



AQUA

Biodiversity in the oceans



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GAMES

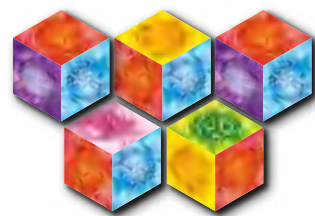
INTRODUCTION

In AQUA, your starting point is a hot spot that gradually becomes surrounded by expanding coral formations. These corals serve as habitats for small marine animals. By fostering biodiverse habitats, you can then create ideal conditions for attracting the largest marine animals.

At the end of the game the player that succeeded in growing the best coral formations, and attracted the most small and large sea animals, will be the winner.



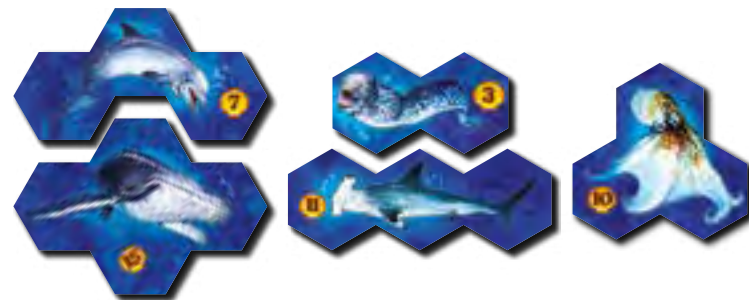
COMPONENTS



70 Coral tiles



72 Small Animals



15 Large Animals



24 Ecosystems



1 Sea Snail token



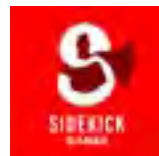
4 Hot Spots



1 Score pad

CREDITS

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SETUP

Here are the steps for setting up the core game.
 To play with the advanced or family variants, please refer to page 7.

1. Everyone receives a Hot Spot tile at random and places it on the table in front of them. This tile will serve as your starting point.
2. Place the 6 core game Ecosystems (★ 1-6) in a line as shown. The advanced Ecosystems (7-18) are only used in the advanced variant and should be returned to the box.
3. Sort the Small Animals into their respective stacks and place one at random above each Ecosystem. The Small Animal is now native to that Ecosystem which affects end of game scoring (see page 6).
4. Sort the Large Animals into their matching shapes, in descending point value (highest on top), and place them near the Small Animals. If playing with 2 or 3 players, remove one Large Animal from each shape as indicated on the tile (🚫) and return it to the box.
5. Shuffle all the Coral tiles face down, and place them opposite the Ecosystems with some free space in between. Randomly remove a number of Coral tiles based on player count (35 for 2 players, 18 for 3 players, and 1 for 4 players), and return them to the box. Reveal one more Coral tile than the number of players, and place them face-up in the center of the table to prepare the starting market.
6. Randomly assign the Sea Snail token and then the game is ready to begin.

Example of a 3 player setup



PLAYING A ROUND

AQUA plays over 17 rounds. To start each round, whoever is holding the Sea Snail token prepares the market and completes their first turn, followed by all other players completing their full turns in clockwise order. Each turn consists of three phases as shown below.

1. **GROW CORAL** - Take and place a Coral tile from the market.
2. **CREATE HABITATS & REEFS** - If you create a Habitat, immediately attract a Small Animal.
3. **ESTABLISH BIODIVERSITY** - If you establish biodiversity, you may attract a Large Animal.

The game ends when you run out of Coral tiles and it is no longer possible to prepare a new market.

PREPARING THE MARKET

(skip this step in the 1st round)

Before each round, the player holding the Sea Snail token is responsible for creating the market by revealing one Coral tile per player into the center of the table. The Sea Snail token is then returned to the market.



1. GROW CORAL

On your turn, take a Coral tile from the market and place it so at least one of its sides connects with a matching color coral - point to point is not considered connected.

If the Sea Snail token is available, instead of proceeding with your turn as normal, you may take this token and place it beside your play area. Play immediately passes to the player on your left, and you will take your full turn once all other players have completed their turn.

If the Sea Snail token has not been claimed, the last player to take a turn automatically receives it.

