

SPADE-FOOTED MUKASH

- 👣 **Length:** 155cm
- 👣 **Height:** 50cm
- 👣 **Weight:** 120lbs
- 👣 **Classification:** Skinth
- 👣 **Life expectancy:** 50 years
- 👣 **Diet:** Omnivore, strong preference for insects, cones, and sporophytes
- 👣 **World population:** 550,000
- 👣 **Differences between sexes:** Females are slightly smaller than males



Usually just called the mukash, this mesolithic species is community-spirited, sociable, and often keen to take responsibility for the welfare of others. While this sounds generous, their motivation is usually to create a win-win situation.



Physiology



Like most skinth, mukash have six limbs. Individuals of these species walk on four limbs and use the remaining two for tasks that require reach or dexterity; some prefer to walk on their outer forelimbs and use their inner forelimbs for such tasks, while others prefer to use their forelimbs the other way around.

Due to the hoof-like structure of their paws they are not particularly dextrous. They can do so much by pinching items between their hooves and using their lips, tongues, and teeth, but this is not always enough.

Mukash skin is ordinarily pinkish-grey or brown, and depending on where the individual in question lives, many have callouses on the pressure points of their bodies, including shoulders, rumps, and backs. Skin colour can vary on a regional basis due to the colour of the local soil, with colours ranging from white (in chalk-rich areas), black (coal), red (ultisol), and pale blue (copper-rich limestone). These colours are often deeply worn into their skin and may be dull or indistinct, unless the individual has deliberately covered themselves. See Culture for more details.

They lay 2 - 4 eggs per clutch, which they tend to keep in nests within the shade of their burrows. Incubation is not usually needed for much of the day within their native range, but some prepare a soft nest of dried vegetation for their eggs for the comfort of their newborns. They become able to breed at age 10, but many females actively plan to have fewer offspring.

Mukash enjoy a range of foods, including insects, cones, and sporophytes. Usually they not eat leaves as these are not calorifically rich enough for their needs. Those who live close to the sea, rivers, and lakes frequently dip into the waters to find fruits and seeds.

This species retains its tendency towards communal living and cooperation, and they are not hierarchical in nature beyond having a leader to make the final decision in matters that impact the whole group. Indeed, they have relationships with several other species.

Intelligence

The mukash are intelligent, and are commonly believed to be more intelligent than their kasulam burrow-mates. However, the truth is that they are more proactive.

Self-Recognition

Members of this species have no difficulty recognising images of themselves, e.g., in a mirror.

Tool Use

The mukash are capable of planning and devising tools, but lack the manual dexterity to put most of their plans into effect.

Cooperation

The problems the mukash have with dexterity, combined with their long-standing cohabitation arrangement with the kasulam, means that they are well-practised at communicating their needs to the kasulam and reciprocating in any way they can.

Medical Conditions

[Introduction needed.]

Damaged Antennae

A mukash's survival is largely dependant on their ability to detect movement behind them, using the light-sensitive antennae on the backs of their heads. If these are damaged then the individual becomes vulnerable. They have four pairs of these, which reduces the likelihood of all of them being damaged.

Example 2

[To be worked on]

Example 3

[To be worked on]



Geographical Distribution



Mukash are one of the three dominant species in the warmer parts of the South Oplayn continent. They usually cohabit with kasulam, as kasulam are capable diggers and are almost invariably happy for the mukash to make adjustments to their burrows.

The relationship between the mukash and kasulam is multi-faceted and steeped in history, so the full reasons for their cohabitation can be read in the timeline section. However, suffice to say here that the kasulam tend to drive the establishment of new burrows and the mukash follow. The mukashs' current burrows include:

Settlements

Subdesert / "Desert" Tribe

The seat of civilization for the mukash, this is an ancient mukash-kasulam communal tribe. It is also the tribe in which the mukash-kasulam-pinno' grath truce was established, along with the precursors to the truces that exist in other parts of the continent.

While mukash benefit from cohabitation with kasulam, not all burrows contain both species. The list below includes the major mukash-kasulam tribes, but there are many small mukash-only burrows.

Ocean Tribe

When the first yellow kasulam left the desert tribe, a number of mukash went with them.

Coral Beach Supertribe

When the red kasulam became common, they scouted for a more suitable biome to live in, including along the South Oplayn coastline. They found Coral Beach, which suited them perfectly.

This is not a suitable area for burrowing as the entire area is based on the dead remains of an ancient, giant coral reef, so the founders had to tolerate living under the shelter of the table corals instead. They all adapted to this, including the mukash.

Grassland Tribe

Yellow and blue kasulam interbred to create green individuals, and these were highly conspicuous among the yellow sands and red corals. They moved on and a number of mukash joined them, where they settled together in the grasslands.

