

Monseignor District

During an abnormally severe winter, given its tropical latitude, coupled with a mysterious, debilitating illness, last year, barbarian raiders attacked the area here, and the wider region around it (see the separate Wyvern Citadel Defence Zone map and description elsewhere in the Atlas for more details). Many settlements took some damage, although by far the hardest hit were Monseignor city and its supporting deepwater port settlement on the Mons Canal, North Mons. Most places on this map show at least some signs of hasty rebuilding, repairs and new construction, with parts of North Mons and Monseignor especially still in ruins.

The mapped area lies on the southwestern fringes of the extensive mangrove swamplands of the River Jackson's delta. The Mons Canal is the southwesternmost waterway off these delta channels, with the swamps continuing for some 70 miles (110 kilometres) to the northeast of it. There are cultivated regions around all the settlements, where food is grown and domesticated animals reared, of which the most substantial are in the loose ring of roads and hamlets centred on Monseignor. Aside from feeding the local population, these agricultural lands generate sufficient surplus for export elsewhere in Kentoria, chiefly by sea.

Overland connections from Monseignor lead primarily southwards, given the Jackson River and swamps restrict such travel to the north. The main southeastern road leads off map to the only River Jackson road bridge, near Stonemoor and Wyvern Citadel, around 50 miles away (80 km), while the southwestern route runs roughly parallel to the coast, through Finsmouth (about 45 miles distant, 70 km), and far beyond. Ships and smaller vessels use the Mons Canal to and from the sea to the northwest, although most ships are unable to progress inland, southeast, much beyond North Mons, due to shallows and mudbanks in the main Jackson River and its many side channels in the delta.

One more overland route leads off map, to the Scrying Detection Finder station at Roved, on the coast about 5 miles (8 km) northwest of Bald Bay, just beyond the map's top left corner. See the Wyvern Citadel Defence Zone map for details on Roved and the Scrying Detection Finder facilities. Lazywitch and Bald Bay provide support services for the people at Roved, as well as themselves.

The valley of the relatively minor River Wisper (some say the name derives from the swamp-lights seen along its marshy banks from time to time) forms one of the map's chief geographic zones. Its southeastern channel rises roughly 25 miles inland of the coast (40 km), while its southern tributary, the unlabelled Newberf, begins about 10 miles (16 km) south of the Wisper bridge at Horsemart.

All the larger settlements include one or more flat-topped towers, some newly-restored, or freshly built, in some cases on far older foundations or ruins, with one or two still being constructed. These are to allow rapid communication and landings by aerial troops mounted on the region's larger wyverns, which are used in defence of the whole area (as detailed fully in the Wyvern Citadel Defence Zone map notes). Smaller settlements are merely required to maintain an open landing field close by, for the same reason.

Monseignor & Surroundings

Monseignor is the only city for many leagues, making it the political and administrative capital for the whole Wyvern Citadel Defence Zone, and places nearby. The city has walls, which show clear evidence of recent rebuilding and repairs, along with some stretches which are simply hastily-raised earthen banks topped by wooden palisades currently, in the wake of the recent raids and partial destruction. Its political hub is the very newly-restored Forum at the city's heart. The city contains several towers, including a flat-topped one within the walls, and a second, still being built, a short way southeast of the wall there, both for wyverns to use. There are two main gates, on the northern and southern sides. Routes from the north gate lead to Stow Abbey and North Mons. The south gate road forks just outside the city, from where the southeastern way leads by Paraber and Lyncene off map to Stonemoor, Wyvern Citadel and beyond, while the southwestern road runs over the Wisper to Horsemart and places far beyond along the coastal route.

Agricultural lands ring the city, worked by folk from the hamlets of Freemonk, Reades, Paraber, Zolehind, Virtue, Inkhole and Stow Abbey. The latter place has a wyvern tower too, thanks to its location on the way to Roved, via Lazywitch. As the "Abbey" name suggests, a religious order is indeed based at Stow Abbey, with a second, quite separate, order based at Freemonk. Lyncene, southeast of Zolehind, is a way station along the main southeast road, a place also known for its game animals, and the unusual, sometimes magical, herbs, plants, fruits and timber obtained from the Rightwood, to its northeast. Wolf Hill, an isolated minor upland southeast of Rightwood, is a further minor landmark for this area.

Bald Bay is a coastal fishing village by the mouth of the River Wisper. It has a wyvern tower, and provides support to the Roved station further north along the shore. The harbour in the Bay itself is small, and only smaller seagoing and riverine craft can use it safely. Dovedock hamlet, a little inland towards Monseignor, supplements the local fish with additional agricultural provisions. The lone, steep hill south of the Wisper and Bald Bay is considered part of the offshore rocky islets collectively called "The Whalebacks", supposedly due to the way their rounded outlines show above the water, and on the landward horizon, from the sea. The offshore rocks are a known navigational hazard locally, and several ships have been wrecked on them over the years.

Lazywitch was originally an outlying farming and hunting hamlet, which has been recently expanded by a new wyvern tower and some housing (both still under construction), all to help support the building and operation of the Roved facility, a short way to the northwest. The Lazywitch Hills, low-rising mounds northeast of the settlement, are known for their magical lights and glows, that are "definitely not" will o'wisps from the marshes nearby. The offshore rocks of The Shrimps are smaller hazards like The Whalebacks to the south, although they have yet to claim any ships, so it is believed. Seals are sometimes seen basking on them at low tide.

Northeast of the Monseignor agricultural "ring" is North Mons, effectively a distant suburb of the main city, as its deepwater port, thanks to the canalisation of the old river channel there as the Mons Canal some years ago. Until fairly recently, the place was known as "North Monseignor" and the channel as the "Monseignor Canal". The names now though reflect both the previously common abbreviation of "Monseignor" to "Mons", and the fact the people wish to indicate they are independent of Monseignor, and not merely a subservient satellite. Forest Urn close by is a farming and hunting settlement to help support the large village/small town-sized population that helps run the port. There is a wyvern tower on the southwestern fringe of the port settlement, and a new road (not shown, as its start would barely register within this map's border) follows the Canal's southern bank a short way north of this map, before turning northwest over a marshy causeway to the wyvern drome at Big 'Un Hill. The woods southwest and west of North Mons, and the extensive Duck Marsh southeast of Forest Urn and east of Reades, are popular hunting grounds. The hills and old volcanic plug of Glory Pile mark the southern limit of Duck Marsh, the Pile itself a notable landmark, whose mica-rich surfaces sparkle and gleam in any light. The Mons Canal has a ferry at North Mons, but no bridge.

South of the Wisper, the chief settlement is the village of Horsemart, with its new wyvern tower, its old market place, and its two fine stone bridges, one over the Wisper carrying the main road to Monseignor, the other on the Newberf, which has a minor road that runs only to the steep, mesa-like, dolerite pile of Melgore, a long-standing place of burial for the region's notable folk (detailed by a separate Atlas map, "The Necropolis of Melgore"). Rocky Melgore forms the western end of a series of lower uplands that include the Vault Hills on the Wisper's north bank, and Bull Pike on the south, through which, over the ages, the Wisper has cut its valley. Eerie Peak, west of Horsemart, is a more isolated small upland spot, at the edge of the extensive Coastal Swamp by the shore, whose mangrove tangles make accessing the coast from the landward side of the Wisper all-but impossible, or so it is believed.