EXAMPLE 1

At the beginning of each round of a three-player game, the market has four Coral tiles available plus the Sea Snail token. Whoever placed the Sea Snail token in to the market takes the first turn.



EXAMPLE 2

Coral tile 2A has been illegally placed as it does not connect with a matching color coral. Coral tile 2B is placed legally as at least one side connects with a matching color coral.

Core Concepts

Core Concepts are highlighted for easy reference. These are reminders to assist in learning the game or when consulting the rulebook during future plays.

Market

At the end of a round, there will be one Coral tile remaining in the market. At the beginning of a round, there will always be one more Coral tile available than the number of players.

Coral

A Coral tile consists of three individual corals.

Sea Snail token

This token gives you the last turn in the round it is taken, but the first turn in the following round.

2. CREATE HABITATS & REEFS

Players have two primary objectives when growing corals: creating Habitats and Reefs.

- Habitats are created by forming a hexagon using exactly three corals of the same color (3A). If you have formed one or more Habitats, immediately place a Small Animal of the same color on top.
- Reefs are created by groups of four or more corals of the same color that are connected with each other (3C).

Habitats earn you points from Small Animals placed on top of them. Reefs earn you points from Small Animals adjacent to them (see Scoring on page 6).

3. ESTABLISH BIODIVERSITY

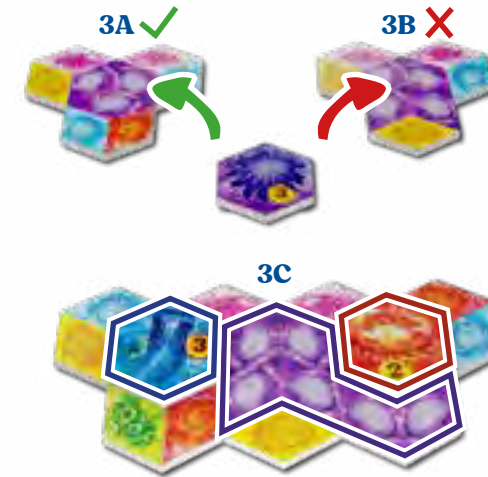
To attract a Large Animal, you need to fulfill three requirements:

1. Large Animals must be placed on top of at least one Small Animal that you placed this turn.
2. Large Animals must rest completely on top of Small Animals.
3. To maintain biodiversity, each Small Animal beneath a Large Animal must be different from one another. No duplicates are allowed.

It is not mandatory to attract a Large Animal. If you attract one, take the most valuable in the chosen shape. Each shape shows two different animals on the front and back - pick the one you prefer.

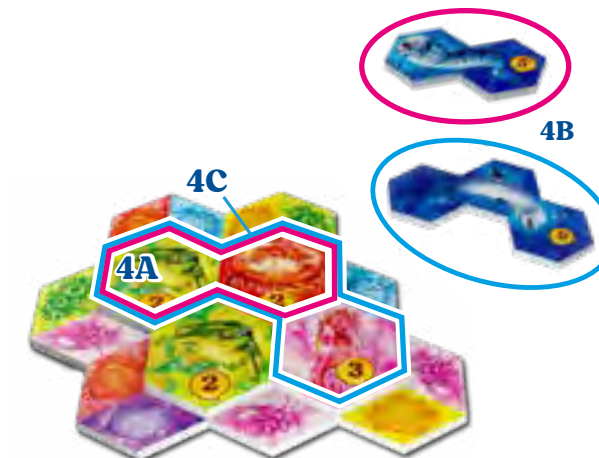
END OF ROUND

The round is over when everyone has claimed a Coral tile. A single Coral tile will remain in the market for the following round.



EXAMPLE 3

A Habitat is created at (3A) and the player must place a matching Small Animal on the habitat. The Coral tiles at 3B do not create a habitat because it does not form a perfect hexagon. The Reef at 3C will score points for all adjacent Small Animals at the end of the game.



EXAMPLE 4

The turtle (4A) was just placed, and now the player can choose to attract either of the pictured Large Animals (4B). Biodiversity means that both turtles cannot be covered, hence the only placement options are the shapes indicated by the highlighted colors (4C).

