

Go Extinct! Megafauna

Presentation notes

Slide 1



- Go Extinct! Megafauna is a fun and friendly game where players collect groups of related animals (clades) to collect points.
- Quick tip: While many students love games, some students may be intimidated by board games or by the competition factor – getting excited about the game may help students who might have these barriers. Incorporating the phrase “friendly round of Go Extinct! Megafauna” may de-emphasise the competition part at the beginning.

Slide 2



- Go Extinct! Megafauna encourages players to think like scientists and is centred around an evolutionary tree.
- Quick tip: Hype the THEME of the game to get students excited about the idea of thinking like scientists as they play the game. Dial the Nerd Factor to 11!
- Example dialogue: “You are all preeminent biologists! Your lab is the envy of the world and now you're racing your colleagues to collect clades of vertebrates for your research! Will you get the wonderfully weird Yolky Folks – the two eggs-laying mammals, the Giant Echidna and Platypus? Will you round up the Skin Shedders – those giant lizards and snakes with the ability to eat prey much larger than themselves? Or will you collect the coveted WHOMPbats – the eclectic clade of giant wombat relatives, including a vegetarian turned carnivore, the “Were-Wombat”?

Slide 3



- The Educational Booklet that comes with the game has lots of information and interesting facts about each animal.
- Example dialogue: "Megafauna are big animals. Shown here on the top row is the Cassowary, the Leatherback, the Giant Echidna, and the Megalania. On the bottom row (left to right) is the Ninja Turtle (Ninjemys), the Red Kangaroo, and the Diprotodon."
- Note the sulphur-crested cockatoo alongside each animal. The cockatoo acts like a scale bar so people can make a comparison and see how big these animals were.

Slide 4

Win by collecting the most clades!



A clade is a group of related animals.

Clades are labelled and colour-coded on the evolutionary tree board and cards. They also share an icon.



- The goal of the game is to collect clades – groups of related animals. Each clade is worth points. The person with the most points at the end wins. The evolutionary tree board will help players identify which animals make up a clade.
- Example dialogue: "Your goal is simple – collect the most clades! These must be complete monophyletic clades, which means it contains one of each colour-coded animal. The evolutionary tree board is your trusty reference. Refer to it often to see what clades you can collect and how you might ask for what you need from your competitors."

Slide 5

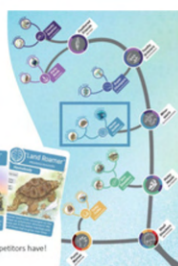
This is Go Fish evolved!

You can ask for anything!

- A Leatherback
- Any 1 Homebody
- Any 1 Mino-saur
- Any 1 Holey Head



Be strategic and ask based on your hand and what cards you think your competitors have!



- Go Extinct! Megafauna is a game of strategy – players can aim to collect any clade on the tree but must be strategic about who they ask and how they ask. The ask should help them get the cards they need to complete their chosen clades.
- Example dialogue: "Go Extinct! Megafauna is Go Fish evolved! The game rules are similar to Go Fish but will challenge you because you can ask for anything on the evolutionary tree board. See how each of these clades gets more and more inclusive!? This means you can ask for a smaller, exclusive clade, like Homebodies, or a bigger, more inclusive clade, like Reptiles (Holey Heads). Overall your STRATEGY will be based on both the LUCK of what you draw and your SKILL in using the evolutionary tree to ask for the cards you need. Your ABILITY to listen to your competitors and infer what cards they have is also important."
- We'll come back to the strategy of asking again.

Slide 6

How to Play

Use the board to identify colour-coded clades!



- There are different sized clades in the game and this determines how many points each clade is worth. (2-card clades are worth 10 points, 3-card clades are 20 points, and 4-card clades are 30 points. This information can be introduced at the end).
- The colours, pictures, icons, and nicknames on the cards match what is shown on the board to make identifying clades and cards easy.
- Example dialogue: "There are 10 solid-coloured clades, like this red Thunder Thighs clade. There are two of each animal in the deck of cards, meaning there is two of each clade to be collected. Each clade should include just ONE of each animal in that clade. For example, having two Giant Tree 'Roos does not make up for missing the Red Kangaroo. Some clades are larger than others and larger clades are worth more points. For example, the Yolky Folks only have 2 cards, whereas the WHOMPbats have 4. You will need to refer to the evolutionary tree board to see which species belongs to which clade and how many different species are needed to complete that clade."

Slide 7

Set Up:

- Shuffle the deck
- Deal 6 cards to each biologist
- Put remaining cards face down as the draw pile
- Select who will go first and proceed clockwise



- To get started, shuffle the deck of cards well and deal six to each player. Decide who will go first and then proceed clockwise.
- Quick tip: You could decide who goes first by asking the question, 'Who ate a dinosaur most recently?'. Birds are dinosaurs so chicken/turkey/duck/etc. and eggs count as eating a dinosaur. (Vegetarian/vegans might like to hear that going first is not advantageous!)

Slide 8

Turn Actions

Do each only once and in order:

- 1) Ask for a card from ONE specific person
- 2) Declare complete clades for peer review!
- 3) Reset hand to 6 cards if you have 5 or fewer cards



(Photo shows the game's designer, Dr Ariel Marcy at National Science Week 2022)

When it's their turn, each player gets to work through the three: Turn Actions – 1) asking other players for cards; 2) declaring clades; 3) resetting their hand.

