

A Sizable Problem

I love the idea of the Size (SIZ) attribute in RuneQuest (RQ). It isn't perfect and there are some well known issues with it, but it wasn't until I began creating my own creatures that I became aware of some of its quirks. As I see it, there are four issues to consider with SIZ:

- It only represents mass. Should it be able to address the differences between a tall thin creature and a short fat one?
- Does the SIZ table extend far enough, covering the creatures from the Creatures Book?
- Are the kg ranges for each size point logical?
- Do the dice rolled to generate the SIZ of a creature give reasonable values?

Size = Mass?

This is the most well known issue with SIZ in RQ and the one I'll spend least time on. The Player's Book clearly indicates that SIZ usually represents mass. This means that a tall thin creature with long limbs could have the same SIZ as a short fat one with stubby limbs.

This has long been the subject of many discussions amongst RQ players. A common proposal is to have two Size attributes; Mass and Height. Some people do use that idea, while others, including myself simply live with the standard definition of SIZ and make exceptions where required.

Is the Table Big Enough?

This one is simple – No it isn't. The highest SIZ value in the official table is 48. The Creatures Book contains over a dozen creatures with a SIZ greater than 48, but that isn't really important to the players, or even to the Game Master. It wasn't until I began to create my own creatures that I encountered the limitations of the table.

One of the first creatures I created was the Diprotodon, probably the largest marsupial that ever lived, and which in my campaign fills a similar role to bullocks, being used as draft animals and for food. These relative of the koala and wombat could apparently weigh up to 2,800kg, over 1000kg more than SIZ 48.

Thus, for me at least, a Size table that included higher values would be very useful. I created one that extended to SIZ 140, which is the maximum size for a Behemoth. Giants can be larger, maxing out at 192, but I could easily extrapolate my table if required.

Are the Ranges Logical?

There is a nice table in the Players Book that shows the weight ranges for each value of SIZ. For example, SIZ 13, the human average, covers weights from 77kg to 83kg,

a range of 7kg. Using Microsoft Excel I looked at the weights covered by each size point and investigated how this changed.

The way the number of kg covered by each SIZ point varies does not make sense to me. They are so chaotic that I wonder if the game designers have been incredibly clever and I just haven't spotted their logic.

Official Size table from the Players Book

SIZ	Lower (kg)	Higher (kg)	Range (kg)	Range Change
1	1	5	5	
2	6	11	6	1
3	12	17	6	0
4	18	23	6	0
5	24	35	12	6
6	36	41	6	-6
7	42	49	8	2
8	50	54	5	-3
9	55	58	4	-1
10	59	64	6	2
11	65	70	6	0
12	71	76	6	0
13	77	83	7	1
14	84	91	8	1
15	92	99	8	0
16	100	108	9	1
17	109	118	10	1
18	119	129	11	1
19	130	140	11	0
20	141	153	13	2
21	154	167	14	1
22	168	182	15	1
23	183	199	17	2
24	200	217	18	1
25	218	237	20	2
26	238	258	21	1
27	259	292	34	13
28	283	307	15	-19
29	308	335	28	13
30	336	366	31	3
31	367	399	33	2
32	400	435	36	3
33	436	475	40	4
34	476	518	43	3
35	519	565	47	4
36	566	616	51	4
37	617	672	56	5
38	673	733	61	5
39	734	799	66	5
40	800	871	72	6
41	872	950	79	7
42	951	1,039	89	10
43	1,040	1,129	90	1
44	1,130	1,229	100	10
45	1,230	1,349	120	20
46	1,350	1,469	120	0
47	1,470	1,599	130	10
48	1,600	1,739	140	10

SIZ 1 covers 5kg while SIZ 2, 3 & 4 each cover 6kg. Then SIZ 5 covers a whopping 12kg! What is so special about SIZ 5? Perhaps the table was created by a duckophile, or perhaps one of the designers is actually a duck!