Habitats

A Habitat is exactly three corals of matching color that form a hexagon. A Habitat must always have a Small Animal on top.

Reefs

Reefs are groups of four or more corals of the same color that are connected. Reefs earn points from the Small Animals adjacent to them at game end. Reefs do not score for Large Animals.

Biodiversity



Large Animals cannot cover two or more Small Animals of the same species.



Animal scoring

At the end of the game, all Small and Large Animals score the points shown on them (●). Small Animals always score, even if covered by a Large Animal. For scoring purposes it never matters which Large Animals covered specific Small Animals.

END OF GAME & SCORING

After 17 rounds, you will no longer be able to refill the market, and the game ends. Use the Score pad to calculate the points for each player. The player with the most points wins. In the case of a tie, the tied player earliest in the turn order wins.

- 
LARGE ANIMALS
 Add up the total points shown on your Large Animals. Then remove them and place them beside your play area.
- 
SMALL ANIMALS
 Add up the total points shown on your Small Animals.

- 
REEFS
 Add up the total points from all your Reefs. For each Reef you have, score the points shown on all Small Animals adjacent to it (point to point does not count as adjacent). A Small Animal may count for several Reefs.
- 
ECOSYSTEMS
 Score each of the six Ecosystems in play.

ECOSYSTEMS


During setup, six Ecosystems are assigned a Small Animal at random, which is placed immediately above the Ecosystem. The Small Animal is considered native to that Ecosystem.

In order to score the points for an Ecosystem, a criteria must be met. The criteria is shown on the tile, and always requires the native Small Animal to fulfill it in different ways.

LOCAL/GLOBAL

There are two overall types of Ecosystems called Local (●) and Global (●). Local Ecosystems require the native Small Animal to be adjacent to whatever is shown on the Ecosystem. Global Ecosystems do not need adjacency to fulfill their criteria and therefore can score from anywhere.


CORE GAME ECOSYSTEMS




For every native Small Animal you have, score 1 point per Small Animal adjacent to it (any color, including its own).




For each barracuda/moray eel you have, score 2 points for every native Small Animal you have.




For each bottlenose dolphin/dugong you have, score 3 points for every native Small Animal you have.



For each manta ray/reef octopus you have, score 3 points for every native Small Animal you have.

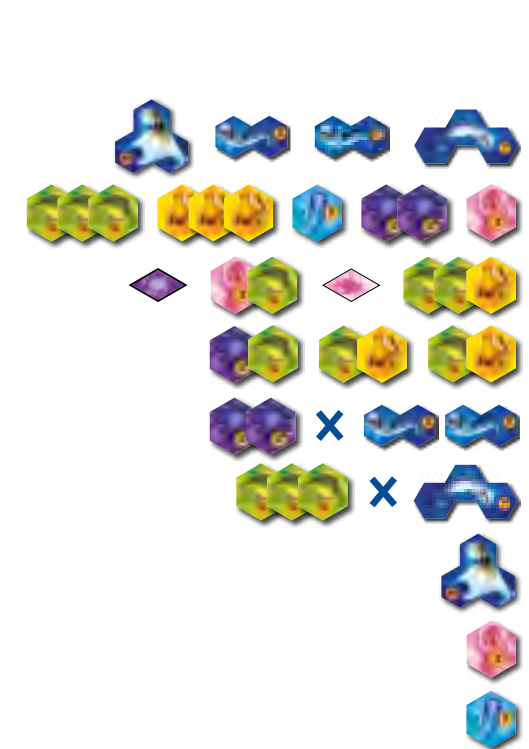





For each hammerhead shark/blacktip reef shark you have, score 3 points for every native Small Animal you have.



For each humpback whale/whale shark you have, score 4 points for every native Small Animal you have.

SCORING EXAMPLE



	ELSA
	25
	24
	11
	6
	8
	9
	0
	0
	0
	83

VARIANTS

AQUA offers three variants to select from: Family, Advanced and Solo. The rules for solo play can be found on page 8.

