 5. Fungal Shambler

I really want to use **Fungal Shambler** in a deck, but that darned **Flametongue Kavu** makes him almost worthless (I still yearn for Shambler to have 5 toughness instead of 4, but the number is always the same when I look at it). If your group of friends tends to think of ubiquitous cards like **Flametongue Kavu** as boring or passé, you might want to try showing up to a night of **Magic** with something along these lines . . .

The Shambler		
Extended-legal Fungal Shambler deck		
<b>Main Deck</b> 60 cards		
12 Forest	4 Birds of Paradise	1 Aether Mutation
2 Island	3 Crypt Angel	4 Harrow
2 Swamp	4 Fungal Shambler	4 Recoil
4 Llanowar Wastes	4 Jungle Barrier	4 Repulse
4 Yavimaya Hollow	4 Krosan Tusker	13 other spells
24 lands	4 Nightscape Familiar	
	23 creatures	

. . . and invite me, because your playgroup sounds right up my alley!

## 4. Krosan Beast

**Krosan Beast** is a Squirrel Beast. It can also be 8/8 for . 'Nuff said.


## 3. Infernal Spawn of Evil , Lexivore , and Spark Fiend

If anyone plays with *Unglued* cards, they may realize the hilarious genius of its three Beasts. I had an impossible time picking a favorite from among **Infernal Spawn of Evil**, **Lexivore**, and **Spark Fiend** so I included all of them in this paragraph. **Infernal Spawn of Evil** makes me laugh every time I read it (IT'S COMING!!!), and **Spark Fiend** always takes me about 5 minutes to relearn what it actually *does*.

For a while, I tried to find as many creatures with little or no text in their text box in order to make a **Lexivore** deck. **Crusade** was always a nice addition, as its text is so minimalist. Then it occurred to me that *not* using permanents would be another way to go. Heck, after an **Armageddon** you can even lock an opponent with **Lexivore**. This deck strikes me as unnecessarily mean for a casual deck, but I would love it if it worked just once . . .

Lexi-Lock		
Casual Lexivore deck		
<b>Main Deck</b> 60 cards		
13 Island	4 Lexivore	4 Accumulated Knowledge
4 Plains	4 creatures	3 Armageddon
4 Tundra		4 Counterspell
21 lands		1 Dismantling Blow
		3 Disrupt
		3 Infiltrate
		3 Miscalculation
		4 Opt
		4 Repulse
		1 Stand/Deliver
		4 Swords to Plowshares
		1 Touch of Invisibility
		35 other spells

## 2. Hunted Wumpus

**Hunted Wumpus**, like **Crater Hellion**, is one of those unusual cards that all types of players love. That 6/6 body, along with its  cost, makes Timmy and Spike drool, while Johnny loves the show-and-tell aspect. Factor in that it's a Wumpus, and you're set for fun times.

I've made green-black Wumpus decks that load up on discard and creature elimination. I've used green-blue Wumpus decks that load up on creature-stealing cards like **Treachery** and **Legacy's Allure**. I have used monogreen Wumpus decks with **Defense of the Heart**. I even used a green-white Wumpus deck in Extended tournaments for a while. Basically, I'm a big **Hunted Wumpus** fan.

## 1. Jackalope Herd

... but not quite as big a fan as I am of **Jackalope Herd**.

True story: When my wife and I moved from Michigan to the San Francisco Bay area, we drove two different vehicles. Sarah got the moving van and the big dog, while I got the Honda Civic and the little dog. We communicated via walkie-talkies to coordinate meals and restroom stops, all the while having fun with "breaker breaker that's a ten-four Charlie" talk. Anyway, with all due respect to Midwesterners, the middle of the United States has some incredibly boring scenery, so I needed something to keep me awake. I bought a pack of **Exodus** on the drive, and decided that each day I would pick a few cards and ruminate on deck possibilities using that card (no, I haven't changed much).

I never got past my first common—**Jackalope Herd**. I spent the *entire drive* with a **Jackalope Herd** taped to my steering wheel. I even learned—and don't try this at home kiddies—to write on a pad of paper while driving, making somewhere in the neighborhood of a dozen Jackalope decks.

Alas, none of my **Jackalope Herd** decks ever won me a tournament. But I always loved the near-creatureless, kind of controllish green-red deck that used a horde of instants. The idea was that anyone trying to kill my Herd would instead find it bounced to my hand, ready to play again. It made for some fun combat tricks too. Here is how I might try a similar deck today, and I think it benefits a lot from **Onslaught**:



Jackalope		Main Deck	
Extended-legal Jackalope Herd deck		60 cards	
6 Forest	4 Anger	2 Beast Attack	
6 Mountain	4 Jackalope Herd	4 Chain of Plasma	
1 Plains	4 Krosan Tusker	3 Eladamri's Call	
4 Karplusan Forest	4 Wild Mongrel	4 Naturalize	
2 Rith's Grove	16 creatures	2 Rith's Charm	
2 Shivan Oasis		4 Solar Blast	
21 lands		4 Starstorm	
		23 other spells	

How much do I love Beasts? Enough to have a list of Honorable Mentions. Who makes a Top 10 list with 10 Honorable Mentions? I never said my middle name's "Decisive."

- **Grollub's** name is too entertaining not to mention.
- **Scragnoth** reminds me of simpler times—when I hated blue.
- **Pallimud** is one of my favorite "I dare you!" creatures.
- **Skyshroud Behemoth** lumbers in as the biggest Beast, which is cool.
- **Kezzerdrix** is a killer bunny.
- I wish I knew how to pronounce **Scalpelexis**.
- **Tephraderm** seems like it holds such terrific possibilities.
- **Krakilin** will always have a home in my ridiculous green-mana decks.
- **Krosan Tusker** pops up in every single deck I make these days.
- And, finally, **Midsummer Revel** isn't a Beast, but it makes them. A lot of them, if I have anything to say about it.

Did you wonder about the article title? For some reason, I had the overwhelming urge to end this article by saying "Beast Beast Beast!"

Beast Beast Beast!

Jay may be reached at [houseofcards@wizards.com](mailto:houseofcards@wizards.com).



[Discuss](#) on the message boards



[Respond](#) via email



[Jay Moldenhauer-Salazar](#) archive

---

[About Us](#) | [Jobs](#) | [New to the Game?](#) | [Inside Wizards](#) | [Find a Store](#) | [Press](#) | [Help](#) | [Sitemap](#)

---

© 1995-2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc., a subsidiary of Hasbro, Inc. All Rights Reserved.  
[Terms of Use](#) - [Privacy Statement](#)

