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**Design Spotlight: First Edition Hirogen** [Tweet](#) [G+](#)

by **Charlie Plaine, Chairman**

13th August 2018

*"You don't realize what's at stake. ... I'm trying to create a future for my people. ... My people are hunting themselves into extinction. Your holodeck technology might offer us an alternative, a new way of life. Instead of scattering ourselves across the quadrant in pursuit of prey, we could simulate the hunt and give ourselves a chance to rebuild our civilization." - Karr, "The Killing Game"*

**Overview**

The Hirogen were added to *Voyager* during the show's fourth season, meant to be new, physically imposing villains to replace the abandoned Kazon and infrequent Vidiian. These hunters were used infrequently, but often in some of the bigger "event" episodes of the show, and would be a major antagonist alongside the Borg for the last half of the series. In game, they are hunters that seek out and eliminate prey, making them one of the most aggressive species.

**At a Glance**

Here's a quick look at the Hirogen Affiliation:

**Hirogen**

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| <b>Nouns</b>              | 32 Cards (1 Facility, 28 Personnel, 3 Ships)   |
| <b>Missions</b>           | 7  |
| <b>First Appearance</b>   | <a href="#">The Borg</a> (2001)                |
| <b>Recent Appearance</b>  | <a href="#">Warp Pack: Holiday 2017</a> (2017) |
| <b>Signature Skill</b>    | Anthropology (28.6%)                           |
| <b>Attack Restriction</b> | STANDARD (Anyone but )                         |
| <b>Appears In</b>         | Voyager  |
| <b>Doesn't Appear In</b>  | Enterprise, TOS, TNG, DS9, and Movies          |

**Strengths**

*Delta Quadrant Affiliations* - I wrote about the general strengths of the affiliations in my spotlight on [Delta Quadrant Federation](#), so please read over that article for details. In summary, the affiliations feature high skill density, above average attributes, and a favorable points-to-requirements ratio on missions. Unlike Delta Feds, Kazon, and Vidiian, Hirogen are an exception; they have ten (10) personnel that have less than three (3) skills!

The Hirogen, of all of the Delta Quadrant affiliations, are in the best shape. They have the most personnel, they have a secondary play engine without having to lean on personnel, and they have a variety of powerful verbs at their command. More importantly, they were the least affected by the series of errata that hit all affiliations. Hirogen didn't lose a key card to the ban list (like the Vidiians did with Organ Theft), and were better equipped to stand alone than the Kazon.

Hirogen decks even come equipped with a way to address the general lack of skill diversity in the form of Rituals of the Hunt. This interrupt allows a Hirogen player to examine every personnel the opponent has in play, and then mark one as "prey." This, in turn, gives all Hirogen with Anthropology each skill on the prey personnel. The choice can be reset at any time, and the Rituals can be downloaded each turn. While it still relies on the opponent having the needed skills, it offers quite a lot of powerful skill gain.

The Hirogen also carry a capturing theme, and can get some benefits like bonus points from capturing opponent's personnel. However, the strongest subtheme is the Children of Light - Holographic personnel that can supplement their biologically Hirogen personnel. All of the Children of Light, from the episode "Flesh and Blood" are all dual-affiliation Hirogen and their native species; Iden, for example, is Bajoran/Hirogen. A Hirogen player can sneak Lewis Zimmerman into play, and suddenly they have a nice supply of extra personnel that can report for free.

**Weaknesses**

It's my belief that the biggest weakness of the Hirogen, much like the other Delta Quadrant affiliations, is their limited available card pool. They only appeared in **nine (9)** episodes of the series and almost all of the characters were male; in fact, as of this writing, there is exactly one (1) female personnel, Kejal, and she is a Hologram. There are some options here (see below), but it's a major obstacle for the Hirogen to overcome. In particular, it makes it difficult to play just Hirogen; to be competitive with them, you essentially have to partner them with the Equinox crew, which dilutes the Hirogen flavor.

As much as it's a benefit to have extra personnel in the form of the Children of Light Holograms, relying on personnel also comes with a suite of drawbacks. They are difficult to use off of ships, and while they can be difficult to kill, there is non-trivial risk of them being "erased" - removed from the game. It's extra deck building logistics that have to be accounted for when playing Hirogen, and that makes these personnel less than ideal as a secondary reporting engine. (More often than not, the cards appear in a Hologram deck instead of a Hirogen deck.)

Finally, the Hirogen have the same free reporting problem as the Kazon do - their free reports require a pre-requisite personnel to be in play. In this Hirogen's case, only Alpha-Hirogen (a keyword in lore) report for free by default; all others may only do so if they name an Alpha-Hirogen who is already in play. This can lead to sequencing problems and can slow down reporting; after all, a handful of personnel with "Dejaren" in lore doesn't mean anything if Dejaren is on the bottom of your deck!



## Looking Ahead

Hirogen had some strong, defining tropes during their appearances on *Voyager*, but I've always felt they haven't been well represented in *First Edition*. I want to feel like a hunter when playing Hirogen, targeting, stalking, and then capturing or killing my prey. Hirogen should have more mechanics that reward hunting prey, including more capturing technology and more unique rewards. Rituals of the Hunt and Relics of the Chase are good starts, but these themes should be defining for the affiliation.

We do have plans for the Hirogen to address what might be their two most challenging weaknesses - lack of available source material, and lack of females. I've seen a few drafts of cards in upcoming sets - notably [b]Project Blues[/b] and [b]Project Delenn[/b] - that will hopefully lay the groundwork for solving these problems. Additionally, providing more diverse personnel will help Hirogen find a secondary play engine and help enable Hirogen only decks. The less people need to rely on Equinox, the better.

## Conclusion

The Hirogen are fun, and in not nearly as rough shape as their Kazon and Vidiian cousins. They aren't without issues, and share many issues with the other **A** affiliations, but they have avoided the devastating impacts of errata (or bans) to key cards. I don't think it will take much to bring them back to the fold, give them a unique mechanical identity, and allow players to play just Hirogen decks. I can't wait to see that happen, and I hope you can't either. Thanks for reading!

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