FAMILY

To simplify scoring, do not score for Reefs or Ecosystems. You skip step 2 in the setup, and instead place all the Ecosystems back in the box. This focuses solely on the Large and Small Animals where each animal clearly displays the points, making it easy to count.

ADVANCED

The advanced rules introduce multiple scoring opportunities with new Ecosystems. During setup step 2, shuffle all 24 Ecosystems face down, select six at random and place them in a line.

SOLO RULES

Follow the standard rules with the following changes:

Setup: Use the core and/or advanced Ecosystems as you prefer. Do not remove any Large Animals. Remove the Sea Snail token and 19 random Coral tiles from the game. Reveal 3 Coral tiles to prepare the starting market.

Playing a Round: When preparing the market, reveal three Coral tiles. Take and place one Coral tile.

End of Round: Once you have completed your turn, the round ends. Discard the two remaining Coral tiles from the market.

End of Game: The game ends as normal after 17 rounds when you run out of Coral tiles. Score as normal and consult the chart below to check how well you did.

For the full solo experience, consider adding achievements (Scenarios, Challenges and Modifications). Achievements are explained on the following pages.

- 60+ : A great start!
- 80+ : Outstanding!
- 100+ : That is satisfying!
- 70+ : Well done!
- 90+ : Expert!

ACHIEVEMENTS

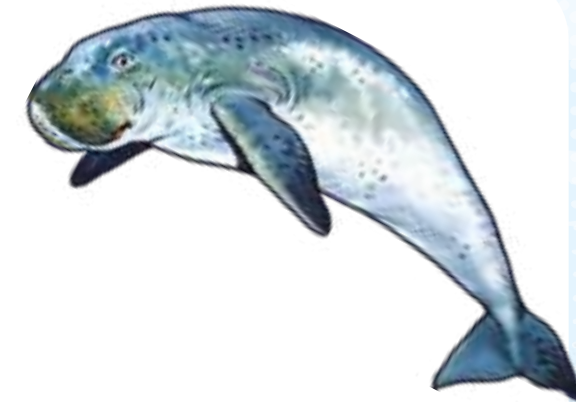
SCENARIOS, CHALLENGES & MODIFICATIONS

You can expand your AQUA experience by chasing the 50 achievements built into Scenarios (page 9), Challenges (page 10) and Modifications (page 10). Achievements can be added at any player count, and unless you are playing with Modifications you do not need all players to partake in the chase. Up to four players can mark their progress on the progress track below.

Assign your name to a specific row of corals on the progress track, and when completing a Scenario, Challenge or Modification, mark off one of your corals on both the progress track and the achievement. Several players may complete the same achievement at the same time.



SCENARIOS




Scenarios are pre-built scoring setups with extra objectives. You may play them in any order and at any player counts.

Setup: Arrange the Ecosystems in the shown order. To complete a scenario, you need to reach the minimum score and fulfill the objective, if any apply. If you successfully do so, mark off the achievement for yourself, both on this page and on your progress track (page 8).

#	ECOSYSTEMS	MIN. SCORE	OBJECTIVE	COMPLETED
A	1 2 3 4 5 6	60		
B	7 8 9 10 11 12	60		
C	16 16 3 5 15 15	65		
D	3 4 5 6 17 17	65	Min 20 points from Small Animals	
E	13 13 18 18 4 6	70	Min 20 points from Large Animals	
F	1 2 3 10 11 12	70	Min 20 points from Reefs	
G	7 14 8 14 9 16	75	Min 1 of each Small Animal	
H	2 6 17 17 18 18	75	Max 20 points from Small Animals	
I	15 15 8 11 13 13	80	Score at least four Ecosystems	
J	7 8 11 4 5 6	80	Have all Small Animals covered by Large Animals	
K	10 13 14 14 13 9	85	Max 20 points from Large Animals	
L	17 17 13 13 2 3	85	Max 20 points from Reefs	
M	16 14 16 15 14 15	90	Min 25 points from Small Animals	
N	18 12 10 9 7 17	95	Max 2 of each Small Animal	
O	12 13 14 15 16 18	100	Score at least five Ecosystems	

CHALLENGES

Unlike Scenarios and Modifications, you do not choose a Challenge before the game begins. Instead, after you finish a game, check if you completed any of the Challenges. If you complete multiple Challenges in a single game, you choose one of them. Mark off the achievement for yourself, both on this page and on the progress track (page 8). Challenges can be combined with both Scenarios and Modifications, and can be achieved at any player count.

