Dominant Species



RULES OF PLAY

Game Design by Chad Jensen

INTRODUCTION

90,000 B.C. — A great ice age is fast approaching. Another titanic struggle for global supremacy has unwittingly commenced between the varying animal species.

Dominant Species is a game that abstractly recreates a tiny portion of ancient history: the ponderous encroachment of an ice age and what that entails for the living creatures trying to adapt to the slowly-changing earth.

Each player will assume the role of one of six major animal classes—mammal, reptile, bird, amphibian, arachnid or insect. Each begins the game more or less in a state of natural balance in relation to one another. But that won't last: It is indeed "survival of the fittest".

Through wily action pawn placement, players will strive to become dominant on as many different terrain tiles as possible in order to claim powerful card effects. Players will also want to propagate their individual species in order to earn victory points for their particular animal. Players will be aided in these endeavors via speciation, migration and adaptation actions, among others.

All of this eventually leads to the end game – the final ascent of the ice age – where the player having accumulated the most victory points will have his animal crowned the **Dominant Species**.

But somebody better become dominant quickly, because it's getting mighty cold....

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Throughout this booklet you will see numerous shaded boxes such as this one. These boxes are filled with examples, clarifications, play hints, design notes, and other assorted wisdom in order to help ease you along.

GAME COMPONENTS

- this 20-page rulebook
- one game board
- six **animal** displays
- 27 cards—1 "Survival" and 26 "Dominance"
- 31 large and 12 small hexagonal tiles used to create "earth"
- 330 wooden cubes representing the "species" belonging to the six animal classes
- 60 wooden cylinders used for the animals' "action pawns"
- 60 wooden cones used as "domination" markers for the animals
- 120 round markers representing the earth's resources, called "elements"
- 6 square markers used to show each animal's "initiative" (turn order during the Planning Phase)
- one cloth bag

GAME OVERVIEW

The large hexagonal **tiles** are used throughout the game to create an ever-expanding interpretation of earth as it might have appeared a thousand centuries ago. The smaller **tundra** tiles will be placed atop the larger tiles – converting them into tundra in the process – as the ice age encroaches.

The cylindrical **action pawns** (or "**AP**"s) drive the game. Each AP will allow a player to perform the various actions that can be taken—such as speciation, environmental change, migration or glaciation. After being placed on the **action display** during the **Planning Phase**, an AP will trigger that particular action for the owning player during the **Execution Phase**.

Generally, players will be trying to enhance their own **animal**'s survivability while simultaneously trying to hinder that of their opponents'—hopefully collecting valuable **victory points** (or "**VP**"s) along the way. The various cards will aid in these efforts, giving players useful one-time abilities or an opportunity for recurring VP gains.

Throughout the game, **species** cubes will be added to, moved about in, and removed from the tiles in play (the "**earth**"). **Element** disks will be added to and removed from both animals and earth.

When the game ends, players will conduct a final scoring of each tile—after which the player controlling the animal with the highest VP total wins the game.

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GLOSSARY



Action Pawns (APs)—The set of wooden cylinders that players will use each turn to mark the actions they wish to perform.

Animal—Mammal, reptile, bird, amphibian, arachnid or insect. One of the six animal classes that each player will be representing throughout the game. Each animal class is represented on earth by a set of like-colored species cubes. Each animal has an animal display and an initiative marker.

Bonus VPs—Some actions and card effects call for a player to earn "bonus VPs". To earn bonus VPs, refer to the **Bonus Points Track** located in the bottom left of the game board. The top row of the Bonus Points Track lists the count that the action or card effect is checking – for example, how many tundra tiles are occupied by an animal during the Survival action (see page 20) – while the square directly below this number in the bottom row gives the amount of VPs gained based on that count.



Dominance Cards—The set of 26 cards that a player will choose from whenever a tile is scored where their animal is dominant. Dominance Cards grant a player one-time effects. One of these cards – "Ice Age" – will trigger the end of the game. The "Survival" Card is not a Dominance Card and has its own separate set of rules (see page 20).





Dominant / Dominance—Having at least one species present on a tile where your animal matches more elements than that of any other animal with species present on that same tile.

Earth—The group of tiles placed in the hex grid portion of the board. Players will place elements and their animals' species and dominance markers onto the various tiles making up the earth.

Element—Grass, grub, meat, seed, sun and water. These round markers – or "disks" – represent the resources the various animals require to thrive. Elements are placed on the animal displays to show "need" and on earth to show "supply". When on earth, elements are placed on the corners of tiles—in this manner, a single element disk can be present on up to three different tiles simultaneously.



Endangered—Any species in play on a tile wherein none of that tile's elements match those of the player's animal (or if the tile is devoid of elements altogether).

Food Chain—Used to break ties when scoring a tile during a Domination action, among other things. In top-down order – best-to-worst – the food chain is:

- Mammal
- Reptile
- Bird
- Amphibian
- Arachnid
- Insect





Initiative Markers—The set of six square markers used on the Initiative track to determine the order of placement during each Planning Phase.

Matching—The number of element "A" on a player's animal display times the number of that same element "A" on a tile occupied by that player's species. To this is added matching element "B", matching element "C", etc. to arrive at a total number of matching elements of all types.

See the graphic example on page 7.



Species—Each small wooden cube on earth represents one species. Each like-colored set of cubes represent the various species belonging to a single animal.

Terrain—Tundra, mountain, desert, forest, jungle, savannah, wetland or sea. Each tile making up the earth is one of these eight terrain types.

Tile—The large and small hexagonal pieces representing the various terrain types. These are used to initially create – then during the game to add to – the earth's playing surface.



Victory Point (VP)—Collected during the game by each animal. Highest VP total determines final winner.

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GAME SETUP

THE BOARD

Place the board – face up! – in the center of the table.

THE ANIMALS

A Have each player choose the animal he would like to play. Give each player the animal display matching their choice. Alternately, you can assign one animal display to each player at random.

See page 17 for a suggested alternate method of assigning animals if there are only 2 or 3 players.

B In reverse Initiative order – that is, insects first, then arachnids, then amphibians, etc. – players place their animal's square initiative marker into the boxes underneath the "**Initiative**" tag.

If there are fewer than six players, one or more of the right-most boxes in this section will remain vacant throughout the game.

Place any unassigned animal displays – along with their initiative markers – back in the game box: they will not be used.

THE TILES

C Place one large tile belonging to each of the seven non-tundra terrain types into their assigned positions in the center of the hex grid. Place a tundra tile atop the sea tile.

D Place the eleven remaining tundra tiles in a face up stack on the "**Glaciation Tiles**" section of the board.

E Flip the remaining 24 large tiles face down and shuffle them up in any manner desired. Create three (face down) stacks of 8 large tiles each. Place these stacks on the three "**Wanderlust Tiles**" sections of the board. Turn the top-most tile of each of these stacks face up.

THE CARDS

F Set the Survival Card off to the side for now.

G Remove the **Ice Age** card from the deck of Dominance Cards. Shuffle the remaining 25 Dominance Cards together. Place the Ice Age card face down next to the board. Put the shuffled Dominance Cards face down atop this card to form a draw pile.

H Draw the top five cards of this draw pile and place them face up in the "**Available Dominance Cards**" section of the game board.

THE ELEMENTS

I Take two of each of the six element types and place them on the tiles of earth as indicated on the board.

Place these element disks so that they slightly overlap each of the tiles that meet at that intersection.

J Gather up the rest of the elements and form a draw pool by placing them into the cloth bag provided.

K Randomly draw 4 elements from the bag—place them on the board into the four squares allotted for them (the ones with the "leaf" symbol) next to the "**Adaptation**" tag.

L Draw 4 more elements at random to fill the leaf squares next to the "**Abundance**" tag, and another 4 random elements for the leaf squares next to the "**Wanderlust**" tag.

M

THE SPECIES

N From amongst the wooden pieces, each player chooses a color to represent his animal. From their colored pieces, each player gathers up the ten **cones** (to be used as dominance markers) as well as the following number of **cylinders** (to be used as action pawns) and **cubes** (to form their species gene pool):

- **6-player game** – 3 cylinders and 35 cubes
- **5-player game** – 4 cylinders and 40 cubes
- **4-player game** – 5 cylinders and 45 cubes
- **3-player game** – 6 cylinders and 50 cubes
- **2-player game** – 7 cylinders and 55 cubes

Put the rest of the cylinders and cubes back in the box.

O From each player's gathered cubes, take one to use as a VP marker: place these on the "0" space of the Victory Point Track.