SIZ 6 is back down to covering 6kg, SIZ 7 covers 8kg and SIZ 8 covers 5kg.

SIZ 9 covers 4kg and then through the rest of the human male SIZ values and up to about SIZ 26 the ranges seem reasonable, but not perfect.

SIZ 26 covers 21kg, but SIZ 27 jumps to covering 34kg and SIZ 28 drops to covering just 15kg.

From SIZ 29 the range creeps nicely upwards but then gets strange again between SIZ 43 and 46.

I am at a loss to explain the odd results. I don't know if it was intentionally designed like that, or if it just happened. Hopefully someone reading this will have knowledge about the design of RQ3 and can explain the logic behind these values.

These results prompted me to construct a SIZ table that had a more logical progression of weight ranges. I am not entirely happy with it, but so far it has worked well. It is not radically different from the official one, being more a tweak and extrapolation than a redesign. The central region of the campaign I run is inspired by Mythical Australia and the surrounding areas also have many non-traditional RPG creatures. It was easy for me to use my alternative SIZ table because few of the standard RQ3 creatures appear in the campaign.

I have intentionally made minimal changes for SIZ values less than 18 as I considered that this is the part where I'm most likely to break the game or do something stupid. This is probably the range that the designers took most care to get the values they really wanted.

Adjusted and Extrapolated Table

SIZ	Lower (kg)	Higher (kg)	Range (kg)	Range Change	SIZ	Lower (kg)	Higher (kg)	Range (kg)	Range Change
1	1	5	5	5	33	663	734	72	6
2	6	11	6	1	34	735	812	78	6
3	12	17	6	0	35	813	896	84	6
4	18	23	6	0	36	897	986	90	6
5	24	35	12	6	37	987	1,083	97	7
6	36	41	6	-6	38	1,084	1,187	104	7
7	42	49	8	2	39	1,188	1,298	111	7
8	50	54	5	-3	40	1,299	1,416	118	7
9	55	58	4	-1	41	1,417	1,542	126	8
10	59	64	6	2	42	1,543	1,676	134	8
11	65	70	6	0	43	1,677	1,818	142	8
12	71	76	6	0	44	1,819	1,968	150	8
13	77	83	7	1	45	1,969	2,127	159	9
14	84	91	8	1	46	2,128	2,295	168	9
15	92	100	9	1	47	2,296	2,472	177	9
16	101	110	10	1	48	2,473	2,658	186	9
17	110	120	12	2	49	2,659	2,854	196	10
18	121	132	14	2	50	2,855	3,060	206	10
19	133	148	16	2	51	3,061	3,276	216	10
20	149	166	18	2	52	3,277	3,502	226	10
21	167	187	21	3	53	3,503	3,739	237	11
22	188	211	24	3	54	3,740	3,987	248	11
23	212	238	27	3	55	3,988	4,246	259	11
24	239	268	30	3	56	4,247	4,516	270	11
25	269	302	34	4	57	4,517	4,798	282	12
26	303	340	38	4	58	4,799	5,092	294	12
27	341	382	42	4	59	5,093	5,398	306	12
28	383	428	46	4	60	5,399	5,716	318	12
29	429	479	51	5	61	5,717	6,046	330	12
30	480	535	56	5	62	6,047	6,389	343	13
31	536	596	61	5	63	6,390	6,745	356	13
32	597	662	66	5	64	6,746	7,114	369	13

