

THE RANGER

THIS IS PLAYTEST MATERIAL

The D&D material in this document is presented for playtesting and review purposes. The game mechanics are a draft, usable in your D&D campaign, but subject to design revision and editing.

Feedback. The best way to provide feedback is to post on <https://reddit.com/r/TherinCreative> or via one of the social media links from <https://therincreative.com>.

Power Level. Material offered by Therin Creative is aimed to be on par with officially published options. I respond to feedback and test results to hone the material until it is in such shape that any D&D campaign can use it just as it could official content, with the confidence that the material is balanced and worthy.

The ranger is a versatile class that specializes in the exploration pillar while retaining strength in the combat pillar. The ranger also has more unique interaction with the social pillar. The class has broad utility through its spellcasting feature. The core ranger from the *Player's Handbook* received a number of new features, including some replacement features for its ribbon features in *Tasha's Cauldron of Everything* by Wizards of the Coast. This material is balanced around the ranger options included in *Xanathar's Guide to Everything* and the aforementioned features. It further expands the class with new features, and you will find expansions for the *Player's Handbook* subclasses to modernize them with their official peers.

The ranger is the best class because it combines the prowess of a warrior, including its ability to withstand injury, with many druidic spells alongside special ranger spells. The ranger is also very skilled and is usually the best at navigating the wilderness and surviving within it. Many rangers are adept trackers and knowledgeable in the threats within their home turf. If you're a player looking for a character that is a natural survivor, pathfinder, and capable as a combatant and as a controller, consider creating a ranger.

The ranger class receives new features and subclasses in this section. You gain class features in the *Player's Handbook* when you reach certain levels in your class. This section offers additional features you can gain as a ranger. Unlike features in the *Player's Handbook*, you don't gain the features here automatically. Consult with your DM on whether you gain a feature in this section if you meet the requirements. These features can be selected separately from one another; you can use some, all, or none of them.

If you take a feature that replaces another feature, you gain no benefit from the replaced feature and don't qualify for anything in the game that requires it.

NATURAL EXPLORER OPTIONS

When you choose a favored terrain, the following terrains are added to your list of options: rustic, sea, underwater, urban.

In addition, when you choose a favored terrain from the Natural Explorer Improvement feature, you can choose one of the inner or outer planes, applying the benefits of the feature when you are in an environment

on that plane that is unique to it. Alternately, you can choose supernatural terrain, gaining the benefits of the feature when you are with supernatural environments, such as the area of a haunting or other spiritfont.

Moreover, you can replace one of your favored terrains with a different one available to you when you gain the Natural Explorer Improvement feature.

FIGHTING STYLE OPTIONS

When you choose a new fighting style, the following styles are added to your list of options.

SWORN WEAPON

After finishing a long rest, choose one weapon in which you are proficient. Until you choose a different weapon through this fighting style, when you attack with that weapon, you can use your Strength, Dexterity, Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma modifier (your choice) instead of Strength or Dexterity, for the attack and damage rolls.

VERSATILE FIGHTING

When you make an attack with a weapon that has the versatile property with one hand, you have a +2 bonus on attack rolls with it, provided you aren't holding a second weapon or a shield. When you make an attack with a weapon with the versatile property with two hands, you have a +2 bonus on damage rolls with it.

PRIMEVAL FOCUS

3rd-level ranger feature which replaces the Primeval Awareness feature

As an action, you can focus your awareness on the region around you. For 10 minutes, you can sense whether the following types of creatures are present within 1 mile of you (or within up to 6 miles if you are in your favored terrain): aberrations, celestials, dragons, elementals, fey, fiends, and undead. You know the distance to the nearest half mile of the creatures and their general direction, but don't know how many there are at each distance.

Once you use this feature, you must finish a long rest to use it again unless you expend a spell slot of at least 1st level to use it again.

WHIRLING BLADES

5th-level ranger feature

When you make the extra attack while engaging in two-weapon fighting, you can make it as part of the Attack action, instead of as a bonus action. You can still make this extra attack only once per turn, and you can't take a bonus action to make another attack this turn.

In addition, while holding a one-handed weapon in each hand, you can take a bonus action to make an attack with one of them during your turn without needing to take the Attack action.

FOE SLAYER VARIANT

20th-level ranger feature, which replaces the Foe Slayer feature

You become the unparalleled hunter of your enemies. Once of each of your turns, you can add your Wisdom

modifier to the attack or damage roll of an attack you make against one of your favored foes from your Favored Enemy feature, one foe marked by your Favored Foe feature, or one foe within your favored terrain from your Natural Explorer feature. You can choose which roll to modify after making your roll, but before the results are known.

