

SPECIES NAME: **CAIRN**

VISUAL REPRESENTATION



SPECIES ADJUSTMENTS

+1 Perception (+2 to normal starting PSI score)

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Physiologically, Cairn are unremarkable humanoids. Bony protrusions on both temples house their larger-than-average brains, which contain large areas for storing and transmitting visual images.

Psychologically, Cairn differ significantly from most humanoids. Because they don't use language, they don't think in abstractions. The phrases "To be or not to be, that is the question" or "We hold these truths to be self-evident" simply wouldn't occur to a Cairn. Without the ability to communicate abstract concepts, they don't understand philosophy, theology, or a host of other -ologies. If you can't see it, experience it, or remember it, it might as well not exist. Cairn like to act quickly and to seize on new ideas. They have excellent memories.

CULTURE

Although Cairn do not maintain a written history - or use any kind of writing at all for that matter - their collective memories are long and accurate. They can correctly state that they were non-sentient forest-crawling apes a mere two thousand years ago. (The comparable development in the human species took hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of years.) The Cairns' telepathic access to one another's minds not only allowed good ideas to spread almost instantaneously through the planet's entire population, but also protected them from the violence and warfare that typically accompanies a civilization's

early development. The concept of harmful struggle between Cairn had never even occurred to them.

Fourteen hundred years ago, however, a deranged individual introduced images into society so horrible that the act of receiving them was as traumatic to brain tissue as a brutal physical beating. The ensuing wars burned themselves out when the entire population of the planet was reduced to a few thousand individuals. An innovator developed mental disciplines to protect the mind from harmful images, whether they came from another person or from the darkest corners of one's own subconscious. They even learned to heal those already affected by the disturbing images.

Cairn culture returned to progress. The population grew. Rapid technological progress resumed. A thousand years ago, the Cairn developed warp drive technology and began to explore the stars. When they encountered other sentient species, however, they were unable to communicate with them. Invariably, these other races spoke through sounds instead of mental images. They recorded their thoughts with strange squiggles, rather than simply remembering them. And Cairn vessels suffered attacks on more than one occasion. Deciding they were truly alone in the universe, the Cairn packed up their starships and retired to their isolated, sparsely populated world to pronounce space exploration a momentarily interesting, but ultimately futile, dead end.

In 2365, the USS Okinawa initiated first contact with the Cairn, with the help of two telepathic officers, a Betazoid and a Vulcan. Intermittent and frustrating contacts continued for five years; nonetheless, the Cairn applied for Federation membership in 2370. It was granted shortly thereafter, leaving the Cairn and Federation with the difficult challenge of integrating their means of communication to allow each side to reap the maximum benefits from their relationship. The Cairn use a MIC, a Mental Image Communicator. A rudimentary holo-emitter instantaneously projects the image sent by the user into the air about three feet away, as if there were an invisible viewscreen, two feet high and two and a half feet long, hanging in midair. The image is two-dimensional, but can be viewed from either side. The holo-emitter supports only limited image movement. The MIC also takes spoken and written expressions and translates them into images displayed on a one-inch-square viewscreen for the Cairn user.

Cairn society is young and vital, hungry for knowledge and development. They value innovation over all. All young Cairn are brought up with the desire to add their own deathless images to the collective memory of their people. Although eager to take part in the interchange of ideas, goods, and technologies that comes with Federation membership, the Cairn are used to being isolated. They remain leery about contact with outsiders, and many folks are prepared to be disappointed; a few worry about another disaster like the Viral Image Wars.

LANGUAGES

The Cairn are only able to communicate through the use of their telepathic ability and the projection of images. This is as close to a language as these people have.

The very few Cairn who have learned to speak using prosthetic voice boxes speak Federation Standard; as that

is the language they were taught in and that is the language the voice-boxes are programmed to reproduce by default.

COMMON NAMES

Cairn have a single name – no family name. And male and female names can often sound alike. This is because the Cairn really do not care how their names sound as much as how they look – that is how the projected imagery with which each Cairn identifies himself to other Cairn looks.

Maques is one example of a male Cairn name, and *Hedril* an example of a female.

HOMEWORLD

The Cairn live on the world they call Vair; a mysterious world of endless forests and woodlands, Vair is the fourth planet in the Visium system.

None of Visium's other planets can support humanoid life. Vairite animal life evolved psi powers early in its evolution. Even Vair's plankton is capable of reacting with the mental energy of organisms around it in a rudimentary way.

Only a tiny minority of Vairite species learned to communicate through sound. Instead of the calls and cries typical of most planets' fauna, Vairite animals send simple, mental messages to one another when they wish to mate, warn of approaching danger, or signal the location of food. Vairite forests overwhelm visitors with their eerie silence.