River Tribe

The kasulam had long-since produced their blue-skinned genome, and blue kasulam had lived as safely as they could in environments that did not allow them to be camouflaged. The migratory [\[whales\]](#) suggested a river-rich location for the blues to go, and they did. Once again, the mukash went with them and established the new tribe together.

Position in Ecosystem

Mukash are technically a prey species, but are intelligent enough to outsmart most predators. They are omnivorous and may eat small animals up to the size of Earthian lizards, small fish, and chicks, if they find them.

Technology

Like most of Kaleida's sapient races, the mukash use technology they didn't design themselves, and which has been given to them by the various space-age civilizations who are collaborating in protecting the planet.

Technological Age

The mukash are in their stone age. They routinely create fires for a variety of purposes, so they may at any time enter their iron age.

Agriculture

Generally the mukash do not farm; they are hunter-gatherers.

However, they have been somewhat coerced into entering their agricultural age. The Desert tribe had been secretly using nets to gather condensation for a long time. While their air wells were not a secret, the extra nets they left lying around on the ground were. These collected extra water and provided the mukash with supplies just in case the pinno' grath took control of their overt air wells.

When the kasulam (followed by the mukash) migrated to the coast, they took the habit for 'over-producing' nets with them. The mukash tribal chiefs were aware that, in a much more water-rich environment, the new tribe lacked protection from the pinno' grath due to no longer being able to use water for leverage, and that the pinno' grath may choose to hunt them with impunity. They came upon a solution: to use the nets to snag fish out of the ocean, and to share their catch with the pinno' grath in return for further immunity.

Language

[In progress]

Naming Conventions

Meta, but most names are a twisted version of a word. E.g., Havven (Haven), Manya (mania), Grav (graph), Nadge (magic), Zune (soon). Due to the lack of surnames, they tend to have suffixes such as "of long ago," "of the River Tribe", or whatever suffix is the

most useful for identifying them. If they are identified in relation to a parent, they are identified with the mother, as fathers don't tend to raise their own litters. This might look like "Manya, of Zune's litter".

- Havven: second in command of the Desert Tribe; takes care of setting up tribal meetings.
- Nadge, of the Desert Tribe: the mukash who measured the number of days in a full year.

Common Sayings

Walks on the Sun

It's considered rude to walk on a shaman's sundial. This social faux-pas was most relevant in the ancestral Desert Tribe where the sand ridges that made up a sundial were easy to tread flat, but the convention continued once the kasulam started migrating into other terrains. The saying, "he/she walks on the sun" is used to describe somebody who is inconsiderate or rude, as an allusion that this is the sort of thing they do.

Energy Usage

The mukash use fire, but this is the only source of energy they use.

The Sciences

The mukash specialise in mental skills such as psychology and mathematics.

Sanitation

The mukash evacuate away from their burrows.

Industry

The mukash generate surplus water in the desert for trading, and provide fish for pinno'grath (or more often, fishing lessons with plenty of companionship; the true industry behind the fishing is the social interaction and information/gossip exchange). These

industries are small-scale and local to each tribe, although the tribes do communicate to keep one another informed of notable events as the entire basis for the water and fish industries is to buy immunity from the pinno' grath. [Note: Kaleida does not have fish, so "fish" will need to be ret-coned at some point.]

History

Mukash history involves a lot of cooperating and collaborating for the sake of their own survival.

Evolution / Genesis

Early in their evolution, this species was referred to as 'athmook', and later changed to 'mukash'. This change is not dissimilar to humanity's ascension from 'great ape' to 'human'.

Timeline

Mukash share much of their history with the kasulam, and it is recommended to read the kasulams' history to make sense of the mukashs' development and movements. The kasulam had the greater survival needs, while the mukash have usually supported them.

Changes in Standards of Living

While the mukash are resourceful, changes to their standard of living have remained modest. Nevertheless, they have made a few improvements over the past few hundreds years.

Burrows to Tents

The original move by some mukash from burrows to mesh tents was prompted by the need to generate water on a covert basis. Given the true purpose of the tents, time spent in them can be seen as a luxury not available to burrow-dwellers, as in the mornings they are routinely heated with a fire, and tea is made and served.

Wherever possible, enough tents are made for all burrow members to have a warm early morning drink.

Desert to Coast

Mukash are well adapted for sub-arid environments, but thrive in water-rich environments. The first migration of the mukash was from the desert to the coast (and

subsequently other locations including a land-side coral reef and a river network), and they thrived in these environments.

Foraging

Mukash will happily eat invertebrates, but aren't quite as talented at catching them as are the kasulam, who have the fingers to do so. One major contribution the kasulam had to mukash burrows is their contribution of invertebrates to eat, often taken from piassijada beds.

Disasters

The mukash have not revealed any historical events to have been particularly disastrous to them in particular. Their predator-prey relationship with the pinno' grath may count as one, but they have established an equilibrium with them to minimise their mortality rate.