Moreover, if you control another creature granted by a class feature or summoned by a spell, you can grant the benefit of this feature to that creature instead of you.

BEAST MASTER

The Beast Master ranger archetype receives the following new features.

BEAST MASTER MAGIC

3rd-level Beast Master feature

You learn an additional spell when you reach certain levels in this class, as shown in the Beast Master Spells table. Each spell counts as a ranger spell for you, but it doesn't count against the number of ranger spells you know.

BEAST MASTER SPELLS

Ranger Level	Spell
3rd	<i>heroism</i>
5th	<i>enhance ability</i>
9th	<i>conjure animals</i>
13th	<i>dominate beast</i>
17th	<i>mass cure wounds</i>

RANGER'S ENHANCED COMPANION

3rd-level Beast Master feature, which requires the Ranger's Companion feature

Your companion has greater resolve. You add your proficiency bonus to your companion's Strength and Wisdom saving throws if it doesn't have saving throw proficiencies. It has a hit point maximum equal to the number listed in its stat block or the value from the Beast Master Companion Hit Points table. It gains a number of HD equal to your ranger level that it can spend to heal itself during a short rest. The size of its HD is indicated on the Beast Master Companion Hit Points table.

You can select any beast of Medium size or smaller, or one which can serve as a mount that is one size larger than a normal member of your race, provided it doesn't have a flying speed. Regardless, the beast must have a CR no greater than 1/4.

You can command your beast by taking a bonus action. If you mount your companion beast, you can only command it to take the Dash, Disengage, or Dodge actions. If the companion acts as an uncontrolled mount, it can move, but will only take the Dodge action.

Your companion gains the benefits of your Favored Enemy and Natural Explorer features. If you take the Favored Foe feature, you can have your beast's attacks benefit from the feature instead of your own.

BEAST MASTER COMPANION HIT POINTS

Type	Hit Points	HD Size
No Flying Speed	5 + 5 times your ranger level	d8
Flying Speed	4 + 4 times your ranger level	d6

HUNTER

The Hunter archetype receives the following new feature.

HUNTER MAGIC

3rd-level Hunter feature

You learn an additional spell when you reach certain levels in this class, as shown in the Hunter Spells table. Each spell counts as a ranger spell for you, but it doesn't count against the number of ranger spells you know.

HUNTER SPELLS

Ranger Level	Spell
3rd	<i>hunter's mark</i>
5th	<i>blindness/deafness</i>
9th	<i>elemental weapon</i>
13th	<i>blight</i>
17th	<i>hold monster</i>

VERSATILE TRAINING

3rd-level Hunter feature

The types of threats encountered are numerous and you know best how to prepare to meet them. When you finish a long rest, you can replace one of the options you chose from the Hunter's Prey, Defensive Tactics, Multiattack, or Superior Hunter's Defense features with a different option from the same feature.

KITE

These rangers are a specialize group of beast tamers that coordinate with a small, flying creature such as a falcon, homunculus, sylph, or dragonette.

They are skilled at isolating single targets to draw them away from their groups or set them up for focused fire. Many value movement over armor, and ranged weapons tend to be favored by such rangers.

KITE MAGIC

3rd-level Kite feature

You learn an additional spell when you reach certain levels in this class, as shown in the Kite Spells table. Each spell counts as a ranger spell for you, but it doesn't count against the number of ranger spells you know.

KITE SPELLS

Ranger Level	Spell
3rd	<i>expeditious retreat</i>
5th	<i>blindness/deafness</i>
9th	<i>hypnotic pattern</i>
13th	<i>freedom of movement</i>
17th	<i>mislead</i>

HARRIER

3rd-level Kite feature

You form a bond with a Tiny flying creature, which draws strength from your connection to nature. The creature is friendly to you and your companions and obeys your commands. Regardless of its form, the creature uses the Harrier stat block, which uses your proficiency bonus (PB) in several places. While hawks and falcons are the most common harriers, you can choose any kind of creature for your harrier, including bats, fairies, dragonettes, or even swarms of bugs.

In combat, the harrier acts during your turn. It can move and use its reaction on its own, but the only action it takes is the Dodge action, unless you take a bonus action on your turn to command it to take another action. That action can be one in its stat block or some other action. Once set on a target, the harrier will automatically repeat the Attack, Harry, or Help action if it was commanded against the same target unless it is slain or reduced to 0 hit points (your choice). If you are incapacitated, the harrier can take any action available to it that it chooses.

