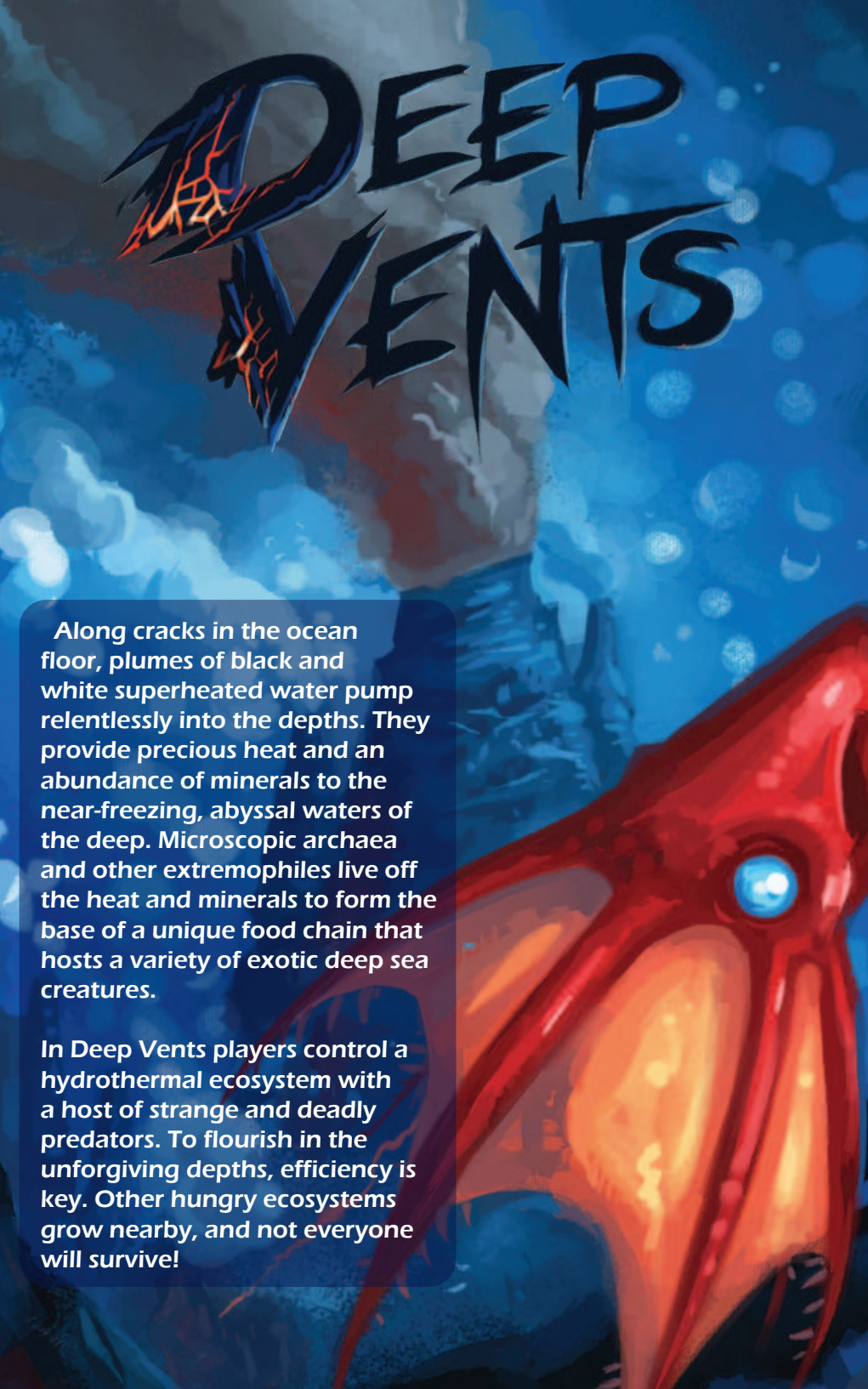


Along cracks in the ocean floor, plumes of black and white superheated water pump relentlessly into the depths. They provide precious heat and an abundance of minerals to the near-freezing, abyssal waters of the deep. Microscopic archaea and other extremophiles live off the heat and minerals to form the base of a unique food chain that hosts a variety of exotic deep sea creatures.

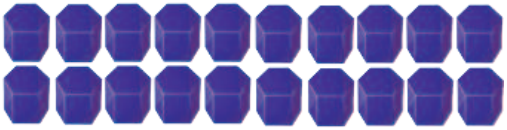
In Deep Vents players control a hydrothermal ecosystem with a host of strange and deadly predators. To flourish in the unforgiving depths, efficiency is key. Other hungry ecosystems grow nearby, and not everyone will survive!

