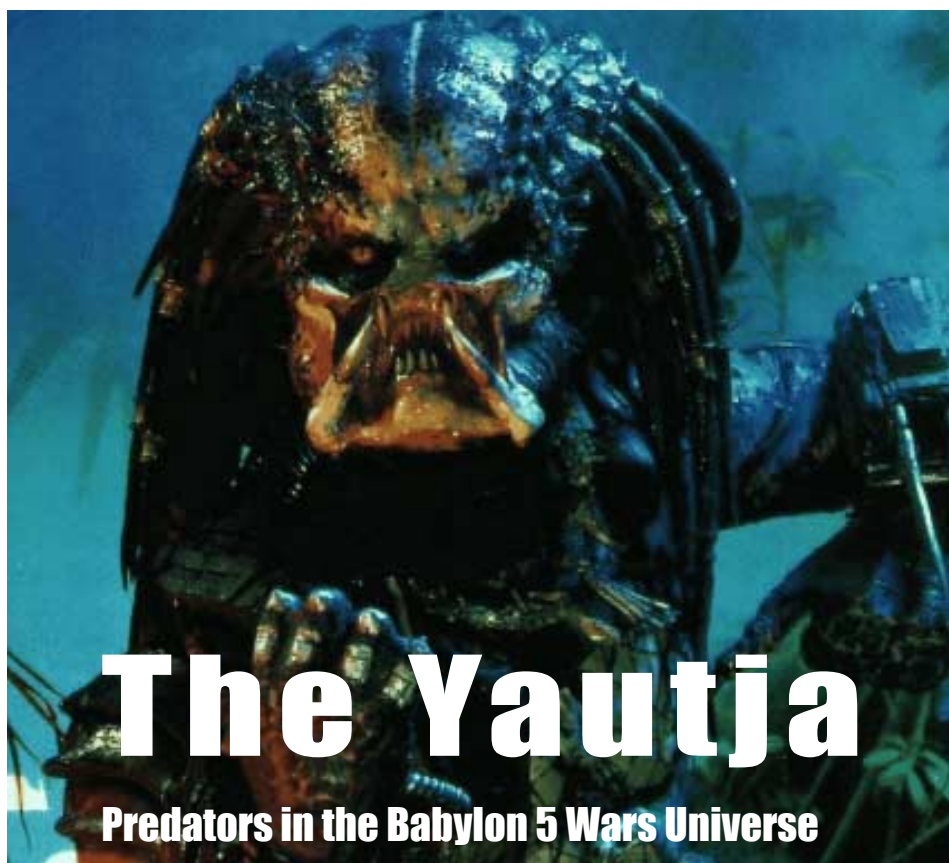


# THE GREAT MACHINE

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## Lost Worlds



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## The Hunt is On... and You are the Prey

*By Christian Meador*

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## Introduction

*Until the lions have their historians,  
tales of the hunt shall always glorify  
the hunter.*

- African Proverb

The Yautja. The name is formless, without shape or meaning, of the void. As such, it is the perfect name for them. Throughout the centuries, they have come as they have willed, moving amongst us silent as death. They are but shadows, and less than shadows. They have molded our societies, adopted the guise of the Gods, and stalked the jungles as

demons. They have brought forth mythology and civilization. And in blinding flashes of incandescent nuclear fire, they have taken it away. They cull our best and brightest, but show sympathy and a thing not unlike mercy to the weak. They see mankind as but sport, our achievements and aspirations as ephemeral and meaningless. And in the greater sense of the endless galaxy, perhaps it is even true. To them, we are merely prey.

And they are the Predators.

This article will examine introducing the Predators into your B5 Wars playing field. While not a complete race to be used in campaign play, the Yautja make a fascinating and formidable addition to any exploration campaign, and will likely bring out trepidation in you players

reserved for the like of the Borg. The Yautja are the ultimate Predators, the most fearsome of bogeymen, but maybe, just maybe, you can earn their respect. And if you do, who knows where they might show up later in the game? Only your gamemaster knows for sure!

## Background

The Yautja have been a space faring race for centuries, visiting Earth in ancient times during the first rise of humanity. Their culture is an expression of the hunt. For a Yautja warrior, all status, all rights, and all chances of mating depend on the success of their hunts. To this end they have focused their intellect and amazing longevity, developing ever better tools to serve them in their safaris. Cloaking technology, multiple sensory inputs, a vast array of specialized weapons, healing kits, even personal nuclear devices ensure that the already formidable warriors have every possible edge when dealing with their prey.