The relatively recent evolutionary changes that the kasulam went through have led to changes in the mukashs' living arrangements, usually with the kasulam seeking independence (and therefore providing the mukash with less tunnel-digging support) or seeking support for more individuals, but this amounted to more of a logistical problem than a disaster.

Discoveries

The mukash are curious and have discovered a range of uses for the plants in their environment beyond that of food or nest-lining. However, it is difficult to trace the following discoveries to them specifically due to their close living conditions with the kasulam; a kasulam was equally likely to have discovered the following as a mukash.

Hilsuny

Hilsuny spirals are covered with a protective wax. The mukash discovered that they could use this to treat the strings they use to make nets, to maximise their water production.

Marra Tree

These trees occur in the desert, including within the territories of mukash-kasulam tribes. If so, and if there are not enough resources to build free-standing air wells or make entire tents, the mukash arrange for the kasulam to use the high branches of this tree as anchor-points. However, this can be counter-productive to the overall goal of using water as payment to pinno' grath in return for not predating them. Strings that are

hard to remove are hard to protect, and permanent fixtures such as marra tree strings are more likely to be taken control of by pinno' grath.

[Whale] Feathers

The primary feathers of the [whales] are so large that they make effective flat surfaces to collect dew from overnight. Many mukash-kasulam burrows store a number of these in pots, ostensibly for their decorative appearance, and covertly to collect the condensation in the pots.

[Whale] down is also used for water-collection. Bunches of them are tied together and hung, sometimes (once again, ostensibly) for decoration, sometimes to be used for brushing away sand, and sometimes as the weights for string curtains. Early in the morning these are squeezed dry of any dew collected, usually into one of the pots in which primaries are stored, and during the day they dry thoroughly in the desert sun. The water is then taken to the mesh tents to be boiled for tea.

As this process can be quite damaging to the downy feathers they are replaced as often as possible to maintain the illusion of them being used for decoration.

Inventions

The mukash are creative problem-solvers and have learned to use the resources available to them in their environment in a number of creative ways.

Fire

Fire is well known to the mukash for being a source of comfort, light, processing (e.g., of plants, to produce wax), and purification (usually of water).

Mesh as "Fabric"

The mukash have yet to invent the loom, but are able to make a mesh that, while not a true fabric, can act as such. They use this to make curtains and simple tents. See Tents for more details.

Nets

While traditionally a net might be used by most civilizations to catch fish, the mukash use them to capture water overnight via condensation. Some are used overtly by stretching them out where they can clearly be seen and harvested from, while others are used covertly: nets left in a pile on the ground behave much like Earthian grass, and collect large quantities of dew overnight.

String

String can be made from [\[I don't have a plant for this yet\]](#) and is vital for making nets, meshes, and tents. It is common to approach the site of a burrow and see kasulam making string.

Tents

Smooth-faced kasulam find living underground more dangerous than their whiskered counterparts. For this reason, some smooth-faces opt to live in tents where they are able to see danger coming.

The tents are made with mesh rather than fabric, partly because the mukash and kasulam lack the technology to make fabrics, and partly to allow them to see through the walls.

There is a third, covert, reason for the smooth-faces living in tents: mesh, especially wax-treated mesh, collects condensation during the night, and a large quantity of mesh (such as the amount necessary to make a network of tents) can collect enough to ensure that most members of the tribe can have a drink.

The mukash and kasulam kept some of their water-collection efforts a secret from the pinno' grath during their early history, and many still do. A mesh tent allowed the burrow to:

- collect water, often secretly by staking the mesh slightly inwards to allow the condensation to drip directly into a bowl,
- to create a focal point for the tribe to gather to boil any water gathered, to help ensure its purity
- to share the boiled water with the tribe to drink as tea, which was particularly welcome after the cold desert night
- for the fire used in boiling the water to evaporate any remaining water from the mesh

This system used the benefit of the mukash and kasulam both being warm-blooded, and the pinno' grath being cold-blooded. The pinno' grath would be unable to visit the burrow at night as the temperature would drop too low for them to be able to hunt effectively, so would theoretically never see the condensation on the tents and recognise their true purpose, as the condensation would be long-gone by then.

Historically Significant People

As the mukash live with the kasulam, some of the people they consider historically significant are kasulam, not mukash. Significant mukash are detailed here; significant kasulam are named but can be read about on the Kasulam Lore Bible.

Nadge of the Desert Tribe

Barely a deity, Nadge occupies a cultural spot similar to that of Santa Claus. She was a mukash who invented the calendar that the mukash and kasulam both use. As part of her calendar development work, Nadge built in a rudimentary system for accounting for leap days. Leap days are seen as a posthumous gift from her to all the mukash and kasulam, as a time in which they can do whatever they wish, whether that's catching up on gathering food, socialising, sleeping, or anything else.

Nations Founded

There are no mukash nations, only tribes. These are described under Settlements.