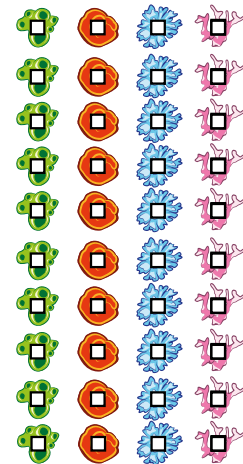
- | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Score 70+ points |     | 13. Win a game by 20+ points (not solo) |     |
| 2. Score 80+ points |     | 14. Have 4+ different Large Animals |     |
| 3. Score 90+ points |     | 15. Have 2+ Humpback Whales/Whale Sharks |     |
| 4. Score 100+ points |     | 16. Win with no Large Animals (not solo) |     |
| 5. Score all six Ecosystems |     | 17. Have 3+ Large Animals that are not adjacent to each other |     |
| 6. Score 30+ points from Large Animals |     | 18. Have 4+ of a single Small Animal |     |
| 7. Score 35+ points from Large Animals |     | 19. Have 2+ of each Small Animal |     |
| 8. Score 25+ points from Small Animals |     | 20. Win with the fewest Small Animals (not solo) |     |
| 9. Score 30+ points from Small Animals |     | 21. Have 5+ scoring Reefs |     |
| 10. Score 25+ points from Reefs |     | 22. Have a single Small Animal adjacent to 4+ Reefs |     |
| 11. Score 30+ points from Reefs |     | 23. Have 6+ Small Animals adjacent to the same Reef |     |
| 12. Win a game by 10+ points (not solo) |     | 24. Have all Small Animals adjacent to a Reef |     |
| | | 25. Have 3+ Large Animals adjacent to a Reef |     |



MODIFICATIONS

Modifications change some of the core rules of the game for all players. Choose one before the game begins. All participating players mark off the Modification here and on the progress track (page 8). Modifications can be used in combination with Scenarios and Challenges at any player count.

- The market has one fewer Coral tile each round (remove 1 more in setup, 17 if solo)
- The market has one extra Coral tile each round (remove 1 less in setup, 17 if solo)
- Reefs must be size 5+ corals to score
- Reefs score 2 points per coral in it, instead of scoring for adjacent Small Animals
- Reefs score points from adjacent Large Animals, not for adjacent Small Animals
- End of game: everyone chooses only one color Reef they can score
- Setup: Remove 10/8/6/4 of each Small Animal at 1/2/3/4 players
- You may only create Habitats in 4 colors
- Large Animals must cover 2+ of the same Small Animal (replacing biodiversity)
- You may only attract one of each Large Animal shape



ANIMALS OF AQUA



HUMPBACK WHALE

A magnificent creature known for its impressive acrobatic displays, including breaching and tail slapping. They are famous for their complex songs that can travel long distances underwater and are believed to be unique to each individual, making them one of the most vocal marine mammals.



MANTA RAY

Manta rays are graceful and majestic creatures that glide through the ocean with their large wingspans, which can reach up to 23 feet. They are filter feeders, using specialized gill plates, called cephalic lobes, to funnel plankton into their mouths.



DUGONG

Dugongs, often referred to as sea cows, are marine mammals closely related to manatees. They are herbivores and spend most of their time grazing on seagrass beds.



BLACKTIP REEF SHARK

The blacktip reef shark is a common shark species found in shallow tropical waters, particularly around coral reefs. They are known for their elegant swimming style and the prominent black tips on their dorsal fins and caudal fins.



BARRACUDA

Barracudas are predatory fish known for their sleek bodies and sharp teeth. They are incredibly fast swimmers and can reach speeds of up to 27 miles per hour.



LONG-SNOUDED SEAHORSE

The long-snouted seahorse is a unique creature known for its ability to change color and its distinctive upright posture. They are notable for their unusual method of reproduction, where the male carries and incubates the eggs in a pouch until they hatch.



