

Errynor, NW Alarius

No one seems quite sure how far Errynor extends away from its core region, as mapped here. Some, rather vaguely, set the Lonesome Woods and Hoarfrost Range as its borders. Others, more precisely, have its landward limits set by the northern Feather Woods and central Spiney Ridge Mountains, the top of the Great Divide escarpment east to the great river that flows into Ever Mere, then up one or other of that river's tributaries to the main north-south block of the Hoarfrost Range, and so to Alarius' icy northern shore. A few say the southeastern boundary lies along the low mountains that extend the Hoarfrosts south to the Great Divide east of Ever Mere instead, while the strangest, but perhaps wisest, commentators hint that only the truly land-locked would think to treat a coastline as a genuine barrier.

Consequently, the map allows the exploration of the surface land and some of its inhabitants, the adjoining sub-sea areas similarly, the lands below the great ice-cap, and those mountain regions that sometimes allow access to the sky-world of the Cloudlands. Notes on various places and peoples from among these follow, but first some general comments about the map itself.

The Errynor Map

Although separate scales have been provided in kilometres and miles, they should be treated as approximate only, as because the planet Nibirum is a globe, and the area shown is some 2000 by 1000 miles in extent (*circa* 3200 by 1600 kilometres), there is some slight distortion in places, particularly towards the mapped area's edges. For practical purposes, this distortion has been largely ignored, however. This is fine when using just this mapped zone in isolation, but may create problems for those wishing to link the edges here to other adjacent areas of Alarius.

No compass rose or north direction is shown, because although the directions towards the true (rotational) and magnetic north poles lie towards the upper right corner of this mapped region in general, the actual directions to both vary across the map. By showing the Solar/Geomagnetics Layer in the FCW file, an overlay appears with latitude lines at 5° intervals, along with lines for the central and southern limits for Nibirum's northern polar auroral zone. From these, the true and magnetic north directions can be found for any part of the map, as "North" is always at right-angles to these lines on their concave sides.

The 65° N latitude line is differently coloured, as this is also the line at and northwards of which the Sun never sets during the northern midsummer - and thus from where it never rises in midwinter.

Note too that almost the entire mapped area lies beneath the polar auroral zone, so the aurora can be seen from here on many to most clearer nights when the sky is sufficiently dark. This has implications for the beliefs and tales of those from Errynor, plus it increases the magical potential available across the region.

As suggested already, the map itself can be adjusted to illustrate different features and optional elements, depending on which Layers are shown or hidden in the FCW file. These include three keys that cover most of the natural and constructed physical features. The largest key covers items on land, and can be shown or hidden using the Overland Key Layer. The other two, covering the undersea and subglacial land features, are shown, with their mapped aspects, when the Undersea Land and Subglacial Land Layers are activated and the Sea Surface and Ice Sheets Layers are hidden respectively. The Land Features Key can also include the Cloudland Platforms key when the Cloudland Layer is active, and similarly the Undersea Features Key can show the Ocean Currents key when the Ocean Currents Layer is turned on. These Layers add their respective items to the map itself too.

Things not illustrated by the keys comprise the political boundaries, the areas occupied by five major migratory herbivore herds, the mean and extreme maximum winter sea-ice extents. These are instead labelled in an appropriate colour on the map itself when their Layers are shown. They are also discussed further below.

Land Features

Notes on selected natural and constructed land features follow, in the order they appear in the Land Features Key.

Caves: Cave symbols (note these are drawings in the map, not actual CC3+ symbols) are used to show places where rivers pass underground, or emerge from being underground, and do not always occur in conjunction with cliff-lines as the Key may imply. They are present in only two small areas of the southwestern quadrant, just in and west of the Spiney Ridge Mountains around The Cragsteps, and by the Last Step cliff-line. Both are areas where substantial limestone-rich rocks are present. Around The Cragsteps especially, these rocks form extensive limestone pavements on the surface (also known as karst terrain), which is extremely difficult to travel across quickly or easily.

Dry River Valleys: Valleys containing dry river beds that no longer hold rivers. These are found chiefly in the region north of the Norvaux Gulf, where the shoreline has become frozen under a relatively narrow expansion of Alarius' ice-cap from the north, forming the Ice Wall near-coastal strip. Instead of freezing into glaciers, the river waters here have either dried-up, or their still-flowing headwaters have been forced into alternative channels after their sea access was blocked, so have been captured into flowing southeast to link with the first watercourse that has been able to continue flowing into The Gulf beyond the end of the Ice Wall, where the Huldramoor Forests begin.

Summer-Flowing River & Summer Lakes: There is just one area of these, close to the zone where the Ice Wall's landward side meets the western end of Alarius' ice-cap in Ghostland. A narrow triangle of tundra between the ice looming over it to either side here enjoys a curious microclimate that allows a valley glacier from the main ice-cap to melt at its end in the spring, forming a liquid lake whose waters then flow northwest all summer, creating a second lake when the waters pond up against the Ice Wall. Those lake waters then re-freeze into a valley glacier which continues flowing slowly under the Ice Wall to the sea. The river and lakes freeze again as the short northern summer concludes.

Ice Cap: Often seeming flat to anyone standing on their surfaces because of their vast extents, the great ice-caps of Errynor are really gently domed. In their larger areas - especially the two substantial regions inland of Ghostspire Coast - they have ice depths of one to two kilometres or more in their midsts (up to a mile and a quarter). Even the Ice Wall along the northern Norvaux Gulf coast forms a round-topped ridge up to five hundred metres (1,600 feet) high in places. The Ice Wall exists because centuries of winter storms have blown-in snow in repeated deluges at the coast, which the frozen land and lack of warmer sea currents nearby have stopped from thawing away. Consequently, the seaward side of the Wall, like the seaward edges of the other ice-cap areas, has become sculpted by wind and weather into many fantastic forms and great, near-vertical, ice-cliffs, which also effectively prevent safe access to these lands from the sea. On the landward side of the ice-caps, including the Wall, crumbling, but often more sloping, ice-cliffs do a lesser job of halting access to the domed caps themselves, along with rivers frozen into valley glaciers that continue to flow sluggishly even below the ice - sometimes as far as the sea.

As summer wanes, the extreme cold of the ice-caps causes the sea to freeze nearby as pack- or sea-ice, which grows out gradually from the land during the autumn. An overlay Layer is available demonstrating the mean maximum extent of this solid sea-ice away from the shore, just before the start of the spring thaw. A second overlay Layer illustrates how much further the pack-ice may extend from the land during an especially severe winter. This growth is deterred in some coastal regions by the presence of undersea hydrocarbon and gas seeps creating motion and impurities in the water that make it more difficult for sea-ice to form. Typical sea-ice thicknesses are a few metres (= yards) at most. During summer, the sea-ice vanishes, except for some icebergs (always a potential danger as parts of the ice-cliffs may break-off into the sea at any time). The frozen land's ice-caps remain though, and particularly along Ghostspire Coast and across Ghostland, the ice-cliffs can create frequent, impressive mirage-visions for sailors offshore, and sometimes for folks on land too, of great spired cities and fantastically-impossible landforms (see information on the real-world *Fata Morgana* mirage type for more details). However, it may not be just the ice-cliffs catching the summer light which creates such apparitions (see below under the Ruined Wheel-Race Ancient Cities discussion on page 28).

Bitumen Seeps & Gas Flares: These are found along the southern shores of the Norvaux Gulf west to roughly halfway along the adjoining northern coast of Alarius. The marker names only cover part of what these areas represent, as although some are indeed places where bitumen seeps from the ground in economically-usable quantities, and some are naturally-ignited flares fuelled by subterranean gas sources, others can include exposed coal seams (some of which may be smouldering), different hydrocarbon sources (such as petroleum), and tar pits, along with deadly quicksand-like patches where the hydrocarbon seep is partly buried by an unsound soil surface. Such seeps also occur under the near-coastal seas, where there are unignited natural gas sources bubbling away into the water too. Few of the gas escapes on land are obvious, with large, burning flares. Some may be too minor to burn at all, and give rise to merely unpleasant smells nearby. Some may show as smouldering soil, or small will o'wisp-like fires (most obviously at night - rarely these may happen over the water as well). Some though have no scent or flame, and may be deadly to air-breathers if any heavier-than-air gas has concentrated in a hollow, for example, such as carbon dioxide or carbon monoxide. Explosive events are very rare from such natural sources, where flammable, although deliberate actions to ignite them with sparks, fire or magic are a different matter.

Aside from humanoid uses of such sources as fuel, lubricants, glues and for waterproofing (the Norvaux ships are noted for their seaworthiness partly because of the use of such high-quality bitumen caulking), the carbon-rich nutrients also produce more and healthier plant growth nearby, particularly underwater, where the raw materials are more easily diluted to useful levels for vegetation. By lowering the freezing-point for water the impurities thus released into soil or water also keep their nearby areas ice-free more often in winter, again an aid to plant growth.

Larger-scale undersea liquid and gas escapes can happen rarely as well, and these may be extremely dangerous. They may create oil-slicks on the surface and shorelines wherever the tide takes them, with all the problems for many creatures, and travel, those can cause. Still more deadly are large-scale gas escapes from the sea-bed, which gas prevents objects in the water from retaining any buoyancy, including fish and seagoing vessels, and which can sink instantly to the sea bed, effectively falling under gravity alone. Air breathers that survive the fall may be drowned rapidly as the waters rush back in to the temporary space created. Such gas escapes are rare overall, but in the open ocean especially, have long been the source of sailors' tales, where a calm sea suddenly becomes deadly for no apparent reason. Any areas where this has happened more than a few times often become known as witch-grounds, and are avoided by knowledgeable sea captains.

Colossal Statue: Another feature which spans both the undersea and overland areas is a vast, carved, pale blue stone statue of a gigantic humanoid standing figure, a lightly-armed male warrior with folded arms, facing out to sea in Giant's Bay off Errynor's icy northern coast. The figure, though somewhat weather-worn, is probably a Cloud Giant (as in D&D). The stone is not of a type recognisable from Errynor. The statue stands roughly waist-deep at mean high tide, in water some fifteen metres deep (about fifty feet), so is around thirty metres (a hundred feet) tall in total. It is approximately 40 km (25 miles) from the nearest land. This size and location suggests that beyond a magical origin, no civilisation from Errynor now would be capable of constructing it.

Floating Islands: These are unanchored small islands which may be natural or artificial constructions, such as actual floating land areas created magically, collections of random flotsam fastened together by tidal and weather action, deliberately built by one or more creatures (possibly an entire colony), or built as homes by marine creatures from their own substance or exudations. A rare few may be unusually large rafts of floating seaweed. Only three such islands are relatively large enough to appear on this map, two around the mouth of the Norvaux Gulf, the larger of which lies west of the western Fireshore Alliance border, and some way north of the coast. The third island lies close-by the northwestern coast of Alarius, west of "The Last Step" map label on land. Of course, as floating islands, these starting points need not be where they may be encountered by adventurers!