SIZ	Lower (kg)	Higher (kg)	Range (kg)	Range Change
65	7,115	7,496	382	13
66	7,497	7,891	395	13
67	7,892	8,300	409	14
68	8,301	8,723	423	14
69	8,724	9,160	437	14
70	9,161	9,611	451	14
71	9,612	10,076	465	14
72	10,077	10,556	480	15
73	10,557	11,051	495	15
74	11,052	11,561	510	15
75	11,562	12,086	525	15
76	12,087	12,626	540	15
77	12,627	13,182	556	16
78	13,183	13,754	572	16
79	13,755	14,342	588	16
80	14,343	14,946	604	16
81	14,947	15,566	620	16
82	15,567	16,203	637	17
83	16,204	16,857	654	17
84	16,858	17,528	671	17
85	17,529	18,216	688	17
86	18,217	18,921	705	17
87	18,922	19,644	723	18
88	19,645	20,385	741	18
89	20,386	21,144	759	18
90	21,145	21,921	777	18
91	21,922	22,716	795	18
92	22,717	23,529	813	18
93	23,530	24,361	832	19
94	24,362	25,212	851	19
95	25,213	26,082	870	19
96	26,083	26,971	889	19
97	26,972	27,879	908	19
98	27,880	28,807	928	20
99	28,808	29,755	948	20
100	29,756	30,723	968	20
101	30,724	31,711	988	20
102	31,712	32,719	1,008	20

SIZ	Lower (kg)	Higher (kg)	Range (kg)	Range Change
103	32,720	33,748	1,029	21
104	33,749	34,798	1,050	21
105	34,799	35,869	1,071	21
106	35,870	36,961	1,092	21
107	36,962	38,074	1,113	21
108	38,075	39,209	1,135	22
109	39,210	40,366	1,157	22
110	40,367	41,545	1,179	22
111	41,546	42,746	1,201	22
112	42,747	43,969	1,223	22
113	43,970	45,215	1,246	23
114	45,216	46,484	1,269	23
115	46,485	47,776	1,292	23
116	47,777	49,091	1,315	23
117	49,092	50,429	1,338	23
118	50,430	51,790	1,361	23
119	51,791	53,175	1,385	24
120	53,176	54,584	1,409	24
121	54,585	56,017	1,433	24
122	56,018	57,474	1,457	24
123	57,475	58,955	1,481	24
124	58,956	60,460	1,505	24
125	60,461	61,990	1,530	25
126	61,991	63,545	1,555	25
127	63,546	65,125	1,580	25
128	65,126	66,730	1,605	25
129	66,731	68,360	1,630	25
130	68,361	70,015	1,655	25
131	70,016	71,696	1,681	26
132	71,697	73,403	1,707	26
133	73,404	75,136	1,733	26
134	75,137	76,895	1,759	26
135	76,896	78,680	1,785	26
136	78,681	80,491	1,811	26
137	80,492	82,329	1,838	27
138	82,330	84,194	1,865	27
139	84,195	86,086	1,892	27
140	86,087	88,005	1,919	27

The Behemoth at 4D10+100 (140) is one of the largest creatures in RQIII. This size is far beyond the limits of the official table. On mine, SIZ 140 is a weight range of 86 to 88 tonnes. I initially thought this was outrageously heavy, but the largest dinosaurs may have reached 100 tonnes, so arguably SIZ 140 should actually be around that value.

I found it difficult to extrapolate the official SIZ table. I aimed for one where the weight range increased relatively smoothly as the SIZ values increased. The official table sort of did this, but in what appears to be a haphazard way.

Do they Work?

The Creatures Book details the statistics for the various beasts of the game, and of course there are others listed various supplements. What do these values represent and do the dice specified for SIZ give realistic weights?

Normal human males have a SIZ of 2D6+6, while non-heroic women have a SIZ of 2D6+3. Is this their full grown size? The Players book states that characters can't change their SIZ value, so presumably it does represent a person's adult weight. Even so, 34-35kg does seem small for an adult woman. I've always assumed that special groups such as pygmies would have a special SIZ dice rating, but perhaps not.

This does tend to hint that the weight ranges generated by the dice may be a bit odd, but more on that later.

It is really difficult to determine the SIZ for many creatures are mythological and myths don't generally give an accurate weight for Manticores, Sea Serpents etc. Many real world creatures have multiple sub-species making their statistics rather rubbery.