If the harrier dies, you can use your action to touch it and expend a spell slot of 1st level or higher. The harrier returns to life after 1 minute with all of its hit points restored. If you can't recover the harrier's body, you can expend a spell slot of 1st level or higher as part of a short or long rest to restore it as above and return it to your side.

AERIAL TACTICS

3rd-level Kite feature

During your first turn in combat, when you use a bonus action to command the harrier, you can use the same bonus action to cast or interact with a ranger spell. If you are fighting with two weapons or have a feature or feat that permits an additional attack with a weapon as a bonus action, you can make that attack using the same bonus action instead of casting or interacting with a ranger spell.

In addition, you can cast the *beast sense* spell without expending a spell slot targeting the harrier, and can target it with the spell even if it's not a beast. After casting the spell this way, you must finish a long rest to cast it again unless you expend a spell slot of 2nd level or higher to cast it again.

ENHANCED HARRY

7th-level Kite feature

The harrier's attacks now count as magical for the purpose of overcoming resistance and immunity to nonmagical attacks and damage. When the harrier hits a creature with its Strike attack on its turn, it can take the Harry action as a bonus action.

Whenever a harried creature moves, the harrier can choose to move with it, unless it moves more than 60 feet, teleports, or moves to another plane of existence; this movement doesn't provoke opportunity attacks.

FLURRY AND GUILF

11th-level Kite feature

When a creature damaged from one of your or the harrier's attacks since the start of your last turn hits a target other than you or the harrier, you can take a

reaction to make one attack with a weapon you hold against that target, provided it's within range. The harrier can use its reaction to also make one Strike attack against that target if it's within reach.

In addition, the harrier has advantage on attack rolls against a creature it attacked or attempted to harry since the start of its last turn.

RESILIENCE OF THE HUNT

15th-level Kite feature

The first time in a turn that a harried target hits you, it deals only half damage.

In addition, if the harrier receives damage that would reduce it to 0 hit points, you can take a reaction to reduce it to 1 hit point instead. Once you have used this reaction, you can't use it again until you finish a short or long rest unless you expend one of your Hit Dice to use it again.

HARRIER

Tiny any creature type

Armor Class 15 + PB

Hit Points 5 + three times your ranger level (the harrier has a number of Hit Dice [d4s] equal to your ranger level)

Speed 10 ft., fly 60 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
4 (-3)	17 (+3)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages understands the languages you speak

Challenge — **Proficiency Bonus (PB)** equals your bonus

Ranger's Bond. You can add your proficiency bonus to any saving throw the harrier makes.

Superior Evasion. When the harrier is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a saving throw to take only half damage, it instead takes no damage if it succeeds, and only half damage if it fails. If the effect doesn't explicitly target the harrier, it automatically succeeds on the save.

ACTIONS

Strike. *Melee Weapon Attack:* your spell attack modifier to hit, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit:* 1d4 + PB bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage (your choice)

Harry. A creature within 5 feet of the harrier must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw against your spell save DC or become harried until the end of your next turn or until it is more than 5 feet away from the harrier.

A harried creature has disadvantage on attack rolls against a target other than you and Constitution saving throws to maintain concentration, and its speed is reduced by 10 feet (to a minimum of 0 feet).

SEEKER

Seekers are rangers that hunt explicit quarry, acting much like bounty hunters. Seekers are consummate huntsmen, who pursue their targets with a single-minded focus.

SEEKER MAGIC

3rd-level Seeker feature

You learn an additional spell when you reach certain levels in this class, as shown in the Seeker Spells table. Each spell counts as a ranger spell for you, but it doesn't count against the number of ranger spells you know.

SEEKER SPELLS

Ranger Level	Spell
3rd	<i>sleep</i>
5th	<i>locate object</i>
9th	<i>nondetection</i>
13th	<i>grasping vine</i>
17th	<i>screaming</i>

HUNTER'S FOCUS

3rd-level Seeker feature

As a bonus action, you can designate a single creature you can see which is within 60 feet of you as your Quarry. You have advantage on Wisdom checks against your Quarry.

In addition, your Quarry is under the effects of the *hunter's mark* spell as if you cast it. When cast this way, *hunter's mark* doesn't expend a spell slot, has no components, and doesn't require concentration. The spell remains in effect until you designate a new Quarry.

Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until your Quarry is reduced to 0 hit points or you finish a long rest. Once you set a new Quarry, you lose your old one.

MASTER TRACKER

3rd-level Seeker feature

Your tracking skills are peerless. Whenever you make an ability check to track any target, you treat a d20 roll of 9 or less as a 10.