The Library: Hidden away in the western heart of the Hoarfrost Mountains lies this great repository of knowledge, containing a vast, perhaps unparalleled, collection of texts and artifacts from across Nibirum - even a few from beyond it. The whole is maintained in great secrecy and security, not least because scarcely anyone outside it knows it exists, let alone where it is. No surface trails lead to it, its exterior looks simply like the normal mountainside, even to anyone moving over it, and there is an unusual property about the mountain it is set in and on which prevents its magical detection, but which suppression is not magical itself. The Library is staffed and lived-in by an array of the planet's most gifted scholars of many forms and types, who also possess magical and physical skills

second to none, to help ensure the safety of the place and that of any visiting scholars bringing or seeking knowledge who manage to reach it. Though no more than a tiny handful of folks there know it, the Arctic Dwarfs of nearby Archlaround have long sworn to protect the Library regardless of the cost to themselves too, a very ancient and powerful pact whose breaking would have dire consequences for the world.

Ugrak Standing Stones: Almost as little-known as the Library, this name is not especially accurate, as few of these exceptionally ancient, once-magical, stones still “stand” in their original fashion, and none are at all obvious, thanks to vegetation growth and soil-creep over many millennia. The Ugrak are believed long extinct, but were once a type of highly intelligent, crystalline-silicate humanoid. Rare cautionary tales persist in places telling of their hubris in daring to use great magics that ultimately destroyed them, changed the world, and unleashed something onto Errynor that had been better left undisturbed. Very few are aware that this roughly 50-mile diameter (80 km) region off the northern end of the Spiney Ridge Mountains was where it all happened. Only the Pirilorni still remember and keep constant watch over this part of “their” forest particularly, though few other creatures find it comfortable to stay nearby for long, while no settlement here by non-Pirilorni has survived either. Those who know of their former existence think that the modern Rock Folk in Errynor (comparable to the Galeb Duhr of D&D) may be a surviving remnant of the Ugrak.

Land Settlements & Their Builders

Settlements marked on the map are only the larger or more prominent ones. Although separated into “town” and “city” size classes, the relatively sparse humanoid populations across Errynor other than in the main realms of Arkant, Perce, Kelloië and Archlaround, mean the actual size of such places can be variable from region to region, and in general is typically smaller than the place-titles might suggest. A town in one part of Errynor might be physically larger and possess more inhabitants than a city in another, for instance.

Only city-class former settlements have been indicated as ruined here, chiefly because just the more prominent places are liable to contain aspects that would remain obvious over longer periods of time, after such a site had been abandoned. Not all such ruined city markers need once have been genuine settlements. Some may be overgrown unusual natural landforms, whose state makes that impossible to identify, for example. Those folk whose architecture favours predominantly vegetative building materials, such as timber or reeds, will rarely leave any such larger-scale ruins for later generations to encounter anyway. Some ruins are so damaged or ancient that their creators can be identified no longer. For those inhabited settlements listed in the Constructed Features of the Land Key, some notes on the peoples involved are given below.

In general, such notes highlight only some of the important aspects for each humanoid type as found in Errynor. Other facets not mentioned can be assumed similar to those presented by the more widely-used RPG systems for near-comparable creatures, if required. The D&D system has been employed preferentially for such comparisons because of its widespread use both in its actual forms and its many RPG clones via the Open Gaming License mechanism. The basic rules and information are freely available for download as PDFs from the Wizards of the Coast D&D website, dnd.wizards.com, for example, so are not dependent on paid ownership of any given proprietary RPG system.

Arctic Dwarfs: Pale-skinned, usually plump, of about half adult Human heights, with dark hair and eyes, Arctic Dwarfs can seem dour and taciturn at first, but they have a wicked sense of humour that their sparkling eyes often betrays. The Archlaround Dwarfs know themselves as the Archlaroundarhay (pronounced roughly as “ARK-la-roond-ar-eye”, with rolled “r’s” and a slightly soft “k”-sound like the “ch” in the Scottish pronunciation of “loch”). When asked by someone for the first time, they will pronounce it with heavy aspiration as if clearing their throats in a hugely protracted manner, and then say with a straight face that they are also known more colloquially as the Roundans, usually followed by a burst of laughter if anyone shows surprise! They love the idea of a name that fits both their home and their physical form - as “round-uns”, that is “round-ones”. They have a close bond with the Snow Goblins, who inhabit a similar range of places in Errynor, and whom the Dwarfs know as the Zantay (“ZANT-eye”), meaning “Golden Ones”. The Dwarfs see themselves as the protectors of the Snow Goblins, though such protection is rarely needed. If crossed, the Dwarfs can be powerful, deadly enemies, with long memories and exceptional resilience. They live for several centuries or more, in rare cases up to a millennium.

Like the Snow Goblins, Arctic Dwarfs may be met with across the colder regions of Errynor, where snow and ice is present for much of the year at least. They grow uncomfortable in more temperate places, thus generally avoid them, and are rarely encountered south of 54° N latitude, especially in the lowlands. Their greatest numbers are to be found in Archlaround in the west-central Hoarfrost Range, a realm ruled by a council of advisors led by a nominal king, all elected by popular vote every tenth year, barring death or incapacity. Arctic Dwarfs make some use of magically-powered flying craft, and more use, notably in the mountains, of unpowered gliders, along with sledges and skis on snow and ice. They breed a special type of small, hardy, strong and sure-footed pony for occasional riding, or more commonly baggage-work. Their settlements are always partly or mostly underground, but still with surface access routes, plus often some above-ground buildings and gardens, mainly constructed from local stone and metals.

They believe that to avoid offending the Spirits of Place that reside everywhere on land, they must always avoid creating long, straight lines on the solid surface (though not on snow, ice, water, underground or in the air). Consequently, their buildings frequently employ unexpected curves, alcoves, buttresses and comparable elements. Similarly, Arctic Dwarf roads and trails on the surface always have meandering paths. When following a straight road built by other folks, an Arctic Dwarf will commonly wander away from it in just such a meandering fashion. Oddly - which suggests this may be no idle superstition - meandering Arctic Dwarfs and their ponies move over an equivalent linear distance at the same speed, and expending no more energy, than those non-Dwarfs following the straight route. Unfortunately, other folks trying to follow a convoluted Arctic Dwarf route will be greatly impeded, unless they are with and aided by a group of Dwarfs.

Beastfolk: This can be a general term in Errynor applied by those who are not, to those intelligent beings that are part humanoid, part land animal. As such, it can be used to refer to a wide range of creatures, like centaurs and satyrs, and lycanthropic shape-changers equally. The strongly magical nature of Alarius though promotes a great variety of other, more random, forms that fit this category too, but which do not fall into such widely-recognised types. It is primarily these additional kinds that are classed as “Beastfolk” and discussed here, though all kinds can be found together at times as well.

There is a particular concentration of Beastfolk along and around the Great Pass through the northern Spiney Ridge Mountains, who call themselves “Spinoans”

(pronounced “spin-OH-ans”). They have a number of settlements in this area, and help maintain the safety of the Great Pass and the adjoining areas for travellers and traders against the many inimical creatures who inhabit the surrounding mountains. The Spinoans enjoy particularly good contacts with the Humans of Perce, and cordial, though less close, relations with the Elves of Kelloië. The Horseclan Nomads of the plains west of the mountains fear them, perhaps as they claim because their horses can be easily spooked by strange scents, more likely as the Beastfolk have always driven them off from raiding the Pass previously. Thus the Horseclan folk avoid the area around the western end of the Great Pass completely.

Some Beastfolk may be winged in an equally random manner (so they rarely show other flying animal characteristics, unlike the avian Birdfolk). As they are able to fly, they often inhabit the higher mountains, and some even make their homes in the Cloudlands.

In much the same way as their physical forms vary, there is no single style of Beastfolk architecture as such, beyond commonly making best-use of materials readily available nearby. They do not frequently quarry or mine stone, or fell timber, but they will make use of such prepared materials if to-hand, or available from trade with other folks, and will also re-use such items, including from ruined settlements, for instance.

Birdfolk: These are winged and feathered, flying, intelligent humanoids, with hawk-like faces, human-like arms and hands, bird legs and large raptor claws on their feet, similar to the Aarakocra of D&D, though much less colourful in plumage. They are rarely encountered, and then chiefly among the higher mountain or Cloudland areas of Errynor. Their settlements tend to take advantage of sheltered ledges and caves in the higher peaks, often enhanced by stone and wood buildings. These may be partly hand-built, partly magically-constructed, sometimes using semi-solidified fog or clouds, but are always provided with large, high-ceilinged rooms, large openings that serve as both doors and windows (which can be closed with heavy shutters at need), and a central garden or paved cloister that is open to the air above, which often forms the main entrance to such a building. Those wishing to avoid giving offence always first present themselves in this central zone on arrival. Bright colours and sparkling glass, crystal, gems and falling water are frequent decorative elements. Errynor’s Birdfolk are sometimes known as Skyrani (“SKEYE-rah-nee”), “Sky-folk” instead.

Elves: The Elves of Errynor are among the most innately magical creatures existing in the land, and often some of the strangest. Barring violence, Elves are essentially immortal. They are unaffected by illnesses or the usual climatic ranges of heat and cold. While they can get wet in snow or rain, for instance, they can choose not to, and can walk over such things as a river’s surface or the softest snow, without effort, getting wet, or leaving a mark, if they wish.

They are not an especially numerous folk, and favour solitude from other peoples, so their homes are commonly located in heavily-vegetated places, especially forests, where they may be concealed more easily. Their settlements tend to be relatively large in area, with individual dwellings quite widely separated from one another. Such homes are usually constructed from living vegetation, either naturally over time, or magically grown and enhanced for the purpose. This can make identifying them very difficult for non-Elves, given that many have no part at ground level. It is entirely possible that a group of non-Elves might traverse what could be classed as an Elf town or city, yet never realise they had done more than pass through an extensive woodland, for instance.

Although scattered Elf groups and individuals can be found across Errynor, along with a separate type of land-elf, the Pirlorni (discussed later), the greatest concentration of Elves is found in the Lonesome Woods, the realm of Kelloië (“kell-OY-yee”), which is also the name the Elves here use for themselves.