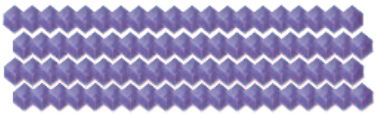
COMPONENTS





42 Hex Tiles





100 Archaea Tokens*

20x Five-Archaea, 80x Single-Archaea



21 Shell Tokens*

15x Shells (resin), 6x Five-Shells (cardboard)



4 Track Cubes*



8 Archaea Shortfall Tokens*

*Components are not meant to be limited. If you run out, use a suitable substitute.

SETUP

1. Give each player a Deep Vent hex. (Return extra Deep Vent hexes to the box when playing with 2 or 3 players.)

2. Shuffle all remaining hex tiles and place the stack face up in the middle of the play area.

3. Place the top 5 hexes in a row to the left of the stack.

4. Choose a player to go first. We suggest the player who most recently swam in the ocean.

5. Give each player starting archaea based on player count and turn order as shown below, then leave all remaining tokens nearby to form the general supply.

Starting Archaea	2 Players	3 Players	4 Players
1st Player	10	15	20
2nd Player	11	16	21
3rd Player		17	22
4th Player			23



Example of a 4-player game setup.

OVERVIEW

ON YOUR TURN:

1. Choose a new hex tile from the row, paying 1 archaeon to each hex you skip over from left to right.
2. Place the new hex adjacent to one of your hexes already in play.
3. Grow or trigger each hex one at a time, from top-left to bottom-right.
4. Slide and replenish the available hexes. Play passes clockwise.
5. Game ends after 8 rounds or if all but one player is eliminated.


ARCHAEA (singular ARCHAEON)


- When you gain a hex, any archaea tokens already on the hex stay on the hex to be used later.
- A single hex can't have more than 10 archaea on it. If it would gain more for any reason, the excess is lost.
- Archaea gained from growing are taken from the general supply unless otherwise stated in the hex guide.
- You may move archaea from a hex you own to your personal supply only by using specific game actions (explained in the following sections).


ATTACKS & SHELLS

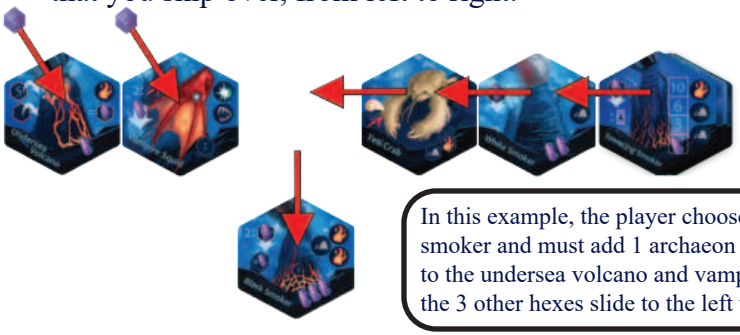

- Hexes with the attack symbol cause all other players to lose that many archaea from their personal supply when triggered.
- A shell blocks half of the damage from one attack, rounded up.
- Shells are used on other players' turns at the time of the attack.
- If a hex is triggered multiple times, each one is a separate attack.

SHORTFALL & ELIMINATION

- If you take more damage than you have archaea in your supply, you must take a shortfall token and 10 archaea. Then finish taking damage. **You may not take a shortfall for any other reason.**
- You may pay off a shortfall token by paying 10 archaea from your personal supply to the general supply.
- If you have a shortfall token during step 1 of your turn you must choose the left-most hex from the row.
- If you end your turn with two or more shortfall tokens, your ecosystem collapses and you are eliminated from the game.

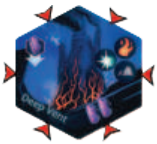
ON YOUR TURN

1. From the row of 6 face-up hexes at the center of the table, choose one to add to your ecosystem. You may choose the left-most hex for free, but if you choose any other hex you must place one archaeon from your supply on each hex that you skip over, from left to right.



In this example, the player chooses the black smoker and must add 1 archaeon from their supply to the undersea volcano and vampire squid. Then the 3 other hexes slide to the left to fill the gap.

2. Place your hex so it touches at least one side of one of the hexes you already have in play. When placing, keep in mind that most hexes affect and are affected by adjacent tiles.



3. Now you must *either* **grow** or **trigger** each individual hex in your ecosystem. Activate each hex in order starting at the top-left and moving right then down to the next row and so on, until you have either grown or triggered each of your hexes.



4. Replenish the hex row, sliding all unclaimed hexes to the left, including the top hex on the stack, revealing a new hex. It is now the next player's turn. Play passes to the left.



