

BEST ZOO

A card game for 1–5 players

12+ years

1 player time 45 - 50 minutes

5 players time 70 - 90 minutes

Welcome to the world of zoos!
Every year, more than 700 million people visit zoos, wildlife parks, and aquariums around the world. Build your own zoo and find out who can do it better.
Because only the Best ZOO matters.

What you can find in this manual

Page 3 Play now in 15 minutes – Learning Game for beginners
Page 9 Advanced Game
Page 11 Five-Player Game
Page 11 Solo Game
Page 12 Card Anatomy
Page 16 FAQ and Common Mistakes
Page 17 Game Components
Page 18 Animal and Feed Reference Cards



Do you want to play now?

Player Setup (5 minutes)

1. Each player takes the five starting Worker cards into their hand. All players have the same cards. Each card represents one of the five basic actions in the game.
2. In the Learning Game, each player takes one random Task card. We recommend using only these: Africa, Asia, Reptiles, Birds, Carnivores, and Water Species. Each player keeps their Task card secret from the other players.
3. Each player randomly takes one of the five starting Feed cards and places it face up on the table. This is the first card in their zoo.
   Instead of taking a random Feed card, players can choose one based on their Task card(s). Decide among yourselves who chooses first, for example by rolling the 6-sided die (the highest roll chooses first). Then continue clockwise. The player who chooses last becomes the first player.
4. Each player takes three coins.

Summary: Each player has five Worker cards in hand, one Feed card on the table, one hidden Task card, and three coins. All of these cards have the symbol “S” (for Starting) on the back.



Table Setup (5 minutes)

1. Take the Season I cards. There are four card types: Animal, Feed, Equipment, and Worker. Shuffle each type separately. Then create the initial offer for the first round by placing these cards face up on the table: two Animal cards, two Feed cards, one Equipment card, and one Worker card.

Tip: The top right corner on the back of each card shows how many cards of that type are added each round.

2. Create a supply of coins and victory point tokens.

3. The first player receives the 6-sided die.

Summary: The table (the face-up and face-down cards in the offer) should look similar to this picture:



That's it! You are ready to play Season I of Best ZOO.

Playing a Round

1. Each player secretly chooses one Action card from their hand and places it face down on the table, so that no one knows what the others have chosen.
2. When all players have chosen, everyone reveals their card at the same time. Then, starting with the first player and continuing clockwise, players resolve their actions one by one.

Animal - You can take an Animal card only if you have a free space on a Feed card or on a suitable Equipment card. Alternatively, you can take a second Animal of a species you already have and add it to the first one.
Most Animals are free, but a few cost coins. These Animals are always bought as a Pair, and you still need a free Feed or Equipment card for them.

Example 1: You have one MOOSE on a GRASS card in your zoo. You can take a second MOOSE.

Example 2: You have a PENGUIN on a FISH card and an empty CRUSTACEANS card in your zoo. You can take a POLAR BEAR, but first you must move the PENGUIN to the CRUSTACEANS card. Then you can place the POLAR BEAR on the FISH card. You can move Animals between cards at any time, but you may never discard an Animal. You can, however, offer an unwanted Animal to other players for free.

Example 3: A DOLPHIN needs FISH or CRUSTACEANS.
It does not need both Feed cards.



Feed – Take one Feed card and place it in your zoo. Feed cards are free.



Equipment – Take one Equipment card and pay its cost in coins.



Worker – Take one Worker card and pay its cost in coins.

Equipment and Worker cards can have one of these subtypes:

Task – Works like your starting Task card, but it is public.
Feed – Works as an improved Feed card.
Effect – Resolve it immediately, or when the condition on the card is met.
Action – Add the card to your hand. It improves your basic actions, and you can use it from the next round on.
Feature – Gives you a repeated advantage whenever the condition on the card is met.
Final Scoring – Scores victory points at the end of the game.



Money – Take three coins.

No action – Sometimes you cannot carry out your chosen action: you do not have enough coins, the offer is empty, or you simply do not want any card from the offer. In this case, take one coin as compensation.