The Kelloië have pale skins, pale eyes of various shades (sometimes different in each eye of an individual), and light yellow to white hair. They maintain cordial relations, including trade, with their neighbours, the Perce Humans and Spinoan Beastfolk of the Great Pass region in the Spiney Ridge Mountains. Kelloië is nominally ruled by a queen and king from the more westerly of the two Elven cities shown on the map, known as The Eye. Kelloië’s settlements are linked by elven roads, magically-built routes that Elves may freely traverse, but non-Elves cannot, without accompanying Elf guides to extend their innate magical presence to allow them to do so. While following a fairly straight, though typically at least slightly arcing, path, an elven road does not always traverse the land surface. Instead, it may pass by way of tree branches (even twigs), banks of foliage, sometimes the air between trees, sometimes (seemingly impossibly) directly into a tree or patch of dense vegetation, only to emerge from another some distance away (a safe form of limited teleportation), or by other unexpected mechanisms. Movement along such a road may seem to defy gravity, or to pass directly over terrain that would not ordinarily support the weight of those doing so. Thus for their own safety, any guided non-Elves allowed to use an elven road will be blindfolded in general. Travellers using an elven road cannot be detected by non-Elves unless the travelling Elves wish it.

Faerie Folk: Faerie beings come in a still-greater range of physical, though generally humanoid, forms than the Beastfolk discussed earlier. Indeed some may resemble Beastfolk, but all are more innately magical even than Errynor’s Elves. Strictly speaking, the Faerie Folk do not belong to Errynor at all, as they ordinarily inhabit a different dimension or plane of existence that occupies the same physical space as Errynor, but which can be accessed only using specific power points on either plane, or by powerful magics otherwise. Although rare Faerie creatures may be encountered almost anywhere across Errynor, there is a particular concentration where several portals or thinnings between the dimensions may be found, in the area between the two tributary rivers leading from the central-southern Hoarfrost Mountains to the great river that flows into Ever Mere. This is sometimes known as Faerie Land as a result. The Faerie settlements here, for all their fantastical appearance - colourful, with a wild mix of architectural forms, including some apparently living buildings, for example - are a pale reflection of the realities that may be discovered on the actual Faerie plane. Those familiar with the portrayal of the Feywild in D&D, or the system of nested, increasingly powerful/magical/weird *regio* (essentially planes) of Faerie in the ***Ars Magica*** RPG, will have a closer idea of how this appears and functions in Errynor.

Gnomes: These are mostly subterranean humanoids, in build similar to, but smaller and shorter than, Dwarfs. They are also skilled miners, prospectors, and workers of stone and metal, with dexterity and craft skills for exquisitely fine work that surpasses even the best of the Dwarfen craftsfolk. They are descended from the Deep Gnomes of the inner reaches of Nibirum, with whom they still maintain some contact, though neither type can safely reach the nearer homes of the other for very long, even using magic. The Deep Gnomes live normally at such great depths and pressures far underground that ordinary Gnomes or Errynor’s surface dwellers would be crushed to death in an instant there. By contrast, a few tens of kilometres or miles underground and the pressure is so slight that an

unprotected Deep Gnome would explode. Even using their best protection and magics, Deep Gnomes are unable to get nearer than several kilometres/miles below the surface, and can accomplish that for only short periods. However, a Deep Gnome so close to the surface is able to pass through solid rock as if it were only a viscous liquid, like mud, so great is their physical density. (The Deep Gnomes are a fantasy variant of those from Paul Ernst's 1936 short story "The Microscopic Giants".) A few ordinary Gnomes have settled on Errynor's surface in places, where they build low-domed, quite cave-like, buildings of stone. Their main known settlement in Errynor though is under the central Spiney Ridge Mountains west of Kelloië and south of the Great Pass, with its outer gate access-route high on a mountainside that leads down to their subterranean cavern town.

Goblyns: Errynor's Goblyns live almost exclusively within their own realm of Arkant, chiefly west of the northern end of the Spiney Ridge Mountains. They and others commonly refer to Goblyns collectively as the Arkanti. Individually, they are relatively small, slimly-built humanoids (about two-thirds the height of a typical adult Human), with finely-chiselled, sharp features, tan to darker skins, eye and hair tones, possessed of much organisational and engineering skill. They have quite a militaristic, albeit agriculturally-based, society, in which all members are taught how to look after themselves from a very young age. All able citizens are expected to serve society for at least a time when they come of age (which can include in the military, engineering, administrative or agricultural spheres). Politeness and honour are highly regarded traits across Goblyn society, including such things as the protection of the weak, elderly and vulnerable. While protective of their homelands, they have little interest in deploying their military acumen in expanding their realm currently, and they maintain cordial ties and treaties with the Humans of Perce to ensure the safety of cross-mountain trade and travel between their two realms. Although having no formal treaty links, the Goblyns would aid the Kelloië Elves and Spinoan Beastfolk in order to maintain the security of the trans-montane passes further afield if necessary, in a loose mutual alliance. The Goblyns distrust the Horseclan Nomads, as occasional raiders of outlying farms and settlements along the southern parts of Arkant west of The Cragsteps (which form a useful barrier to the Horse-Raiders, as the Goblyns often call them). Consequently, there is a more obvious military presence in these border settlements than is usually seen elsewhere across Arkant.

In dress, armour, weapons and architecture, the Goblyns favour styles reminiscent of Earth's Ancient Romans, and are comparably effective militarily, should the need arise. So even their unpaved roads are typically better-prepared and maintained than some properly paved roads elsewhere, while their paved roads, which are built chiefly between towns and cities, have magically-powered rail-lines running alongside them, for rapid passenger and small-goods transport, which services operate to regular, reliable, timetables. They are fine sailors too, and sound shipwrights, whose trading vessels may be found in places across Nibirum's oceans occasionally.

Few Goblyns are capable of magic use beyond the typical minor household effects many inhabitants of Errynor can accomplish. Those of their folk who are more magically-attuned can become abnormally powerful in creating permanent or semi-permanent effects on Goblyn-created structures and artifacts, however.

Goblyn society is ruled by a popularly-elected senate council, chosen every four years, from whom a suitable overall leader and other senior officials are selected by the senate. Such choices can be revoked or amended to meet particular crises, if necessary.

Humans: Humans are by far the most numerous of Errynor's humanoid inhabitants, noted for their need to construct communities wherever they go, whether as permanent or semi-permanent settlements, or in nomadic groups. Their range of skin, hair and eye colours, dress styles and architectural preferences is legendarily broad. Of the settled Human populations, there are numerous small independent states, city-states and kingdoms scattered across Errynor, many of which consist of one settlement and the adjoining agricultural land needed to support its population. These are commoner across the Red Plains between the Lonesome Woods and the Hoarfrost Range, and in the Wild Downs region towards the coast west of the Spiney Ridge Mountains, south of Arkant. There are also two larger, more coherent states, the Realm of Perce (pronounced as "Purse" in English) in the eponymous river valley cutting through the northeastern Spiney Ridge foothills, and the partly-adjacent Realm of Norvaux (pronounced either as "Nor-FOLKS" or "NOR-voh", depending on who tells you it in Errynor), with its scattered lands, sea-routes and settlements around and on the southern half of the Norvaux Gulf.

Perce's economy is largely agricultural, as despite being close to the tundra, the combination of mountains, hills, valleys, passes and woodlands in the area creates some relatively benign microclimates that allow fruit-growing - including even some wine grapes - along with hardier cereal and vegetable crops, and a broad range of domesticated animals. The mountains and more northerly lands are sparsely-inhabited, often used primarily for hunting, adventuring or the exploitation of natural resources, not agriculture. The main settlements are mostly small market towns, with the cities essentially larger versions of those. Architecture makes use of local materials, trending towards an early-medieval European style overall, with many of the smaller settlements composed of thatched roundhouses of a size suitable for each to contain an extended family. Those nearer the mountains or wilder lands (which includes the Lonesome Woods of Kelloië in some Humans' minds) tend to be walled or otherwise fortified, usually by banks and ditches, and a wooden palisade. Such defences are mainly against raiding creatures, or animals seeking food. Even in these districts though, not all towns need be walled, having instead such things as gated main streets, with narrow (one person wide) alleys between properties and garden strip-lands extending away from the thoroughfares, which can form an equally effective barrier if sensibly defended. Some of the larger towns and more prosperous cities indulge in elaborate stone, or stone-founded, defences, if perhaps at times largely for show or prestige. Roads are usually dirt trails, occasionally wood-planked "corduroy"-style, or gravelled, away from the main settlements, but a few are paved, particularly nearer the cities. There are many unpaved trails too. Friendly relations are maintained with the Arkant Goblyns, Kelloië Elves and Spinoan Beastfolk, to help keep trade flowing to and from Perce, sometimes by treaty, mostly by less formal mutual agreements. Relations with Norvaux can be strained, as the Norvaux (always "Nor-FOLKS" when used of the people instead of the state) are fiercely independent, but necessary allies thanks to their boat-building skills and ready access to bitumen and other hydrocarbon substances from the Gulf coasts. Most, but not all, Percyans ("PURSE-ye-ans") have dark hair and eyes, and pale to somewhat swarthy skins, which may become tanned or weather-beaten in season. Politically, Perce is ruled by a hereditary monarch, with a council of advisors drawn from various parts of society. Areas of the realm and its settlements are controlled by an aristocracy who all owe their lands, positions, and loyalty to the monarch, though their titles and real powers are as variable as the size of their domains.

The people of Norvaux carry out some agriculture, but their colder, poorer, soils make this more a subsistence than tradable commodity. They are expert boat-builders

and sailors, especially of near-coastal craft and waters, as well as being very knowledgeable in collecting and using the liquid hydrocarbon and gaseous substances available from seeps along much of the southern Gulf coasts. They also fish the Gulf for food, drying, salting and smoking their catches for future use and trade. The main concentration of their settlements is around the Perce estuary at the Gulf's southern tip, with smaller clan-lands on both long sides of the Gulf north from there. As sailors, they often set-up independent raft-towns on the Gulf itself well away from land, when their boats meet up and lash together temporarily to swap materials, catches and stories, and give aid if needed to fellow Norvaux. Temporary camps and boatyards may spring up too for a time almost anywhere along the ice-free Gulf coasts, including foraging expeditions for timber, hunting or new resources. An annual trading voyage leaves as soon as the ice allows along the southern Gulf shore, around the Dreaming Cape headland to the more northerly Goblyn coastal settlements, as well as calling-in at other friendly places along this stretch of shore, returning before the winter sea-ice forms to halt water-borne travel beyond the Gulf. In a severe winter, the Norvaux will sometimes use horse-drawn sleds and skis to cross the frozen Gulf and maintain contact with their outlying settlements. Their society is matrilineal. Each settlement area has its own clan-matriarch, some elected, some hereditary, but all owe allegiance to the High Matriarch, whose seat is at the largest Norvaux town, on the Perce estuary. Three or sometimes four clan-matriarchs rule in the main Norvaux lands too (east, west and south of the estuary, the fourth - if there is one - ruling the easternmost agricultural area closest to the woods away from the estuary). Relations with Perce can be variable, but are important for trade. The most northwesterly Norvaux clan is part of the Fireshore Alliance as well (on which Alliance see more below in the discussion of Undersea Features). This means that the whole of Norvaux considers itself also part of that Alliance (at least when it suits them). On land, the Norvaux will reuse upturned old boats as huts, workshops and shelters when no longer seaworthy. Other buildings are of stone, often circular in plan, sometimes rectangular, and usually of a single storey, roofed with turf. However, every settlement has one large, well-built, circular-section, stone tower or more, constructed like an ancient Scottish broch. This means it has a gap between its two thick outer walls, creating a space that contains stores and stone stairs to the upper levels. These walls surround a series of radiating rooms on each level, the rooms of truncated wedge form, with a central communicating area between them. The lowest interior level is typically all of stone, but the higher levels - floors and internal walls - are normally timber. Sizes vary, with 50-65 feet heights (15-20 metres) being not unusual, and a 40-50 feet (12-15 metres) external base wall diameter. The top generally has a sheltered fire or large lamp set to shine out to sea at night as a guide for ships, and which also can be used to send signal messages in times of need. The folk of Norvaux have fair skins, often weather-beaten, red or yellow hair, and blue to green eyes.