Yet honor still calls to the Predators. They hunt other warriors as expressions of their dominance and superiority. The weak, infirm, woman and children have little to fear from these demons of the night. Only those who bear weapons, who battle on the behalf of their respective societies, need face their skills. And while their starships can carry hundreds of warriors across the galaxy, each Predator hunt is a lone one. If the Predator who is hunting you can be defeated, you gain the respect of the other hunters. Only the greatest prey, the like of the dreaded xenomorph Aliens, can gain the attention of a pack of Yautja.

Of course, in their galaxy, there are relatively few space faring races.



The Yautja are unchallenged in the depths of space. Combat amongst the stars against worthy foes is unknown to them. The greatest of their ancient enemies, known to human kind as the Space Jockeys, passed from the Milky Way long ago. Indeed, the only one a human ever saw was the victim of a xenomorph infestation, encountered by Ripley's Nostromo on LV-426. The days of battle between those huge and telepathic space tyrants and the hunters of the Yautja are but memories in the solar wind.

The expansion of the hunt into space would no doubt be of great interest to the Yautja as a civilization. While initially applying the same rules to the game that they do in their interaction with lesser species during their stalking on the different worlds of the galaxy, it is unknown how they would react to a true challenge of their abilities that could threaten them at a species level. Nomadic,

the Yautja homeworld has yet to be determined. Most who have studied them believe their race exists among the stars, clans of Predators separated by time and space from their common culture, existing to visit and overcome the myriad worlds of their spiral galaxy. But there is little doubt what their motivation would be once they encountered war vessels of a space capable culture. They would be true to their nature. They would hunt.

And if that means they would stalk the ships of your B5 space exploration campaign, so much the better.

## Technology

**Billy:** I'm scared  
Poncho.

**Poncho:** Bullshit,  
you ain't afraid of  
no man.

**Billy:** There's  
something out  
there waiting for  
us... And it ain't no  
man.

- Predator

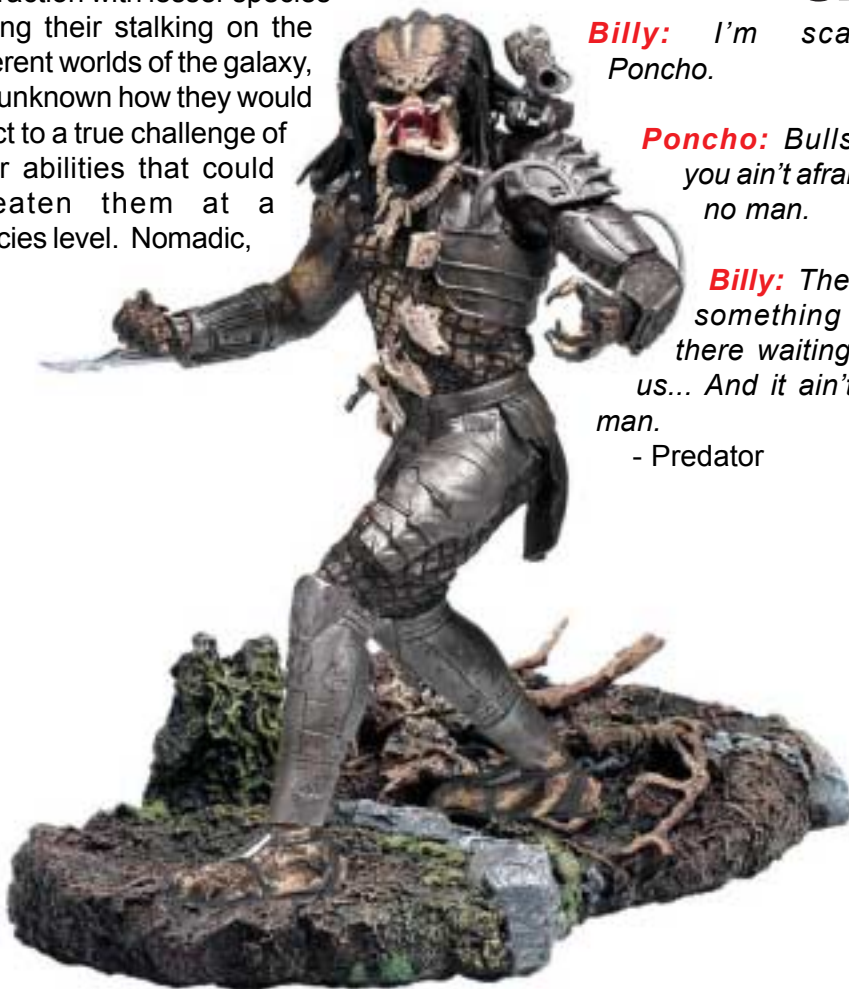
Yautja technology is quite advanced, and has remained at that level for tens of thousands of years. However, it is also extremely focused, and many of the cultural advancements that we would take for granted have been deemed unworthy of the attention of any true Yautja. Their interest in technology is subsidiary to their psychosis, and it is focused entirely on their aggregate cultural mania.