P Each player then takes species from his gene pool and places them on certain starting tile as follows:

- **Insects –** 2 on savannah, 1 on wetland and desert
- **Arachnids** – 2 on jungle, 1 on forest and wetland
- **Amphibians –** 2 on wetland, 1 on jungle and savannah
- **Birds** – 2 on forest, 1 on mountain and jungle
- **Reptiles** – 2 on desert, 1 on savannah and mountain
- **Mammals** – 2 on mountain, 1 on desert and forest

Q With fewer than six players, ignore placement instructions for any animal not being played. Note that each animal begins the game Dominating its centrally-occupied tile.

BEGIN PLAY

R The game now begins with the Planning Phase of the first turn, with the player in control of the animal having its initiative marker furthest to the left on the Initiative track conducting the first AP placement.

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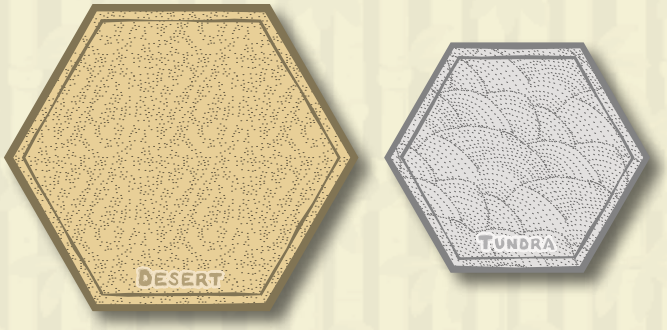
Dominant Species
Mammals
Reptiles
Birds
EVOLUTION
IMMIGRANTS
NOCTURNAL
PREDATOR
HIBERNATION
9-5-3-2
8-4-2-1
7-4-2
5-3-2
4-2
3-2
1

EARTH



The large and small hexagonal tiles will, when added to the game board's hexagonal play area, make up the "earth"—the playing surface that much of the game will be focused on.

The species belonging to each animal will be placed on earth tiles from their respective gene pools. Species removed from earth for any reason other than Glaciation (see page 13) are placed back in the box, out of play—NOT back into the gene pools.

Elements will occupy the corners of the earth tiles when not on an animal display, on the action display, or awaiting deployment from the element draw bag.

The cone-shaped dominance markers will be placed on tiles of earth when the corresponding animal can claim dominance there.

New (large) sea, wetland, savannah, jungle, forest, desert and mountain tiles will be added to the edges of earth when players perform the Wanderlust action. These are taken from the top of the three tile draw stacks.

New (small) tundra tiles are taken from the tundra draw stack and placed onto existing (large) tiles when players perform the Glaciation action. This converts that large tile into a tundra tile for the remainder of the game.

Tiles that touch along a common edge are said to be "adjacent" to one another.

Even though a tundra tile is slightly smaller than the tile it sits upon – and therefore will not physically touch the six tiles that could conceivably surround it – it is still considered adjacent to those tiles as it converts the tile underneath it into tundra: which does physically touch the tiles next to it.

ELEMENTS

These are the round markers that make up the six elements used in **Dominant Species**: grass, grub, meat, seed, sun and water. When placed on a tile of earth, an element represents "supply"; when on an animal display, an element represents "need". Taken together, these provide for an animal's "matching" elements on each tile of earth.



DRAW BAG

When not on an animal display, on the action display, or on a tile of earth, elements are kept in the draw bag. Whenever a new element is called for, it is always taken from this draw bag. Conversely, whenever an element is removed from an animal display or the game board it is always placed back in this draw bag for later use.

MATCHING ELEMENTS EXAMPLE: In the graphic at right, the insects dominate the desert tile even though they have fewer units there than the amphibians; dominance being based on quality, not quantity.

The insects match a total of 3 elements (1 grass + 1 grass + 1 grub + 0 water) to the amphibians' 2 elements (1 grub + 1 grub + 0 meat + 0 water three times over).

Even having just its two default sun elements, if one of the reptile species in the savannah migrated into the desert the reptiles could immediately claim dominance from the insects with a total of 6 matching elements (2 sun x 3 matches each).

Note that with three water the amphibians would dominate the savannah (3 to 2) if they were to move there.

Note also that if the sun element sitting on both these tiles were to be removed the reptiles would be endangered in the savannah, as they would no longer match any elements there.

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MATCHING ELEMENTS

Some effects call for a player to determine his animal's "matching" elements on a tile. To determine an animal's matching elements on a particular tile, do the following:

- count the number of times the animal's left-most element type appears on the tile;
- to this count add the number of times the animal's second element appears on the tile;
- repeat for each of that animal's third, fourth, fifth and sixth element, if present, to arrive at a sum total.

See the graphic example below.

ENDANGERED SPECIES

Any species occupying a tile where its animal matches exactly zero elements is said to be "endangered".

Endangered species are vulnerable to elimination during the Extinction action and cannot claim dominance of a tile.

DOMINANCE

When an animal has at least one of its species present on a tile and that animal matches more elements there than any other single animal with a species present, it is said to have "dominance" on that tile. A tie for greatest matching elements means no animal is dominant there.

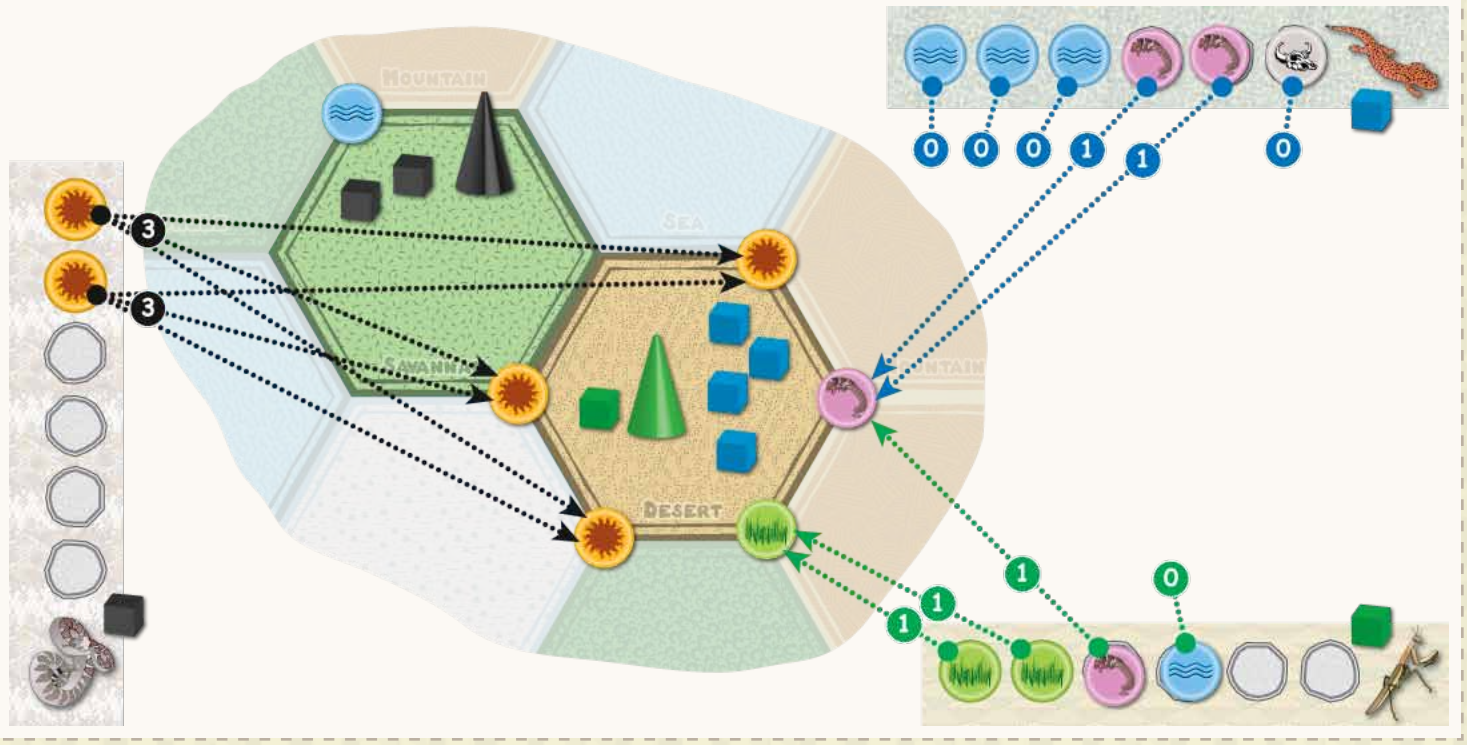
Endangered species can never claim dominance, even if their animal has the only species present on the tile.

