



## Loup Garou

### ROUGAROU

The Rougarou (alternately spelled as Roux-Ga-Roux, Rugaroo, or Rugaru), is a legendary creature in Laurentian French communities linked to European notions of the werewolf.

#### Versions of the Folklore

The folk tales of the creature known as a rougarou are as diverse as the spelling of its name, though they are all connected to francophone cultures through a common derived belief in the Loup Garou (pronounced lu'gãr-ru). Loup is French for wolf, and garou (from Frankish garulf, cognate with English werewolf) is a man who transforms into an animal.

#### Louisiana Folklore

Rougarou represents a variant pronunciation and spelling of the original French loup garou. Both words are used interchangeably in southern Louisiana. Some people call the monster rougarou; others refer to it as the loup garou.

The rougarou legend has been spread for many generations, either directly from French settlers to Louisiana (New France) or via the French Canadian immigrants centuries ago.

In the Cajun legend, the creature is said to prowl the swamps around Acadiana and Greater New Orleans, and possibly the fields or forests of the regions. The rougarou most often is noted as a creature with a human body and the head of a wolf or dog, similar to the werewolf legend.

Often the story-telling was used for fear. One example is stories were told by elders to persuade Cajun children behave. Another example relates that the wolf-like beast will hunt down and kill Catholics who do not follow the rules of Lent. This coincides with the French Catholic loup garou stories, where the method for turning into a werewolf was to break Lent seven years in a row.

A common blood sucking legend speculated that the rougarou was under the spell for 101 days. After that time, the curse was transferred from person to person when the rougarou drew another human's blood. During the day the creature returned to human form. Although acting sickly, the human refrained to tell others of the situation for fear of being killed.

Other stories range from the rougarou as a headless horseman to the rougarou derived from witchcraft. In the latter claim, only a witch could make a rougarou - either by turning themselves into wolves or cursing others with lycanthropy.