That being said, encountering a Yautja starship should be a chilling experience for the races that have fared into the void only relatively recently. The Predator's starships are just as formidable as one would expect for a society that exists between the stars.

## Cloaking Device

While individual Yautja hunters are provided with their invisibility cloaks, bending light around them, the Yautja quickly learned that the technology wasn't quite so easy to adapt to thousand meter long starships. As such, only their most important vessels, the floating cities and homes to entire clans known as Motherships, are consistently fitted with the cloaking device. Lesser vessels must make due with Stealth coatings and Sensor Ghost projectors, as discussed below.

Cloaking Devices on Yautja Motherships have a rating of one third of the vessels EW rating, which for these vessels defaults to four. This is a strong cloak, able to bend seeking sensors away from the hull and allows for the Motherships to penetrate into even the most well-guarded of planetary systems. Part of the cloaking system includes heat and noise baffles, that make the vessels unnervingly quiet even when



in atmospheric conditions. A Mothership could be hovering just a few meters away and be completely unnoticed by the average humanoid. This adds to their fearsome reputation and sense of the macabre.

All cloaking device rules follow the guidelines indicated in Tyrel Lohr's Star Trek Rules PDF, v2.5. This can be found at [planetside.firenebula.com](http://planetside.firenebula.com).

## Stealth Technology

The majority of Yautja ships use Stealth, making it extremely difficult to detect or lock-on to the unit in question. This operates identically to the Hyach Stealth rules located in Militaries of the League II, page 5. For those without that supplement a summary follows:

The ships are by default undetected and do not appear on the map, using secret movement orders. They are only detected on the map when they get within the following number of hexes of a unit:

Base, 5xSensor Rating

ELINT ship, 3xSensor Rating

Normal Ship, 2xSensor Rating

Fighter, Offensive Bonus

After revealed, they still can only be locked on to if the unit is within the following ranges:

Base, 24 hexes

Ship, 12 hexes

Fighters or Shuttles, 4 hexes

If the stealth ship locks on to an enemy vessel or fires weapons at them, it is considered revealed,

however the difficulty to lock on it still applies.

Stealth ships are detected after EW has been allocated, so in most cases they can gain a single round of unreturned fire.

## Sensor Ghost Caster

Another refinement of the Yautja electronic countermeasure facility, the Sensor Ghost caster plays havoc with enemy missile guidance. Creating false images, it creates a daunting problem for both human and computer ballistic guidance. While turning the caster on voids Stealth capability in Yautja ships, doing so gives the vessel a +6 DEW bonus against ballistic weapons only.

## Reflective Armor

A high-tech defense, Yautja vessels are coated with a reflective substance that bends coherent light away up impact, making laser classed weapons much less effective against them. This has had the side affect of making laser weapons obsolescent among the clans, whose primary foe in space is likely to be another Yautja clan quarreling over prime hunting grounds.

Yautja ships gain an armor bonus equal to their reflective armor rating against laser class weapons (including Pulse lasers from other crossover genres). In addition, the reflective armor rating does protect against subsequent rakes against the same structural location for raking weapons, though the base armor rating is ignored as usual.

## Plasma Lance

A focused plasma weapon, as seen in the orbital drilling scene in Aliens versus Predator movie. These weapons are extremely efficient at causing primary core damage due to its plasma abilities, often coring out ships to drift while leaving their hulls intact. This facilitates a furtherance of the hunt on the victim ship.

## Disk Defense System

Utilizing a larger version of the Predator's killing disk, these ship based weapons are a nightmare to enemy fighter pilots. Utilized in the same manner as a Narn Pulsar Mine, the detection of approaching fighters sends out these shuriken disks encased in an ambient energy field and decimates them. The weapon does a standard eight points of matter damage, designed intentionally to disable most fighters without destroying them. Sufficiently spirited captives are often found from the fighter pilots of other races, and they make for great sport.

## Spear Launchers

A catapult like device used with the Yautja's Boarding Spear fighters, this allows them to be fired off at considerable velocity in the directions indicated on the SCS. Spears launched in this manner don't suffer the usual initiative penalties associated with launched fighters or shuttles, and can be given a speed of five in any direction it is capable of being fired. This allows the Boarding Spears to have great latitude and capability in boarding an enemy vessel.



## Starships

*"You don't know them, don't know what they're like. You've heard the stories, but deep down you don't believe them, you still think you're the toughest thing going... That's not how it is. When it comes right down to it, it's going to be you against walking death - just you. And when it gets to that point, all the fancy knicknacks in the world won't mean shit, and how tough you think you are won't matter. What matters is whether you're ready to do anything to take 'em down."*

- Predator, Cold War

## Mothership

The great ark that carries entire Yautja clans from world to world, it is in search of ever more worthy prey. The Yautja Mothership protects its clan well, from its invisibility to its sturdy armor, and its deadly plasma and pulse weapon systems. The Mothership makes the hunt possible, and for that it carries a special place in the heart of its clan.