Example of the replenished row after player 1 buys the black smoker above.

GROW



Grow means to take archaea from the **general supply** and place them on the active hex. On the bottom right of each hex are symbols which indicate what it needs to grow new archaea.

Passive Trait: This growth symbol means this hex grows 1 archaeon for each matching passive trait symbol on any adjacent hex. Place that number of archaea from the supply directly on the active hex.

Archaea Symbol: If the growth symbol is archaea, place that number of archaea from the supply directly on the active hex.

Other Growth Symbols: Refer to the hex guide on pages 13-16 for special growth abilities.

No Growth Symbol: This hex cannot actively grow. (See the hex guide for hex abilities.)

Note: Each hex may either grow or trigger, but may not do both in the same turn.

GROW EXAMPLES

If you choose to grow every hex in this ecosystem, these effects apply:

1. The Deep Vent hex gains 2 archaea.
2. The Yeti Crab is adjacent to 3 heat and 2 rock passive trait symbols, so it gains 5 archaea.
3. The Goblin Shark is adjacent to 2 rock symbols, so it gains 2 archaea.
4. The White Smoker gains 2 archaea.
5. This hex has been decimated and no longer triggers or grows, but still provides a heat (passive trait) to adjacent hexes.
6. The Lanternfish is adjacent to 1 predator symbol, so it gains 1 archaeon.
7. The Scaly-Foot Snail is adjacent to 2 heat and 1 rock symbol, so it gains 3 archaea.



! IMPORTANT !

You decide whether to grow or trigger **each indiviaul hex**. This means you may grow one hex and trigger another in the same turn. However, you **must** activate each hex in order: top left to bottom right and may not go back once you move to a subsequent hex.

TRIGGER

On the upper left of each hex are symbols which indicate how to trigger a specific action.



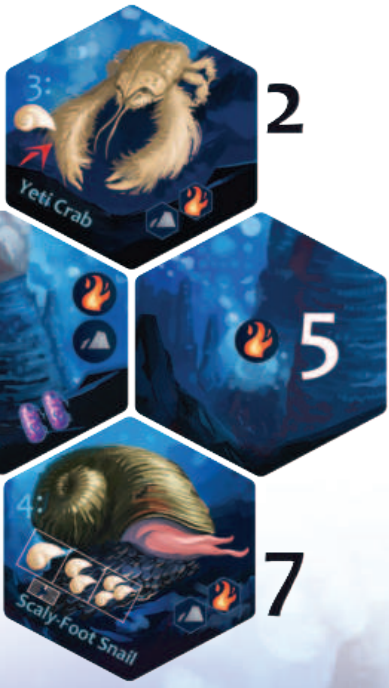
Spend Archaea: Pay the number of archaea indicated from the active hex to the general supply, then trigger the action. (Refer to the hex guide on pages 13-16 for trigger action descriptions.)

Collect Archaea: Take all archaea from this hex into your personal supply.

Other Trigger Symbols: Refer to the hex guide.

Repeating Triggers: You may trigger each hex as many times as you can afford. Each trigger is a separate action. Complete all desired triggers on a hex before moving to the next hex in your ecosystem.

Note: If triggering a hex would have no effect, you *must* choose to grow.



TRIGGER EXAMPLES

Assuming all hexes have 5 archaea, if you choose to trigger every hex, these effects apply:

1. Take 5 archaea from this hex into your personal supply.
2. Pay 3 archaea to the general supply, gain 1 shell, and deal 1 attack to all opponents. 2 archaea remain on the hex.
3. Pay 3 archaea, all opponents discard 1 shell, and you deal 1 attack to all opponents. 2 archaea remain.
4. Take 5 archaea from this hex into your personal supply.
5. This hex can not be triggered. Any archaea placed here are worth 1/2 point at game end.
6. Pay archaea equal to the number of adjacent hexes—in this case, 3. Place 1 archaeon from the general supply on each adjacent hex: Goblin Shark, White Smoker and Scaly-Foot Snail. 2 archaea remain.
7. Pay 4 archaea, gain 1 shell, and advance one space on the shell chart. The next time it triggers you'll gain 2 shells. This leaves 1 archaea behind.

ATTACKS

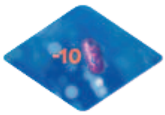
Some hexes attack opponents when triggered.



Basic Attack: Each opponent loses one archaea from their personal supply per attack arrow on the active hex.



Targeted Attack: The symbol directly beside the attack arrow(s) indicates what this attack targets. Each opponent loses archaea equal to the number of attack arrows **times** each matching symbol in their ecosystem (in this case, 1 per heat).