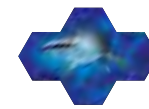
BOX JELLYFISH

Box jellyfish are marine invertebrates known for their cube-shaped bodies and long, trailing tentacles. They are among the most venomous creatures in the ocean and their stings can be extremely painful and, in some cases, deadly.



CLOWNFISH

Clownfish are small, brightly colored fish that live in sea anemones. They are protected by the stinging cells of the anemone and, in return, provide food and remove parasites.



WHALE SHARK

The whale shark is the largest fish in the ocean, with a length of up to 40 feet or more. Despite its massive size, it is a gentle giant, feeding primarily on plankton and small fish.



REEF OCTOPUS

The reef octopus is a highly intelligent and adaptable creature found in coral reef environments. They have remarkable color-changing abilities, which they use for communication, camouflage, and hunting.



BOTTLENOSE DOLPHIN

Bottlenose dolphins are highly intelligent and social animals known for their playful nature and acrobatic behaviors, such as leaping and riding waves. They have a complex communication system that includes whistles, clicks, and body movements.



HAMMERHEAD SHARK

Hammerhead sharks have distinctively shaped heads, called cephalofoils, which are believed to enhance their sensory abilities. Their unique head shape provides improved 360-degree vision and electroreception, allowing them to detect prey more efficiently.



MORAY EEL

Moray eels are fascinating creatures with elongated bodies and powerful jaws. They are primarily nocturnal, hiding in crevices during the day and actively hunting at night.



TRAPEZIA CRAB

The trapezia crab is a small, brightly colored crab species that lives in symbiosis with certain species of corals. They have a mutualistic relationship, where the crabs protect the corals from coral-eating starfish in exchange for food and shelter.



GREEN TURTLE

The green turtle is a large marine reptile known for its distinctive greenish shell and its importance to marine ecosystems. They are herbivores, feeding primarily on seagrass and algae.



CROWN-OF-THORNS STARFISH

The crown-of-thorns starfish is a large and spiky species that can have a negative impact on coral reefs. They feed on coral polyps and, when present in large numbers, can cause significant damage to coral colonies.

ECOSYSTEMS

CORE



For every native Small Animal you have, score 1 point per Small Animal adjacent to it (any color, including its own).



For each barracuda/moray eel you have, score 2 points for every native Small Animal you have.



For each bottlenose dolphin/dugong you have, score 3 points for every native Small Animal you have.



For each manta ray/reef octopus you have, score 3 points for every native Small Animal you have.



For each hammerhead shark/blacktip reef shark you have, score 3 points for every native Small Animal you have.



For each humpback whale/whale shark you have, score 4 points for every native Small Animal you have.

ADVANCED



For each trapezia crab you have, score 3 points for every native Small Animal adjacent to it.



For each clownfish you have, score 3 points for every native Small Animal adjacent to it.



For each green turtle you have, score 3 points for every native Small Animal adjacent to it.



For each box jellyfish you have, score 3 points for every native Small Animal adjacent to it.



For each crown-of-thorns starfish you have, score 3 points for every native Small Animal adjacent to it.



For each long-snouted seahorse you have, score 3 points for every native Small Animal adjacent to it.

x2



For each Reef you have, score 3 points for every native Small Animal adjacent to it.

x2



For every native Small Animal, score 2 points per Small Animal adjacent to it, that is native to the Ecosystems immediately to the left and right of this Ecosystem.

x2



If you have 3 or more of the native Small Animal, score 7 points.

x2



The player(s) with most of the native Small Animal, score 7 points. Second most, score 3 points (you must have at least one to score). If tied for first/second, all tied players score the points. Solo: Score 7/3 points if this is the Small Animal you have the most/second most of among all your Small Animals.

x2



For every native Small Animal you have, score 4 points. Important: Large Animals may not be placed on top of the native Small Animal.

x2



For every native Small Animal you have, score 1 point. Important: Large Animals may be placed on top of multiple of the native Small Animals (ignoring biodiversity).

MATCHING CORALS & SMALL ANIMALS