Orcs: Some scholarly opinion in Errynor suggests that all the current humanoid types there are really just different kinds of Orc, which have taken different magically-enhanced, at times magically-induced, evolutionary paths to arrive at their present appearances, abilities and behaviours. This certainly accounts for what are commonly considered separate humanoid species being so able to interbreed, where physically possible. Regardless, "Orc" has become a general connotation for those humanoids that do not fit within the more populous or distinctively widespread groupings across Errynor. Such smaller units or clans have their own names for themselves, which may be known and used by others, though outsiders will more often pick-up on some distinctive physical

trait, as they perceive it, to name individual Orc bands. So in different parts of Errynor there are, for example amongst more, folks known as the Red-Eyed Orcs (whose scarlet irises reflect light as red even at night), the Half Goblins (slightly-built humanoids who are similar to, but smaller than, the Arkant Goblins), and the Stooping Hobgoblins (tall, slim, muscular humanoids who track and hunt animal prey by scent, so are commonly spotted in a characteristic stooped posture). The use of terms such as “Orc”, “Goblin” or “Hobgoblin” is thus merely a convenient shorthand “size & type” comment, though it can include a negatively disparaging implication in many places, suggestive of “simple, crude, vulgar, uncivilised”, regardless of how inaccurate such labelling may be.

Snow Goblins: The most widespread of Errynor’s “Orcs”, Snow Goblins are, unsurprisingly, found predominantly across the snowier and icier regions, chiefly east of the Norvaux Gulf. They are small in stature, at roughly half the height of an average adult Human, are frequently hairless, have large feet, hands and heads for their body sizes, pale lemon-yellow skins and yellow eyes, and typically wear little to no clothing. They have a close magical affinity with snow and ice, which they can transform quickly, skilfully and artistically by hand and magic into whatever form they desire, be it buildings, sculptures, trails, or slides for skating and fun. Their innate magic means they never feel cold, and are quite comfortable being outdoors naked in even the worst winter blizzards imaginable. Indeed, they rather enjoy those! The downside to this is that in areas warmer than their beloved arctic and tundra regions, they quickly become lethargic and sickly, and will eventually die of the heat, while tropical heat would kill them more quickly. They build settlements even up to city-sized from time to time, chiefly, if not exclusively, from snow and ice, though the closest thing they have to an organised realm is a loose, more or less accidental, relative concentration of settlements scattered across a *circa* 50-mile (80 km) area on the northern side of the last-but-one higher peak in the northern Hoarfrost Range, towards the northeast edge of the map. They are a lively, quick-moving, nimble, fun-loving folk, often playing on the ice-caps and snowfields of the north. It is said they named The Long Slide ice-cap (called Shissith in their own tongue) from their desire to be able one day to slide along its entire length in one go (a journey of some 2,000 miles - 3,200 km - however!). They make hollowed-ice sculptures along mountain tops and ridges where they know the wind will catch them and play whistling tunes through them. Some of these ice organs have become landmarks for those daring few non-natives who have traversed the nearby parts of the Hoarfrost Mountains more than once. The Snow Goblins are fond of the Arctic Dwarfs, and will always greet them cheerily when met by chance in the wilds. They are warier of other folks, though their pale skins and the fact they are unaffected by ice-created mirages or snow-blindness means they can usually hide easily, even in plain sight, or escape unnoticed, from those they wish to avoid. They do make trails across the snow and ice at times, apart from their famous slides, which trails are narrow and meandering in a form that perhaps copies those of the Arctic Dwarfs, or perhaps is just because they like them that way. These are impossible for humanoids larger than Snow Goblins to use, however. Their name for themselves is Shardnay.

Giants: Giant humanoids are rare in Errynor now, but individuals and occasional small settlements may be encountered still, while it is likely they were more numerous in past times, judging by the ruined settlements of up to city size attributed to them across the land, together with other surviving giant-sized remnants, like the colossal statue in Giant’s Bay off the north coast. The relatively commoner giants still present are the Ice Giants, scattered thinly over the colder zone (essentially, these are the same as D&D’s

Frost Giants), while others include Cloud, Flame, Hill and Rock Giants. These too are much like the giant types of D&D (Flame = Fire Giants; Rock = Stone Giants there), but are uncommon to very rare in Errynor. Most of those there are, are found in places towards the southeastern corner of the map, in and near the southern Hoarfrost Mountains west of the great river's main tributary there, which has led to this area sometimes being known as the Land of the Giants, "Yetlunhame" in local parlance.

Lizardfolk: Although there are currently no known Lizardfolk groups or settlements in Errynor, occasional ruins of Lizardfolk type can be found, including at least one ruined city-like settlement in a marsh in the eastern Lonesome Woods of Kelloië, close to the south-central edge of the map.



Three other significant land humanoid types may be found in Errynor that are not indicated by items on the Land Features Key. These are the nomads who follow the migratory large herbivore herds, the mainly nomadic folks of the Horseclans, and the Pirilorni. These are discussed next.

Herd-Following Nomads: Overlays showing the general territories for five great migratory herds of larger herbivores can be activated on the map via the Migratory Herds Layer. These fit almost exclusively within the tundra zone. Other large herbivores of different kinds, some of which also migrate seasonally, can be found over this same region, but these five groups have proven the more cohesive and numerous down the years. The actual animals are of the reindeer-caribou-elk-moose types found on Earth in general size, appearance and behaviour. On a broad scale, they head north in spring to give birth to their young, as the thaw brings freshly-sprouting vegetation and increasing daylight. They remain toward the north of their ranges for much of the summer, essentially until the new-born are strong enough to cope with the southwards trek to their winter pastures around the more temperate end of their ranges. This southern movement begins shortly before the autumn frosts first slow and stop vegetative growth. Of course, the animals do not move or live as a single massive group, but those that make up one of the five great herds do stick more or less within the boundaries indicated for them. Those borders also show those of the humanoid nomadic clan groups that follow the same herds through the seasonal cycle.

Despite their different origins, something about the nomadic lifestyle seems to promote a broad apparent agreement across the various humanoid groups involved. Most use shamanic magic, and each clan often follows its own totemic spirit, which is usually that of an animal, but which can be a more elemental force. The spirit's name is normally used in that of the clan. Those nomadic folk that need shelter create tents from animal hides quite often, or woven textiles, though they may build more solid stone, earth or timber structures from time to time as well, including sacred sites, and some will set up well-hidden caches of suitable materials for their temporary constructions near their summer and winter grounds for easier use. Some clans use domesticated animals as beasts of burden, occasionally with wheeled carts, though more commonly sledges which can be pulled over frozen ground, snow or muddy thawed soil with equal relative ease. Similarly, some clans use skis as well. None use riding animals, however.

Scattered settlements can be found all across the tundra, many created by Humans, as their greater populations in Errynor overall might suggest. While not always built by or for the herd-followers, they may be often welcomed in such isolated places if

peaceable, or driven-off if not. Some of these places can become homes for those nomads too frail or ill to continue their previous mobile lifestyle, and who choose to settle so.

There are three known types of herd-following nomads, Humans, Arctic Dwarfs and Snow Goblins.

Human nomad clans occur in all five of the herd ranges in Errynor, and are collectively referred to as Clanfolk. Most human clans follow sacred totemic creatures.

Nomadic Arctic Dwarf clans are called Peistans (pronounced "PIE-stans", meaning "Animal-" or, confusingly, "Beast-folk") by their more sedentary kin. They are chiefly located in the Herd 5 area between The Magic Bowl vale in the west-central Hoarfrost Range and the Land of the Ice Drakes ice-cap, with a few more isolated clans found elsewhere, mostly east of the Gulf. Even the clans in the Herd 5 area are not numerous. All the Peistans follow totemic animal spirits.

Scattered clans of nomadic Snow Goblins, the Annay, follow parts of Herds 3, 4 and 5, but again, they are few in number overall. They tend to be viewed as less sophisticated than other Snow Goblins by the Shardnay, mostly because they see the nomadic lifestyle as being far too much work and not enough fun. Naturally, the Annay tend to view their more sedentary cousins in a similar light! Some follow totemic creature spirits, but most prefer elemental ones instead.

Horseclans: Most of the Horseclan Nomads are Human, but the Clans will accept other humanoid outsiders occasionally, if they can pass an initiation test. They are otherwise similar in outlook, beliefs and behaviour to the Herd-Following Nomads further north in Errynor, except that their seasonal drifting north in spring and south in autumn is not following particular types of herd animal, but anything they can charge-down or otherwise hunt from horseback. Indeed their seasonal movement is as much to ensure sufficient grazing for their beloved mounts, as hunted meat for themselves. While split into a number of tribal groups, each with its own name, collectively they call themselves the Eponae ("eh-POHN-eye", meaning Horse-Folk), and regard a deity called Epona, Epna, E'pna (where the " ' " represents a glottal-stop sound) or some similar name, as their spiritual leader and shamanic totem creature. This deity can appear as either male or female, or as both in dual forms, but the deity always has some distinctive horse-feature, even when in a not fully equine form, such as a Human with a horse's head, or feet or arms that end in horse legs and hooves, and so forth. Expert riders and fighters from horseback, the Clans are not above raiding settlements from time to time, though equally they may stop to trade instead, and a few places to which they have a particularly positive connection are always off-limits to raiding (at least by most of the Clans).