Dominance of a tile is signified by the placement of a wooden cone of that player's chosen color. Dominance can be gained or lost at any time and is effective immediately. Further, it is the responsibility of the players – not the rules in and of themselves – to call for a change of dominance.

In other words, dominance (or the loss of it) must be verbally and physically claimed and is not automatic. Thus once dominance of a tile is legally established, that dominance will remain in effect unless and until another player: (a) claims dominance there for his own animal, or (b) shows there to be a tie for greatest number of matching elements, thus removing the previous animal's dominance marker.

Players will usually want to check to see if any animals have gained or lost dominance at the conclusion of those actions affecting placement or removal of elements—the Adaptation or Depletion actions, for example.

Each animal has 10 dominance cones. This is not a hard limit: in the unlikely event that a single animal dominates 11 or more tiles, use any method desired to mark the excess.



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SPECIES

The wooden cubes represent the "species" that each animal will use to represent itself on earth. Most species will begin the game in their owner's gene pool. Most or all of them will eventually occupy (be placed on) the tiles of earth. Species removed from earth for any reason other than Glaciation are permanently removed from the game.

A player is never "out of the game", even if he somehow both runs out of species in his gene pool and loses his last remaining species on earth. An animal caught in such a dilemma won't be able to speciate or migrate, for example, but still has other action options (and still maintains a VP total).

GENE POOL

Prior to being placed on a tile of earth, species belonging to an animal are kept in a pile in front of their owning player—each such pile is called a "gene pool". Whenever a species is added to earth, it is always taken from that player's gene pool. However, whenever a species is removed from earth for any reason other than Glaciation it is always placed back into the box, out of play (not back into the player's gene pool).

VICTORY POINT TRACK

The "**Victory Point Track**" runs around the outside of the board. This is where, using one of its allotted cubes, each animal will keep track of its current VP score throughout the game.

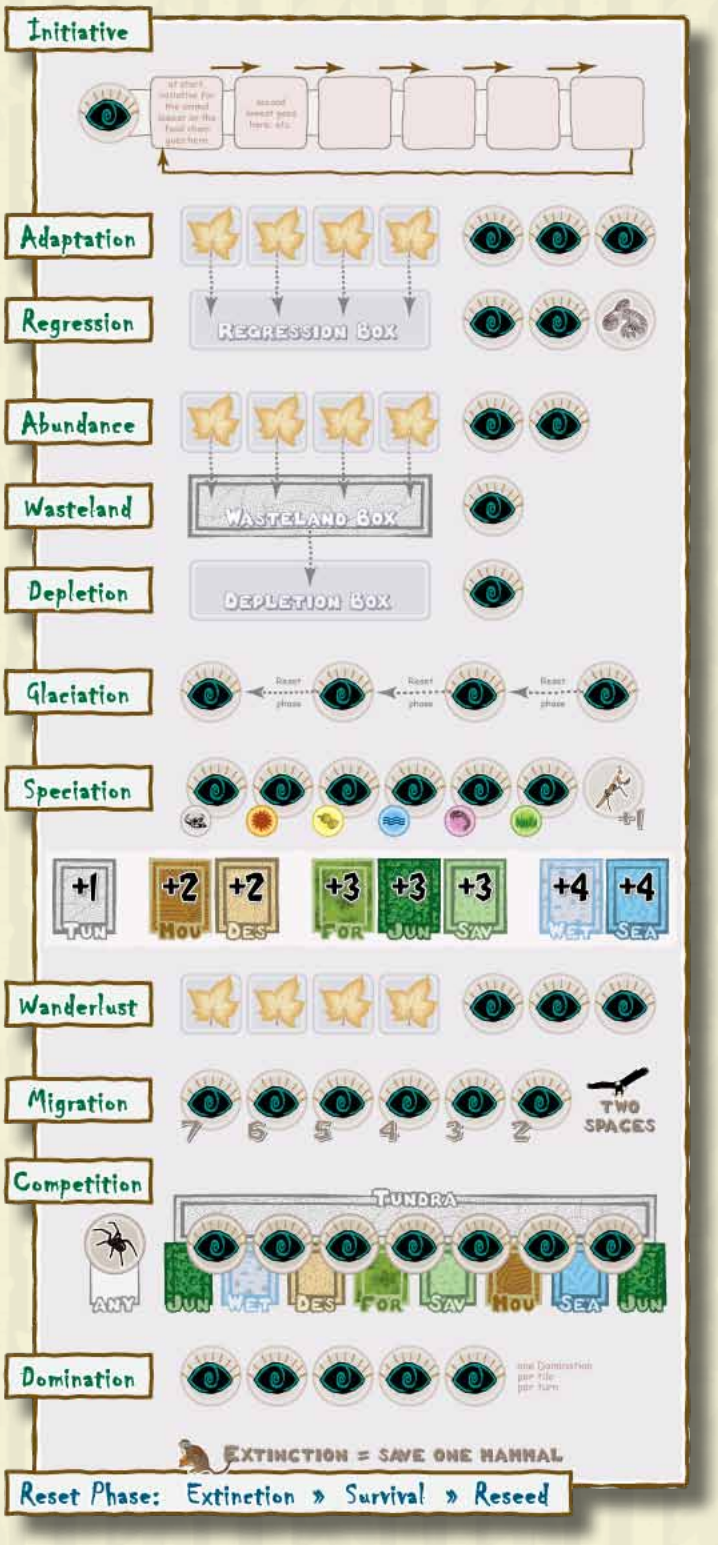
Whenever an animal gains or loses VPs, move its cube forward or backward on the track accordingly. Place a spare like-colored cube in the "+100" space if an animal ever goes above 100 VPs. VPs may never drop below zero.

The spare cube may come from those previously removed from the game.

ACTION DISPLAY

This is the large pink-gray boxed area on the right side of the game board. The action display is the game's "engine", so to speak, and will facilitate each player's wants and desires as far as furthering their animal's destiny on earth.

The action display:



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SEQUENCE OF PLAY

Dominant Species is played in a series of turns in which all players take part more or less simultaneously. Each turn is divided into three Phases:

PLANNING PHASE

EXECUTION PHASE

RESET PHASE

During the Planning Phase, players will take turns placing their available action pawns (APs) into the "eyeball" spaces of the action display that dominates the right half of the board. Each AP will indicate an action to be taken by that player during the following Execution Phase. Each action space can hold a maximum of one AP so it's "first come, first served".

During the Execution Phase – which begins once all available APs have been placed for the turn – APs are removed from the action display in top-to-bottom, left-to-right order. Each time an AP is removed in this fashion, the owning player performs the action indicated in that section's title bar (such as "Glaciation" or "Migration").

During the Reset Phase (page 20), some species may go extinct and one player may be able to score VPs via the Survival Card. Then if the game hasn't ended yet the action display is reset for the following turn.

Play continues from turn to turn in this manner until the game ends and final scoring occurs (page 20).

PLANNING PHASE

During each turn's Planning Phase players will, one at a time in left-to-right Initiative order, place one of their available APs into any vacant "eyeball" action space of the action display. Each eyeball space can contain at most a single AP.

> APs cannot be placed into non-eyeball spaces, such as the one with the arachnid icon in the Competition section.

After the last animal in Initiative order has placed an AP, the current "round" ends and a new round begins with the animal at the front of the Initiative track. Rounds continue in left-to-right Initiative order until all animals have run out of available APs to place. In each round, any animal that has run out of available APs is simply skipped when its position on the track is reached. Unplayed animals are also skipped.

EXECUTION PHASE

During the Execution Phase, APs placed on the action display during the immediately preceding Planning Phase are removed – one at a time in top-down and left-right order – and the appropriate action performed by the owning player. The order is thus:

1. Initiative
2. Adaptation
3. Regression
4. Abundance
5. Wasteland
6. Depletion
7. Glaciation
8. Speciation
9. Wanderlust
10. Migration
11. Competition
12. Domination

VOLUNTARY ACTIONS

Actions are never mandatory: when a player's AP is removed from the action display he may choose to voluntarily forfeit the allowed action in its entirety.

SKIPPING SECTIONS

Most sections of the action display can be skipped if they contain no APs. Exceptions include:

- Regression—this section always affects all animals with matching added elements;
- Wasteland—this section always affects all tundra tiles with matching elements;
- Speciation—the insects always get a chance to add a single species to the board;
- Competition—the arachnids always get a chance to compete against a single opposing species.

The various actions are described on the following pages in detail, and are presented in the same order in which they are to be executed during actual play of the game.

> The actions are also presented – in order of execution – in abbreviated form on each player's animal display.