3. At the end of the round, add new cards of each type to the offer and play the next round. In the Advanced Game, the number of cards in the offer is limited, but you can ignore this in the Learning Game.

4. The first player role passes clockwise: pass the 6-sided die to the player on the left.

5. The last round of a season begins when the last card of that season (I, II, or III) is added to the offer. Note that each card type has a different number of cards, and the Feed cards always run out first.

End of Season – Breeding

1. At the end of the last round of the season, remove all remaining cards from the offer.
2. Two identical Animals form a Pair. For each Pair you have, roll the 6-sided die. If the result is equal to or lower than the Animal's breeding level, a baby is born: take one victory point and place it on the Animal card.
   If you succeed, roll again, this time with the 20-sided die. If the result is again equal to or lower than the breeding level, another baby is born: take one more victory point and place it on the Animal card. If the 6-sided die roll fails, you do not roll the 20-sided die.
   Cards that modify breeding apply to both rolls, as described on them.
3. In a 2- or 4-player game, pass the first player role clockwise once more.

Seasons II and III

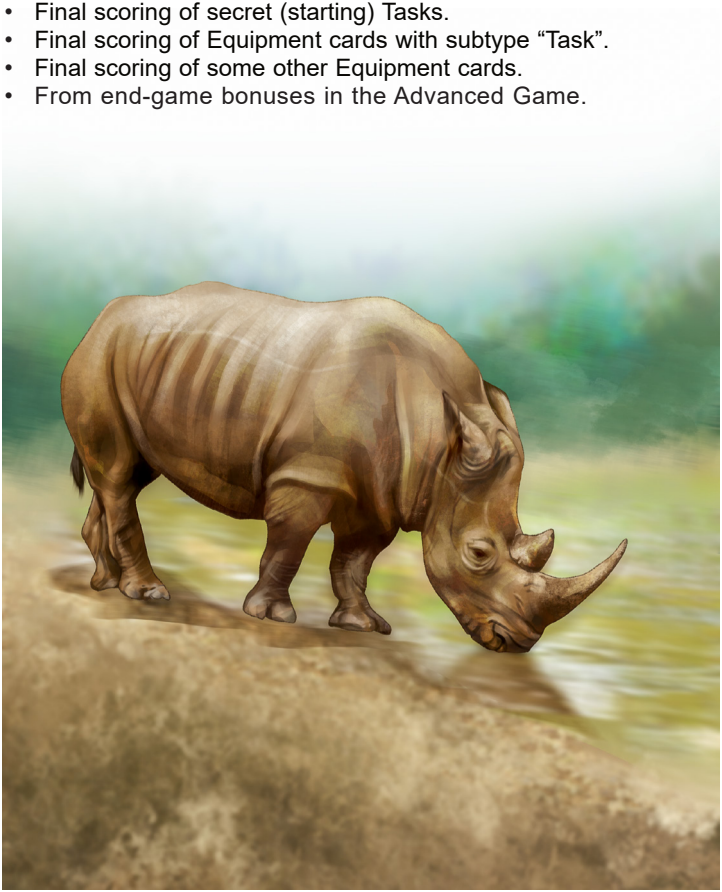
Set up the offer using the Season II cards and play using the same rules as in Season I. Then continue with Season III. The game ends after breeding at the end of Season III.

End of the Game

Score all Tasks, both secret and public. The player with the most victory points wins.

1 You can earn victory points:

- One point for each baby born during breeding.
- From special effects on a few cards.
- Final scoring of secret (starting) Tasks.
- Final scoring of Equipment cards with subtype “Task”.
- Final scoring of some other Equipment cards.
- From end-game bonuses in the Advanced Game.



Advanced Game

The core rules are the same as in the Learning Game. The changes are explained below.

Changes to Setup

1. Setup is the same, with one exception: each player takes several random Task cards, depending on the number of players:

Players	1	2	3	4-5
Received Tasks	6	5	4	3

2. Each player secretly discards one of their Task cards. Keep the remaining Task cards secret; they are scored at the end of the game.