Moreover, as an action, you can expend a spell slot to locate your Quarry; if your Quarry is within 5 miles of you, you know its direction and distance from you.

ENSNARE

7th-level Seeker feature

Exceptionally adept at trapping and eliminating your foes, you increase the spell save DC of your ranger class features and spells by 2.

QUARRY'S END

11th-level Seeker feature

After you deal damage to your Quarry with a weapon attack or a ranger spell, if it has fewer hit points remaining than your level in this class, it is immediately reduced to 0 hit points.

Whenever you reduce your Quarry to 0 hit points, you can choose to render the target unconscious and stable.

HUNTER'S WILE

15th-level Seeker feature

Your drive to pursue your target pushes you past your limits. Whenever you must make a saving throw and don't have disadvantage on the roll, you can use your reaction to gain advantage on it.

In addition, whenever your Quarry deals damage to you, you can use your reaction to gain resistance to that damage.

SLEUTH

Rangers who take on the archetype of the sleuth are master investigators, trained in uncovering clues and secrets and connecting the dots in an investigation. They are calm under pressure and ever alert.

It is common for such rangers to work with local constabularies or peace keepers to provide detective services. Sleuths are equally at ease in the hustle of the city as in the wilds.

SLEUTH MAGIC

3rd-level Sleuth feature

You learn an additional spell when you reach certain levels in this class, as shown in the Sleuth Spells table. Each spell counts as a ranger spell for you, but it doesn't count against the number of ranger spells you know.

SLEUTH SPELLS

Ranger Level	Spell
3rd	<i>disguise self</i>
5th	<i>see invisibility</i>
9th	<i>tongues</i>
13th	<i>arcane eye</i>
17th	<i>legend lore</i>

CANVASS

3rd-level Sleuth feature

Adept at gathering information from accounts, written and spoken, you gain a bonus equal to half your proficiency bonus on Intelligence checks to recall knowledge, and Charisma checks to solicit information from others. This bonus is in addition to your proficiency bonus, if any.

UNCANNY AWARENESS

3rd-level Sleuth feature

You have exceptional reflexes and a mind that processes variables astonishingly fast. You add your proficiency bonus to initiative rolls.

In addition, once during your turn when you hit a creature with a weapon attack when one of your allies is within 5 feet of the target and the ally isn't incapacitated, you deal an extra 1d6 weapon damage.

SUSPICIOUS

7th-level Sleuth feature

When you make an Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check to detect hidden or secret things, you can treat a d20 roll of 9 or lower as a 10.

REVERSAL

11th-level Sleuth feature

When a creature misses you with a weapon attack, the next attack roll you make against it before the end of

your next turn has advantage and deals an extra 1d6 weapon damage on a hit.

UNCANNY REACTION

15th-level Sleuth feature

Your awareness is such that you can swiftly react to impending danger. When you are attacked by a melee or ranged attack, you can use your reaction to add your proficiency bonus to your AC for that attack. If the attack still hits, you regain the use of your reaction, but can't use this feature again until the start of your next turn.

If this causes a trap to miss you with an attack roll, you can jam the mechanism as part of the same reaction, if it is possible.

ZEPHYR

Rangers of the Zephyr archetype act in rapid movement and rely on wielding two weapons. In battle, they are a flurry of motion, quickly striking foes and leveraging magic to create openings to quickly scatter foes. Those of this archetype are athlete exemplars, and are especially adept at navigating their preferred terrains.

ZEPHYR MAGIC

3rd-level Zephyr feature

You learn an additional spell when you reach certain levels in this class, as shown in the Zephyr Spells table. Each spell counts as a ranger spell for you, but it doesn't count against the number of ranger spells you know.

ZEPHYR SPELLS

Ranger Level	Spell
3rd	<i>expeditious retreat</i>
5th	<i>misty step</i>
9th	<i>wind wall</i>
13th	<i>freedom of movement</i>
17th	<i>tree stride</i>

ALTERNATE SPELLS

If you have *Xanathar's Guide to Everything*, you can replace the *expeditious retreat* and *tree stride* spells with the *zephyr strike* and *steel wind strike* spells at the DM's discretion.

SPELL SQUALL

3rd-level Zephyr feature

While holding a one-handed weapon in each hand, you can cast a ranger spell you know without a free hand unless it has a material component that is consumed in the casting or it has a gold piece value.

