



WILDLIFE RESCUE

Playing To Win Guide

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GAME OVERVIEW

In *Wildlife Rescue* players take on the role of zoo conservation officers and aim to save as many endangered species as possible. The objective of the game is to collect the highest scoring hand of wildlife cards, which are obtained by rolling six wildlife dice. Each die contains animal symbols, representing the eight critically endangered species featured on the wildlife cards.

On his turn, a player aims to obtain at least three symbols of the same species on the wildlife dice – if this is achieved within three throws then the player takes the appropriate wildlife card, each having a different points value depending on the relative difficulty of obtaining that species in the game. Players score additional bonuses if they collect the three species wanted by their zoo. These are displayed on zoo collection cards, one of which is distributed to each player at the start of the game.

Despite the game's simplicity there is surprising scope for tactical play. To understand the tactics involved in *Wildlife Rescue* players need to understand more about its fine-tuned game mechanism.

GAME MECHANISM

The game revolves around the six unique wildlife dice. Each die face displays one of eight critically endangered species as follows:



Dama gazelle



Ceylon rose butterfly



Harlequin mantella frog



Rodrigues fruit bat



Mountain gorilla



California condor



Amur leopard



Javan rhinoceros

Each animal symbol is displayed on one of four background colours. The species on blue backgrounds are on average easiest to obtain during the game; the green symbols are slightly more difficult to obtain; the yellow symbols harder still and the pink symbols are the most difficult. Both species on the same colour have an equal chance of being obtained. For example, on the pink backgrounds, the Amur leopard has the same chance of being obtained by a player as the Javan rhinoceros. But if you look at the score card no two cards have the same points value – why is this? To answer this question we need to look at the pack of wildlife cards. There are two Amur leopards in the pack and only one Javan rhinoceros. The relative scarcity of the Javan rhinoceros wildlife card accounts for its greater value. Similarly for the other colours – there are more dama gazelles than Ceylon rose butterflies (both blue background); this is why the Ceylon rose scores more points.

During a game let the dice colours be your guide. For example, if a throw turns up two symbols of a blue species and two symbols of a pink species it will, on average, be far easier to obtain a third blue species and collect the appropriate wildlife card. Of course, the pink species will reward a player with more points but players should remember that the greater reward comes with the greater risk of getting nothing at all.

In addition to the relative chances of obtaining the different coloured species the tactical subtlety of the game lies in the zoo collection and zoo transfer cards.

The zoo collection cards are a valuable source of points. If a player collects all three species listed on his or her zoo collection card then the four cards are placed face down in front of the player. Not only does the player earn the stated bonus but no opponent can take any of the three wildlife cards by playing a zoo transfer card later in the game. Players should note that collection A (worth 100 bonus points) is the hardest to obtain on average; the easiest are collections E and F (both worth 50 points).

From the table below it can be seen that for the bottom four species there are more instances of the animal appearing on zoo collection cards than there are wildlife cards for it. For example, there are only two Ceylon rose butterflies in the pack of wildlife cards but it appears on three zoo collection cards (C, D and F). This can have significant tactical implications. If zoo collection Cards C, D and F happen to be dealt to three players in a game and two of those players complete their zoo collections, the third player will not be able to complete his or her zoo collection. In this way the lower value species play a significant role in the game. By contrast the other species – Javan rhinoceros, Amur leopard, California condor and mountain gorilla – appear on less zoo collection cards than there are wildlife cards. Therefore, these higher value species can often be taken by a player using a zoo transfer card.

<i>Species</i>	<i>Number of wildlife cards</i>	<i>Instances on zoo collection Cards</i>
Javan Rhinoceros	1	None
Amur Leopard	2	1
California Condor	2	1
Mountain Gorilla	3	2
Rodrigues Fruit Bat	2	3
Harlequin Mantella	3	4
Ceylon Rose	2	3
Dama Gazelle	3	4
TOTAL	18	18

As the game progresses more and more wildlife cards will be taken by players until there are no more cards of a particular species available. Players should be aware which species are available for collection and which species are not. For example, if a first throw produces two mountain gorilla symbols it is pointless for the player to set them aside if all three cards of this species are already held by players. The only exception is when a player intends to use his or her zoo transfer card (see later).