Their preferred range is the higher grasslands inland of the coastal plain districts, up to the western edge of the Spiney Ridge Mountains, though all the Horseclans avoid the area near the western end of the Great Pass (for the reasons, see under "Beastfolk" above). Their northern limit is constrained by the extensive limestone pavements around The Cragsteps south of Arkant, which are too dangerous to risk their precious horses in crossing. To the south, their lands extend to the end of the grasslands in the northern limits of the Feather Woods, from where tales and songs still tell of the legendary Eonaarean Squadron, its great battles on the plains before the Forest, and the tomb of its lost squadron somewhere among the trees. Some Clans still gather to overwinter at the Golden Halls of the Eonaar north of the Forest, to remember such older times. Many Horseclan shamans also gather before the spring migration at the Sacred Grove of E'pna in the western Spiney Ridge east of the Golden Halls, returning there with fresh offerings and tales in autumn. Both sacred places, effectively the ancestral homes for many of the

Clans, also have small, permanent, Horseclan settlements to maintain and protect them year-round, when most of the folk are travelling. These places are some way south of the southwesternmost corner of the Errynor map, incidentally (see the separate Feather Woods map for their precise locations).

Pirilorni: A type of Elf widely believed to be either mythical or extinct, even by other Elves, whose name survives in that of the Forest at the northern end of the Spiney Ridge Mountains. The name, pronounced “pi-ri-LAWN-ee”, can be translated as “Dream” or “Dreaming Elves”, although they are sometimes called Dusk Elves or Twilight Elves instead. Tales about them suggest they were the most strongly magical of the Elves, able to perform complex spells by thought alone, apparently. However, they also tended to become incorporeal over time, due to constantly channelling such vast energies, so that despite being immortal, many vanished from view. They did not disappear entirely from the world it seems. They just ceased to have individual identities or any physical form after so vanishing.

The reality is they are neither myths nor extinct, as a scattering of mostly-corporeal Pirilorni still exists in Errynor at least, even to the extent of having some smaller settlements in places. Their numbers dwindle over time however, as more become incorporeal, while few to no fresh births occur to replace them. They prefer isolated spots to live in, as other humanoid noise and general presence causes them something between discomfort and pain. Given that irritating an extremely powerful magical folk with the ability to accidentally obliterate a city with a thought would be better avoided, this is not a wholly free choice. Their greatest relative concentration is in the eponymous Forest in and around the Ugrak standing stones area there, over which they maintain a constant protective watch, deterring any “visitors” without revealing themselves. A system of Pirilorni elven roads links their settlements in this region. These are similar to normal elven roads, but only the Pirilorni can use them fully. A skilled Pirilorni can communicate telepathically and instantly with other Pirilorni also on the linked road system, and can use instant settlement-to-settlement safe teleportation the same way.

The Pirilorni are slim-built humanoids with skin, eye and hair shades that match one another in a given individual, but which can be of any colour overall, though the tones are always pale. They communicate mostly telepathically amongst themselves, but when they speak, their voices are soft, and they never waste words. In addition, for non-Elves, it is always difficult to pin down their exact location, as they seem to shimmer and blur as if being viewed in twilight, even when they are in full sunlight. Their settlements and constructions are similar to those of other Elves, and if anything, are still harder to detect.



The Huldramoors

One final place on land from the Errynor map may benefit from some additional explanation, The Huldramoors, the large tract of ice-cap free hills, forest and tundra plain lying between the northern shores of the Norvaux Gulf and the westernmost mountain chain of the Hoarfrost Range. The Huldrafolk are magical, faerie, creatures, the guardians of the wild land. Very rarely seen, some regard them as manifestations of the natural spirit of such places, while some think them merely myths. Certainly there are any number of, at times conflicting, tales as to their natures, appearances and powers.

The females, *huldra*, are commonly reported as being solitary, very beautiful, tall, young, seemingly human, long-haired women. When encountering a lone traveller, a huldra can be very charming and seductive, which may ultimately lead to a positive or negative result for the person met with, depending on how that person behaves with and reacts to the huldra. Such results can be permanent. A huldra can be told as non-human if the person meeting one spots that she has a tail (usually described as like that of either a cow or a fox). Some huldra are said to have a hollow back, like an old tree trunk.

Fewer tales are told of the male, or *huldrekarl*, though he has some similar attributes to the female - solitary, tall, long-haired, apparently human, with a beautiful body, but a hideous face and an abnormally long nose. Encounters with the males can have comparably beneficial or harmful results to those with the huldra.

The Huldrafolk are all able to control the local weather, especially those near-surface types such as rain, fog, mist and snow that can help conceal them, and they can appear from, or vanish into, vegetation, unnoticed rock crevices, or hidden surface hollows at will. Equally, in their guardian aspect, they can cause humanoids to become disoriented and trapped in an area for days or years, sometimes driving those affected insane, or can make them flee in terror for no identifiable reason.

While the “moors” element in Huldramoors may imply the more open land, Huldrafolk can be present across all the terrain types in this region - hills, plains, forests, mountains, rivers, lakes, marshes, and even underground in caves and mines. Huldrafolk may be encountered elsewhere in Errynor too, if still less commonly than in this region.

Undersea Features

The undersea land has a somewhat different character to the overland one. The inshore waters region near the coastline has a solid surface that slopes down fairly gently away from the air boundary in general, but this begins to drop more rapidly further out to sea, culminating in great, near-vertical, cliffs towards the edge of the continental shelf. To help demonstrate this, instead of only illustrating terrain types over large areas, the mapped subsea land is chiefly defined by a series of contours showing the depth of water above the various regions. The use and choice of these depth bands is based partly on physical considerations drawn from Earth's oceans, partly on the commonly-used contours for large-area bathymetric maps for Earth.

Sunlight penetrates to between 100-200 metres below the sea's surface (*circa* 330-660 feet), partly dependent on water clarity. This in turn determines the depths to which photosynthetic organisms can continue to live. Giant kelp, which creates much of the undersea forest cover, can grow as far inshore as between the mean low tide and lowest spring tide lines, but overall, it prefers a greater water column, between roughly 6 and 30 metres deep (20 to 100 feet). Hence the 30, 100 and 200 m contours.

Cold water corals, being animals, do not require sunlight to live, relying on food particles drifting down from above. They are found in water depths from around 200 to 3000 metres or so (approximately 660 to 9,700 feet), albeit their greatest depths are not well-established for Earth, and could be lower than this. Although a few species live in waters shallower than 200 m (the shallowest type copes in only *circa* 40 m of water, 130 ft), their general upper limit reinforces the use of the 200 m contour.

The remainder of this section details selected natural and constructed undersea features in the order listed by the Undersea Features Key.

Bitumen Seeps: These were discussed already under “Land Features” above.

Cold Water Corals: Also, if misleadingly, known as deep-water corals, they often occur in deep, dark, cool, high latitude seas on Earth, concepts here simply transferred to Nibirum. They form reefs on the seabed, averaging 15 metres high by 50 metres wide (50 by 150 feet). About 60% of such reefs occur beside or within sea-floor pockmark craters caused by the expulsion of hydrocarbon gases and liquids such as ethane, methane and propane, the hydrocarbons created either by ancient geological action, or more often by relatively recent collections of rotting, once-living materials trapped by sea-floor silting. In places these reefs can grow to be tens of kilometres/miles long and a couple of kilometres/miles wide. The largest known for Earth is *circa* 35 km (20 miles) long by 3 km (2 miles) wide, at depths from 300 to 400 metres (1,000 to 1,300 feet). Sometimes, cold water corals can form separate mounds scattered over areas around 100 square kilometres in extent (60 square miles), each mound about 100 metres in diameter (330 feet) and 5 metres tall (15 feet), with a “tail” of sand extending for several hundred metres down-current (1,000 feet or more), looking somewhat like a sand volcano. Individual giant corals forming such reefs and mounds can be equally impressive. Rare branching ivory corals, resembling great white, leafless trees can be several tens of metres tall (up to 100 feet or so), for instance, and in tangled thickets can be more formidable as obstacles than any land-based vegetation that may seem superficially similar. The reefs shown on the Errynor map have been sized and placed drawing on these details, and can be home to many creatures, including humanoids.

Hot Water Vents: While hot springs warmed by geothermal energy can occur equally on land or beneath the sea, the general lack of vegetation cover underwater makes them somewhat more conspicuous there, as sedentary animals, and plants where the water depth is not too great, will tend to congregate nearby to take advantage of the nutrients brought up along with the warm water. In places, these vents may form impressively tall, chimney-like structures from deposited minerals coming out of solution as the water cools after escaping from the subterranean region, such as the deep ocean “black” and “white smokers” found on Earth. (Although the Errynor map does not include any waters close to this depth, some of the Errynor vents are of this type.) Larger vents may be noticed on the ocean’s surface in calm conditions, as areas of warmer water, sometimes discoloured by partly-dissolved minerals, or bubbling. Depending on the surface weather, such above-vent activity may include plumes of mist or fog too.

Kelp Forests: The depth- and sunlight-dependence of giant kelp growth was noted above. For pedants, kelp is an algae, so technically not a plant, but its behaviour is not dissimilar otherwise. Apart from sunlight, it needs a firm surface for its holdfast - not a root, as it does not derive nutrients through it - to anchor onto or into, usually rock or sand, and a sufficient quantity of accessible nutrient in the water nearby. Giant kelp is commonest and better-growing where there is deep-ocean upwelling of cool, nutrient-rich water. Under such circumstances, it may grow vertically 30-60 cm a day (1-2 ft). There are various kinds of forest-creating giant kelp, including annuals, and perennials that can live for over twenty years. Thus some kelp forests, or areas within them, may be present in some years but not others. Similar to deciduous tree and other tender land-plant behaviour, giant kelp shows its greatest growth in spring and summer (which periods are also coincident with the more active spells of oceanic upwelling), followed by a dieback as nutrient levels and sunlight periods decline, and storms increase. The largest giant kelp

can grow to about 45 metres (150 feet), so there is often a heavy, near-surface canopy over the forest in summer. In Earth's northern hemisphere oceans, giant kelp forests occur in waters of suitable depth between about 25° and 73° N latitude, with the range for western Europe (treated as a suitable comparison for Errynor in a loosely physical sense) being from *circa* 38° to 73° N. Kelp forest growth for Errynor has been shown on the map following this range of parameters. Again, many creatures live in these forests.