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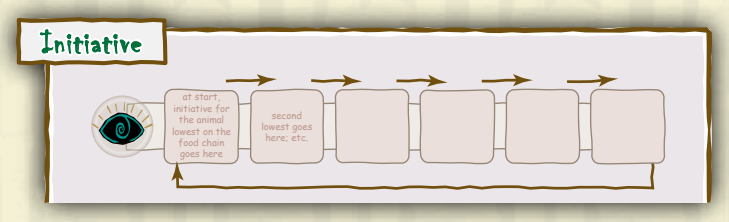
INITIATIVE



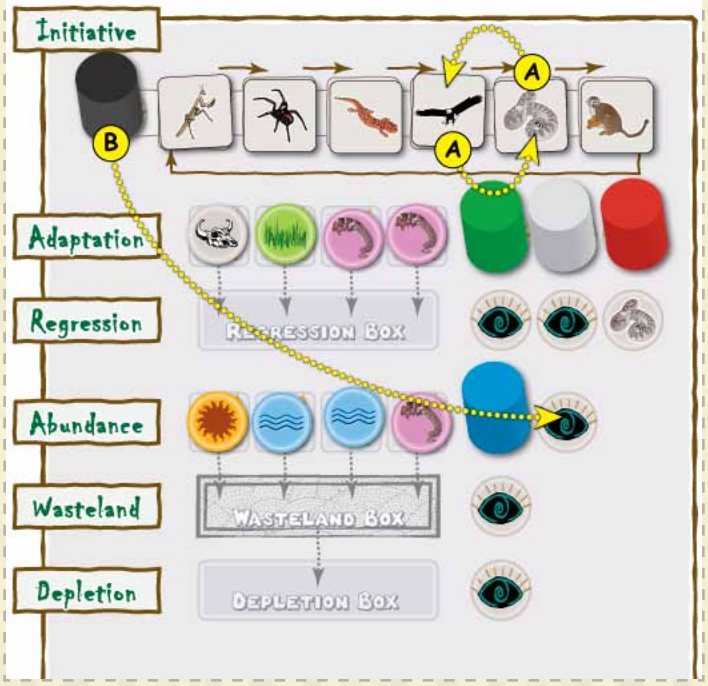
At the start of the Execution Phase, remove any AP that was placed here. That player performs the following activities:

- On the Initiative track, swap his animal's initiative marker with that of the animal directly to the left of it—thus effectively moving one space forward on the Initiative track. Ignore this activity if the acting animal already occupies the front (left-most) Initiative spot.
- Place the AP that was just removed into any vacant eyeball space.

The player effectively makes the very last AP placement of this turn, as well as moving forward in turn order for the following turn's Planning Phase.

EXAMPLE: In the Planning Phase the reptile player (black) decides to improve his position a bit on the Initiative track, so he places an AP here in the first turn of a six player game.

When his AP is removed, he first swaps positions with the bird player's initiative marker (A). He then chooses another empty eyeball space to place the AP that was just removed: seeing an opportunity to get more sun into play, he takes the last vacant space in the Abundance section (B).



ADAPTATION



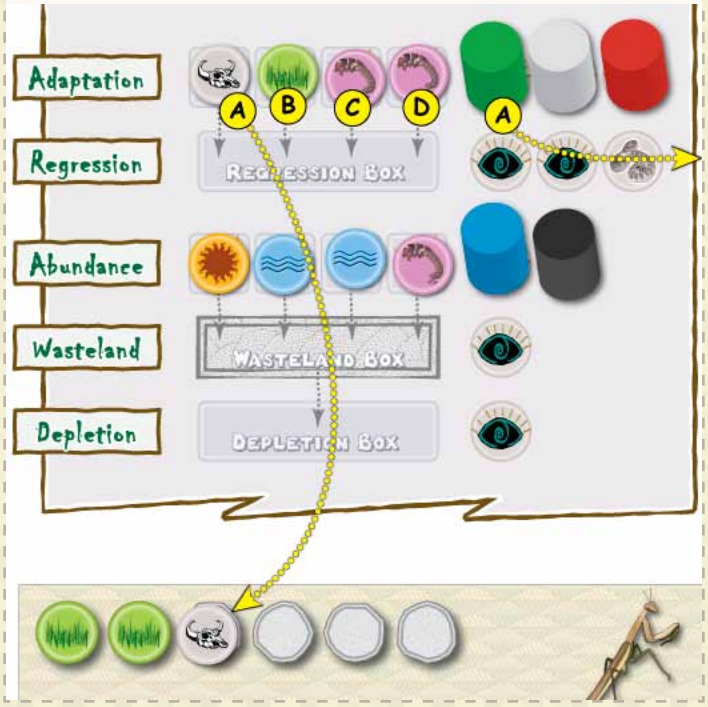
After any Initiative action has been performed, APs are removed from this section one at a time in left-to-right order. When an animal's AP is removed, that player selects one of the elements currently present in this section. The chosen element is removed from the action display and placed on an empty (gray) element space on that animal's display.

No animal may ever have more than six elements on its animal display (counting both the inherent elements and added elements). If the acting animal already possesses six elements, this action is forfeited.

Animals are allowed to acquire multiples of the same element type.

EXAMPLE: The insect player (green) wants to diversify a bit. He gets to remove his AP first and chooses to place the available meat element on his animal display (A). The white and red players are left with grub and grass to choose from.

The insects could have instead chosen to specialize by taking the grass element (B) to add to their two default grass. Taking one of the two available grubs (C) is risky because, if neither of the other two players took the other grub, it would move down to the Regression Box at the end of the turn (D) thereby forcing the insects to spend a precious AP next turn to save it.



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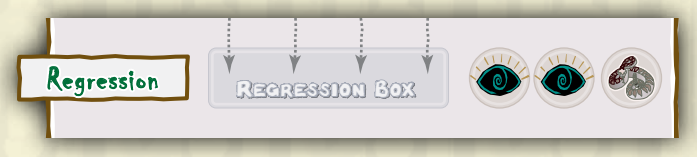
REGRESSION



After all Adaptation actions have been performed, Regression occurs as follows: for each element <u>type</u> present in the Regression Box, every animal removes one element <u>disk</u> of the same type from its animal display.

Action Pawn Benefit—Each AP present in this section prevents one such element from being removed from that animal. Note the third space here with the reptile symbol inside: the reptiles are always considered to have one "free" AP in this section.



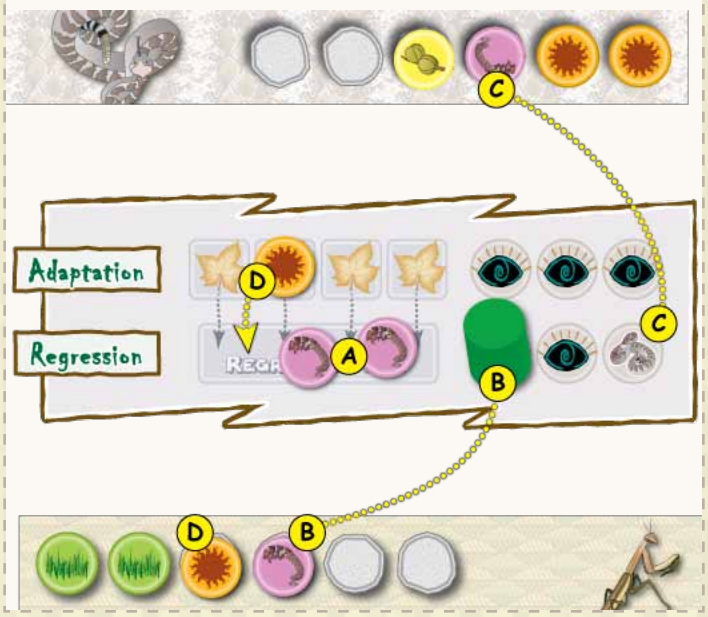
During the Planning Phase the reptile player can still choose to place APs in this section as normal if he so desires.

No animal may ever have its default elements removed (those printed in the upper left corner of the animal displays). Animals possessing only their default elements cannot be affected by Regression in any way.

After any and all Regression occurs, return any APs in this section to their owners.

EXAMPLE: The Regression Box holds two grub elements (though this counts as only <u>one</u> element <u>type</u>) (**A**). The insect player placed an AP here, which saves his grub element from being removed (**B**). The reptile player's free AP here likewise saves his grub (**C**).

Note that the insect player's sun element is in danger of being removed next turn when the sun sitting in Adaptation is moved down into Regression at the end of the this turn (**D**).



