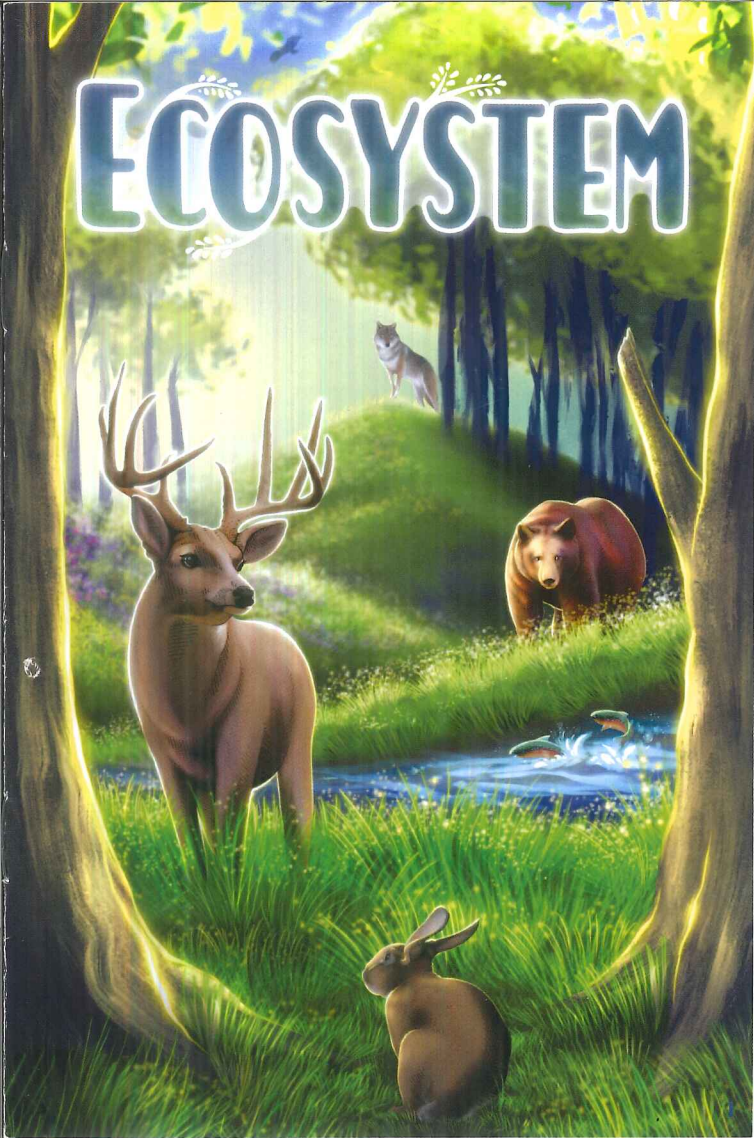# ECOSYSTEM

Ecosystem is a card drafting game in which each player creates a beautifully diverse and thriving ecosystem. Players pick cards from among the available animals and landforms, arranging them into a grid of 20 cards (their "ecosystem"). Each type of card awards points for placing it where it will flourish. Players have many opportunities to earn points as they craft their ecosystems, and will earn additional points for their level of biodiversity. When all the cards have been selected and placed, the player with the highest-scoring ecosystem wins!

SETUP AND OVERVIEW

Give a player aid to each player. Shuffle the deck of cards and deal 10 cards to each player, setting the remaining cards aside until Round 2.

Scan the QR Code to watch the rules instead!

To begin playing *Ecosystem*, each player looks at their hand of cards and **selects one to keep**, placing it face down in front of them. Once all players have selected a card, they **simultaneously reveal the cards and place them** into their ecosystems. Each **player's hand of cards is then passed to the left**, so that each player will receive a new hand of the same number of cards from the player to their right, in a clockwise circle. The players' next selection will come from this new hand.

Play continues in this way until all 10 cards have been placed, signifying the **end of Round 1**. When this happens, **deal each player 10 new cards** for Round 2. **Play proceeds in the same way, except that players will pass cards to their right,** circulating counterclockwise this Round. At the end of Round 2, players score the 20 total cards in their ecosystems to determine the winner.

PLACING CARDS

After selecting each card, players will add them to their ecosystem. A player's **ecosystem** is their personal grid of cards, arranged on the play area in front of them. When players place new cards, they must observe the following rules:

1. Starting with the second pick, new cards must always be **placed adjacent to an existing card**. *"Adjacent" in this game always means left, right, above or below—not diagonally.*
2. Players' ecosystems will eventually make a **grid 4 cards high and 5 cards wide**. New cards may never be placed in a location that would exceed this size, and the full 4x5 grid will eventually be completely used.

Since players start with a single card, it is okay for their ecosystems to grow naturally and with uncertainty at the beginning of the game. However, once a player has played into a 4th row or 5th column, they may no longer expand further in that direction.

As long as players observe the placement rules above, they may place new animals and landforms in their ecosystem anywhere they choose (though some options may be strategically preferable). At the end of the game, they will score **points** according to the rules for each card, then receive **Diversity points** for the number of animals and landforms they have utilized well in their ecosystem.

CARD TYPES

Most of the card types score points for being placed in their preferred environments, adjacent to other suitable cards.

BEES like Meadows—Each Bee scores **3** points for each adjacent Meadow card.

BEARS like Bees and Trout—Each Bear scores **2** points for each adjacent Bee and each adjacent Trout.

TROUT like Streams and Dragonflies—Each Trout scores **2** points for each adjacent Stream card and each adjacent Dragonfly.

FOXES *don't* like Wolves or Bears—Each Fox scores **3** points, as long as it is *not* adjacent to any Wolves or Bears.