Seamounts: Seamounts are undersea surface hills and mountains that can have remarkably steep-sided, relatively narrow, vertical extensions, sometimes of a height sufficient to break the sea's surface as an island, no matter how deep the water in which they originate. Most are undersea volcanoes, and while typically they start on the seabed as a normal shield volcano (one with a broad base and quite gently-sloping sides), as the mount grows, it erupts more lava than might be expected of a similar land volcano. Surrounded by cold water, the lava solidifies more rapidly than it would in air, so stays fairly close to the eruptive vent. Hence after a time, such volcanoes tend to grow vertically, but not horizontally. While a seamount remains active, such a narrow, high, steep conical form is fairly stable, probably because the magma pipe feeding the lava to the top vent keeps the interior warm and malleable, so the whole retains a degree of flexibility. As the structure ages, and less magma is extruded, the seamount becomes prey to partial or total collapses. Given that Earth's seamounts range up to roughly 4,000 metres in height (13,000 feet), the collapse of such a vast amount of rock can generate massive tsunamis at the ocean's surface. Various classes of seamount are identified on Earth, though for simplicity not for Nibirum here, given how few feature on the Errynor map. One type though, the tablemount, has been loosely included, as tablemounts (or guyots) are flat-topped seamounts whose level surface lies more than 200 metres (650 feet) below the sea surface. On the map, these are shown as low, flat-topped seafloor hills.

Fissure Lines: These are steep-sided, relatively narrow, elongated fractures in the seabed, that can be very deep (hundreds of metres = yards or more). They are tension features, notably in the seafloor zone where begins the steeper descent towards the great cliffs at the edge of the continental shelf. They form convenient habitats for sea-dwellers not reliant on sunlight, including sometimes the sea's intelligent humanoids.

Colossal Statue: This great, probable Cloud Giant, statue in Giant's Bay off the north coast was detailed earlier under "Land Features".

Undersea Settlements & Their Builders

See the comments at the start of the "Land Settlements & Their Builders" section above for general notes on what settlements are illustrated on the Errynor map. The only difference is that ruined undersea settlements are rarely hidden by vegetation, other than when in kelp forests and relatively shallow waters. Most ruins will have been destroyed by tidal, storm or current action over time, or concealed by silting, all of which work similarly in disguising the remnants of structures much below city-sized just as well as vegetation does on land. The builders of the settlements from the Constructed Features segment of the Undersea Key are provided with the following notes, given in order from that Key.

Fish-Folk: These slender humanoids have four limbs, including webbed hands and large, webbed feet, with control fins on their arms, legs and back, and narrow, forward-facing,

fish-like heads, with large, dark eyes. They are entirely marine aquatic beings, and cannot breathe in air without magic. They are rare in Errynor's seas, but do form settlements from time to time, often ones that are well-concealed, and usually carved skilfully into native rock or dead coral within a still-living reef. Their architecture favours narrow openings that suit their slender frames, along with tapering, conical towers, which can make their buildings look quite castle-like to land-dwellers (or like miniature seamounts for sea-dwellers). They are at home in almost any depth of water, given enough time to acclimatise to the pressure changes involved. Although most prefer a relatively settled lifestyle, even when they do not build structures to live in, a small number favour a free-swimming nomadic existence instead, some of whom will tackle lone surface vessels on occasion. Fish-folk live otherwise primarily as hunter-gatherers, but will trade with other creatures, and produce particularly fine, artfully-carved work in stone, coral, shell and similar substances. Their name for themselves, which other sea-dwellers may use too, is Thalassans. They communicate using a mixture of visual gestures, skin-colour changes (including bioluminescent patches), some noises, and limited-range telepathy (*circa* 500 m = 1500 ft). (These Fish-folk are similar to D&D's Locathah.)

Lands-Folk: While this is a common undersea term for all land-dwellers, here it refers specifically to land-dwellers in city-sized settlements, living apparently normally under the sea (and under some kind of major enchantment). Two such cities are known in Errynor. One is of Beastfolk in the kelp forest around 120 miles (190 kilometres) north of the Dreaming Cape coast. The other is in open coastal waters, just 35 miles or so (55 kilometres) off the Ghostspire Coast. The Beastfolk have no marine adaptations, and their city simply sits on the seafloor as if on cool temperate land, while the folk too look and behave as if they were in such a normal land environment, even farming and hunting in the immediate neighbourhood of the city. They seem quite oblivious to the fact they can hunt fish among the "trees" (actually giant kelp). The second city and its surrounding farmland are set within a protective dome that contains normal, breathable air. The city is doubly remarkable for being one of Halflings, a humanoid otherwise unknown to Errynor! Magic-using Merfolk and Sea Elves who have investigated report that from inside, the dome is undetectable, and only a typical land-like sky-view, complete with sun, moons and stars at appropriate times can be seen, along with typical mild-temperate weather phenomena, such as clouds and rain. This remains so even when the area is completely below the opaque sea-ice in midwinter. No one from either city is aware of anything amiss, though neither they nor any other creatures within their respective areas can be removed from them, nor harmed by any marine creature that makes its way within their settlements. The Halflings' dome appears to be indestructible, as far as anyone who realises it exists knows. (The Halflings here are effectively as described by D&D.)

Merfolk: Merfolk are more or less the equivalent of Sea-Humans, in that they are by far the most populous of Errynor's intelligent humanoid sea-denzens, and their upper bodies, limbs and heads are often very human-like, including to skin, eye and hair colouring. Their lower bodies and legs show considerable variation however, including some that have a single, large, fish-like tail instead of legs, while others have scaled legs that end in large, propulsive fins, not feet. Some are able to change forms between such options, while some can alter their lower halves into a form more suitable for whatever their current needs and environment are, including to fully humanoid legs and feet capable of walking on land. They cannot stay long on land, even so. Many Merfolk can cope with a broad range of sea environments, from shallow to great depth, providing they

have sufficient time to acclimate to the substantial pressure changes involved with changing water depth. A significant proportion, especially those that preferentially occupy the shallower, nearer-surface waters, are able to breathe in air or water with comparable facility. Merfolk pay little heed to the physical differences between their variant forms, which can have its own dangers for land-dwelling air-breathers who fall into the sea, as Merfolk will sometimes mistake them for their own folk, and not realise they may be drowning. Their own name for themselves reflects this, as it is simply “The Folk”, and even within a family group, it is common to find a mix of legged and tailed types. They communicate using vocal speech and eye-contact-range telepathy, though they can use telepathy only when underwater.

The only distinction Merfolk sometimes draw is with that proportion of Merfolk that follow a nomadic existence, whom they can know as “The Sea-Folk”, compared to the more sedentary settlement-constructors, “The Place-Folk”. Such sea nomads commonly follow a similar lifestyle to land nomads, using shamanic magic and following marine creature or elemental spirit totems. They live by hunting, with some following particular migratory fish shoals or marine mammal herds. They will also attack lone surface craft at times, depending on the proportion of those among them who can breathe in air and water. Their mix of physical forms is largely the same as other Merfolk.

Merfolk that build settlements do so again in a wide variety of styles and places, partly dependent on their preferred lifestyle. Those that practice agriculture - growing and harvesting coral in deeper waters, or kelp and other seaweeds where the water is shallow enough, and farming fish, often in large, netted enclosures - tend to build more and larger structures overall, generally from whatever materials are available close-by. These may be carved into rock or coral reefs, or constructed from pieces of rock which may be quarried for the purpose, or re-used from older structures (including ruined settlements), along with shells and pieces of living coral, shipwrecks and driftwood. Natural caverns may be used as well, or seafloor hollows roofed over, while some Merfolk use concrete made from crushed shells and dead coral for their buildings. Those following a hunter-gatherer existence, who tend to congregate in shallower waters and around coral reefs, may use similar materials and methods, though for ease, they tend to use or expand existing undersea features, such as caves, cliffs, fissures, or tunnels into the seabed. Even the nomadic folk will build temporary structures from time to time (and more permanent sacred seabed sites), though when the nearer-surface conditions start to roughen in winter storms, like the shoals and herds they follow, they usually just head into deeper, calmer waters instead. (Similar to the Merfolk of D&D, while the nomadic types are based on D&D’s Tritons.)

Sea Devils: Second in order of decreasing population numbers to the Merfolk, if by quite some way, the Sea Devils are of a generally humanoid form, thus have a body with four limbs and head, all of which are scaled, with hands and feet similar to those of Humans, but rather larger, with sharp claws instead of nails, and webbing between fingers and toes. They have small control fins on their arms, legs and back too. Their heads are ruggedly square by Human norms, their faces flattened, with large, dark, forward-facing, fish-like eyes, a mouth full of robust, sharply pointed teeth, and spines around the edges of their faces which can look like horns, partly hence their common name. Like some of the Merfolk, they are all able to breathe freely above or below the water, though they can breathe air for only quite short periods. They prefer to live in deep, quiet waters, which is where they are more liable to be encountered. Indeed, their own name for themselves is *Kachaya* “The Quiet-Water Folk”. Their communication is largely telepathic when

undersea, within eye-to-eye range like the Merfolk, or vocal speech in air, though they can use either at any time. They have a bioluminescent patch above each eye that they can show or hide at will too, which can be used to communicate over greater distances in the dark. They are also able to use a sonic attack when in water from time to time, over typical hand-to-hand combat distances.

While a few favour a wandering, nomadic lifestyle, with the typical nomad traits, albeit rather more prone to raiding seabed settlements or surface craft than their Merfolk counterparts, most Kachaya favour a more fixed existence. Their seafloor settlements are normally of domed buildings with round access-points, the whole sometimes concealed with seaweeds in shallower waters, or within natural features such as fissures, reefs or caverns in deeper waters. The settled Sea Devils carry out some fish and coral farming, much in the way of the Merfolk, but like the nomads, they frequently supplement this by raiding other undersea settlements, surface vessels and onshore land settlements near the coast, all of which helps further explain the “Devil” element in their popular name.

Although all political borders in Errynor are somewhat fluid, those of the undersea folk are especially so. Each of the undersea humanoid groups believes - or will at least publicly express the belief - that the entire ocean is “theirs”. The reality is that groups of Sea Devils tend to be attacked if they stray far from their home ranges, on the assumption that they must be intent on raiding. Consequently, the Kachaya, when not actually out raiding, remain largely within the provinces as noted on the map. Other folks straying into these areas are considered fair game by the Kachaya, who will maintain they are simply protecting themselves against aggressors. While the Sea Devil provinces can be thought of as vertical columns in the water up to the surface, Sea Devil numbers and practical considerations mean they are essentially domes, highest above the larger settlements within the province. Thus the chances of an attack decline higher in the water column, and laterally further from such settlements. Surface ships “violating” the province areas - or passing nearby - stand a much increased chance of being attacked than elsewhere though, given the two-dimensional nature of the sea-surface effectively traps them should they pass “over” the invisible border. Kachaya leaders tend to be physically and/or magically strong individuals, and although they have an aristocracy of sorts, their leaders do not necessarily come from it. Each province has its own leader. However, nearby provinces sometimes become grouped together when an especially capable leader emerges. Such leaders at any level usually survive only as long as their strength and success lasts. (The Kachaya are loosely similar to the Sahuagin of D&D.)