ABUNDANCE

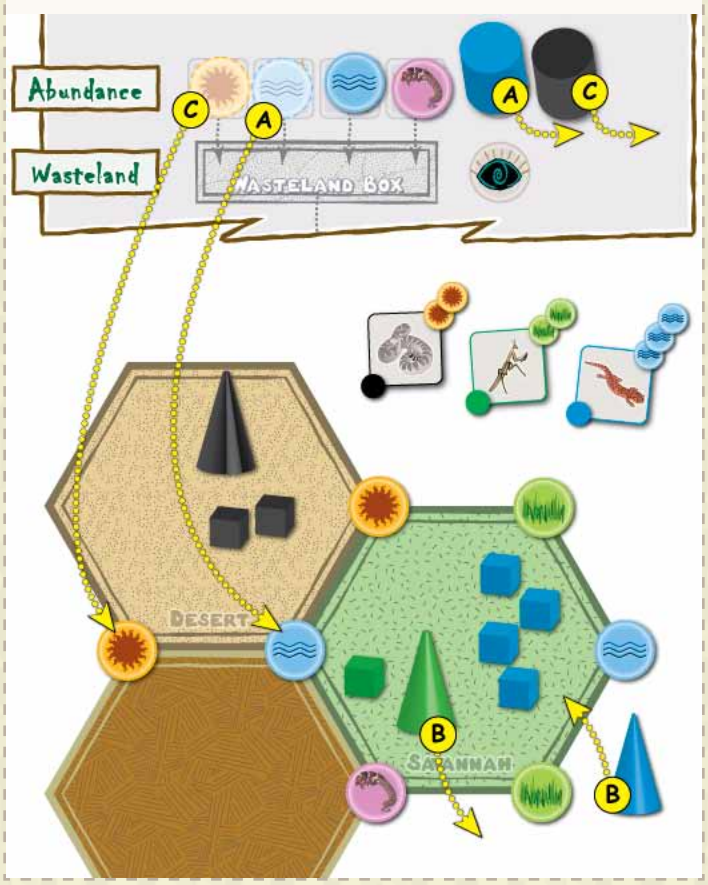


After the Regression action has occurred, APs are removed from this section one at a time in left-to-right order. When an animal's AP is removed, that player selects one of the elements currently present in this section. The chosen element is removed from the action display and placed on a vacant corner of any tile of earth.

Elements can be placed on any vacant corner of a tile, even a corner shared by only one or zero other tiles (that is, those tile corners currently on the "edge" of earth).

EXAMPLE: The amphibians get first pick (**A**) and choose to place one of the available water elements as indicated. This gives them dominance of the Savannah tile: 6 matching elements to the insect's 4 (**B**).

The reptiles get second pick (**C**) and choose to place the available sun tile as shown. This will allow them to later expand into the mountain tile without those species going extinct.



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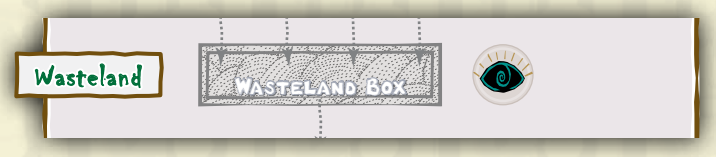
WASTELAND



After all Abundance actions have been performed, remove any AP that was placed here. That player removes any one element currently in the Wasteland Box, placing it back in the draw bag.

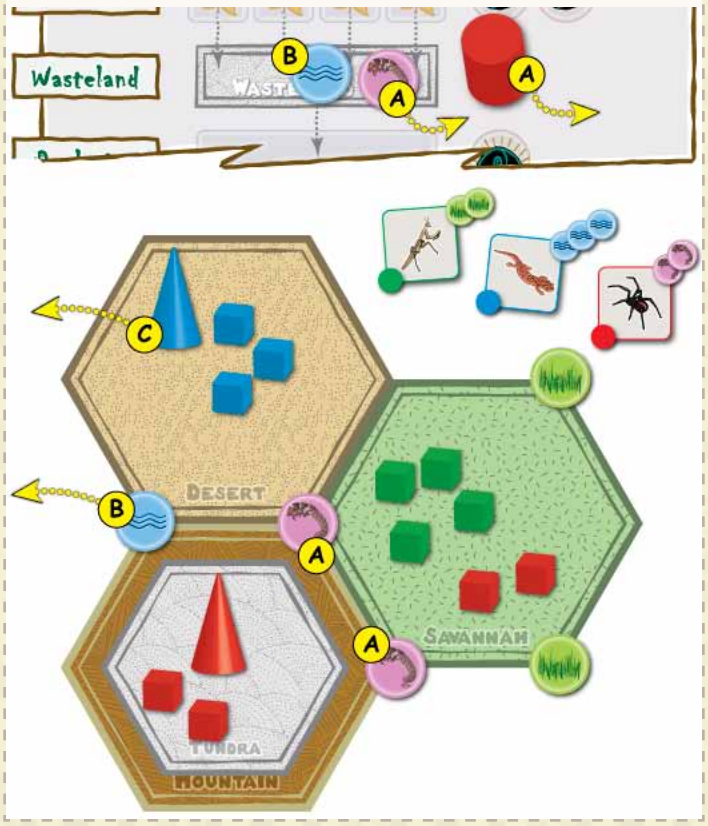
Then, regardless of whether there was an AP placed in this section or not, the Wasteland action automatically occurs: remove <u>all</u> elements from tundra tiles that match the element type(s) still present in the Wasteland Box. Removed elements are placed back in the draw bag.

Note that the Wasteland Box will be empty – and the action skipped – during the first turn of the game.

EXAMPLE: The arachnids remove their AP, choosing to place the grub element in the Wasteland Box back in the draw bag. Thus the two grubs adjacent to tundra are saved (A).

A water element remains in the Wasteland Box, so all water elements on earth that are currently adjacent to a tundra are removed and place back in the draw bag (B).

The amphibians lose their dominance of the desert tile because their species there are now endangered (C).



DEPLETION



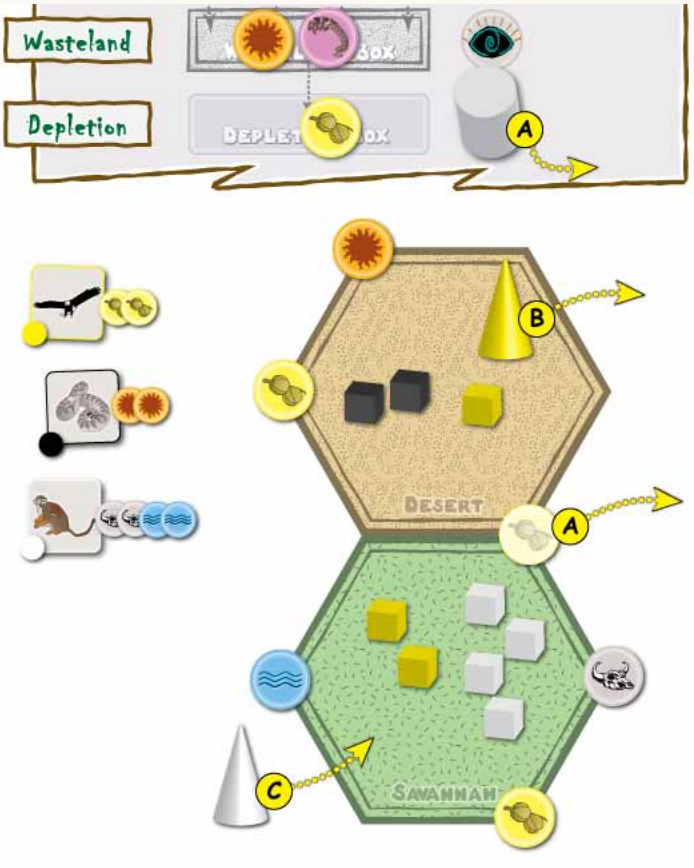
After any Wasteland action has been performed, remove any AP that was placed here. That player selects one element on earth that matches an element type in the Depletion Box. The chosen element disk is removed from earth and placed back in the draw bag.

If none of the elements in the Depletion Box match elements on earth, this action can have no effect.

Note that the Depletion Box will be empty – and thus the action useless – during the first and second game turns.

EXAMPLE: The mammal player removes his AP from this section. There is a lone seed element in the Depletion Box so he may remove any one seed element from earth. He chooses the one straddling the desert and savannah (A).

On each tile the birds go from matching 4 elements to matching 2. They lose dominance of the desert as they are now tied with the reptiles (B). The mammals will gain dominance of the savannah where before it was a tie (C).