Social Movements

The cooperative nature of the mukash makes them open to further awareness of the needs of their burrow-mates. To this end, social movements tend not to encounter much resistance, and tend not to arise in the first place as oppression is not the default in a mukash-kasulam community.

Kasulam Disability - Albinism, Anophthalmia, Bright colours, and Smooth-face

Collaborating with others to create a safe environment is in the mukashs' blood. Their cohabitation arrangement was founded on the kasulams' willingness to shelter the mukash and the mukashs' reciprocal willingness, topped with the kasulam benefitting from the warning cries of the athmook (the ancestor of the mukash), which benefited both athmook and kasulam alike.

Since then the kasulam have developed a number of mutations that have had varying effects on their ability to live safely. It is mostly the kasulam who have looked after their own in this regard, but the mukash have been almost invariably happy to follow suit. In practice this means bringing extra food to the burrow for light-sensitive or blind individuals, continuing to perform due vigilance for predators, and incorporating a preferable living space for the whiskerless smooth-faces in their solution to the ongoing predator problem.

Sex, Sexuality, and Gender

There is little in the way of sexual dimorphism between male and female mukash, which translates to little in the way of alienation between the sexes. In addition, mukash do not

form long-term breeding pairs, and for this reason have a healthy disregard for the mating habits of others - so long as those mating habits do no harm. This includes same-sex attraction, which the mukash are aware exists but do not consider an issue worth their concern.

The only issue around sex for mukash is their child-rearing habits, which are mostly seen as the duty of the mother. While she can request help if need be, it is not the default for other mukash to offer assistance.

Trade Routes

Mukash-kasulam tribes communicate with one another, although this is usually driven by the kasulam, whose families disperse every generation. The mukash send information along with the travelling kasulam, and in this way new discoveries and inventions are communicated between tribes.

However, to call this system a 'trade route' is overstating it. Mukash do not have commercial infrastructure or logistics in place and source all they need locally.

Wars and Alliances

The mukash predict the risk of negative relationships - predation or smaller-scale problems rather than war - so strive to form friendships and alliances.

War for water

This is an ongoing point of difficulty for the mukash, though it has rarely escalated to become a long-lasting conflict. Since the mukash harvest drinkable water and some other species don't, they've always had the occasional problem with other species raiding their settlements, commandeering their condensation towers, etc. in search of water. They have a cultural tendency to want to retain the position of producing and distributing water for others due to their responsible nature, so as a civilisation they're likely to want to keep control of their air wells.

Clearer-headed mukash leaders manage this situation as well as they can, usually by offering to build air wells for other species as trade, teaching them to make their own, or by creating ongoing trade deals for water.

Dexterity assistance

One of the mukashs' weaknesses is their lack of dexterity. Given the 'upper hand' they have with other species in collecting drinkable water they often request help in return in the form of labour that requires dexterity.

This water-for-dexterity trade is the main basis for their ongoing relationship with the kasulam.

The mukash enjoy multiple seats at the Sunset Cathedra. The standard coating for leaders joining these councils is a red base (for belonging among equals) and black spots (for advertising, or acknowledgement, of their good-quality, inter-species relationships, a pertinent message in an inter-species council). This message is usually more warmly received if the spots were painted by a fellow member of the council or the fellow member's loved ones, so context matters. Occasionally they may demonstrate a blue saddle if they have major news to bring.

Culture

The curiosity of the mukash means that they were always likely to develop an interesting culture. [\[There is much more here I could work on.\]](#)

Calendar

The mukash created a calendar after they settled in with the kasulam. More specifically, the phases of the moon were already used as a loose frame for measuring time, probably by the kasulam. A mukash called Nadge, of the Desert Tribe designed a system for defining the start and end of a year. It's not known how long ago she lived, but the calendar system is very old.

Once Nadge had identified the start of the year, she attempted to fit the lunar month into it. This caused her a number of problems that either she, or a subsequent astronomer, eventually resolved by calculating and implementing leap days, but in the meantime, she named the months, with her inspiration being the main tasks for that particular time of year, which members of her community might do together.

Month Name	Equivalent	Season	Description
Leaving month	January	Wet	Young kasulam leave
Month of welcome	February	Wet	Unfamiliar young kasulam arrive
Month of settling	March	Wet	A month of grief, arguments, and other settling necessary for new kasulam to settle in
Month of pulling nets	April	Dry	Wet season has faded so airnets have become indispensable
Month of mending nets	May	Dry	Task for when it's dry, to take everyone's minds off thirst.
Month of roasting bugs	June	Dry	Food preservation

Month of bargaining	No equivalent	Dry	The pinno' grath usually start seeking extra water
Month of games	July	Dry	It's too hot to be out much. Everyone's hungry and thirsty. Minds are taken off this with games using sticks and stones
Month of closing the pots	August	Dry	Pots are to be sealed to ensure not a drop evaporates away
Month of hanging feathers	September	Dry	Extra task for when it's try, to catch extra water
Welcoming the rain	October	Wet	The rain comes, and everyone celebrates
Month of fetching mushrooms	November	Wet	The mushrooms are relatively plentiful
Beginning of goodbye	December	Wet	Preparing the young kasulam to leave

The Day of Resetting

Each month starts on the day of the first new moon. This creates a leap day every few years, which is called The Day of Resetting. The tribal shaman takes responsibility for measuring and enacting this. For this reason, most shamans have a calendar-style sundial in their working space. Some are scratched from rocks, perhaps centered around a tree, while some are built into the soil, and others are sand circles rimmed with stones.