Shortfall Tokens: If an attack deals more damage than you have archaea in your personal supply, you must take a shortfall token and 10 archaea. Then finish taking damage from your borrowed supply of archaea. **This is the only reason you may take a shortfall. You may not take one voluntarily.**

SHELLS

Some hexes grant one or more shells when triggered. Keep these in your personal supply. Any time you are attacked, you may pay one of your shells to the general supply to reduce the attack by half (rounded up). You may only spend one shell per attack.

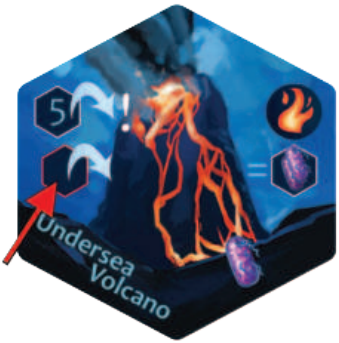


Example: An opponent attacks once with the Colossal Squid, which targets heat. There are 5 heat in your ecosystem and you have 2 shells in your personal supply. You may spend 1 shell to block 3 of the damage from the attack, meaning that you only lose 2 archaea. You may not use the other shell unless your opponent triggers a subsequent attack.





DECIMATE



Some triggered effects ‘decimate’ hexes. If one of your hexes is decimated, remove any archaea from the hex and keep half, rounded up, in your personal supply, returning the rest to the general supply. Flip the hex over in place. For the remainder of the game, only the passive trait on the back of the hex applies; you may not activate the hex. It may collect archaea from adjacent hex abilities.

GAME END

The game ends if either:

Each player has completed 8 turns. Each player will have 9 hexes at this point.

or:

All but one player is eliminated by shortfall. Any player is eliminated who ends any turn with 2 or more shortfall tokens.

Remember: At any time, a player may pay off any shortfall tokens by paying 10 archaea for each token to the general supply.

SCORING
Players score points for the following:

- 1 point for each archaeon in their personal supply
- 1 point for every 2 unused shells, rounded up
- 1 point for every 2 archaea on their hexes, rounded up
- -10 points for each archaea shortfall token

The player with the most points has built the most robust hydrothermal ecosystem and wins the game!

In the event of a tie, the tied player who went earliest in the turn order is the winner.



ICONOGRAPHY



White border means “this hex.”



Red border means “opponent’s hex.”



Blue border means “adjacent hex.”



This means “all adjacent hexes.”



This is an exception to the above symbol. When in the grow area of the hex, this means “gain 1 archaeon for each trait of this type on all adjacent hexes.”



This means “all enemy traits of this type.”



Attack 1.



This means “add 1 archaeon from the general supply to each adjacent hex.”



This means “take all archaea off of this hex and add them to your personal supply.”



This means “when an adjacent hex triggers, place 1 archaea on this hex.”



Gain 1 shell.



Each opponent destroys 1 shell.



Passive trait: bioluminescence.



Passive trait: heat.



Passive trait: rock.



Passive trait: predation.



One archaeon.



All archaea.



Take 1 archaeon from the general supply and place it into your personal supply.



All opponents must decimate 1 Colossal Squid or 1 Giant Squid.



This means “all adjacent hexes with a bioluminescence passive trait must move 1 archaeon to this hex.”

HEX GUIDE A-G



ANGLERFISH
Grow: Add 1 archaeon for each adjacent bioluminescence.
Trigger: Spend 3 archaea. Each opponent takes damage equal to their total bioluminescence.



BLACK SMOKER
Grow: Add 3 archaea.
Trigger: Spend 2 archaea. Move all remaining archaea on this hex to your supply. Then add 1 archaeon from the general supply to each adjacent hex.



BULL CACHALOT
Grow: Add 1 archaeon for each adjacent predation.
Trigger: Spend 5 archaea. Each opponent must decimate 1 Colossal Squid or 1 Giant Squid. Any opponents with no squid hexes instead take damage equal to 2 times their total predation.



COLOSSAL SQUID
Grow: No effect.
Trigger: Spend *all* archaea from this *or* an adjacent hex that has at least 4 archaea. Each opponent takes damage equal to their total heat.



DEEP VENT (Starting Hex)
Grow: Add 2 archaea.
Trigger: Move all archaea on this hex to your supply.