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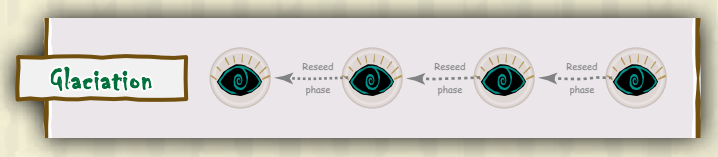
GLACIATION



After any Depletion action has been performed, remove the left-most AP (only) from this section. That player conducts a Glaciation action by performing the following steps:

1. Select a non-tundra tile that is adjacent to at least one other tundra tile.

2. Remove and temporarily set aside all species from the chosen tile.

3. Place a new tundra tile (from the face up stack) on top of the chosen tile.

The tile is no longer considered to be its former terrain type and is instead treated as a "tundra tile" for the rest of the game.

4. Remove all elements from earth that are surrounded by exactly three tundra tiles.

This means that an element occupying a corner of only one or two tundra tiles on the "edge" of earth are unaffected.

5. Gain **bonus VPs** (see page 3) based on the number of existing tundra tiles that are adjacent to the newly-placed tile.

6. From the pile of set-aside species, place 1 belonging to each animal back onto the tile.

7. The remainder of the removed species, if any, are displaced back to their owners' gene pools (instead of being eliminated and put back in the box).

If there are no tundra tiles remaining in the stack (all 12 are already out on earth) this action is forfeit.

Note that if there are any APs in the second, third or fourth eyeball spaces these are not removed at this time. Instead, these will shift forward during the upcoming Reset Phase.

Players will find that Glaciation is subtly powerful enough to sometimes warrant investing in a future action, even if it means being without the use of an AP for a turn or two.

EXAMPLE: The reptile player gets the Glaciation action this turn. He would like to glaciate the Savannah because, not only would it would give him 3 bonus VPs for placement next to two existing tundra tiles, but would also give him control of the Survival Card (3 total reptiles in tundra compared to 2 arachnids and 1 insect). However, he doesn't want the lone sun element to become surrounded by three tundra and thus be removed during step 4....

So he instead chooses the desert tile for Glaciation (step 1). He removes all the species there (step 2) then places a new tundra tile atop it (step 3). Step 4 has no effect. In step 5 he scores 1 bonus VP (for there being one existing tundra adjacent to the new tile). Then, of the species removed in step 2 – 1 insect, 2 birds and 4 amphibians – one of each is put back on the new tundra (step 6), with the remaining 1 bird and 3 amphibians being put back into their respective gene pools (step 7).



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SPECIATION



After any Glaciation action has been performed, APs are removed from this section one at a time in left-to-right order. When an animal's AP is removed, that player chooses any one element on earth that matches the element type accompanying the space from which the AP was taken. He then places new species from his gene pool onto the adjacent tiles as follows:

- Up to 4 species if the tile is sea or wetland.
- Up to 3 species if the tile is savannah, jungle or forest.
- Up to 2 species if the tile is desert or mountain.
- Up to 1 species if the tile is tundra.

Note that only one, two or three tiles can be populated at a time: those with a corner occupied by the chosen element.



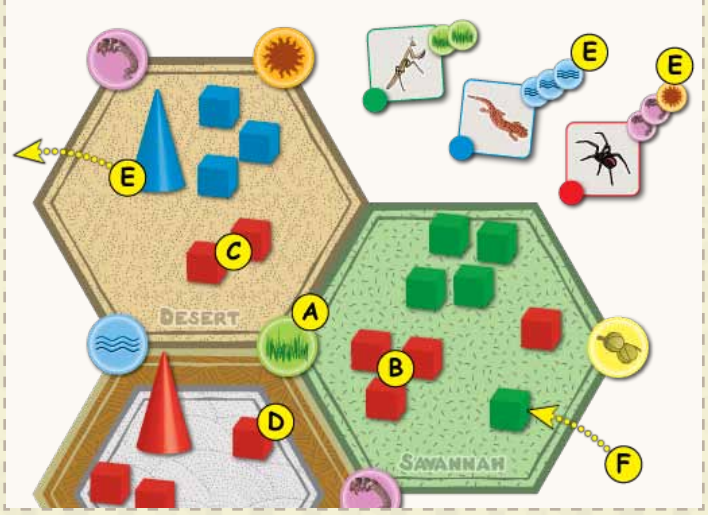
After all Speciation actions have been performed, the insect player may place a single species from his gene pool onto any one tile of earth.

During the Planning Phase the insect player can still choose to place APs in other spaces within this section if he so desires.

EXAMPLE: The arachnids remove an AP from the "grass" eyeball space. They choose the grass element shown below (A). This allows them to place 3 more species in the savannah (B), 2 in the desert (C), and 1 more into the tundra (D).

The amphibians lose dominance of the desert since they are tied with the arachnids at 3 matching elements each (E).

The insects then place their free species in the savannah in order to maintain the quantitative advantage there (F).



WANDERLUST



After all Speciation actions have been performed, APs are removed from this section one at a time in left-to-right order. When an animal's AP is removed, that player selects one of the available face up large tiles (those atop the **Wanderlust Tiles** stacks). He then performs the following activities in the order shown:

1. Select a vacant (white) hex on the game board and place the new tile there. The hex selected must be adjacent to at least one existing tile of earth.

2. May select one of the available element disks in the Wanderlust section of the action display and place it onto any vacant corner of the newly-placed tile.

3. Gain **bonus VPs** (see page 3) based on the number of existing tiles adjacent to the newly-placed tile.

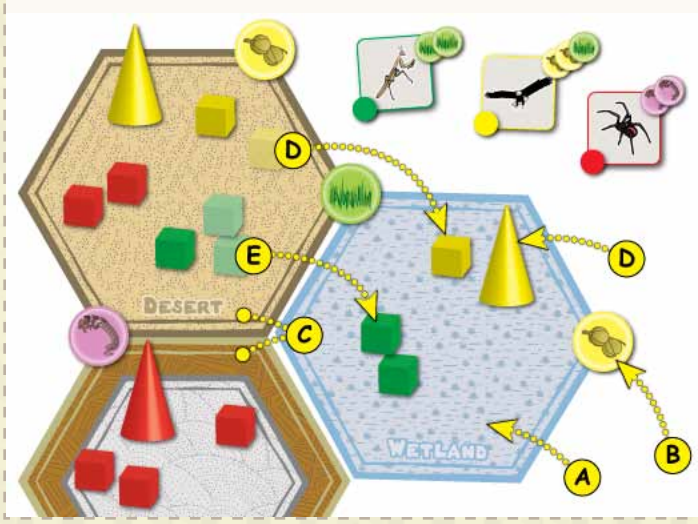
Finally, in food chain order, every player may move all, some or none of his species that are currently adjacent to the newly-placed tile onto that tile.

If any of the three tile stacks becomes depleted, the number of possible Wanderlust actions will be reduced accordingly.

EXAMPLE: The birds are first. They choose a face up wetland tile to place (A) along with an available seed element (B).

There exist 2 tiles adjacent to the new wetland tile (C): referencing the Bonus Points Table, this nets the birds 3 VPs.

The birds then decide to move 1 of their adjacent species onto the new wetland tile, immediately claiming dominance (D). The arachnids decline (they would be endangered there). Finally, the insects move in 2 of their species (E).



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MIGRATION



After all Wanderlust actions have been performed, APs are removed from this section one at a time in left-to-right order. When an animal's AP is removed, that player selects up to X of his animal's species anywhere on earth, where X is the number in the space from which the AP was taken. Each chosen species is then moved onto an adjacent tile.

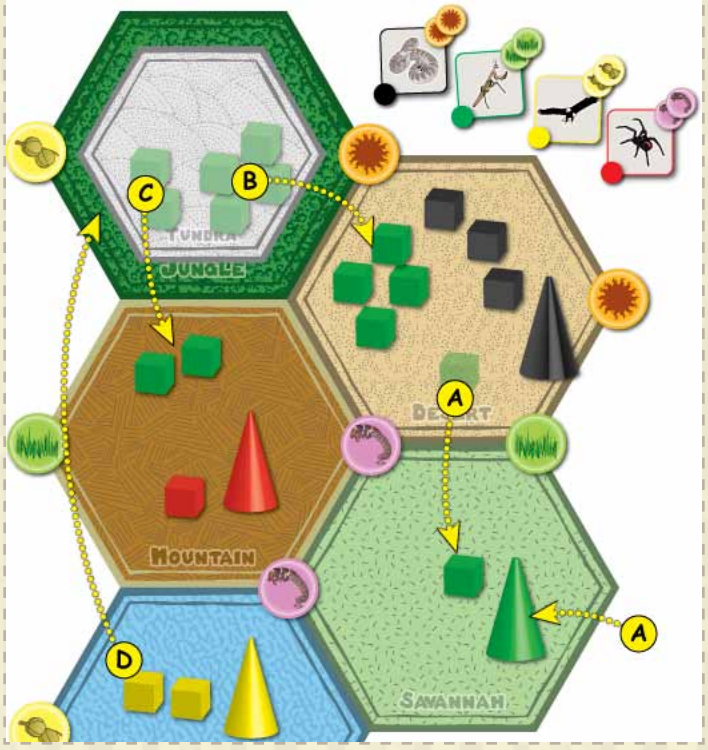
Each bird species may Migrate to a tile up to two tiles away: that is, birds may be moved <u>through</u> an adjacent tile and onto a second tile.