It's considered rude to walk on a shaman's sundial. See "Walks on the sun" under *Language* for further details.

Leap years are considered to be a final gift from Nadge after her death: a little extra time to gather food and water, to rest, or to use as each mukash or kasulam sees fit.

Leader and Follower Sequences

They don't have weeks, they have a fortnight between the first New Moon and final waxing Gibbous Moon, and a second one between the Full Moon to the final Waning

Crescent before the next New Moon. Each is 14 or 15 days. The moon is considered to be an eye that's either closed or closing, or open or opening.

The fortnights are named differently depending on which one they're talking about, and typically look like this:

Fortnight 1 ("Leader Sequence")

1. New Moon ("sleeping")
2. New Moon ("sleeping")
3. Waxing Cresc ("drowsy")
4. Waxing Cresc ("drowsy")
5. Waxing Cresc ("drowsy")
6. Waxing Cresc ("stirring")
7. Waxing Cresc ("stirring")
8. First Quarter ("half awake")
9. First Quarter ("half awake")
10. Waxing Gibbous ("wakeful")
11. Waxing Gibbous ("wakeful")
12. Waxing Gibbous ("wakeful")
13. Waxing Gibbous ("wakeful")
14. Waxing Gibbous ("wakeful")

Fortnight 2 ("Follower Sequence")

1. Full ("alert")
2. Full ("alert")
3. Waning Gibbous ("wakeful")
4. Waning Gibbous ("wakeful")
5. Waning Gibbous ("wakeful")
6. Waning Gibbous ("wakeful")
7. Waning Gibbous ("wakeful")
8. Third Quarter ("half awake")
9. Third Quarter ("half awake")
10. Waning Cresc ("settling") (notice the difference between this name and the equivalent in the leader sequence)
11. Waning Cresc ("settling")
12. Waning Cresc ("drowsy")
13. Waning Cresc ("drowsy")
14. Waning Cresc ("drowsy")
15. New ("sleeping")

The above would usually be phrased as, "I will go and pick mushrooms at follower, on the second wakeful moon."

Days

The above implies that the mukash and kasulam count their "days" by counting nights. This is in spite of the fact that both species are naturally diurnal, and the light part of a day remains an important time for them. A day starts the moment a sliver of the sun can be seen on the horizon.

Both prefer daylight, but days are harder to tell apart, which prompts them to use the moon that occurs at the end of said day as the moon offers a more practical system for telling the days apart. This shift of focus towards the night time is useful for the mukash and kasulam as:

- a. they can leave the burrow without overheating, and
- b. the pinno' grath are too cold to move. They may meet if the mukash or kasulam go out at dusk, if they're in a dryer part of the desert and want to go out before it gets too cold.

Food

Food and drink are among the mukashs' pleasures, and they make the best they can out of what they have available - even those who live in the desert, where it takes an inventive mukash indeed to make a tasty meal.

Hilsuny Sticks

These may be eaten as a snack while a member of a mukash-kasulam tribe prepares wax. While the hilsuny is harvested for the wax on its surface, the individual preparing it usually takes the opportunity to eat the flesh at the plant's core.

Alternatively, a mukash wandering through the desert may eat hilsuny for sustenance and moisture, although the skin tastes rather disgusting.

Tassey Seeds with Aqualorica Juice

A snack or side-dish. Tasse seeds are coated with the juice from aqualorica seeds and toasted until the juice has dried onto the seeds. The flavour is salty, citrusy, and nutty, but can become bitter if eaten in large quantities.

Tasse seeds grow in the ocean so this meal is more likely to be eaten by the sea.

Tea

Mukash enjoy a cup of tea every morning. This is a ritual developed in the desert where water is harvested covertly each night and must be consumed before the pinno' grath wake up. It is boiled up and served as a tea to warm the mukash and kasulam up after the cold of the desert night.

Palm fungus tea is a popular choice. [To be worked on further.]

Water

Many mukash shelters include a fog net in the form of a fan of string tied to rocks and tree branches with a container or trough beneath. At night, fog collects on the strings and runs down to the trough. By morning, enough water has been collected to use for the family's daily tasks.

They use other forms of air wells throughout their range, and have used these to build cooperative relationships with other species who are less likely to have sustainable water sources.

Art

[Introduction needed.]