Moreover, during your turn when you use a bonus action to cast or interact with a ranger spell you know, you can make the attack granted from two-weapon fighting as part of the Attack action instead of as a bonus action, but can still make this attack only once per turn.

WIND BLADE

3rd-level Zephyr feature

Once during your turn when you take the Attack action while holding a one-handed weapon in each hand, you can make a special attack using both weapons provided you move at least 10 feet in a straight line toward the

target, including vertically, before making the attack. Roll one attack roll using the attack bonus from one of the weapons. On a hit, roll weapon damage for each weapon and apply the same ability bonus to damage that you used for the attack roll plus an additional 1d6 magical slashing damage as sharp winds bite your target.

MOVE LIKE WIND

7th-level Zephyr feature

You have advantage on Strength (Athletics) checks while in your favored terrain.

Your long jump is up to your Strength modifier and your high jump is up to 5 + your Strength modifier feet, with or without a running start. Additionally, you can use a surface such as a wall or an object larger than you such as a tree or statue to spring from during a jump. When your jump reaches such a surface or object, you can jump again. You take no fall damage from the distance you jump, but abide by all other movement rules.

WHIPPING WINDS

11th-level Zephyr feature

The additional magical slashing damage of your Wind Blade feature increases to 1d8.

In addition, once during your turn when you hit a creature with two different one-handed weapons, you can force it to make a Strength saving throw against a DC equal to 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Strength or Dexterity modifier (your choice). On a failed save, you choose one of the following options to occur:

- The target drops one held item in a space within 5 feet of both you and it. Your space is a valid option.
- The target is pushed 10 feet away from you.

SUDDEN GUST

15th-level Zephyr feature

While holding a one-handed weapon in each hand, you can make a special reaction. When you are hit by a weapon attack, you may use your reaction to roll the weapon damage die for one of your held weapons and add the number rolled to your AC against that attack. If this causes the attack to miss and your attacker is within 5 feet of you, you may make an attack with the other weapon you hold.

MAKING YOUR OWN RANGER SUBCLASS

YOU MAY DECIDE THAT YOU WANT TO CREATE YOUR own ranger subclass that best fits your campaign. Before embarking on this task, you want to be sure that no existing ranger subclass can meet your design goals. One of the greatest flexibilities offered in 5e class design is how open it is to re flavor the features.

If there is a subclass that can meet your mechanical needs and stylistic vision, it is best to simply use that and save a lot of time in designing, writing, and playtesting.

If, however, you find that no existing subclass achieves the fantasy or has the mechanics to match your visions, this section will guide you toward making a ranger subclass that fits the 5e D&D model. The guidelines will help you create the features for your subclass and detail how you should balance the class to fit within the official options and those offered by Therin Creative and similar content creators.

Please note that despite the guidance offered herein, your subclass may need further tuning. Be certain to spend the time to playtest your subclass.

CLASS CHASSIS

The ranger is a half spellcaster with a number of features. It requires Wisdom for its spellcasting, and favors Dexterity over Strength and Constitution. Intelligence and Charisma aren't needed for the class, and its features compensate for lower scores. Rangers are often dependent on multiple ability scores, and as such, you shouldn't try to require another ability score for subclass features – stick to using Wisdom and either Strength or Dexterity.

HIT DICE

The ranger has a d10 Hit Dice, and is one of the sturdiest classes in the game. While the ranger can excel at ranged combat, it has better consistent survivability than classes like the rogue and monk.

PROFICIENCIES

The ranger has access to all martial weapons, shields, and light and medium armors, and an above average number of skill proficiencies. This opens a lot of avenues to enhance the ranger's specialties through weapons, armor, and skills. Generally, you won't want to grant a ranger a new proficiency unless the proficiency is necessary to interact with a subclass feature.

ABILITY SCORE IMPROVEMENT

The ranger uses standard progression for the Ability Score Improvement (ASI) feature (4th, 8th, 12th, 16th, and 19th level). Rangers shouldn't gain additional ASI features as that is the domain of the fighter and rogue classes and not something a subclass generally grants.

SPELLCASTING

The ranger has the spellcasting feature, with several limitations. It uses spells known, requiring characters to choose spells each level from the ranger spell list. Due to the low number of spells a ranger is likely to know, most modern ranger subclasses grant the ranger a feature that

gives it additional known spells that fit the theme of the subclass. The ranger also doesn't have ritual casting or spellcasting focus features, meaning your subclass could introduce those if it makes sense, such as for a spellcasting-specialist ranger.

RIBBON FEATURES

The ranger has a significant number of features that enhance the exploration and social pillar without offering significant impact on combat. Rangers get more combat enhancing features in its subclasses.