Birds cannot migrate over blank hexes (those not yet containing a terrain tile).

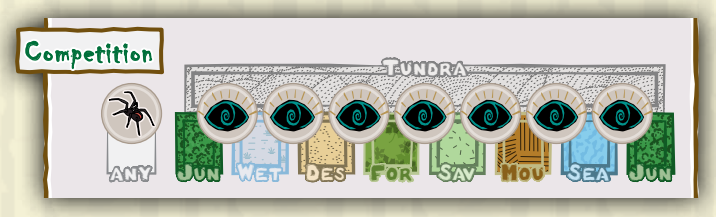
Migrating species beginning a Migration action on the same tile may move together onto the same tile or be split up onto separate tiles, at the owning player's discretion.

*EXAMPLE: The insects remove an AP from the "7" eyeball space. They move 1 insect from the desert to the adjacent savannah, claiming dominance (**A**). Being endangered on the tundra, they use their last 6 migrates to move their species out of there: 4 to the desert (**B**) and 2 to the mountain (**C**).*

*The birds also have a Migration AP this turn. Seeing what the insects did, they plan to use their special ability to move one of their species from the sea to the now vacant tundra (**D**).*



COMPETITION



After all Migration actions have been performed, APs are removed from this section one at a time in left-to-right order. When an animal's AP is removed, that player notes the three terrain types associated with the space from which the AP was taken. He then chooses <u>up to 1 tile of each</u> of those terrain types currently on earth. To choose a tile, it must contain:

- at least one of that animal's species; <u>and</u>
- at least one opposing species.

That player then eliminates any 1 opposing species on each of the chosen tiles. Place eliminated species back in the box, out of play (not back in their owners' gene pools).

The arachnids are always considered to have one "free" AP in this section. They compete first, in any terrain type, but only on a single tile.

In the Planning Phase the arachnid player can still choose to place APs in other spaces within this section if he so desires.

*EXAMPLE: The reptiles have an AP in the "tundra-desert-forest" eyeball space (**A**). They choose to eliminate 1 mammal in the left-most forest (**B**) and 1 insect in the tundra (**C**). They have no presence in the desert so forfeit their third competition (**D**).*

*Even with presence, they cannot compete in the second forest nor in the sea this turn (**E**).*



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DOMINATION



After all Competition actions have been performed, APs are removed from this section one at a time in left-to-right order. When an animal's AP is removed, that player selects one tile on earth that has not yet been chosen for Domination this turn. That tile is then scored by performing the following steps:

1. The animal having the most species present on the tile gains X VPs, where X equals the first number listed for that terrain type on the **Tile Scoring** table on the game board.

2. If the tile being scored is any terrain other than tundra, the animal with the second highest number of species present gains a number of VPs equal to the second number listed for that terrain on the **Tile Scoring** table.



There must be another animal present—an animal alone on a tile cannot claim both first and second place.

3. If the tile being scored is sea, wetland, savannah, jungle or forest, the animal with the third highest number of species present gains a number of VPs equal to the third number listed for that terrain on the **Tile Scoring** table.

There must be a third animal present—an animal claiming first or second place on a tile cannot also claim third place.

4. If the tile being scored is sea or wetland, the animal with the fourth highest number of species present gains 2 or 1 VPs, respectively.

There must be a fourth animal present—an animal claiming first, second or third place on a tile cannot also claim fourth place.

- IMPORTANT: In all cases above, ties for number of species on the tile being scored are broken in descending food chain order (that is, mammals first, then reptiles, etc.).

5. Finally, if there is a dominant animal on the tile being scored that player must select and execute one face up Dominance Card (if one is available). Any choices to be made in the execution of a Dominance Card are made by the player who chose it. After execution place the card back in the box, permanently out of play.

Clarifications of card effects can be found on pages 18-19.

Note that when the **Ice Age** card is selected, the game will end at the conclusion of the current turn (see page 20).

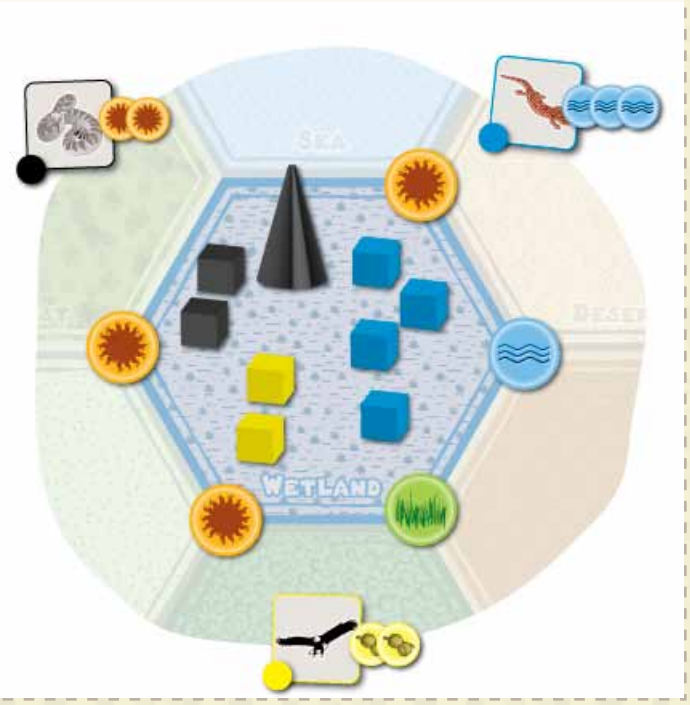
Note also that the dominant animal might not be the same as the animal that chose to score that particular tile, and might not be the animal that scored the most points.

Finally, be aware that the first player each turn to have a chance to select a Dominance Card will have five effects to choose from—after which the choices will become progressively fewer as face up Dominance Cards are selected and their effects resolved.

After all Domination actions have been performed, the Execution Phase is over and play proceeds to the Reset Phase (see page 20).

EXAMPLE: The reptile player has chosen to score the lone wetland tile in play. First place (8 VPs) goes to the amphibians with 4 species present. Reptiles and birds have 2 species each: the reptiles are higher on the food chain and so score 4 VPs for second place. The birds settle for third place (2 VPs) while no animal gets the last 1 VP for fourth place.

Then, being dominant on the tile, the reptiles must choose and execute one face up Dominance Card.



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OPTIONAL 2- AND 3-PLAYER RULES

When playing **Dominant Species** with only 2 or 3 players, the following rules may be used which allow for each player to control multiple animals. These rules conflict with some of those found elsewhere in this rulebook: where there is conflict, the rules in this column take precedence.

MULTIPLE ANIMALS

When assigning animals to the players during set up, assign all six animals. Thus in a 3-player game each player will be in control of two different animals; in a 2-player game, each player will control three different animals.

Players should assign one colored set of wooden bits to each of their animals. Each animal receives 3 cylinders and 35 cubes as if it were a 6-player game. Each animal maintains its own separate VP total.

ACTIONS

When one of a player's animals is acting, his other animal(s) and their species are considered "opposing" for all purposes (exactly as if they were controlled by an opposing player). For example, when a Dominance Card refers to "your animal" it is referring only to the animal that was dominant on the scored tile—in this case your other controlled animal(s) would be treated as opposing.

FINAL SCORING

While all six animals will ostensibly gain VPs throughout the game, only one belonging to each player will count for the final score. At the end of the game, each player's animal with the **lowest** individual score will be that player's overall final score—animals with higher scores belonging to the same player are ignored.

Thus it behooves you to try to maintain a balance between your multiple animals throughout the game rather than sacrificing one for the benefit of another.

For example, in a 2-player game Mark's animals have scores of 70, 145 and 160—netting him only 70 VPs. If Bob's animals had 75, 85 and 95 points, his final score would be 75 for the win.

OPTIONAL (RANDOM) EARTH SETUP

The following alternate setup for earth will have the animals beginning the game unevenly matched but with varying starting VP levels to compensate. This option can be used with either the base game or in conjunction with the optional 2- and 3-player rules to the left.

Follow normal setup for earth except as follows:

TILES

Prior to placing tiles on the board, shuffle all the large tiles face down. Draw seven at random and place them into the seven starting spaces. (The remainder form the three draw piles as normal.) Place a tundra atop the central tile.