BASIC STRATEGIES

A player can adopt three basic strategies in a game of *Wildlife Rescue*. He or she can be a:

High Roller

Collector

Opportunist

The High Roller looks for the highest scoring species in the first throw and, if a wildlife card of this species is available, sets aside the chosen die or dice. If the wildlife card is not available then the High Roller selects the next most valuable species and so on. On subsequent throws the player seeks to obtain three of a kind of this species. Disregarding the risks, the High Roller aims to maximize the number of points he or she can get from any turn.

The Collector focuses exclusively on obtaining the three species on his or her zoo collection card. The goal is to win the zoo collection bonus as quickly as possible. After the first throw the collector looks to see if one or more of the three species have been rolled. If so, the die or dice of the chosen species is set aside and pursued for the remaining two throws. If not, the collector will scoop up all the dice and throw again. Later in the game, after achieving or abandoning the zoo collection, the collector will need to change strategy.

The Opportunist looks for the most occurring species in the first throw. If a wildlife card of the species is available the chosen die or dice are set aside. On subsequent throws the player seeks to obtain three of a kind of this species. The opportunist goes with the flow, maximizing his or her chances of picking up a wildlife card each turn. While the High Roller goes for high value wildlife cards, the opportunist opts for high numbers of cards. This does have an advantage in the case of a tie – the winner is the player with the most wildlife cards. The disadvantage is that the Opportunist will have to decide what to do when there is no obvious candidate in the first throw. Throw all dice again? Select the lowest scoring species to maximize chances of collecting a wildlife card?

THE FIVE GOLDEN RULES

1

Decide on your basic strategy and stick with it. If you've decided on the Collector strategy collect the three species on your zoo collection card as soon as possible.

2

Observe the wildlife cards your opponents are collecting and pay special attention to the three species they need for their zoo collection.

3

Pay attention to the number and type of wildlife cards available. The game ends when all but three wildlife cards have been collected. This end condition can be changed – see *Wildlife Rescue* FAQ and Advanced Rules.

4

Use your zoo transfer card effectively (see next section).

5

Observe which players have played their zoo transfer cards, as the impossibility of retaliation may influence your decision on how and when to play yours.

USING THE ZOO TRANSFER CARD

The zoo transfer card is a bit like a 'joker' and is a powerful tactical asset in *Wildlife Rescue*. It is best used in one of three ways:

- (a) To take a valuable wildlife card from an opponent near the end of the game.
- (b) To take a wildlife card that you need for your zoo collection from an opponent, especially if that card completes the zoo collection, in which case it can never be taken by another player.
- (c) To take a wildlife card from an opponent who needs it for his or her zoo collection.

PROBABILITY AND ODDS

The following table shows the approximate odds of obtaining three or more of a species in a single throw of all six dice and in a turn (i.e. within three throws).

<i>Species</i>	<i>Points</i>	<i>Single Throw</i>	<i>Turn</i> ¹
Javan Rhinoceros	100	215 to 1	12 to 1
Amur Leopard	80	215 to 1	12 to 1
California Condor	60	108 to 1	7 to 1
Mountain Gorilla	50	108 to 1	7 to 1
Rodrigues Fruit Bat	40	27 to 1	2 to 1
Harlequin Mantella	30	27 to 1	2 to 1
Ceylon Rose	20	17 to 1	Evens
Dama Gazelle	10	17 to 1	Evens

¹ These odds assume that the species has been pre-selected by the player before the first throw of the turn and the player continues to try to obtain this species throughout the turn.

From the table it can be seen that if a player was determined to collect a Javan rhinoceros to the exclusion of everything else then it would take, on average, 13 turns to achieve this goal (1 success accompanied by 12 failures). This is probably not the best strategy.

The table also provides some insight into the best basic strategy. A player is *twelve* times less likely to obtain the Javan rhinoceros than a Ceylon rose butterfly but the Javan rhinoceros only scores *five* times more points. This counts against the high roller strategy *over the long run*. However, in any individual game – with luck – it may also be the winning move. Also remember that the odds table does not take into account the relative scarcity of each wildlife card, the zoo collection bonus and the tactical deployment of a zoo transfer card.

In short, there are plenty of variables to interest experienced gamers as well as the novice who simply loves the thrill of throwing six dice and seeing what will be.