ARCHETYPE FEATURES

Ranger archetypes grant features at 3rd, 7th, 11th, and 15th level – explicitly at those levels between gaining a new level of spell.

RANGERS USE SPELLS

It is worth reiterating that rangers are spellcasters. Spell slots are factored into the balance of the class for each pillar of the game. Rangers have combat spells for direct damage, control, and enhancement. They also have spells to circumnavigate the exploration pillar and in certain cases interact with the social pillar. A well-designed ranged subclass will utilize its spells in a meaningful way, and you need to balance it with its spells and spell slots taken into account.

If you want to build a subclass that doesn't use spells, you should build a fighter and not a ranger. A noncaster ranger is a popular request, but to facilitate the concept, you will need an alternate class with a chassis that doesn't contain the spellcasting feature. Replacing a class feature is complicated, hard to balance, and cumbersome for players to adopt.

BUILDING A RANGER

ARCHETYPE

Once you understand the class chassis, you're one step closer to building a subclass. You'll also want to review existing subclasses to get a feel for their design and balance. This section will aid you in understanding what your subclass features should accomplish.

RANGERS HAVE ARCHETYPES

While the experimental ranger had the Ranger Conclave feature for its subclass, the published ranger uses the Ranger Archetype feature for its subclasses, consistent throughout publications. You should only use or refer to the Ranger Conclave if you are building a ranger based on the Revised Ranger from *Unearthed Arcana* offered by Wizards of the Coast that was abandoned. This guide doesn't cover the Revised Ranger.

Before starting on the formal work to build your subclass, devise its theme and role. What is your subclass's purpose? What roles does it fill in an adventuring party? How are its mechanics interesting and unique? Why would a player choose your subclass?

Let's start by looking at some existing ranger subclasses.

Hunter. The Hunter ranger fills the theme of warden and champion against the monstrous horde, with flexibility in what kinds of foes it counters. They can be giant killers, or the stalwart heroes that rush into the hordes of foes. Players choose this archetype to excel in battle against select foes.

Beast Master. The Beast Master ranger gains an animal companion that aids the ranger in scouting and tracking. In combat it helps to corral and flank foes or dash behind enemy lines to reach high-value targets. The companion's hit point pool helps its party by spreading out damage. Players choose this archetype to control a secondary character to open up more positional tactics.

Gloom Stalker. The Gloom Stalker ranger is the hunter of the Underdark and similar environments. It is an ambusher that is adept in the dark. Players choose this archetype because they want to ambush foes and delve in the darkest of places.

Swarmkeeper. The Swarmkeeper ranger taps the fantasy of controlling a swarm of insects or similar in a way that creates new tactics. Players choose this archetype for its versatility in what the swarm can accomplish and its descriptive flavor.

Sleuth. The Sleuth ranger is a detective that leverages skills and spells to root out the truth of a situation. It can lead investigations, interrogations, and uncover the most hidden of secrets. Players choose this archetype because they want to explore urban environments, uncover mysteries, and have that uncanny knack for observation.

Each ranger subclass does something unique, explores the ranger kit in a certain direction, but at its core, each is a ranger, tapping the full range of the class features and spells at its disposal.

BUILDING THE SUBCLASS

This guide covers building a ranger archetype consistent with official published material. Each ranger archetype is defining in the scope of the subclass. While it still relies on the core ranger package, the subclass will feel quite distinct.

Subclass features are granted at 3rd, 7th, 11th, and 15th level. Except for 3rd level, each Ranger Archetype feature should only grant one subclass feature. Consult the Ranger Subclass Features table for when you should grant features.

There are exceptions to the rule of only granting a single subclass feature:

- Ribbon features are frequently weak on their own, so in certain cases you may grant a second, minor feature, which could be another ribbon feature.
- The feature has some complex interactions that are much clearer when separated. Often this is indication that something should be cut, but in rare cases, it makes sense to split a feature for comprehension.
- You are expanding an existing feature in a minor way. Sometimes it's better to include the enhancement in the core feature, and at other times it could be a note in another feature.

RANGER SUBCLASS FEATURES

Ranger Level Feature

3rd	Ranger Magic, Offensive Feature, Minor Feature
7th	Utility Feature
11th	Combat Expansion Feature
15th	Defensive Feature

RANGER MAGIC

3rd-level [Your Ranger Subclass] feature

Modern rangers have a list of extra spells they add to their known spells. If you are only using the *Player's Handbook* or 5.1 SRD, this feature should be omitted.