EAGLES hunt Rabbits and Trout—Each Eagle scores **2** points for each Rabbit and Trout within 2 spaces in any direction. (An Eagle may therefore hunt the nearest diagonal spaces.)

DRAGONFLIES like Streams —Each Dragonfly scores points for the total size of all adjacent Streams (continuously connected Stream cards in any pattern).

EXAMPLE: *The Bee in the top row scores 6 total points for the Meadows to its left and below it. The Bee in the second row scores 3 point for the Meadow to its left. Neither Bee scores for the other two Meadows, which are not adjacent to either Bee.*

The Eagle scores 6 total points for the adjacent Rabbit, the Rabbit 2 spaces above it, and the diagonal Trout.

The Dragonfly in the bottom row scores 2 points for the total Stream adjacent to it. The Dragonfly in the second row scores 6 total points for the two Streams next to it (4 points above and 2 points for below).

DEER like their freedom—Score **2** points for each row and column that has at least 1 Deer in it. Players score the row *and* column for each Deer, but do not receive additional points for having more than 1 Deer in the same row or column. (Spreading out Deer scores more points.)

RABBITS are quick—Rabbits allow the player to immediately switch the positions of any 2 cards in their ecosystem when played. Rabbits score **1** point each.

MEADOWS—Meadow regions score points based on the number of adjacently connected Meadow cards: **0/3/6/10/15** points for 1/2/3/4/5+ Meadows. A player may score multiple separate Meadow regions, but a single continuous Meadow region scores a maximum of 15 points.

STREAMS—After all the cards have been placed, players compete for the largest Stream region. The player with the most continuously connected Stream cards (in any pattern) scores **8** points, and the second most receives **5** points. Players must have at least 1 Stream card to score any points.

WOLF PACK—After all the cards have been placed, players compete for the largest Wolf pack (they need not be adjacent). The player with the most Wolves scores **12** points, second most scores **8** points, third most scores **4** points. Players must have at least 1 Wolf to score any points.

Ties—If players tie for largest Stream or most Wolves, the tying players earn full points. In this case, the next lower prize would not be given. For example, a two-way tie for most Wolves would result in 12 points for the tying players and 4 points to the player with the third most Wolves.
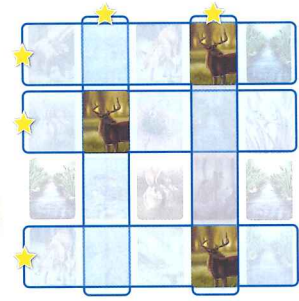
EXAMPLE: *These 3 Deer have been placed among 2 columns and 3 rows for 10 total Points.*

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DIVERSITY POINTS

After players have scored the points from their cards, they **assess overall diversity** by examining how many distinct card types have contributed to their ecosystems. Review the card scoring for each player and count the number of card types that **did not score any points.** These are called **ecosystem gaps**. (Players may have ecosystem gaps because they did not play any of a particular card type, the scoring condition for the card type was not met, or they did not have one of the largest Streams or most Wolves.) Based on the number of ecosystem gaps, each player receives the following Diversity bonuses or penalties:

ECOSYSTEM GAPS	6+	5	4	3	≤2
DIVERSITY POINTS	-5	0	3	7	12

Players then total all their points. The player with the most points wins! If players tie, they share the victory.

SCORING EXAMPLE

Molly won by focusing on Deer and Streams with Dragonflies. Her 3-card Stream was the second largest after Chris's (shown on page 4). By scoring for all but 3 types of cards, she earned 7 Diversity Points.

PLAYERS	M	C	A
BEARS	4	0	0
BEES	6	9	9
MEADOWS	0	0	15
TROUT	4	2	0
EAGLES	2	6	0
RABBITS	0	3	0
DRAGONFLIES	7	8	0
FOXES	3	0	6
DEER	12	0	6
STREAMS	5	8	0
WOLVES	0	0	12
DIVERSITY	7	0	-5
TOTAL	50	36	43

2-PLAYER GAME RULES

For a 2-player game, **deal a third hand of 10 cards on an unused player aid** for a neutral player. When passing cards, the neutral player aid is included in the rotation (so that one player will always be passing to the neutral player in Round 1 and the other player will be passing to the neutral player in Round 2).

After both players have made each selection, **randomly remove one of the cards from the neutral player hand** and set it next to the neutral aid face up in a pile. Players may look at these cards at any time (they are not arranged or used). Ecosystem placement and scoring proceed as normal, except that the **neutral player's Stream and Wolf cards are compared** when scoring Largest Stream and Most Wolves (the neutral player Streams are all considered connected).

SOLO GAME RULES By Richard Wilkins

For a solo game, shuffle the deck and deal yourself a single hand of 10 cards. You will use your cards to build your own ecosystem (according to the normal rules), but will also discard cards into a second ecosystem for Nitka, your opponent.

Each turn, play 1 card into your Ecosystem according to the normal rules, then choose 1 card to discard. The discarded card will be played into Nitka's ecosystem, creating a 4x5 grid as normal, starting at the top-left and proceeding left to right, then top to bottom, until you reach the bottom-right.

After discarding to Nitka's ecosystem, draw 1 new card from the deck. **If Nitka has just finished a completed row, draw 5 new cards instead.** Continue playing in this way for 20 total turns, when your ecosystem should be complete and Nitka has finished her 4th row.

To score the game, calculate your score normally (competing for Largest Stream and Most Wolves), then calculate Nitka's score, ignoring diversity scoring for Nitka's ecosystem. Your goal is to beat Nitka by 30 points for an **easy** victory, 50 points for a **normal** victory, or 70 points for a **difficult** victory.

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Dedication: *Ecosystem is dedicated to my dear friends, Sean and Trudi Wagner, without whom this game could not have been made. Words cannot express how grateful I am for your friendship. —Matt Simpson*

Genius Games