Changes to Gameplay

1. Experienced players can speed up the game: after the chosen cards are revealed, players may resolve their actions simultaneously. Only players with identical or conflicting actions must resolve them in turn order.

2. The number of cards in the offer is limited. Add new cards to the offer so that you can always tell which cards were already there in the previous round. If the limit is exceeded, remove the oldest cards from the game. The maximum number of cards in the offer depends on the card type and the number of players:

Players	1	2	3	4-5
Animals	4	4	4	4
Equipment	1	1	2	3
Workers	1	1	2	3
Feed cards	unlimited			

Final Scoring

End-game bonuses: There are three bonuses. The winner of each bonus gets 2 victory points. In case of a tie, each tied player gets 1 victory point.

2 **Zoo with the Most Animals** – Each animal counts. *Example: A KANGAROOS card counts as two animals.*

2 **Zoo with the Most Species** – Each species counts once. *Example: Two KANGAROOS cards (four animals) count as only one species.*

2 **Best-Equipped Zoo** – Count all your Equipment and Worker cards, except starting cards.

Game Tiebreaker: If there is a tie after final scoring, the player with the most coins wins. If there is still a tie, the tied players carry out one additional breeding, using all their cards that modify breeding.

Five-Player Game

In a five-player game, the last player in turn order may be at a slight disadvantage. To compensate, apply these two rules at the beginning of each season:

- **One coin for the fifth player** – The fifth player in turn order takes one coin as compensation.
- **More cards in the offer** – After setting up the initial offer, add one Worker card and one Equipment card to it. As a result, some card types may run out sooner than in a game with fewer players.

Solo Game

There are two solo modes: Best Score and Fulfil the Mission.

Best Score – Try to score as many victory points as possible. Your starting Task cards are scored at the end of the game as usual, but do not score the end-game bonuses from the Advanced Game. Rate your final score as follows:

- **0–15 points:** Poor animals! This zoo is more dangerous than useful or habitable. Try again and do better.
- **16–24 points:** Well, well… There is plenty of room for improvement.
- **25–35 points:** Excellent job! This zoo is a pleasant place for the animals and for your happy visitors.
- **36+ points:** How did you do that? This zoo is amazing!

Fulfil the Mission – Choose a solo Task card and try to achieve all the goals written on it.

Card Anatomy



EQUIPMENT
Starting Action card

At the start of the game, all players have the same five Action cards. One of them is EQUIPMENT. This card lets you buy one Equipment card from the offer. You must pay the cost of the chosen card, which is usually one coin.



The top left corner on the back of each card shows the game period: S for Starting, or I, II, or III for the seasons.

The top right corner shows how many cards of that type are added to the offer each round (two Animal cards in this example).



BIRDS

Starting Task card, secret

Each Task card defines its scoring conditions and the number of victory points it gives. If you have the BIRDS Task card and at the end of the game you have two PENGUIN cards and one FLAMINGO card, that counts as two species and gives you just one victory point.



WOOLLY MONKEY

Animal card, Season I

The two symbols in the top right corner show fruit and insects. This means you can place this Animal on a FRUIT card or an INSECTS card.

In the game, this Animal belongs to two groups: Primates and America (bottom left corner). Groups are important for completing various Tasks.

This Animal's breeding level is 3 (bottom right corner), so breeding succeeds on a roll of 1–3.

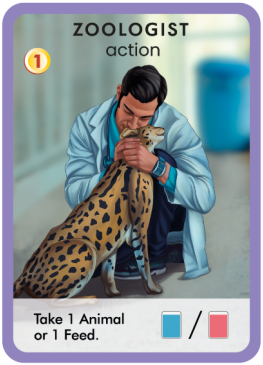


FISH

Feed card, starting or from the offer

Each Feed card can hold one or two Animals of the same species.

For example, a FISH card can hold one or two PENGUIN cards, but not one PENGUIN and one POLAR BEAR.



