

The relationships humanity has with the living creatures of our world are as varied as the ones we have with each other. We have fought to keep from being eaten by the predatory, we have nurtured and raised domestics as companions and partners in labor, we have driven some to extinction, we have studied all to increase our understanding of life. Explore the wonders, rewards, and tragedies of the animal kingdom this season. Remember: This is a reference sheet only; check the Season Themes page on GoHavok.com to verify which months are open for submissions and which are closed.

PARTNERS & PREDATORS (DEADLINE: November 7, 2021)

Animals can be many things to humans: trusted mounts and fellow warriors, comfortable lap pets, sources of food, manual laborers, lie detectors, trained trackers and rescuers, formidable foes, and pernicious garden pests. What emotions do animals provoke in these relationships? Show us! (*Publishes in January.*)

SWIMMERS & SOARERS (DEADLINE: December 5, 2021)

There's something about the blue expanse above that draws the human eye. Treat us to a closer look at flying creatures, their view from above and their eyrie homes. What if humans lived in the crags, riding the giant eagles? Delve into the sea, where life is broad and deep, mysterious, and rich with resources. What if we lived on islands and had trained water creatures who retrieved treasures from the depths? Or what if we lived under the sea ourselves? (*Publishes in February.*)

DISCOVERIES & EXTINCTIONS (DEADLINE: January 3, 2022)

There's nothing like the thrill of discovery and the tragedy of permanent loss. What is hiding in the dense jungle or the dark depths of the sea? What is camouflaged in plain sight? Did your human colony drive a native species to extinction on accident? Tell us the tale of the last of the draco-griffins or how a mage brought the rainbow phoenix species back from a humble pile of ashes. What would a foodie pay to sample an exotic but forbidden meat? How far would someone go to poach—or preserve—an endangered species? (*Publishes in March.*)

BEAUTIFUL & DANGEROUS (DEADLINE: February 6, 2022)

It's time to push the limits of human emotion. What is it like to encounter a herd that covers the earth as far as the eye can see? To witness the birth of a precious baby? Make us dread the tall grass, tremble at a rustle in the bushes, gasp as we run from certain death. Poisonous spines, venom, or skin contact could cause a mysterious death. Rare markings could drive the price of a pet sky high or tempt a collector to thievery. (*Publishes in April.*)

SYMBIOTES & PARASITES (DEADLINE: March 6, 2022)

Some relationships with (or between) animals are very close, to the point their lives are intertwined. What if there was an animal that could regulate a human's failing heart or stabilize blood sugar levels? What if two creatures discovered on another planet had a hidden symbiotic relationship, where reducing one population threatened the other? We're looking for creatures in symbiotic or parasitic relationship to humans or to other creatures. Make it fascinating, make it rewarding, or make it terrible and horrific. (*Publishes in May.*)

MACRO & MICRO (DEADLINE: April 3, 2022)

Wow us with enormous creatures the size of cities that create an entire ecosystem around themselves. Astonish us with tiny creatures whose entire existence happens within 1 cubic foot—or within one human organ. Show us tiny mice, insects, or even bacteria. The world is full of small wonders. Or surprise us with a planet-sized creature inhabiting distant nebulae and grazing on asteroids. (*Publishes in June.*)

WE NEED ALL FIVE MAJOR GENRES

Havok receives a lot of fantasy submissions. We love fantasy, but we also love science fiction. And mystery, thriller, and comedy. In fact, because of the lower submission volume for the mystery, thriller, and humor categories, your submission may have a better chance at publication if it fits those genres.

TIP #1: You can *still* write a fantasy or science fiction story while targeting mystery, thriller, or humor. Take your fantasy (or futuristic) character and setting and center your story around a mystery, a question, an unknown. Or make the story life-threatening and thrilling. Or give your characters a humorous personality or put them in a hilarious situation.

TIP #2: The Animal Kingdom theme offers many options suitable for all five genres. Here are some ideas to spark your imagination:

- *Mystery:* investigating an unknown creature; a mysterious attack or puzzling evidence of animal encroachment (“who is stealing lettuce from the garden?”); a scientist trying to figure out how a creature reproduces or where they hide their nests; a whodunit where the perpetrator used an animal accomplice; what animal to choose for a child’s birthday gift; a warrior choosing which long-term mount is the best animal to bond with.
- *Humor:* a mischievous creature causing havoc in someone’s life (a pet? a pest?); trying to train an animal with hilarious results; an animal mistakes the main character for a potential mate; a robotic animal companion with faulty (or poorly written) programming creates awkward situations for its owner; absurdity at an animal show.
- *Thriller:* put someone’s life at stake (could be the animal’s life, too); a critical countdown drives the action (must deliver the egg before it hatches; must find food before the baby animal dies; find the rare animal before the poachers do); survival of the fittest; animals in warfare, rescue, and law enforcement (note: animal survival preferred); journeying through or gathering supplies in an area inhabited by deadly predators or unpredictable and powerful herbivores.
- *Science Fiction & Fantasy:* aliens, hybrids, and cyborgs; both common animal legends and obscure cultural myths; innovative roles for animals in the future or in fantasy economies.