ELEMENTS

One at a time, randomly draw a total of twelve elements from the bag, placing them onto the twelve tile corners normally allotted for starting elements. (The action display is seeded with elements normally.)

SPECIES

Place 1 mammal species onto each non-tundra tile containing a single meat element; 2 mammals onto each non-tundra tile containing 2 meat; 3 mammals onto each non-tundra tile containing 3 meat; etc.

Repeat this process for reptiles and sun; birds and seed; amphibians and water; arachnids and grub; insects and grass.

Identify the animal having the most species on earth and count those species. Place every animal's VP cube into the space of the Victory Point Track equal to this count. Then each animal loses a number of starting VPs equal to the number of starting species it has on earth (thus the animal or animals with the greatest number of starting species will begin the game with 0 VPs).

It is possible, however unlikely, that an animal will begin the game with no species on earth. If this occurs, don't panic! That animal will start the game with a nice VP lead—plus it means that the odds of its preferred element coming out of the draw bag and onto the action display is enhanced.

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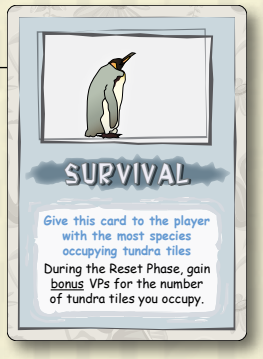
THE CARDS

SURVIVAL CARD



The Survival Card is set aside at the beginning of the game. During play, players should keep track of how many of their species occupy tundra tiles. Any player with the sole highest count automatically and immediately takes possession of the Survival Card. If two or more players are tied for most, no player controls the card (it remains uncontrolled and will not score points for any player).

During each Reset Phase, after Extinction, the player in control of the Survival Card earns bonus VPs (see page 3) for the number of tundra tiles occupied by one or more of his animal's species.

DOMINANCE CARDS



The 26 Dominance Cards are a player's reward for being dominant on a tile that is scored during a Dominance action. When a face up Dominance Card is selected during a Dominance action, that player must resolve all of the card's effect (or at least as much as possible given the current game situation). The card is then placed back in the box, out of play.

Should a question arise during play, hints and clarifications for the various card effects are outlined below.

AQUATIC
Take the chosen element from the draw bag. If there are no vacant corners on any sea or wetland tiles currently in play the first part of this card is forfeit. If you have no species remaining in your gene pool the second part of this card is forfeit.

BIODIVERSITY
You don't receive additional VPs if a tile contains more than one opposing species—it's simply 1 VP per tile that you occupy that has ANY opposing species on it.

BIOMASS
If your animal is alone on such an overcrowded tile you must eliminate one of your own species there. If multiple animals have species on an overcrowded tile, you choose which one dies out.

BLIGHT
The dominant player chooses which elements to remove from the chosen tile.

CATASTROPHE
The dominant player chooses which species to eliminate on the chosen tile. It is also that player's choice as to which single species to remove from adjacent tiles. The second part is mandatory, however, so if the dominant player is the sole occupant of an adjacent tile he will have to eliminate one of his own animal's species there.

COLD SNAP
Every animal except the one controlled by the player selecting this card loses one of its species on each tundra tile.

DISEASE
An animal's default (printed) elements can never be removed. If the order of removal makes a difference, they are removed in food chain order. Place any removed elements back into the draw bag.

ECODIVERSITY
Remember that "sun" is a single element "type"—so, for example, the two default sun elements on reptiles count once for this card effect, not twice.

EVOLUTION
You may select species anywhere on earth to replace—you don't need to share a tile with a chosen animal, for example. If you only have zero or one species remaining in your pool you can only replace zero or one opposing species, respectively.

FECUNDITY
You get only +1 per occupied tile; not +1 per species on that tile. If the number of species remaining in your gene pool is less than the number of tiles you occupy, you choose which tiles get the additional species and which are skipped.

FERTILE
It's 1 VP for every species on the chosen tile—yours or an opposing animal's.

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HABITAT
The element is not drawn at random—the player may choose any element currently in the draw bag.

HIBERNATION
The species may only come from those previously eliminated (not from a player's species gene pool and not from among those put back in the box at the start of the game).

ICE AGE
The game will end at the conclusion of the turn in which this card is selected—after Domination, perform Extinction and score the Survival Card as normal but skip the Reseed step. Then perform final scoring (see **Endgame** on page 20).

ICE SHEET
This ability follows all the normal rules for Glaciation (see page 13).

IMMIGRANTS
Animals make their decisions in food chain order. An animal having only its default (printed) elements cannot choose the first option—nice try!

INSTINCT
The AP may be placed into any empty eyeball space—even one that has yet to be acted upon this turn. This card generally acts as a super-early placement for the following turn.

INTELLIGENCE
If the animal highest in the food chain picks this card, they will be the only animal to benefit. Retrieve new action pawns from those set aside at the start of the game.

MASS EXODUS
The player choosing this card moves all animals, even his opponents'. Species may be split up amongst any and all adjacent tiles as the player sees fit.

METAMORPHOSIS
You cannot dump your two default (printed) elements. Note that you choose an element from the draw bag—the new element is not selected at random.

NICHE BIOMES
Remember that this card isn't chosen until after the relevant tile is fully scored. The "first place" value of a tile is its left-most number on the **Tile Scoring** table: for example, 9 for sea, 8 for wetland, 7 for savannah, etc.

NOCTURNAL
This card has no effect if chosen by the animal already at the front of the line.

OMNIVORE
The new action pawn comes from those set aside at the start of the game.

PARASITISM
If the animal lowest in the food chain picks this card, they will be the only animal to benefit. Retrieve new action pawns from those set aside at the start of the game.

PREDATOR
Note the word "opposing" on this card: you don't have to eliminate one of your own species on tiles containing only your species. You may choose a different opposing animal's species on each tile.

SYMBIOTIC
This effect counts default as well as added elements.

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A kind thanks to the following individuals for giving their time to help proofread this rulebook — David East, Kevin Morris and Paul Marjoram

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RESET PHASE

During the Reset Phase, animals may lose species to extinction and one animal may be able to gain VPs via the Survival Card. Then the action display is reset in preparation for the next turn's Planning Phase.

EXTINCTION

First, Extinction occurs as follows: Eliminate <u>all</u> endangered species. Eliminated species are removed from earth and placed back into the box, out of play.



EXCEPTION: Each turn the mammal player may automatically save <u>one</u> of his endangered species from Extinction (his choice of which if he has more than one that is endangered).

SURVIVAL

Next, make sure the player having the most species on tundra tiles is in possession of the Survival Card. If there is a tie for most species, no player receives the card. The owning player, if any, then scores **bonus VPs** (see page 3) based on the total number of tundra tiles occupied by his species (the quantity of species on each tile is irrelevant).

RESEED

Note: You do not need to perform this step if this is the last turn of the game (via play of the Ice Age card).

Finally, in preparation for the next turn perform the following activities:

- Draw enough new Domination Cards off the top of the draw pile to fill – face up – each empty space of the **Available Dominance Cards** section of the game board. Any cards already occupying this section remain where they are. If there are not enough cards remaining in the draw pile to fill up every card slot, fill up as many as you can; the rest will remain vacant.

Once the draw pile is depleted, no new cards will be placed for the remainder of the game.

- Slide any APs in the second, third and fourth spaces of the Glaciation section one space to the left.
- Remove all elements from the Regression, Depletion and Wanderlust sections of the action display. Place them back into the draw bag.
- Slide all elements in the Wasteland Box down into the Depletion Box.
- Slide all elements in the Abundance section down into the Wasteland Box.
- Slide all elements in the Adaptation section down into the Regression Box.
- Draw 4 elements at random from the bag and place them into the four "leaf" squares of the Adaptation section.
- Draw another 4 elements at random and place them into the four "leaf" squares of the Abundance section.
- Draw another 4 elements at random and place them into the four "leaf" squares of the Wanderlust section.
- If face down, flip face up the top tile of each of the three large tile stacks. Any empty stack remains empty.

Play then proceeds to the next turn's Planning Phase.

ENDGAME

When the game ends via the Ice Age card, finish the remainder of the Domination actions, if any, then perform Extinction and score the Survival Card as normal. Then remove all Domination markers from earth and score each and every tile of earth one last time: Domination is ignored during final scoring—that is, animals gain VPs only, not any Dominance Cards that may be remaining.

Once final scoring is complete, the player in control of the animal with the highest VP total wins the game. In case of a tie for highest, the tied animal closest to the top of the food chain wins the game for its controller.

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