Like the Predators themselves, few things can oppose a Mothership when its prey has been chosen. In addition to its intimidating weapon suite, the Mothership acts as a carrier to deploy the tools of the hunt. Boarding Spears, which can be used as fast but ungainly fighters, or breach the hulls of enemy ships to deploy Predators in their midst, or as was seen in AvP even fire them down into the landmasses of unknown worlds. Ner'uda shuttles, to send out small hunting parties to reap the trophies that are required by Yautja society. Egg-laying drones, that plant the eggs of the xenomorphs in far off locations to later be culled. Even docking



facilities for smaller ships, such as the Safari Cruiser or Tracking Cutter. The Mothership lives up to its name, acting as a base and haven for the entire Yautja society.

## Safari Cruiser

A sleek vessel, the Safari cruiser often is used to take the veteran Yautja warriors on their most difficult hunts. Approaching obliquely to the world of its choice, it launches a Ner'uda shuttle to the hunting grounds, as seen in the opening sequence in Predator. The Safari cruiser is unused to space combat, but makes for a potent adversary, often gaining the advantage in the opening salvo with its stealth

capabilities and suite of pulse tracking weapons.

## Tracking Cutter

The smallest of the mainline Predator starships, the Tracking Cutter is often used when inserting hunting parties into urban locations. Once present in a city, it uses its heavy plasma cannon to silently cut its way underneath its hunting grounds. Often potential prey only find that a star vessel is in their midst after defeating the Yautja warrior in question, as shown when Detective Mike Harrigan tracked a young Predator back to his Cutter hidden underneath a tenement in Los Angeles.

## Boarding Spear

Intended primarily in its role to allow Predators to board opposing space vessels, the Boarding Spear can also function with some capability as a heavy interceptor should the need call for it. However, it is far more deadly when injecting a Yautja warrior into the heart of an enemy vessel, to hunt in the close confines of the ship. The Boarding Spear uses the same boarding rules as a normal breaching pod.

## Ner'uda Shuttle and Egg Laying Drone

Included for completeness, each of these vessels function as normal shuttles. The Egg-Laying Drone is an automated shuttle containing xenomorph eggs, which they use to seed worlds for later hunting. Introducing alien xenomorphs onto a player's world is left as an exercise in pure evil by the campaign GM.

## Predators

Note that Predator boarding parties add +2/-2 to all boarding actions, and can cloak themselves after boarding if they desire. While cloaked they cannot attack or be attacked, but gain an additional +1 bonus (up to +3) when they decloak to attack in future rounds.

If the campaign in question includes Elite characters, it is quite likely that the Yautja will seek out the more capable individuals on any world they arrive on. With their advanced cloaking technologies, Predators may be able to stalk worlds unseen and undetected even when facing advanced sensor technologies.

A hunt normally takes 1d3 turns to resolve. Roll on the table below to determine the outcome. Add +1 if the officer in question is an expert scanner, security officer or war leader, add +2 if they are an expert warrior or troop leader.

2 or less: the Predator slays the elite officer in the hunt, taking his spine and skull for a gruesome trophy.

3-4: the elite officer is killed by the Predator, but the Predator is wounded. The Yautja's honor has been met, and they have some little respect for their new prey.

5-7: the elite officer fights the Predator to a draw, both of them being wounded. The elite officer is out of action for 1d3 turns, the Predator escapes to hunt another day. He will return 1d20 turns later to settle which of them is predator, and which of them is prey.

8-9: the elite officer defeats the Predator, who activates his nuclear device. The officer manages to escape the blast, but one structure

on the planet is destroyed. The Yautja as a race acknowledge the officer's victory, and may act in their favor in future encounters.

10 plus: the elite officer defeats the Predator, and disarms him before his death blast. The Predator in question may be ransomed, rescued, or find some other way to kill himself to settle his honor. The Yautja race becomes friendly with the elite officer, and will act to his advantage 1d4 times in the future. However, as always with the enigmatic Yautja, how that is expressed is up to their own unique sense of honor, and may be covert in nature.

## Conclusion

*Monsters, such as this one, are rare. They exist to keep us humble, to remind us that we are not the greatest creatures in the universe. They also exist to remind us of the relationship between predator and prey.*

*Without prey, the predator is nothing.*

- Predator, Big Game

I hope you've enjoyed this look into the mind and capabilities of the Yautja, as well as the ships they utilize in the hunt. Adding the Predators into a normal exploration campaign, or even just as a surprise addition to a table top game, can make for a game session that the players in question won't likely forget!

Until next time...

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