

Ghrups

Description: basically, a mini-shoggoth (8 lbs); only it glows faintly blue, and doesn't try to eat you. Ghrups absolutely **look** slimy, but they're not. They smell like various metal ores; Dwarves at least find Ghrup-scent pleasant and comfortable. The species generally makes no sounds on its own.

Ghrups are what you get when you take a slime mold that lives in caves and expose it to High Magic for a while. The result is a slime mold that's amorphous, boneless, active, mobile, and mildly curious. Ghrups generally eat plant matter, lichens and fungi, and whatever insects they can catch, by a variety of methods. Some Ghrups spread themselves out into a thin film and wait for prey that way; other Ghrups construct long tongues out of their bodies to target flying insects, or turn themselves into intricate webs. Food is absorbed through the 'skin' and dissolved, in classic gelatinous fashion. Inorganic residue is usually excreted every few days.

Ghrups last about twenty to thirty years in the wild, and up to a century when tended. They theoretically reproduce by budding, but Dwarves have discovered that if you take

samples from two different Ghrups and mix them together, the result can grow into a Ghrup that takes traits from both 'parents.' Dwarvish Ghrup 'breeds' are merely the most successful combinations.

Oh, yes, the Dwarves breed them. Interestingly, Ghrups are easily domesticable. Humans and demi-humans are perfectly safe around them, as are most larger animals (a Ghrup can and will tackle rats). The species is about as intelligent as a dog, and can be easily trained to stay out of food supplies and whatnot; they're absolutely useless in combat, but as companions they're surprisingly congenial. At least, that's what the Dwarves say; they've been 'breeding' Ghrups for as long as the Dwarves have been keeping records. Other humanoid species have their own opinions, but it is grudgingly conceded that Ghrups are excellent at keeping vermin populations down.

Very grudgingly conceded, though. Most non-Dwarves simply don't understand the appeal.

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