

Año Nuevo

*A game of elephant seals
by Hutson Hall*



The Life of the Elephant Seal

Every year, Northern elephant seals travel thousands of miles to the beaches of Año Nuevo State park. After a long, hard year of hunting to build up their supplies of fat, they return to the beach to mate. The most experienced bulls know the best beaches to travel to to ensure they will have many females in their harem and their young will survive re-entry into the unforgiving ocean, and are able to judge how much food they will need to store up in order to make the most of their time. The biggest and toughest bulls can ensure that they get the best beaches by fighting off those smaller than them. The life of an elephant seal is harsh, but it's the only life they've ever known.

Components

- **48 Prey Cards** – 16 Crab, 16 Squid, 8 Shark, 8 Skate
- **60 Harem Cards** – 20 Prime Age, 20 Matron, 20 Primaparis
- **10 Location Cards**
- **6 Reference Cards**
- **6 Sets of Tokens** – Numbered 1-5, Ocean, Seal Token, VP Tracker
- **Turn Tracker**
- **VP Tracker**
- **Seal Figurine**

Card Layouts

Prey Cards

Card Name —————

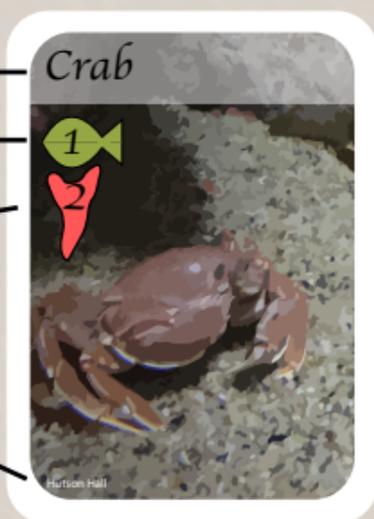
Food Value —————

Used to Mate

Fight Value —————

Used to Fight

Image Attribution —————



Card Layouts

Harem Cards

Card Name —————

Special Text —————

Only on Matron card

Victory Points —————

Collect the most to win

Image Attribution —————

Matron

When this card is taken, add an additional Harem card to this Location.

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Año Nuevo Research

Location Cards

Card Name —————

Special Text —————

Capacity —————

Number of Harem cards this Location holds

Image Attribution —————

Protected Bay

Each Harem card on this Location has .

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Honza Hall

Setup

- 1.** Shuffle the Location cards, Harem cards, and Prey cards into their respective decks, then place the Harem and Prey decks in the center of the table.
- 2.** Flip over cards from the Location deck equal to the number of players minus one, then put the rest of the Location cards back in the box.
- 3.** Each player takes a set of tokens equal to the number of Locations, plus an Ocean token, and a Seal token.
- 4.** Place the Seal Figurine on the Turn Tracker at turn 2.

Summary

In Año Nuevo, players will take the role of bull Northern elephant seals as they complete their yearly life cycle.

Each turn, players will Travel to either the Ocean or to one of the Location cards. In the Ocean, they will draft hands of Prey cards, which they will use to Fight (using the cards' Fight values) and Mate (using the cards' Food values) when traveling to the Locations. The winner of the game is the first player to score 40 Victory Points, collected through Mating.

Overview

1. Beginning of Turn*

Move turn tracker up and place Harem cards on Locations if the tracker resets.

2. Travel

Reveal Tokens and move your Seal Token.

3. Posture

Players newly sharing a Location display Prey cards face-down, then decide if they will back down. If any players do, return to the Travel step.

4. Fight

Discard Prey cards displayed during the Posture phase, then assign Alpha, Beta, Bachelor roles based on results.

5. Hunt/Mate*

- Players in the Ocean add a Prey card from their Pool to their hand, then pass their Pool, drawing a Pool if they don't have one.
- Alphas and Betas on a Location discard a Prey card to take Harem cards from the Location, increasing their VP score and adding more Harem cards to the Location if they took a Matron.

FIRST FIVE TURNS

During the first five turns of the game, only conduct the steps marked with * as there will be no Harem cards on the Locations yet. Once the turn tracker has been reset and Harem cards have been placed on the Locations, conduct the turn normally.

Beginning of Turn

Move Turn Tracker

At the start of each turn, move the seal figurine placed on the turn tracker up by one number. If it began on 7, reset it to 1.

Replenish Harem cards

If the turn tracker was reset to 1 this turn, discard all Harem cards, then flip Harem cards face-up onto each Location equal to that Location's . If the Harem deck runs out, reshuffle the Harem discard pile.