Sea Elves: Rarely encountered, the undersea Elves are similar in appearance and nature to their land-based cousins, but with adaptations such as webbed hands and feet, and control fins over their limbs and bodies, all to suit them better to their usual marine habitat. Able to breathe equally in air or water, their seagoing adaptations make them less sure-footed on land, so they seldom fully leave the water. They are found exclusively in shallower, so usually near-coastal, regions, where they build well-concealed rock, stone or coral-based structures among the kelp forests, carrying out small-scale farming mixed with some hunting. Their largest community in Errynor is the Pallee Realm (“PAH-lee”) off the north coast from Giant’s Bay east to Ice-Roof Bay below the ice-cap. Scattered Sea Elf settlements can be found elsewhere, though the Elves still call themselves “Pallee” in Errynor’s seas, no matter how far from that realm they may be physically. Telepathic up to 500 m/1500 ft or so, Sea Elves can communicate vocally as well in air or water. They can also use these facets to trick or confuse those they do not wish to find them without revealing themselves. (Essentially, these are the Aquatic Elves of D&D.)

Sea Orcs: About as uncommonly-met as the Sea Elves, but found in the deeper oceans as well as the near-coastal shallows, Errynor's Sea Orcs are water-breathing, tall, streamlined, hairless, with large, webbed, clawed hands and feet, large, dark eyes, and long, sharp teeth. They have quite robust control fins on their back, arms and legs that flatten into their skin when a burst of swimming speed is necessary. Overall, they are probably the fastest swimmers in short bursts of any of Errynor's undersea folk. They live chiefly by hunting fish, but are not above taking other prey - surface swimmers, for example - at need, or should opportunity arise. They can attack using a sonic stun burst at times, at a target up to 50 m/150 ft away. Although they can use vocal communication near one another, their preferred method is by eye-to-eye contact range telepathy. Their communities are widely-scattered over the seas, with no cohesive larger-scale or realm-like structure. Each tribal group though will usually have one or more undersea caves they regard as "theirs" within their normal hunting range, so they are relatively sedentary in that respect. They can make objects quite skilfully, primarily tools and weapons for hunting, which often show a remarkable degree of inventiveness. They call themselves the Ketorka, which means more or less "Sea-Folk". (These are variants of D&D's marine hobgoblins, the Koalinth.)

One other type of intelligent humanoid may be encountered occasionally in Errynor's undersea lands, the Storm Giants.

Storm Giants: As rare as their land-giant cousins in Errynor, just a handful of isolated small settlements and ruins built by this folk may be noted. The Giants themselves are much as detailed in the D&D books, albeit in Errynor they are found exclusively underseas, and can communicate telepathically over eye-to-eye distances.



Three more features would benefit from discussion here, one purely undersea, The Deadlands, the others having elements applicable to under- and over-sea situations, the Fireshore Alliance and Moon Mare Strand.

The Deadlands: This is a large tract of undersea land in which there are no living settlements, just an unusual number of old, ruined ones. The area lies west and northwest of Dreaming Cape. The nearby surface land seems unaffected, although the sparse population in the exposed tundra here makes this inconclusive. However, there are tales of ghost ship sightings off the coast west of the Cape, where the shore turns sharply south and runs closest to the Deadlands. What little kelp grows near the ruins tends to be stunted and sickly, while a large, shallower bank about 125 miles (200 kilometres) west of the Cape, where a kelp forest might be expected to thrive, judging by similar offshore shallows to this bank's northeast, remains barren of most vegetation.

Fireshore Alliance: The harsh climate of northern Errynor promotes a spirit of comradeship among the different folks that live there, particularly on land. It is rare to find someone local and able who will not go to the aid of a stranger in trouble out in the wilds, particularly in bad weather, for instance. More than a century ago, rendering such aid led to this seemingly unlikely loose confederation of land and sea-folk along and north of the northern shore of Errynor on and west of the northern Gulf. The marked area of the map includes the overall lateral region and water-column of the Alliance, encompassing

the individual settlements from which many of its members come, including the Fish-Folk, Merfolk, Sea Elves and land Humans. The most northerly part of the scattered Norvaux clan-lands is a member, thus so is all of Norvaux and its ships. Although the official Alliance area does not cover the remainder of the Gulf, all Norvaux people and ships - at least nominally - respect it, given they benefit from it as much as anyone. The annual Norvaux trading forays around Dreaming Cape to the northern Goblyn lands are made possible by help from Alliance members undersea and along the coast, the aid being mutual, given this allows the Norvaux ships to trade with those same folks as well. The basis of the confederation is to allow free trade and travel between all its members, and to provide mutual aid and protection, should it be needed, including militarily against any incursions from outside. The Alliance's name derives from the remarkable natural gas flares along parts of the coast, the Fireshore itself. With the hydrocarbon seeps found both on land and under the sea, such elements seem to many an apt summation of the mutual pact that cements this land and undersea collaboration.

Moon Mare Strand: This is a long, west-facing stretch of coastline on the western shores of Errynor, beginning just south of the Goblyn lands of Arkant. It runs from there south for about 100 miles (160 kilometres). It consists mostly of a beach of strikingly fine, white sand. It has a presence for promoting calm, even on stormy days, or so it is said. Offshore is the great Moon Mare Forest of giant kelp, said to be an equally tranquil region. Besides the impressive scenery, Moon Mare Strand is a particularly special place. An event has happened here at the full White Moon nearest the northern spring equinox every twelfth year since time immemorial (so the tales record). Just as the White Moon is setting then, near dawn, and the tide is at its very lowest (because this happens only when the White Moon's perigee coincides with the equinox), a herd of 24 white horses is seen galloping towards the shore on the surface of the sea, as if coming straight from the Moon. Above them fly six white pegasi. Below them, under the water, swims a herd of 12 giant sea horses and 12 giant leafy sea dragons, all also white and moving along the same path at the same speed towards the shore. (Leafy sea dragons are larger, more elaborately-formed, and in Errynor more magical, types of sea horse.) The horses make landfall at the same spot as one another on the coast, along with the pegasi, while the sea horses and dragons draw to a halt at the nearest point on the same line in the kelp forest where there is still a comfortable water depth for them. When they reach land, six of the horses can be recognised as actually unicorns. Regardless of the prevailing weather otherwise, for an hour to either side of this arrival moment, the local conditions along the sea-path, on land and below the sea, become quite calm and temperate. The setting White Moon and rising Sun are always visible when each is above the horizon for at least this same period, through gaps in any clouds.

An assorted group of land humanoids equal in number to the horses, unicorns and pegasi is drawn to an area around the only Human town shown on the map close to the Strand a few days before the event. A similarly varied group of 24 undersea humanoids is likewise drawn to the Merfolk town in the kelp forest clearing closest to the Strand at the same time. There is no clear pattern to who is so-selected, or why, but all involved feel the call, and know it when it comes, even if they have never heard of Moon Mare Strand before, nor how far they may have to journey to reach the place. From these gathering areas, the humanoids make their way to the place on the Strand and in the Forest where they similarly know the lunar creatures will arrive, which is never the same twice in a row, and there await the event itself. When the animals arrive, they each pair-off with one of the humanoids, forming a lifelong bond.

The arriving creatures are all exemplary beasts, strong, healthy and magical. Consequently, the lucky folk are known as The Chosen, while the region around the two gathering towns is called The Chosen Lands. Many pairings will go on to accomplish great things in the world. It seems no accident the Lands of the Horseclans have their northern end inland of the Strand, while the Goblins' military aerial squadron, The Pegasus Legion, bears a winged White Moon disc as its emblem, because it owes its origins to a pegasus and its Chosen Goblin rider from many years ago. Half of all the creatures are pregnant on arrival, and will give birth to their young within days of the event. The other half are of the opposite gender - so female for the undersea types, male for the land and airborne ones. Once born, the young are free to stay or scatter as they will, once they are old and strong enough, each according to their type. Again, all are fine specimens of their kind, if less magical than their lunar parents.

As any Chosen humanoids receive great honour through this public spectacle (and are always welcomed back to The Chosen Lands, should they return), a truce is in-force for the complete lunation, new White Moon to new White Moon, over the event itself across The Chosen Lands, so any and all of the friends, families or clanfolk may come with them to celebrate in peace and safety too. This creates a festival atmosphere throughout the area. Of course, not all who congregate thus have such pleasant or noble motives, but there are various powerful, benevolent, highly magical creatures who also inhabit The Chosen Lands who will enforce the truce, ruthlessly at need, should matters progress too far beyond companionable boisterousness.

The Moon Mare Festival has become an annual event for The Chosen Lands around the spring equinox, for all the lunar equines only feature every dozen years. Horse racing, horse fairs and a great many other entertainments go on there, as much a celebration of spring and surviving the rigours of winter for the folks in the lands about as anything else. In such "off" years though, the Festival lasts only 6 or 12 days. The same truce applies, and any Chosen who visit during this time are always especially fêted. In all cases, there are ample opportunities for contacts and commerce across the shoreline between undersea and lands-folk, as well as within their separate spheres.

The Cloudlands

The Cloudlands are a highly magical region, connected to the rest of the world at certain places, yet separate from it, not simply because clouds are free-floating aerial objects, but because the Cloudlands exist continuously on a separate plane that only interacts with the surface world from time to time. Anyone may live there, should they wish, if they can reach the Cloudlands, as the clouds have a slightly soft solidity to them once there that behaves much like a ground surface, but one which is capable of physical or magical manipulation into other forms - such as a dwelling-place with rooms and furniture. The substance still looks like - indeed is - that of the clouds, so it is not possible to make entirely flat surfaces or straight edges, and the forms created will change subtly with time too, though the overall shape will remain until altered by some means again. Strong winds can damage or even sweep away such forms, and the clouds raining or snowing onto the ground below can weaken them too, unless magically supported, but once the winds pass or the rain stops, the objects affected can be restored with less effort than was needed originally, as if the clouds (or more accurately the places the cloud-shapes were) have retained a memory of the shape they had been given - as long as this is begun within at

most a few hours of the event. The effect is as if the shape remains, while the clouds move through it.

Most creatures inhabiting the Cloudlands are flying, magical or incorporeal, as those without these abilities rarely feel comfortable among the clouds for long, plus such creatures can move freely to and from their homes whenever they wish, wherever the clouds may be above Errynor. This is because being clouds, the locations of few places are fixed with regard to the surface world. Indeed some magical creatures routinely use mobile cloud islands as vehicles to move their entire dwellings from place to place within the Cloudlands or above whichever part of Errynor they desire.