Example 1

[To be worked on]

Example 2

[To be worked on]

Example 3

[To be worked on]

Folk Tales

The mukash have a number of folk tales that they tell. These include:

The Three Nesters

Two kasulam and one mukash nestling who are friends explore the woods for the first time. They find a number of hazards and bounties; the needle fungus is a harmless though unpleasant hazard (but one the youngsters have to remind themselves not to scream or shout about as loud noises can attract predators). The Piassijada plant (also known as the grasping carpet) is a boon that they encounter as it can be lifted up to reveal lots of edible invertebrates underneath.

Religion and Spirituality

[Introduction needed.]

Nadge of the Desert Tribe

A mukash from ancient times who occupies a similar cultural role to Santa Claus, but who gifts leap days. See entry under *Historically Significant People* for more details.

Example 2

[To be worked on]

Example 3

[To be worked on]

Slavery

It must be stated that the mukash-kasulam relationship is not one of master and slave. Both species are interdependent on one another.

Clothing

Mukash do not wear clothes. However, they do adorn themselves with different colour clays, minerals, and muds, each of which have their own symbolic meanings. For further information read Coating.

Clays and Minerals

Mukash use a variety of clays and minerals to cover their skins for various reasons. Check Coating for more details.

Translation Devices

Soon after the invasion, all sentient kaleida natives, including the mukash, were gifted translation devices. These devices work with many different languages, host AI that account well for context and tone of voice, and are robust enough to rarely require maintenance. Most are worn as a pendant around the neck.

Magic

Since there is no magic on Kaleida, there is nothing to say here.

Special Events

[Introduction needed.]

Example 1

[To be worked on]

Example 2

[To be worked on]

Example 3

[To be worked on]

Festivals

[Introduction needed.]

Monsoon Season

In areas of the world that the mukash live that are prone to monsoons, the rainy season negates their ability to provide water to other species. For this reason, and because monsoon season is predictable, the mukash prepare to be unable to trade for a while and enjoy some community and family time together.

They don't only spend time with family and their own community. They often invite non-mukash to join them to build relationships together without business getting in the way. A lot of storytelling in spots sheltered from the rain happens. Indeed, the table corals facilitate this.

Cleansing is also done during this season. The soils, minerals, and clays that colour the mukashs' skin during the year are difficult to maintain during periods of sustained, heavy rain, so the mukash make a tradition of washing it off and being neutrally-coloured for the duration of the season. To cleanse themselves as fully as possible, saponin-rich fruits and seeds are collected from the local waters or bought from other species, and used as a soap to rid themselves of every trace of colour.

This act has become symbolic of their unity as a species.

Sport

[Introduction needed.]

Example 1

[To be worked on]

Example 2

[To be worked on]

Example 3

[To be worked on]

Social Dynamics

The mukash are highly communal in their lifestyle.

Coating

This is the accepted term among mukash for covering oneself in clay. Available clays vary depending on the area but the mukash are known to cover themselves in chalk, coal, rust-rich clay, and copper-rich limestone. This turns them white, black, orange-red, and ice-blue respectively.

In many areas there is overlap of availability, so choice and patterning of colour has developed symbolic significance.

Plain colours are the simplest messages. Extra nuance can be inferred with patterns.

Plain white

The colour of boldness, assertiveness, pride, and generosity. They consider brightness to be indicative of the sun and of the glare of the desert, which are both to be respected and feared, but which can give generously - the sun by giving the day, and the desert for being a place from which strangers come with good things to share.

Therefore, a mukash will clay themselves in plain white to indicate that they are on a journey, either physical or psychological (such as doing a trade, learning a skill, or settling a dispute), and that they plan to be able to give of themselves to achieve it.

Plain black

The colour of emphasis and leadership. Mukash do not tend to burrow in coal so they rarely turn themselves black from the simple day to day experience of living in their burrows, so any mukash who coats themselves black has done so deliberately.

Pure black is a striking colour so leaders will sometimes use it to draw attention to themselves, especially for ceremonies.

Plain red

Red is the symbol of family, cooperation, and productivity. Ultisol is easy to dig and holds its shape so is a popular choice for burrows wherever a choice is available, so burrowers, and those who live in the resulting burrows, are often red in colour.

Entire tribes can be somewhat red, so this is the colour of belonging.

Plain blue

The colour of the stand-out individual, the messenger, or the harbinger. Copper-rich limestone is rare and only occurs in small pockets of land. While this limestone can be subject to cave-formation just like any other limestone, only a very few caves are like this and have been taken as a home by the mukash.

Most mukash know where the few pockets of blue soil is but few ever have reason to coat themselves in it. When it is used, normally it is used by individuals who must pass on important messages or make a very unusual announcement.

