

From Shore to Abyss

An Introduction to the Ti-Kop

I am Bluefin, singer of distant songs and keeper of our family history. I have lived amongst humans and I have travelled to the lightless depths.

W e are the people of the sea, at home on land and underwater. We are free within our endless realm, kept safe from hazards above and below.

W e can be wanderers or we can build homes and stay put. We can live on shore or we can stay in our caves beneath the sea. We trade where we can, acting as middlemen between the land-dwellers and the other sea-dwellers who live too deep or hate the air and so cannot trade. We fight to defend ourselves, although often it is easier to move away if things become difficult. Only our sacred breeding beaches are worth struggling for.

The Ti-Kop are an aquatic humanoid race found beneath the sea and along the shores of the World of Conclave, mostly concentrated in the Southern Sea area. Ti-Kop is a transliteration of their name for their species (which translates as The People) from their clicking, popping language. Humans also refer to them as 'gloppies' in mimicry (perhaps mockery) of the sound of their speech. There are many varieties of ti-kop and, unlike humans and tlixu, these varieties are distinct sub-species rather than divisions based on superficial differences.

Personality: Ti-Kop are generally quite free-wheeling and easy going. They have little sense of responsibility compared to many races and are fairly slow to anger. This is not to say that individual ti-kop do not take duties seriously, but a ti-kop is likely to let set-backs and worries simply wash over him.

Physical Description: Ti-Kop are roughly proportioned like a slender human. Their skin, which is hairless and quite tough and scaly, ranges in tone from a deep mottled purple to light green-blue. Their fingers and toes are webbed, and fin-like extrusions extend from their shoulders to elbows and down their sides from mid-torso to knees. The males have short crest-like protrusions from forehead down to mid-back, and that is the only visible difference between the sexes as genitals are kept inside the body except when mating. Their eyes (which are usually a darker shade of their skin tone with no whites) have no lids, they have no noses, their mouths are small rounded orifices and they have no external ears. Their necks are nearly as broad as their heads, with three gill-slits extending across their throats, and they use these organs to smell as well as breath.

They don't wear clothing but often sport one or two bandoleers with straps and pouches for equipment and goods. They like to decorate themselves by piercing scales with jewellery

Relations: Ti-Kop often work closely with fishermen and merchants, and trade a number of goods like pearls, shellfish seaweed and 'seabone' (see below). The goods that they particularly seek to trade from humans are gold and jewels for their body decoration, manufactured metal items and privacy; for the ti-kop return to secluded beaches for their annual mating contests. They make valuable scouts for navies as they are capable of swimming long distances without stopping and some even work as shipwrights

Alignment: Because of their lack of organised culture ti-kop are often Chaotic, but just as many are Neutral because they have little interest in rigorously supporting a cause.

Ti-kop Lands: Ti-Kop live along the shoreline. They have a fairly primitive society, organised at the village level, where the elders form an informal council with the eldest as spokesperson. They don't consider themselves to be a nation; indeed many groups pay taxes to, and are considered citizens of, the local land-based group (for example, Llaza). They live in caves and holes that are either fully or partially underwater. Some of these are artificially created

Religion: Ti-Kop have a vague affinity for water spirits but no organised religion. Many ti-kop who live amongst other races will adopt local religions or philosophies.

Classes: Ti-Kop have little time to adopt the cause of a paladin, nor to pursue the training of a monk or a wizard but otherwise are likely to follow

any path. They are quite often rangers, either hunting animals (sharks in particular) or evil aquatic races or following the environmental ranger alternative.

Language: Ti-Kop communicate amongst themselves with clicks, whistles and pops, a language known as T'k (more commonly Tik or even Gloppyspeak) These sounds are mostly incomprehensible to humans although some who live and work closely with them can understand a few simple words. Ti-Kop can usually understand the local human tongue but speak with a distinctive clicking 'accent'. The ti-kop also use a sign language for communicating with other ti-kop species and with land-dwellers.