TIP #3: We need both real creatures and imaginary, historical and futuristic. Dive into details and wow us with animal trivia in your story.

TIP #4: Show animals in relation to humans or make animals the stars of your story. Sentient animal species or humanoid animal characters (a la “furrries”) also acceptable. Talking animals (a la *Watership Down*) are fine, too.

VARIETY IS THE SPICE OF LIFE—AND ANTHOLOGIES

We want to see all kinds of animals, both real and imaginary ones. Types of animals to consider:

- fish, undersea creatures
- birds, flying animals
- mammals
- amphibians
- reptiles
- invertebrates (insects, spiders, worms, etc)

Using the season themes to inspire you, send us a story that fits any of the following daily flash genres:

MYSTERY MONDAY: From cozy to crime scene, start your week off with a bit of mystery. Creep through downtown foggy London Town, spy on secret agents at a midnight meeting, catch up with an old friend who may or may not be a cat burglar, or just figure out who stole your homework before the last bell rings. It doesn't have to be a classic mystery with detectives, clues, murder, or theft. If it's mysterious, uncertain, or unknown, take us on a journey through the dark and shine a bit of light on the hidden—and maybe even startling—truth.

Sub-genres: Amateur sleuth (*The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*), cozy/whodunit (Agatha Christie), crime (*The Departed*), legal/medical (*A Few Good Men*), noir (*Blade Runner*), police procedural (*Silence of the Lambs*), professional sleuth (Sherlock Holmes), supernatural (*The Woman in Black*), psychological horror (*Sphere*)

TECHNO TUESDAY: As your week hits its stride, don't be afraid to ask, "What if..." What if NASA really is covering for the aliens? What if your new cell phone comes with a free brain implant? What if a radioactive spider gives you super powers? What if time travel vacations are a thing of the past? With Havok, even the mysteries of the universe aren't too great to explore over your morning cup of coffee.

Sub-genres: Hard sci-fi (*The Martian*), soft sci-fi (*Spider-Man*), military (*Starship Troopers*), space opera (*Star Wars*, *Dune*), steampunk (*The Time Machine*), cyber/bio/nanopunk (*The Matrix*), voyages extraordinaire (Jules Verne), gothic (*Frankenstein's Monster*), dystopian (*The Hunger Games*)

WACKY WEDNESDAY: Halfway done, and who couldn't use a little humor over their lunch break? Well, embrace the lighter side of Havok as you laugh your stress away, 1,000 words at a time. Whether you're running alongside a hilariously unfortunate private eye, hitching a ride across the galaxy, helping a kid defend his home from Christmas burglars, enjoying a "sick day" with a high school adventurer, or going on an epic quest to find a holy grail, you can rest assured that your adventure will be anything but serious.

Sub-genres: Forget 'em! What would Wacky Wednesday be with a bunch of rules? If it's funny, lighthearted, and downright entertaining, you're hitting the mark.

THRILLER THURSDAY: As your week races to a close, get caught up in some heart-pumping excitement. Run down a terrorist before time runs out. Infiltrate a secret society before they collect the last relic. Untangle a sociopath's plot before he pins the whole thing on you. Take down a crime boss before he takes you down. And do it all before your kids wake up from their afternoon nap.

Sub-genres: Action (*James Bond*), adventure (*Indiana Jones*), conspiracy (*The Da Vinci Code*), crime (*Die Hard*), medical (*Outbreak*), man vs. nature (*Jaws*, *Twister*)

FANTASY FRIDAY: TGI fantasy! Now, sit back and drift into another world filled with high elves, amateur wizards, magic wardrobes, suave vampires, and gun-slinging monster hunters. With Havok, there's no limit to how far the story will take you as you kick your feet up and usher in another fantastic weekend.

Sub-genres: Fairy tales (*Cinderella*), horror (*Dracula*), high fantasy (*The Lord of the Rings*), low fantasy (*Harry Potter*), magical realism (*Midnight in Paris*), medieval (*A Game of Thrones*), portal (*The Chronicles of Narnia*), urban/paranormal (*The Dresden Files*)