Step 1: The Ask

- When it's their turn, the active player gets to Ask another player for a card: they can be specific and ask for an animal (such as a Red Kangaroo) or be more general and ask for a card from a clade (such as Thunder Thighs or Holey Heads). The active player should direct their question to ONE other specific player.
- If the player has a card that was asked for, they must hand it over. If not, they say "Go Extinct!" and the active player picks up a card from the draw pile instead. This way, every round, you get at least one card, but it may not be the one you wanted! A quick tip: Cards should be passed face down so others can't see what card is being passed on.

Step 2: Declaring clades

- If you have any complete clades, now is the time to lay them face up in front of you. The other players can then do a peer review to make sure you have one of each animal in the clade.

Step 3: Resetting your hand

- If you have 5 or fewer cards at this step, use the draw pile to reset your hand back to 6. If you have 6 or more cards then your turn simply ends!

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- Winning Go Extinct! Megafauna is all about strategically asking for cards to collect clades. Understanding the Ask action and what you can ask for is therefore a critical part of the game. The key thing to remember is that you can ask for a card in many different ways – you can ask for a specific animal, a solid-coloured clade, or a deeper clade – as you try to collect cards that complete clades.
- The example dialogue below explains this using an example that may be helpful in the classroom.
- “If you had the Ninja Turtle and Land Roamer cards from the Homebody clade in your hand you would need just one more card – the Leatherback – to complete the clade. So, you could ask another player for the Leatherback specifically. This works well if you think you know this player has that specific card. But, if you ask for a specific animal, what are the risks? It could give away what you’re going for and it gives a big hint as to what you have, making it easier for other players to get specific cards from you when it’s their turn. Instead, you could ask another player if they have any Homebodies. What are the possible cards that you could get if you asked for Homebodies? Land Roamer, Ninja Turtle, and Leatherback – remember there are 2 of each animal so you might get a duplicate instead of the one card you wanted. You could also ask for a deeper clade, such as the Mino-saurs, and potentially get the card you want, or a card for another clade (like the Super Chompers or Early Birds, clades you also have cards for). An advantage of this strategy is that it doesn’t give away to others what cards you have and what cards you’re specifically looking for.”
- Additional notes: Each card lists every clade – solid-colour and deeper – that it belongs to on the left-hand side.

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Ask Again Rule!

If you ask for a specific animal (not a clade) AND you get it, then you get to repeat your Ask action!

This means you could try for a specific animal again or for a clade.

Could you steal all the WHOMPbats one by one???



- The Ask Again Rule rewards players for successfully asking for a specific animal by allowing them to Ask again. This rule helps balance the dominant strategy of asking for deeper clades by rewarding players who listen and use the tree to infer the specific animals in their opponents' hand. On each new ask, you can switch between people you are asking.

- Example dialogue: "The Ask-Again rule rewards those who take the risk of asking for a specific animals and are successful. If you successfully pull off a specific animal ask – that is if the other player has the specific animal you asked for --- then you get to Ask again! This means you could go for another specific animal. If you're successful again... you get to ask yet again! You also have the option to switch and instead ask for a clade. You can also ask a different person each time."

- Additional note: If students are struggling with the game rules, this slide/rule can be optional or introduced after they have successfully played several turns.

Slide 11

Turn Actions

The animal's clade symbol

A solid-colour clade symbol

Thumper's Tracks

A deeper clade symbol

Fuzzy Mamas

- 1) Ask for a card from ONE specific person
 - You can ask for **any** clade! If the other player has 1+ animal matching your Ask, they choose ONE to give to you. If not, they say Go Extinct! and you draw 1 card.
 - Ask Again! If you asked for a **specific animal** and you get it!
- 2) Declare complete clades for peer review!
 - A clade has one of each animal – no more, no less. If your competitors find a mistake, pick up your cards and try again!
- 3) Reset your hand to 6 cards if you have 5 or fewer cards
 - Do this last & only reset your hand if it's your turn
 - No clade declarations after resetting
 - If you have 6+ cards, your turn is done!

- This slide summarises the actions a player does when it's their turn. This slide can be left on screen as students play the game for players to refer to until they're getting close to ending the game when the next slide can be displayed.
- Note: some players might be tempted to reset their hand after giving another player a card (i.e. not during their turn). Let them know that resets only happen at the end of their turn. You can tell students that having fewer cards makes them less of a target for other asks.

Slide 12

End Game Rules

When the draw pile runs out...

- 1) When asked for a clade, players give up to 3 cards instead of just 1 card!

For example: you asked for Fuzzy Mamas. If the other player has...

- 4+ Fuzzy Mamas, they choose which 3 to give.
- 3-3 Fuzzy Mamas, they give you all of them!
- 0 Fuzzy Mamas, they tell you to "Go Extinct!" and you end your turn without drawing a card.

Post! The Ask Again Rule is unchanged and can be a good option sometimes.

- 2) No reset: once you're out of cards, you're out! Turns skip you.

WINNING!

Once everyone runs out of cards, score the clades you declared for your research.

2-card clade = 10 points
3-card clade = 20 points
4-card clade = 30 points

The player with the most points wins!

- This slide explains the End Game rules and points system and can be displayed as students wrap up their game.