Names: Ti-Kop names are given within the first few weeks of hatching, as individual personalities begin to develop. They are descriptive (often translated into the local land-dweller language) and make no distinction based upon gender.

Ti-kop personal names (translated): Bluestorm, Sharkmind, Happysong, Greencalm, Yellowfin, Sandwalker.

Adventurers: Ti-Kop generally dislike leaving the water but a rare member of the race will seek adventure out of curiosity. Other ti-kop adventurers may have been driven out of their home by slavers or the hostile actions of land dwellers.

Ti-Kop Racial Traits

- +2 Con, -2 Int. Ti-Kop are surprisingly tough for their slight build, but they are not as intellectually developed as other races.
- Ti-Kop base speed is 30 feet. They have a swim speed of 30 ft.
- **Medium:** As medium-sized creatures ti-kop gain no special bonuses or penalties based upon their size.
- **Aquatic:** Ti-Kop are able to breathe underwater comfortably. They gain a +8 racial bonus to Swim checks and may move through water at their base speed without making a Swim check. They must make a check to perform a special manoeuvre and may always Take 10, even when rushed or threatened. A ti-kop may use the run action whilst swimming provided it swims in a straight line.
- **Amphibious:** Ti-Kop are able to breathe air and can survive out of water indefinitely..
- **Noxious Secretions:** Ti-Kop are able to produce a noxious secretion from glands in their wrists, once per day. The purpose of this is to make them unpalatable to predators. If a ti-kop is swallowed whole it may use these secretions to cause the swallowing creature to regurgitate it. The swallowing creature must make a Fortitude save of DC 10 + the ti-kop's character level + Con modifier or immediately regurgitate the character.

These secretions can also be used to make a touch attack which, if successful causes the

target to make the same saving throw as above or suffer distracting skin irritation for 1 round (treat as *sickened*).

- **Low Light Vision.**
- Ti-Kop are able to inflate their bodies and raise their crests in a display of aggression. They gain a +2 racial bonus to Intimidate checks.
- **Automatic Languages:** Tik and Common. In the World of Conclave, replace Common with Low Imperial.
- **Bonus Languages:** Aquan, Ti-Kop Sign Language, Other Aquatic Race (at GM's option).

Typical skills

The following are culturally typical Craft and Perform skills that ti-kop might know, as well as common weaponry used. Ti-Kop characters are not restricted to these lists.

Craft/Profession skills: Body piercing, Fishing, Pearl-gathering, Ropemaking, Sailing, Seabone/shell carving, Seaweed farming, Seaweed weaving, Shellfish farming

Perform skills: Dance, Farsinging (see below), Sing, Storytelling.

Weaponry: Dagger, Dart gun, Harpoon, Net, Wrestling.

Table: Random Starting Ages

	Adulthood	Barbarian Rogue Sorcerer	Bard Fighter Paladin Ranger	Cleric Druid Monk Shaman Wizard
Ti-kop	16 years	+1d4	+1d6	+2d6

Table: Aging Effects

	Middle Age	Old	Venerable	Maximum Age
Ti-kop	50 years	80 years	100 years	+3d20 years

Table: Random Height and Weight

	Base Height	Height Modifier	Base Weight	Weight Modifier
Ti-kop, male	4'8"	+2d6	90 lb.	× (2d6) lb.
Ti-kop, female	4'6"	+2d6	85 lb.	× (2d6) lb.

Ti-Kop Weaponry

The ti-kop use a variety of weapons adapted for underwater use. The most common item is a dagger carried strapped to the thigh. Ti-kop also use the harpoon (treat as a javelin) and have developed a small crossbow-like weapon that fires coral or seabone darts. Treat these as light and hand crossbows, depending on the size. Nets are commonly used, and the favoured unarmed style of the ti-kop is wrestling.

Seabone

Seabone is a substance used by the ti-kop albeit manufactured by a different submarine species. It is magically solidified and woven sea water. Seabone can be made into rigid and flexible items and keeps an edge – in effect anything from a net to a greataxe may be created using this wondrous substance. A seabone item requires daily immersion in sea water else it dissolves irreversibly. Seabone items add their normal encumbrance penalty to Swim checks, rather than double as is normally the case. Seabone items cost double the listed price.