Choose one spell each from 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th level that fits the theme of your subclass. The spell can come from any list, including the ranger list.

If you include spells from sources other than the *Player's Handbook*, you want to indicate those sources. If you are sharing the subclass, you can't reprint content that is not provided by the publishing license you are using (i.e. don't reprint a spell description from *Tasha's Cauldron of Everything*).

If you do include spells outside the *Player's Handbook*, it is recommended that you offer alternative spells from it so groups without the referenced book can utilize your content without additional work on the DM's part. If the spell is one you created for the subclass, include its description after the subclass (or an appropriate section for a compendium of content).

[YOUR RANGER SUBCLASS] SPELLS

Ranger Level Spell

3rd	1st-level spell
5th	2nd-level spell
9th	3rd-level spell
13th	4th-level spell
17th	5th-level spell

OFFENSIVE FEATURE

3rd-level [Your Ranger Subclass] feature

Each ranger archetype gets a damage boost of some sort at 3rd level. Typically you want an increase of 3 to 5 damage per round which may be increased at higher level (typically at 11th level). See the Ranger Damage table below for guidelines.

If the additional damage requires interaction with the action economy, such as requiring a bonus action (e.g. Ranger's Companion feature), the feature can add more damage. In this case, weigh what the action requirement costs the core class and adjust accordingly.

You should increase the additional damage if the feature has limited uses per rest, provided it is expected that the ranger will run out before it can recharge. In addition, the damage can be increased if the source can be removed during play, such as with an animal companion that can be killed.

RANGER DAMAGE

Damage Source	Additional Damage	Example
Unlimited attack rider	3 (4 at 11th level)	Dreadful Strikes
Once per turn rider	4 (5 at 11th level)	Gathered Swarm
Conditional	4	Slayer's Prey
Conditional and limited	14	Dread Ambusher
Bonus Action	5 (9 at 11th level)	Planar Strike
Killable Companion Bonus Action	9 (21 at 11th level)	Primal Companion
Limited Resource Efficient	5 (10 at 11th level)	Psionic Power

MINOR FEATURE

3rd-level [Your Ranger Subclass] feature

This is an optional feature that mainly serves to flavor the archetype. This feature should mostly affect the exploration or social pillars. This can include skills modifiers or bonus proficiencies. It should only affect the combat pillar if the subclass's Offensive feature is very restrictive, such as the Gloom Stalker ranger's Dread Ambusher feature.

You may prefer to grant additional utility to the Offensive feature as the Swarmkeeper ranger's Gathered Swarm feature does instead of including this feature. Some Offensive features intrinsically include the Minor feature's utility effect, such as the Beast Master ranger's Ranger's Companion feature that grants a beast that can perform appropriate tasks, absorb damage, and supplement the ranger's abilities.

UTILITY FEATURE

7th-level [Your Ranger Subclass] feature

A utility feature grants new options to the ranger, often augmenting its movement or defenses. You can also make this a situational defense feature if that makes more sense for your concept. Depending on the power of the effect, you may choose to limited it, especially if the feature duplicates or grants a spell.

This is also the point where you want to grant any quality of life enhancements. You may also decide to expand the ranger's social or exploration pillars if that better fits the subclass's theme.

RESOURCES

Rangers have a primary resource in spell slots. In general, you shouldn't give the ranger a second resource and tap its spell slots to fuel features that aren't self-contained in usage. The exception is when bulk of the subclass leverages this resource and managing it through a full adventuring day is vital for the ranger subclass to remain competitive.

It is common for a feature to offer restriction on how often it can be used to limit the scope of its power. Frequently this is one or two uses per short rest or even long rest. If the feature's usage should scale, then it's usually better to grant uses equal to an ability score modifier, such as Wisdom, or based on proficiency bonus.

Be careful about using proficiency bonus uses with low-level features. These can result in multiclassed characters being equally able at the feature as a single class character. Subclass features can be unpredictable when used in combination with other classes and subclasses, especially when factoring in third-party and homebrew content.

COMBAT EXPANSION FEATURE

11th-level [Your Ranger Subclass] feature

With this feature, the ranger expands its combat ability. This feature can expand the Offensive feature or add something new. It can also increase efficiency with the ranger's offensive kit. Generally, you want to aim to increase the ranger's damage equal to about half of one attack per round (around 5 extra damage per round).

If the combat ability has nondamage riders or options, such as the Mighty Swarm feature, the increase should be smaller. If the bonus attack or damage requires an action, such as a bonus action, it can deal more damage. For instance, the Ranger's Companion feature functionally doubles the damage bonus of the Offensive feature by granting the beast one additional attack. For expanding the Offensive feature's damage, consult the Ranger Damage table.