Humanoids who live among the Cloudlands by choice or preference (known as Air-Folk to surface-dwellers), include winged Beastfolk, Birdfolk, Cloud Giants, magically-capable Humans and some Pirilorni from among those discussed earlier. There is also a small number of **Aerial Dwarfs**, cousins to the surface-dwelling Arctic Dwarfs, whose flying technologies allowed them to reach the Cloudlands first many generations ago, some of whose descendants never fully returned to the surface. They still require such technologies to fly, but have developed ways of even using the cloud-substance thus, and have become overall more magically-adept than many non-cloud-dwelling Dwarfs. Their own name for themselves, also used by the surface Dwarfs, is Aerans (“AIR-uns”).

Elves other than the Pirilorni live among the Cloudlands as well, the **Lyossar** (“lee-OSS-sar”), Light or Sky Elves. All Elves, thanks to their innately magical natures, are able to walk to the Cloudlands if desired. However, the Lyossar are more properly at home there, growing uncomfortable if they must interact directly with the surface world for long. In the clouds, they can fly or swim as well as walk at will, despite having no wings. They do favour feathered cloaks, created in multicoloured forms from discarded or lost feathers they have chanced to find. Their dwellings are among the most impressive and colourful in the Cloudlands (with rainbow, iridescent and low-sun colours that naturally feature in clouds being dominant), which never seem to suffer from storm or precipitation damage.

The Cloudlands can be considered as occupying the whole area of - if effectively “above” - the Errynor map. Their natural mobility and variable presence over the land though means they have not been mapped here. What has been shown, by an optional overlay using the Cloudland Layer, are those near-mountain-top Cloudland Platforms, places within which clouds appear with greater, recurrent, frequency, and where, when clouds are present, it would be possible for any surface-dweller to just walk into the Cloudlands from, or back to, the solid mountainside. Although each Platform area may not appear complete from the surface at any given time, if it is at least partly present, it will be situated somewhere within its indicated region. It could equally disappear to surface view at any time, which would only prevent a surface-dweller from reaching the Cloudlands, or the adjacent surface world at that spot then, not cause them to fall. The nature of the Platforms means that a creature is either fully on the surface or in the Cloudlands when interacting with one of these at the point it vanishes for surface observers. There is a variable range of probabilities for each Cloudland Platform to be present for the surface world at any given time. This has been simplified for the map into just two categories, the more stable Platforms that are present, and thus accessible, greater than half the time, and those that appear less often.



The Subglacial World

Ice-caps and glaciated landscapes are effectively the solid outer surface of the world in many respects. In northern Errynor, creatures and intelligent humanoids may live out their whole existences on and around the ice-caps, and never think anything more than this about them. Below the vast depth of ice (up to two kilometres, a mile and a quarter, in places), there is another land surface though, as the subglacial land segment of the Errynor map demonstrates. After all, in a world where magic-use and incorporeal beings exist, even such hidden places are not wholly inaccessible.

Much of the subglacial land is simply frozen, bare ground, with glaciers filling what were once river valleys, often still flowing slowly below the ice-caps to - sometimes out into - the sea. Ice-Roof Bay is one major, concealed feature, where the ice-cap long ago grew out over a funnel-shaped bay from the land while retaining its solidity, so the ice edge now lines-up with the rest of the nearby iced land of the north Alarius coast. The undersea humanoids, particularly the Pallee Elves, have long known of it, as the place where there is no sea-ice in winter, but a permanently ice-roofed vast lagoon year-round.

West of this Bay, at and far inland from Ghostspire Coast, are two other hidden landscapes, the Frozen and Living Lost Worlds. Both areas share some features in common. Both are very low-lying, and contain vegetation that is no longer found on the surface world. The plants belong to a much more ancient time, with great tree-ferns, gigantic horsetails and other elsewhere-extinct species. The landscape's character is that of a sub-tropical region, rather than the temperate to arctic nature of modern Errynor.

In the Frozen Lost World, this vegetation seems to have been flash-frozen in place, as it is all perfectly preserved as it would have been in life, yet is entirely encased in solid, opaque ice. Oddly, there appears to be no frozen animal life in this area at all - not even tiny insects. There are also five vast, interconnected freshwater lakes of inland sea sizes, set among the ancient frozen marsh, forest and more open vegetation. Partly thanks to the overlying ice-pressure, coupled with a magical effect, these lakes remain liquid, as do most of the rivers flowing slowly into and between them, freezing into glaciers again only towards the northern edge of the ice-cap, where the river-channels form three enormous, once-swampy, deltas. There are fish and other small freshwater animals in the lakes and rivers, though relatively few in number, often sightless (unsurprising, as there is no natural light from the surface below the deeper ice-caps), and again of a comparably ancient character to the surrounding frozen vegetation.

As might be told by the name, the vegetation in the Living Lost World area is very much alive and thriving, alongside a great variety of ancient, again elsewhere extinct, creatures. The climate is of a sub-tropical nature, including warmth, mists and rain at times. This zone is maintained within a very ancient, impenetrable, magical force dome, whose sides rise near-vertically at the edges, doming-out over the central area at a height of about three-quarters of a mile (a kilometre), ordinarily not high enough for rain clouds to form, yet apparently some do. The ice-cap above the dome's top is still a mile thick (1½ km), quite unaffected by the dome's presence and interior nature. The force dome extends an equal distance below ground level here as well, so is really a bubble in its full form.

The interior of the dome magically shows the sky as it currently appears from Alarius, but as if from a location in the northern tropics, around the Crescent Ridges to Tanglewoods region modernly, including clouds. The weather conditions in the dome are also appropriate for that part of Alarius, though in a lessened form. So rain falls, but is always much less heavy than the region's worst downpours; a tropical gale would be here merely a strong breeze. While a thunderstorm might be seen in the dome's sky, no

lightning strikes happen within the domed area. By day, the sun is visible, by night the moons and stars, when conditions allow, again as would be seen from the northern tropics. There is nothing to suggest the true location of the Living Lost World from within the dome, nor that it survives only because of its protected environment. The force dome is undetectable from outside. Should anyone ever tunnel down to it through the ice, it would seem to be merely a continuation of the opaque ice above it, if of more than diamond hardness.

Within the dome, much of the ground surface is occupied by two huge freshwater lakes, with streams flowing into, between, and out from the largest, eventually into the liquid lakes of the Frozen Lost World via an ancient sub-glacial gorge. The larger lake shows signs of having been deliberately constructed in places, to those with sufficient knowledge to recognise it (of a scale beyond any modern culture in Errynor). The smaller lake is in part of a still more ancient impact crater surrounding a low central hill, the only substantial elevation in the Living Lost World. Around and beneath this crater are various concentrations of useful, sometimes rare, metals and other unusual substances.

Among the ancient animals are insects, fish, amphibians, land animals and flyers, though as if chosen from different parts of the prehistoric past, not any one particular era. It would take a great sage to recognise this modernly, however. Similarly, the vegetation too seems to have been selected from a wide range of ancient times. Living amongst all these is a relatively small population of ancient, intelligent, tribal humanoids quite unknown to Nibirum now, the **Drune** (pronounced "Droon"). They are a small (two-thirds adult Human-sized), chunky, hairless, folk, who typically go naked unless protection for a particular task is sensible. They show features that seem like some kinds of Dwarf and Orc today, and might be thought of as archaic ancestors of either by scholars sufficiently well-versed in such matters. The Drune have olive skins, small brown eyes and broad teeth that are quite Human or Dwarf-like. They make and use a variety of pseudo-wooden, bone and metal tools and hunting weapons, as well as chiefly nature-based magics, and live as hunter-gatherers with some small-scale simple crop and livestock agriculture near their settlements. Their buildings, which can be sophisticated in form, and several storeys high in places, are chiefly composed of natural, once-living materials, such as the not-exactly wood of the tree-sized vegetation here. They also use rafts and up to moderate-sized boats on the water, as well as crannog-style dwellings on the shallower lake edges.

The Drune know of, but scarcely ever use, fire, creating heat flamelessly with their innate magic when required. This is primarily because the entire Living Lost World has an atmosphere significantly richer in oxygen than the air outside it now. Fires thus burn larger, brighter and expel more heat, albeit for a shorter time, than those from beyond the dome would expect. This also means that creatures taken from the Living Lost World will soon suffocate and die if taken into Errynor from the dome (including water-breathers, as the water too contains a greater proportion of oxygen than outside-normal). Air breathing creatures visiting the Lost World by magical teleportation - there is no other way to circumvent the force dome - will feel initially drunk, and be unable to function usefully within the dome for some time, until they acclimatise to these prolific oxygen levels. Even then, it would be inadvisable to remain for more than a few days, as much beyond this and a return to the world outside could prove as fatal as to a Lost World native.

Hidden among the ancient landscapes of both Lost World areas is a scatter of ancient, ruined, city-sized probable settlements that belonged to what Nibirum's greatest scholars call **The Wheel-Race**.

Ruined Wheel-Race Ancient Cities: “Wheel-Race” is the name given to an apparently wholly extinct, very ancient group of intelligent beings of unknown form that constructed a number of what are now considered ruined cities found in various places, including those that still lie undiscovered below parts of northern Errynor’s ice-caps. These cities were clearly of a carefully constructed and planned form. They are always large, and set within a thick, circular outer stone wall, pierced by several broad gaps, presumed to be gateways for surface access. Their inner layouts vary, but the ruined lower courses of the stone buildings and their presumed foundations that survive are commonly also of a circular shape. While repeated use of such circular patterns might be thought reason enough for their modern naming, in fact it is the variable number of large, horizontal, circular stone discs set within matching hollows in the floors of a few surviving probable cellars that is the key diagnostic feature. These discs are set on central spindles so each can freely rotate within its hollow, albeit for what function is now entirely elusive. No recognisable writings or other artifacts have yet been found in association with these cities to help explain them or their originators.

Something about the cities, or the way they interact with Nibirum’s magical field, seems to create apparent illusions or mirages relatively nearby sometimes, notably in places where mirages could commonly happen anyway. The visions suggest towering cities of sparkling crystal skyscraper-style buildings, far higher than should be possible. Some rare witnesses have mentioned seeing quite large, indistinct, moving forms within the cities, that are said to vaguely resemble sailing ships - tall, thin, elongated shapes that have undulating surfaces. A few such reports note that an indeterminate floral scent may occur in conjunction with such sightings. Where there is water between the viewer and the mirage, a tiny number of witnesses have mentioned seeing ghostly ripples on the water’s surface in that intervening space, behaving like the wake of an invisible boat. Whether such stories are more than tall tales remains unproven.