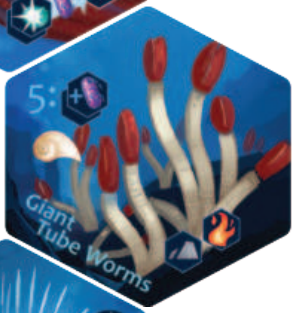


GIANT OARFISH
Grow: Add 1 archaeon for each adjacent hex with 2 or more archaea.
Trigger: Spend 3 archaea. Each opponent takes damage equal to the number of their hexes with 3 or more archaea.

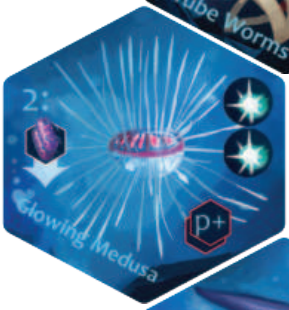
HEX GUIDE G-I



GIANT SQUID
Grow: Move 1 archaeon from each adjacent bioluminescent hex to this hex.
Trigger: Spend 3 archaea. Each opponent takes 4 damage.



GIANT TUBE WORMS
Grow: Add 1 archaeon for each adjacent heat and 1 for each adjacent rock.
Trigger: Spend 5 archaea. Add 1 archaeon from the general supply to all adjacent hexes, then gain 1 shell.



GLOWING MEDUSA
Grow: Add 1 archaeon for each of your opponents' hexes with archaea equal to or greater than the number of players.
Trigger: Pay 2 archaea. Move all archaea on this hex to your supply.



GOBLIN SHARK
Grow: Add 1 archaeon for each adjacent rock.
Trigger: Spend 3. Each opponent loses 1 shell and then takes 1 damage.



GULPER EEL
Grow: Move all archaea from 1 adjacent hex to this hex.
Trigger: Spend 3 archaea. Each opponent takes 2 damage.



ISOPOD SWARM
Passive Grow: Add 5 archaea each time an opponent decimates a hex. (No effect when you choose grow.)
Trigger: Spend 1 archaeon. Gain 1 shell then move all remaining archaea on this hex to your supply.

HEX GUIDE L-V



LANTERNFISH
Grow: Add 1 archaeon for each adjacent predation.
Trigger: Spend archaea equal to the number of hexes adjacent to this one. Add 1 archaeon to all adjacent hexes.



POROUS ROCK
Grow: Add 1 archaeon.
Trigger: Spend 1 archaeon. Gain 1 shell.



SCALY-FOOT SNAIL *Place a marker on the first space on the track when you place this hex in your ecosystem. Grow:* Add 1 archaeon for each adjacent heat and 1 for each adjacent rock. *Trigger:* Spend 4 archaea. Gain shells equal to the **current** space marked on the track, then move the marker up one space (max 3 per trigger).



TOWERING SMOKER *Place a marker on the bottom space on this track when you place this hex in your ecosystem.*
Grow: Add archaea equal to the number marked on the track. *(Max total archaea in one turn: 10.)*
Trigger: Move all archaea on this hex to your supply. Then advance the marker one space on the track.
Note:You can't trigger this hex if it has no archaea.



UNDERSEA VOLCANO
Note: Heat on this hex is equal to the number of archaea on it.
Grow: Add 1 archaeon.
!Automatic Trigger: If this hex has 5 or more archaea you *must* choose to trigger instead of grow when you activate this hex. Decimate this hex. All opponents decimate one hex of their choice.



VAMPIRE SQUID
Passive Grow: Whenever you trigger an adjacent hex, add 1 archaeon to this hex.
Trigger: Spend 2 archaeon. Each opponent takes 1 damage. Add 1 archaeon to your supply from the general supply.

HEX GUIDE W-Y



WHITE SMOKER
Grow: Add 2 archaea.
Trigger: Move all archaea on this hex to your supply.



YETI CRAB
Grow: Add 1 archaeon for each adjacent heat and 1 for each adjacent rock.
Trigger: Spend 3 archaea. Gain 1 shell. Each opponent takes 1 damage.

Variant: Starting Bid

If you're playing in a tournament setting, you may want to start the game with a bid for first player. Start the bid after setting up the hex row so that players can see what will be available on the first turn.

First give each player a number of archaea depending on the number of players (2 players: 10, 3 players: 15, 4 players: 20).

Pick a method to randomly decide which player starts the bid. That player may bid any number of archaea, stating their bid aloud. Then, in clockwise order, the remaining players may bid or pass. Each subsequent bid must be at least 1 archaea more than the last. Bidding proceeds until one player makes a bid and the remaining players all pass. The winning player pays their bid amount in archaea to the general supply (the remaining players pay no archaea). Then give players extra archaea depending on turn order. Player 2 gains 1 extra. Player 3 gains 2 extra. Player 4 gains 3 extra. Start the game as normal.

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