DEFENSIVE FEATURE

15th-level [Your Ranger Subclass] feature

Rangers finish with a decent defensive feature. This defense should come into play normally without stringent conditions, but it may have limited uses.

If the Utility feature is a defensive one, this feature can add utility instead. If the Combat Expansion feature doesn't increase the ranger's damage and the Offensive feature's damage doesn't scale, you should grant that missing damage here, such as with the Monster Slayer or Zephyr ranger archetypes.

UPDATE NOTES

7 SEPTEMBER

RANGER CLASS OPTIONS

- Sleuth's Civilized Environs feature reworked into Natural Explorer Options that adds rustic and urban environments, as well as sea and underwater for high seas or aquatic campaigns. This requires using the Natural Explorer feature.
- Natural Explorer Options also allows changing favored terrains and allows choose inner and outer plane environments at higher level.

KITE

- Harrier changes
 - Hit points are now $5 + 3$ per ranger level (from $10 + 2$). It's overall sturdier, but don't expect it to fight powerful foes on its own.
 - Commanding your harrier now always takes a bonus action, but it will stay on its target and repeat the same action until you command it otherwise or the target is reduced to 0 hp.
 - Harry action now imposes disadvantage instead of a penalty (it took the old Flurry and Guile effect), included on Constitution saving throws to maintain concentration, but also correctly indicates that the harrier must remain within 5 feet to persist the debuff.
 - No longer gets a bonus on attack rolls.
- Aerial Tactics is a new feature that replaces Aerial View.
 - Allows using the same bonus action on your first turn in combat to command the harrier and either cast/interact with a ranger spell (e.g. *hunter's mark*) or make an additional attack with a weapon (e.g. fighting with two weapons, Polearm Master feat).
 - Can cast the *beast sense* spell once per long rest without expending a spell slot, targeting the harrier. This is a replacement for the old feature.
- Kite Magic now grants *mislead* at 17th level instead of *seeming*.
- Harry feature renamed to Enhanced Harry to avoid confusion with the harrier's action.
 - Now properly grants the harrier's Strike acting as a magical weapon to be in line with other "pet" subclasses in tier 2 play.
- Flurry and Guile feature changed.
 - Reaction attacks no longer depend on the target being harried, you or the harrier only need to have damaged it since the last turn.
 - The harrier now has advantage on attack rolls against a creature it attempted to harry since its last turn.
- Purposeful Guard feature renamed to Resilience of the Hunt.

SEEKER

- Master Tracker effect changed to be even across levels, and the Quarry location no longer depends on a feature that may have been replaced.
- Hunter's Wile has new effect that should better lean into the grizzled bounty hunter flavor.

SLEUTH

- Civilized Environs rolled into Natural Explorer Options.
- Canvass feature moved to 3rd level (from 7th).

ZEPHYR

- Swift Strikes merged with focus effect from Zephyr Magic into new 3rd-level feature, Spell Squall, and altered to allow you to cast the spell first and then get to make an offhand attack so that you don't have to take the Attack action first before casting and benefitting from the spell.
- Move Like Wind moved to 7th level, but now also increases high jump base to 5 feet and allows long jumps without a running start. Also prevents fall damage due to vertical double jumps to activate Wind Blade on the fall or just jumping in general.
- Whipping Winds changed to use saving throw (Strength or Dexterity based) and either disarms or pushes 10 feet. Trip is overbudget for the Zephyr subclass.
- Sudden Gust parry portion now only rolls the weapon damage die (likely a d4, d6, or d8) instead of half of its damage to avoid unintentional interaction with certain magic weapons and spell effects. No longer automatically scores a critical hit.

3, JULY 2023

SEEKER

- Hunter's Focus is always a bonus action.
- Hunter's Focus now described as setting the target as your Quarry (keyword capitalized). "Quarry" is used to specify feature interactions with it for consistent language.

ZEPHYR

- Move Like Wind negates the movement requirement for high jumps. It is intentional for the Zephyr to spring off walls and terrain to gain bonus movement in setting up Wind Blade attacks. This is basically required movement for activating Wind Blade in dungeons.
- Wind Blade no longer uses scales based on level; it adds 1d6 damage at 3rd level and 1d8 at 11th level.
- Swift Strikes now simply lets you make the two weapon fighting bonus action attack using the same bonus action of the spell.

GENERAL

- Guidelines for making new ranger subclasses added.