Further complicating things is the difficulty of obtaining real life statistics even when the above issues have been resolved. Most paper and online resources I could obtain would often only specify a single weight figure, making it unclear if this was the average or the maximum. It was very difficult to find the lowest normal weight for a creature, its average weight and the maximum weight. Many sources contradicted other ones, and Wikipedia (not surprisingly) contradicted itself.

For example, when I attempted to find the weight of an adult male African Elephant, four different sources gave these values:

6000kg to 9000kg
3500kg to 12000kg
4500kg to 6000kg
4000kg to 7000kg

The 12 tonne figure is useful for GMs. It appears that the other high values are probably what we would consider the maximum size of African Elephants, but there are some individuals which greatly exceed that value. I consider this a real world justification for having an exceptional creature that is much larger than the SIZ dice would indicate is possible.

Size ratings for prehistoric creatures are especially problematic. The Demon Duck of Doom is an extinct giant, probably carnivorous bird that terrorized parts of Australia during the late Miocene epoch. Wikipedia claims they stood 3m tall and weighed 500kg. Is this the average or maximum size? Is it for the adults in general, or males or females? If it the average size, what is a reasonable variation amongst adults? Sources don't specify, presumably because no-one knows.

The following table shows the real life weights of some creatures, what SIZ values they would have, and what SIZ values are generated by the dice. For the "Min" and "Max" weights, I've provided the weight in kg, then below that the SIZ this would equate to using my table. This SIZ is in round brackets "()". If the official table

covers this weight then I have provided the SIZ that weight would be from that table in square brackets “[]”. In some cases as well as providing a maximum weight I have also provided an extreme weight. This is the heaviest recorded specimen of that species.

Creature Name	Min	Max	Extreme	Dice	Min	Ave	Max
Wolf	20 (4) [4]	68 (11) [11]	86 (14) [14]	2D6+3	5	10	15
Polar Bear (Female)	200 (22) [24]	340 (26) [30]		3D6+15	18	25.5	33
Polar Bear (Male)	400 (28) [32]	680 (33) [37]	1002 (37) [42]	3D6+21	24	31.5	39
Elephant Indian	3000 (50)	5000 (58)	8000 (67)	6D6+30	36	51	66
Elephant African	3500 (52)	7000 (64)	12000 (75)	6D6+32	38	53	68
Killer Whale	2585 (48)	7257 (65)	8000 (67)	6D6+40	46	61	76

As can be seen, the real world weights and the SIZ table derived weights do not always match up well. I spent a lot of time attempting to devise a better table, and create a couple of drafts that did fit better for the official creatures. This often resulted in weight range increases that were quite irregular, and while this was satisfactory for the official creatures, it gave poor results for many other creatures, both real and made up.

One problem I think exists is the tendency to increase the number of dice for larger creatures. Elephants for example, roll 6D6 and then have a hefty number added to the total. This would be fine if every SIZ point represented the same number of kg (perhaps 5, or 10, or 15), but it doesn't. The number of kg represented by a SIZ point increases (in general) as the values for SIZ become greater. This in itself is not a problem, but when combined with the large number of dice to be rolled for SIZ, I feel adds to the difficulty of developing a suitable size table. If SIZ represents an adult specimen, then I think 3D6 or even 2D6 would be a better choice for the elephant, but of course have a larger number added to the roll. 3D6+48 would give a minimum of 51, and average of 58.5 and a maximum of 66, which I think are better SIZ values for an African Elephant.

Summary

If you have read through to this far, then thank you. You are interested in this topic, really bored or just strange! I don't expect anyone else to use my table, but was asked to post it and want to explain how and why it came about. It could be used or easily adapted for use by other GMs who create their own creatures, but probably won't be.

I am aware that mass and weight are not the same, but for the purposes of this document I don't really care.

I am quite happy to copy my size table out of this document and post it as a separate pdf if people are interested.

I welcome any comments, positive or negative.

Thanks

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