ZOOLOGIST

Worker card, improved Action card

You can obtain improved Action cards during the game.

This card costs one coin.

ZOOLOGIST lets you take an Animal card or a Feed card. You decide which one when you resolve the action.

Improved Action cards go into your hand. You can set aside the Action cards you no longer need.

When the chosen cards are placed face down, the other players can tell that you are playing an improved Action card, because the back of each card shows its season symbol.



POND
Equipment card, Season I

Equipment cards always have a cost, shown in the top left corner.

This card costs one coin.

POND works like a Feed card, but it has two spaces for two Pairs of Animals: one for fish-eaters and one for crustacean-eaters.



JUNIOR VET
Worker card, Season I

During each breeding (usually at the end of a season), JUNIOR VET lets you reroll up to two rolls.

This card costs one coin.

Its effect cannot be combined with the effect of the GENETICIST card. You can use it for any breeding during the game, not only at the end of a season.

FAQ

Can I use the income from DIRECTOR or BUILDER to pay for the card I take?

No. You must pay the cost of the card first and receive the income only afterwards. If you do not have enough coins, you cannot take the card.

What is the difference between Effect, Feature, and Action?

Effect – Resolve it immediately, or at the moment stated on the card (e.g. at the end of a season). You can use each Effect only once per game.
Feature – Works like an Effect, but you can use it repeatedly whenever its condition is met.
Action – The card goes into your hand, and you can play it from the next round on, as often as you like. The only exception is EXTERNAL ZOOLOGIST, which you can use only once per season.

What happens to an Effect when a card changes owner?

If an Effect card changes owner for any reason, the new owner can resolve its effect immediately.

Does a successful breeding add cards to my zoo?

No. A successful breeding gives you only victory points. No new cards are added to your zoo.

Common Mistakes

Each Feed card can hold only one Pair of the same species. For example, you cannot place two KANGAROOS cards (four kangaroos) on one GRASS card.

In a 2- or 4-player game, pass the first player role clockwise once

more after breeding. This balances the first player's advantage at the beginning of each season.

Do not forget the special rules for the Five-Player Game: one extra coin for the fifth player and more cards in the offer.

Game Components

6-sided die
20-sided die
24 coins
20 victory point tokens (value 1)
20 victory point tokens (value 3)
5 Animal and Feed reference cards
5 solo Task cards
45 starting cards (Feed: 5, Task: 15, Action: 25)
42 Season I cards (Animal: 16, Feed: 10, Equipment: 8, Worker: 8)
42 Season II cards (Animal: 16, Feed: 10, Equipment: 8, Worker: 8)
42 Season III cards (Animal: 16, Feed: 10, Equipment: 8, Worker: 8)

If you run out of tokens, use any suitable substitute.



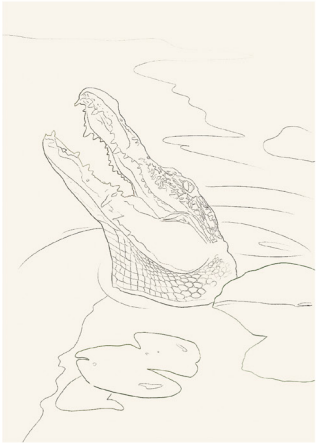
Animal and Feed Reference Cards

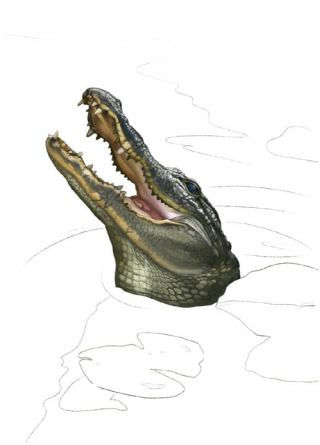
For players who enjoy strategic planning, the game includes reference cards. They list all Animals with their characteristics and all cards that provide Feed. Any player can use reference cards to plan their actions.



Game design: MaPa · Illustrations: xbershil

Stages of working on an illustration










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ZOO