Here are the meanings for the patterns mukash use in their coating symbolism:

Forearm/leg/face gradient

The colour of training, growth, or transformation. A new burrower is likely to get clay, soils, or minerals primarily on their hooves, forearms, and faces, giving a gradient, and an apprentice seed-or-fruit gatherer may lose the clay from their forelimbs and faces as they continually dip these beneath the water's surface and wash them off. The gradient has therefore become indicative of the individual's striving to become something different, usually something more.

Depending on the colours involved this can be highly ceremonial, as not all combinations are easy to achieve cleanly, and the effort that goes into creating certain colour combinations is unlikely to be lost on the audience.

For example, a white body with black extremities is easy enough to achieve - the mukash need only coat themselves in chalk and then scrabble their hooves and rub their faces against coal - but the message would be seen as pretentious at best and antagonistic at worst: "I am a bold individual with plans to become an authority figure."

For another example, presenting with a red body with blue extremities has a clear enough message: "I am one of the group but am prepared to deliver some unsettling news", but achieving serviceably blue extremities in a mostly red environment is difficult and would require the individual to stay out of the clays and remain standing so as not to leave red marks on their limbs. This combination would make sense if the individual wanted to volunteer to deliver notable news to another tribe, but other members of the group may wonder why they were so keen to do so - depending on the context. In other contexts, multiple individuals may dress in this way.

Saddle

A dorsal colour that is different from the rest of the mukash's body denotes being a stand-in or a substitute in that role.

For example, a leader may attend the Sunset Cathedra and leave their aide to lead in their absence. The leader is likely to wear a base of black for their journey and the aide will wear red but rub their back against a coalface to give themselves a black saddle before presenting themselves to the group as the stand-in leader.

A second example might be a mukash in white with a blue saddle. The white denotes their intrepidity, which they may want to use to denote the distance they have travelled ("I have travelled far from my people," which is a bold thing for the community-minded mukash to do), and the blue saddle would be helpful in denoting that they had suitably unusual news to bring (such as news of a plague of non-sentient pinno' grath, an announcement of a large-scale water-harvesting project requiring input from multiple tribes, or the death of a tribal leader).

Spots

The symbol of inter-species matters, of very good relationships, and of peace and relaxation. Mukash hooves and mouths lack the dexterity to draw spots, especially

small ones. Therefore, if a mukash wants to make a statement about their high-quality relationship with non-mukash species as part of their coating, they will arrange to have a member of that species paint on their spots before presenting themselves to their audience.

For example, a mukash with a white base and red spots is telling their audience, "I have travelled far and made many friends in distant places". This is a homecoming combination and will be met with delight and requests for stories of the traveller's adventures. By contrast, a black base with white spots suggests, "I am an authority figure with allies in territories far from here".

As another example, a blue-clayed mukash with red spots is saying, "I come bearing major news and I have many friends/supporters".

Due to the practical difficulties with drawing spots, and the fact that the commentary may often be about relationships between mukash and not with the non-mukash who actually painted the spots, context may be inferred from this too. Context may also be inferred from the number and size of spots, although there is no clear guidance on what these might mean.

Treparte Symbol

This is a relatively unusual symbol, but worth knowing for its context. Mukash can and will grieve after the deaths of loved ones. When a mukash feels they have grieved as much as they need to, they will often paint the abstract symbol of a treparte symbol on their chests or flanks to show that they are out of mourning and are ready to rejoin the cycle of life.

See *Treparte Reed Species Lore Bible* for more details.

Sexuality and Romance

Mukash do not form long-term romantic relationships, and instead mate in the spring before parting ways. The female raises her young with her tribe and, while she takes primary care of her young, the other tribe members help if requested, or if she appears to be in particular need of assistance.

Courtship

A male mukash will approach a female, usually at night, and begin to walk in circles around her. His walk will include a strut where he shows off the strength in his shoulders. If she is ill at ease with him then she will turn as he walks so that his flank is in front of her; if she is relaxed with him then she will allow him to walk around her.

He continues to test her level of relaxation, and when she is thoroughly accepting of him to the point that she will allow him to walk behind her unchallenged, he does so and mates with her.

They part company immediately after.

Rearing Young

The female prepares a nest of soft material - dead grass and leaf litter usually - which she puts into a chamber of her burrow or the back of her coral 'cave'. Then she lays between 2 and 4 eggs in her nest within a day of mating.

Child-Rearing

The eggs hatch around 45 days later. The young are born with closed eyes but use their antennae to sense their mothers' presence.

The mother hunts for insects and takes them home to feed her young. When they are newborn she chews her catch on the way home, and spits the paste into her newborns' mouths. As they get bigger and stronger she leaves them whole and drops them into her babies' jaws.

The young open their eyes and begin to explore the burrow and the area immediately around it. Their mother continues to seek food for them, and this is often a time when other members of the tribe will help by either keeping an eye on them while their mother hunts, or by hunting while she tends them.

When they are confident and well-coordinated enough to follow their mother or any other hunter, they do. They learn how to find their own food.