The Cairn evolved from these silent, psi-active animals. Where sapient species of other planets took their first steps toward intelligence when their hominid forebears developed spoken language, stimulating the enlargement of their brains, the proto-Cairn developed their minds when they became the first animals to mentally transmit complex images instead of simply instinctual cues.

Staggering quantities of brainpower were required to summon up and receive detailed images. The Cairn not only evolved much more quickly than hominids elsewhere, but experienced extremely rapid social and technological development thereafter.

FAVORED PROFESSION

Despite their shortcomings in the area of personal communication the Cairn make excellent Diplomats, Scientist, and the Explorer elite profession are also commonly favored by the Cairn.

Some Cairn do serve in Starfleet. And in the decade the Cairn have enjoyed membership in the Federation, at least one Cairn officer has advanced in rank to command his own Starship.

The Cairn are an open and honest people, and are not likely to be found in the role of Rogues. Also, since they do not believe in religion, or understand theology, mythology, or philosophy they tend to make terrible Mystics despite their Psionic abilities.

Most Cairn PCs will, likely, be Scientists or Starship

Officers, while NPCs will tend towards Explorers, and Diplomats.

SPECIES ABILITIES

The Cairn are a very perceptive people and observe things around them in their own unique way. But, one a Cairn has formed a mental image of something they can communicate this information on a level far more detailed than simple verbal communication.

Cairn receive a +1 species bonus to their Perception scores.

They also have several traits individual to their species:

Psionic: The Cairn are some of the most powerful telepaths ever encountered by the Federation. While most Psions begin with a starting level of 4 for their PSI attribute, a Cairn begins at a level of 6. Cairn can advance their Psionic attribute as a Favored Attribute. And their PSI score can reach as high as 14.

Mental Imagery: Due to their advanced form of Telepathy, the Cairn do not project words with their minds, they communicate in mental images. All Cairn begin with a level of 6 in the Telepathy skill, with a Mental Imagery specialty. And they may advance this one Psionic skill as a Professional Skill. This may seem unusually high, but this skill is as basic to a Cairn as speech is to most humanoids. When a Cairn child projects his first images it is the equivalent of a human baby speaking his first word.

The Cairn can only project their images to other Cairn and other Telepaths skilled in Receptive Telepathy. Any non-Cairn attempting to understand a Cairn image does so with a -4 penalty to their Psionic skill roll.

CAIRN PSIONIC SKILLS

The Cairn can learn Psionic skills from among the full range of those available. However, they can only advance their Telepathy skill as a Professional Skill. All other Psionic skills are advanced as non-Professional skills, at a cost of 2 advancement picks per level.

Ranged & Focused: Cairn characters receive both the Psionic Coverage and Psionic Focus edges as Species Traits. (see pages 136-137 of the Player's Guide). The Psionic skill effected by both edges is Telepathy. The Cairn cannot be Ranged & Focused with any other Psionic skills.

Mute: Cairn cannot speak, unless fitted with an artificial voice-box and taught how to use it. They can only communicate effectively using a Mental Image Communicator, or MIC. But they are completely physically mute. Cairn suffer a -4 species-based penalty when trying to use a skill that requires speech (Debate (Oratory) for example); in a situation where they are expected to speak, if they do so without the benefit of the MIC.

Intolerant (non-Telepaths): This is an optional flaw and if taken at character creation is balanced with a free edge. Some Cairn have had bad experiences with non-Telepaths, and attempts to communicate with them. As a result some Cairn are wary, and even outright unfriendly to non-Telepaths. This is not the norm among these people; but a

few individuals have suffered the unfortunate circumstances to have this flaw despite the Cairn's membership in the Federation and the galactic community as a whole.

MENTAL IMAGE COMMUNICATOR

Specifications: 15 – 25 cm, length. 0.3 – 0.5kg mass.

Description: These devices come in a wide variety of sizes and shapes. But all of them function as a hand-held portable holographic emitter tuned to project a Cairn's telepathic imagery into the air as a hologram. Each device also has a small viewing screen that displays an image as a translation of spoken or written impressions directed at the Cairn using the device.

Rules: All Cairn adults will have a skill in using this device – *Systems Operation (Mental Image Communicator)* – beginning the game with the skill at level-6, as it is a very essential skill for Cairn to know. Cairn children will have the same skill, at level-4. Any use of the device is done with a +2 affinity from the Cairn's Telepathy skill.

Duration / Energy: 750 hours of intermittent use; 48 hours of continuous use.

Range: 3 / 6 / 12 / 20 +6