

The Warden – A New Class for OD&D

The Warden is a woodland protector, tracker and guide. They have the skills of the fighting-man (including the same attack matrix, and access to the same weapons), along with a few specialty skills that lend themselves to outdoor-themed campaigns. Wardens prefer to wear leather armor, simply because their ability to surprise others and be stealthy requires them to travel lightly. Wardens are distrustful of certain forms of magic, and will not use potions. They will, however, make use of any magical leather armor, weapons or artifacts usable by fighting-men they come across (magic or Elfin chain armor may be an option for Wardens at the referee's option, assuming such armors are available and of lighter weight than standard chain armor). They may only keep as much wealth and possessions as can be carried on their person – Wardens travel too much to hoard wealth.

Wardens are quite hardy and have bonuses to their hit dice at levels 1-4. Thereafter they match fighting-men. Wisdom and Constitution are prime requisites for Wardens, but they get bonuses to earned experience only if both ability scores are 13 or more. Only humans may be Wardens.

Warden Advancement

Level	Title	Experience Points	Dice for Accumulative Hits	Healing Poultice	Special Ability
1	Outlander	0	2	1-4	Direction sense
2	Wanderer	2,800	3	2-5	Stealth, surprise, tracking
3	Runner	5,600	4	2-7	Detect snares & pits
4	Woodsman	11,200	5	2-11	
5	Forester	20,000	5+1	2-12*	Calm wild animals
6	Protector	40,000	6	4-14	
7	Guardian	80,000	7+1	5-20**	
8	Overseer	150,000	8+2		
9	Warden	300,000	9+3		Attract followers
10	Warden, 10 th level	450,000	10+1		

* Healing poultice cures disease

** Healing poultice neutralizes poison

Wardens save as fighting-men but get +1 to any saves versus death or poison.

Wardens are experts with the short or long bow, and get to-hit bonuses with either, in addition to any other bonuses they might have. This to-hit bonus is +1 at 1st level (Outlander), and an additional +1 every three levels - so a Woodsman gets +2 to-hit, a Guardian +3 to-hit, and a 10th level Warden gets +4 to-hit, the maximum bonus. They incur no penalties for the use of bows while riding a horse or otherwise moving.

Wardens are skilled in medicinal herbs. They can prepare healing poultices that will heal an increasing number of hits based on the Warden's level (see table, above). These healing poultices can be used once per day, per character. At the referee's option, this can be in addition to any binding of wounds that may be allowed. At 5th level (Forester) and above, the Warden's healing poultices act as a Cleric's cure disease spell, albeit not for magically induced ailments. At 7th level (Guardian) the poultice also acts to neutralize poison. The healing is relatively slow, however, taking 2-7 turns to neutralize poison or restore hits, and a full night's rest to cure disease. They can carry enough herbs and materials to make four such poultices, before having to forage for more raw materials.

Wardens are capable of living off the land, and in a suitable environment (access to water, plant life, small game) can live indefinitely, including the construction of snares and natural shelters.

The warden's stealth in the outdoors allows them to move silently to within 2" of a foe and observe them undetected (but there must be some form of concealment available, such as trees, boulders or undergrowth), with a 5 in 6 chance of success.

Wardens are accomplished trackers. There are no specific rules to cover this, as success or failure will vary based on the terrain, weather, age of tracks and time of day. It is left up to the referees' discretion, however in an ideal environment (non-rocky terrain, daylight, good weather, recent tracks), the track should always succeed. On the other hand, prolonged severe weather (e.g., hurricane, blizzard) would make tracking all but impossible. An example may be useful. Assume the weather is clear and it is mid-morning. If a Warden were tracking a band of Goblins who passed by a wooded area not less than an hour or two before, this should succeed automatically. If the band of Goblins had traveled through the forest eight hours prior, and it was a clear night with just moonlight to track by, this might succeed 3 times in 6. Add clouds and light rain, and the chances might drop to 1 in 6.

Wardens have a keen sense of direction, thus they cannot not be led astray while traveling in the wilderness. They are also not easily surprised. Beginning at 2nd level (Wanderer), while in their native outdoor environment, they will surprise foes on a roll of 1-3 in 6, yet they themselves have only a 1 in 6 chance of being surprised. The lower chance of being surprised extends to any others the Warden is traveling with, while a Warden must be alone or with another Warden to surprise others more easily.

At 3rd level (Runner) and above, Wardens can detect snares, pits or unsafe rock formations within 2", merely by passing near them, and not while engaged in combat. They can only do this outdoors.

At 5th level (Forester) and above, Wardens can attempt to calm wild animals (wolf, bear, boar, etc.), with a 5 in 6 chance of success. This does not apply to intelligent or enchanted creatures. Animals so calmed will not attack the Warden or anyone traveling with them.

Wardens of 9th level may choose to settle in one specific wilderness region and in doing so, will attract 5-15 followers, all Wardens of 2nd - 5th level who will take over patrols of that region. Unlike Lords, they never build castles, but instead opt for remote wilderness dwellings whose location is known only to their followers.

If the referee decides to use the Warden as a NPC, they will typically patrol a large woodland area that encompasses several small villages or towns, providing healing, protection from the more fearsome woodland creatures and even dispatching the occasional group of bandits. In return, the towns will give their Warden lodging and access to any food, water, horses or other supplies they may need.