This is usually a stage of intensive learning, where they learn how to hunt, and to speak.

Once they are competent in finding food, the young are independent enough that their mother can afford to relax and let the young acquaint themselves with the rest of the tribe - and vice versa.

Politics

The mukash have always had a humble approach to their own power. This has helped them to succeed in bribing or outwitting the pinno' grath, support their evolutionary partners when the kasulam needed them most, and to respond to the offworlders without reflexively declaring war.

While there are many tribes of mukash - some large enough to be mentioned under Settlements, many too small to be notable - they do not have a leader who oversees them. They are, effectively, a network of interconnected tribes.

Government / Leadership Style(s)

As many tribes are made up of a mix of mukash and kasulam (generally 1 mukash for every 4 kasulam), different roles may be fulfilled by one species to benefit the other.

Tribal Leader

In mixed tribes there are usually two leaders: one mukash and one kasulam. This can have practical implications such as disagreements where the two must take extra time to reach a consensus, and it can be disastrous if a leadership pair fail to reach a consensus at all, but this sharing is traditional and often upheld as a symbolic gesture of both species having equal power.

Second in Command

[I'd like to write this to work out whether the two leaders would each have their own or whether the second in command would be just one individual.]

Sentries

The role of sentry in a tribe consisting of two prey species is an interesting one. The sentries are not there to fight off intruders, although they may do if they can and discussion doesn't seem to be a viable alternative. The true purpose of a sentry is to watch for sunrise and wake up the burrow at the first sign of sunrise to gather their water to the mesh tents to boil it, have a hot communal drink, evaporate the condensation outside the tent, and be dry in time for any visiting pinno' grath.

Weavers

A kasulam-only group. Weavers may be considered to be higher-ranking than hunter-gatherers on account of water being such a valuable commodity, and weaving being necessary for the tribe to collect it.

Hunter-Gatherers

Mukash and kasulam tend to hunt and gather together. Mukash tend to prefer digging for food such as roots and insect nests, while kasulam are more likely to pick up fruits and seeds while swimming, collect sporophytes and cones, and find adult insects or very small animals. Kasulam are also more capable of using nets for fishing, although mukash can and will use them too.

Utopian / Dystopian Qualities

Kaleida has never been intended to be a utopia, although it is meant to be a pleasant place overall with no large-scale war or environmental destruction, and with pretty scenery and colourful animals. However, these features cause their own negative side-effects: medical knowledge is at a low level, and no species is truly capable of keeping itself safe from the apex predators of the world, to name two.

Moral Tone

[Introduction needed.]

Example 1

[To be worked on]

Example 2

[To be worked on]

Example 3

[To be worked on]

Military and Law

See Sentries for more information.

Economy

Above all else, the mukash *trade*. To trade allows them to gain resources not available to them alone, and this gives them the evolutionary advantage that brought them into the mesolithic era. Overall, they like to use trade to build relationships and promote themselves as indispensable to help improve their survival rate.

Finance

The mukash are highly aware of the power they either hold, or are mistakenly believed to hold, due to their tendency to collect water in the dryer parts of their range. Because of this, they focus on bartering and trade as a way to continually build relationships with other species, to ensure ongoing mutual goodwill.

They would, as a species, find the concept of currency to be strange and possibly distasteful as it would divorce the social value of their preferred trading form.

Soap

Saponin-rich fruits can be used as a soap, and this has seasonal significance to the mukash who use it in their cleansing rituals during the monsoon. They rarely use it at other times of the year, and generally trade for it rather than harvesting it themselves.

Business

The mukash like to make deals. Indeed, that is the basis for much of their social history.

Education

[Introduction needed.]

Example 1

[To be worked on]

Example 2
[To be worked on]

Example 3
[To be worked on]

Healthcare and Medicine

[Introduction needed.]

Example 1
[To be worked on]

Example 2
[To be worked on]

Example 3
[To be worked on]

Shelter

Due to this species' long history with burrowing, most have a preference for having access to indoor space. In some areas they continue to dig burrows, but in others they create indoor spaces in other ways, including building mesh tents and by living on and under the table corals of Coral Beach.

Fog nets

Like most local species, the mukash need water to live, and have developed excellent water-collection devices. Given the fundamental requirement most species have for water and the mukashs' proactive attitude to life, they harvest water not only for themselves but for other species too.

Screens

The mukash who live here like to weave or encourage the growth of plants to create screens that partially close off the 'caves' created by the corals. These can serve two purposes: one is to help enclose the space to make it feel more cave-like, and the other is to harvest water (see 'Fog nets' above).

Mesh Tents

See Tents under the Inventions section.

Travel / Transport

If a mukash travels, it will be on foot. Potentially they may send messages via the [\[whale\]](#) species, as these are migratory and tend to visit various burrows and settlements in their lifetimes.

Credits

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~Hayley, The Character Consultancy