Farsinging

Farsinging is a Perform skill used by some ti-kop to transmit messages in the ti-kop language over great distances. It can only be used underwater, and requires a certain level of skill to modulate the pitch so as to allow maximum transmission. It broadcasts in all directions at once and is not suitable for private messages. Anyone capable of understanding the Tik can understand a farsung message.

The farsinging character makes a Perform (Farsinging) check, and the maximum radius distance that the message travels is equal to the result of the skill check times 10 miles. For example, a Bluefin rolls a Perform (Farsinging) result of 15, thus carrying his message over an area of 150 miles radius. The character must be able to speak the Tik in order to use this skill.

Ti-Kop Feats

Several feats are available to ti-kop characters:

Poisonous Secretions

Your wrist glands produce a more potent secretion than normal.

Prerequisite: Ti-Kop

Benefit: The ti-kop's wrist gland secretions produce a poison that causes 1D3 primary Dex damage and 1 point of secondary Dex damage. This is in addition to the sickening effect of the standard secretions. If a creature saves against the DC of the secretions, it suffers neither effect. The poison can be effective as both a touch attack and against swallowing creatures.

Bioluminescence

You are able to produce a faint light from your body. All ti-kop have a vestigial ability to do so, but it requires practise to produce any useful and visible effect.

Prerequisite: Ti-Kop

Benefit: The purple-green light produced illuminates the same area as a torch (bright illumination to 20 ft., shadowy illumination to 40 ft.), but has the downside that the luminescent character does not gain any benefit of cover from darkness. However, since the luminescence is integral to the character, she can gain the benefits of *blur*, *displacement*, *invisibility* and similar effects. This ability can be turned on and off at will.

Ti-Kop Sub-Species

The species of ti-kop described above form probably the largest sub-group to interact with land-dwellers, and are often (if erroneously) known as True Gloppies by humans. Other sub-species of ti-kop exist. Unlike the superficial differences of appearance and culture that the different types of human and tlixu display, these ti-kop sub-groups are separate enough that they are unable to interbreed (although they interact quite freely).

K'keer (Those Who Drift)

Also known as Wild Gloppies by humankind, the K'keer are a nomadic culture. They herd a species of giant sea slug, that they use for food and also as protection for their eggs. The sea slugs have poisonous tendrils, but the K'keer are immune to this poison. They lay their eggs onto the body of the sea slugs, hidden amongst the tendrils. Not only do the poisonous tendrils deter predators, but the eggs derive nourishment from the sea slug. The sea slugs have an almost religious significance to the K'keer. K'keer appear similar to ti-kop except that their crests tend to be slightly larger, and their colouration includes red extremities.

Additional traits:

Poison Tolerance: K'keer are immune to the poison of the giant sea slug. They gain a +2 racial bonus on saves against all other forms of poison

R'ee'k'kop (Those who Shun the Light)

These beings are sometimes known as Deep Gloppies by the humans, although their existence is something of a myth amongst surface dwellers. They live on the fringes of the abyssal depths and perform the thankless task of fighting the monsters that try to cross over from the Underwater Darkness World into the world above. This they see as a sacred duty and they have a grim order of honourable warriors trained to lay down their lives in the darkness (unlike ti-kop they are quite likely to take the paladin class). Unlike other ti-kop they are incapable of surviving out of

water. R'ee'k'kop have a pale skin colouration and all of them possess bioluminescence which they have developed to a form of communication.

Additional Traits

Replace Low Light Vision with Darkvision (90 ft.)

R'ee'k'kop do not have the Amphibious trait.

They gain the Bioluminescence feat (see above) for free.

Born to the Deep: They gain resistance 10 to the effects of water pressure. Each round, a R'ee'k'kop ignores the first 10 points of damage he suffers as a result of being deep underwater. In effect this means that he may comfortably live at depths of 100 ft. below the surface, and may survive up to 200 ft. over short periods of time.

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