Travel

Each player secretly selects a token corresponding with where they wish to Travel. Once all players have selected their token, players simultaneously reveal their choice and move their Seal tokens. Do not move your Seal token if you are a Beta or a Bachelor and the Alpha on your Location did not leave. Whenever a player Travels to a new Location (the Ocean is *not* considered a Location), they must discard a Prey card.

Elephant seal mating locations have been carefully chosen through a centuries-long process of trial and error. The most popular locations have been chosen for their size, safety, and amount of effort to travel.

Posturing

If multiple players occupy the same Location, they must compete to become the Alpha of that Location. The Alpha will have first pick of the Harem cards on the Location, and no other players may leave the Location until the Alpha does. The first part of this process is Posturing.

During Posturing, all players on a Location *who are not Betas or Bachelors* choose and simultaneously display any number of Prey cards from their hand, face-down such that all other players can see how many are displayed. Once players have seen how many cards their opponents have displayed, all players simultaneously show if they will stay and Fight or back down by showing a thumbs-up or thumbs-down. All players who back down go back to the Travel step and repeat. These two steps are repeated until no players have backed down.

Elephant seals don't fight unless necessary. They would prefer to use their valuable fat stores on mating. Before coming to blows, they attempt to intimidate the other into backing down by drawing themselves up to their full height, baring their teeth, and letting out fearsome bellows.

Fighting

If, after Posturing, there are still multiple players who are not Betas or Bachelors on a Location, those players Fight.

To Fight, players reveal all cards displayed during the Posturing step and tally up their . The player with the most  becomes the Alpha. The player with the second-most  becomes the Beta. All other players become Bachelors. **All Prey cards used to Fight are discarded.**

Tie-Breaker

If players are tied during a Fight (or if players are still tied after the tie-breaker conditions at the end of the game), the first tied player to bellow like an elephant seal wins the tie. If it is unclear which player bellowed first, all players vote on which bellow was the most fearsome.

It is a fearsome thing to watch two elephant seals clash. The behemoths throw their bared teeth at each other's blubbery necks until both have blood streaming down their bodies and one emerges victorious.

Hunting

When a player Travels to the Ocean, they set aside any Prey cards in their hand. While Hunting, players will instead be interacting with Pools of Prey cards either drawn from the Prey deck or passed to them from another player. Unlike their hands, players do not own cards from their Pool until they set them aside.

Each turn a player spends in the Ocean, they choose one card to set aside from their Pool and pass the remainder of their Pool to the player on their left (do not pass if you are the only player in the Ocean).

If a player has no Pool to choose from, they draw five cards from the Prey deck to create a new Pool (during the first turn, players will enter the Ocean and should draw new Pools). If the Prey deck runs out, reshuffle the Prey discard pile.

When a player leaves the Ocean and Travels to a Location, they put all cards they set aside into their hand and discard their Pool.

Most of the elephant seal's year is spent hunting for prey to build up fat stores, as they do not eat at all while on the shore.

Mating

After Fighting is resolved, each player on a Location must discard a Prey card if possible. If you are an Alpha or Beta, you may take Harem cards equal to the  of the discarded Prey card.

Alphas always mate first, and may take any Harem cards they wish. Betas mate after the Alphas, and are assigned which Harem cards to take by the Alphas.

Bachelors may not take Harem cards, though they still must discard Prey cards.

When a player takes a Harem card, they move their VP tracker token up the VP Tracker by the  of the taken Harem card, then they discard the Harem card.

Matrons: When a Matron card is taken, immediately add another card to the Location. When discarding a Prey card with more than 1 , you may take a Matron and flip a new Harem card before choosing another Harem card to take.

Female elephant seals only give birth to one pup per year, so it is important that the pup survives until maturity. Unfortunately, inexperienced mothers often lose track of their pup and end up feeding others, resulting in the malnourishment of both pups.

Ending the Game

If, at the end of a turn, one or more players have at least 40 VPs, the game ends immediately and the player with the most VPs wins.

In the event of a tie, ties are broken in order of:

- 1.** If one player is an Alpha and no other tying player is, they win.
- 2.** The tying player who has the most Prey cards left in their hand wins.
- 3.** Use the tie-breaker method on Page 8.

Clarifications

- If you discarded a Prey card with multiple  and have  remaining while there are no more Harem cards on your Location, that  is forfeit.
- Players who are uncontested on a Location are considered to be Alphas.
- If an Alpha leaves a Location, the Beta on that Location becomes the Alpha. If one Bachelor remains, they become the Beta. If multiple Bachelors remain, they remain Bachelors.

Credits

Photographs: All photos are credited on the card on which they are featured, and are used either by explicit permission or under creative commons licensing. Photos have been edited to better fit the theme of the game.

All design, iconography, rules, playtesting, and editing done by Hutson Hall.

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