

Call of the Wild

A fast-paced action game for 3 to 6 players ages 8 to adult

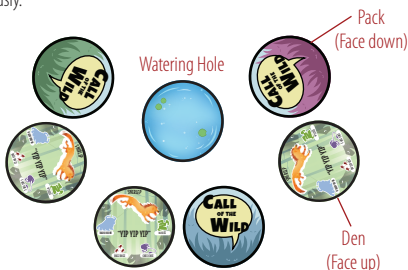
By David Medley and Evan Scheidegger

Objective

Venture out into the wild and score points by Mating, Hunting, and meeting Objectives.

Setup

Each player chooses a color and takes all 10 cards of that color. Those cards will be shuffled and placed face down in front of the player to form a **Pack**. Each card represents one of five mythical **Creatures**. Place the **Watering Hole** card in the center of the play area within reach of all players. Each player draws 2 cards from their pack. Play may begin as soon as everyone is ready. There are no turns; all players act simultaneously.



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- Both players must agree to meet (usually non-verbally)
- There can only be two creatures in each meeting
- Players may not flip an opponent's card until the opponent releases it
- Players may not flip their own card. If a player flips their own card, that card is discarded face-down to the Watering Hole

If a player can't find someone to meet with, they may put that card back in their hand and make a call with another card or even the same card again.

Mating

If two of the same type of creature meet by making the call in the center of their cards, they **Mate** and both players score one point. Each player takes their opponent's creature back to their Den (face-up pile) to track their score.

Hunting

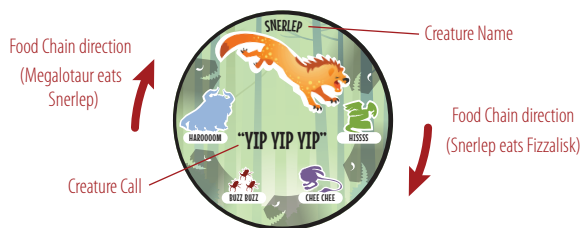
Players may choose to make a call that does not match the creature they are offering. This is called **Hunting**. To hunt someone who is trying to mate, make the sound of the creature 1 step clockwise from your creature, on the right side of the card.

Eating

When two creatures meet that are adjacent on the **Food Chain**, one creature **Eats** the other. Each creature eats the creature clockwise from it on the Food Chain.

Example: Steve has a Snerlep in his hand, whose call is "Yip Yip Yip." Snerleps eat Fizzalisks, whose call is "Hissss." When he places his Snerlep face down on the table, he calls "Hissss" in the hopes of luring a Fizzalisk out, which he can then eat.

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Gameplay

Calling

Players place one of their cards flat on the table face-down and make a **Call**. A call is mimicking the sound of any of the five creatures in the game. Each card has the name of its creature at the top, the sound that creature makes in the center and the call of the other four creatures in a semicircle around the bottom of the card.

Meeting

If two players are making the same call, they may choose to **Meet**. In order to meet, players must perform the following ritual:

- 1) Slide their cards face down toward each other
- 2) Release their card and place their hand on the other player's card
- 3) Flip the exchanged cards face-up where all players can see them

Megalotaur eat Snerleps. Snerleps eat Fizzalisks. Fizzalisks eat Wiffaloons. Wiffaloons eat Skeevils. Skeevils infest Megalotaur.

The player whose creature eats the other scores two points and drags both cards back to their den.

Note: Be sure that both players flip their opponent's card in the middle of the table rather than drawing it towards themselves before flipping. This makes it easier for the eating player to collect both cards quickly and allows all players to see the interaction.

Double-Crossing

Players may make any of the 5 calls. A player who suspects another player of hunting should make the call 2 steps clockwise on the card and eat the player that was trying to eat them! (More on this in "Tips" below.) When trust between two players is really low, they may go even deeper on the Food Chain.

Avoiding

If, during a meeting, two creatures are not adjacent on the Food Chain, they **Avoid** each other. Both players discard their cards to the Watering Hole face-up and score no points. If the creatures are the same type but both were hunting, those creatures also avoid each other and are discarded face-up to the Watering Hole. As everyone knows, you can't start a relationship based on lies!

Drawing

Whenever you have fewer than two cards in your hand, you may draw. You may not have more than two cards in your hand. When your pack is depleted, continue to play with the cards remaining in your hand.

Discarding

Players may discard from their hand at any time. These cards go face-down to the Watering Hole and do not score any points. Then the player may draw as normal.

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Ending the Game

When a player meets with the last card in their hand and their pack is empty, that player announces that the game is over (**Sundown**). After sundown, no further meetings can take place and players return all cards in their hand to their pack face-down. If a player discarded or flipped their own last card, that player cannot end the game. Players must use their last card in a meeting to end the game.

Scoring

Players score one point for each creature in their den. Whoever scores the most points wins! In the case of a tie, the player with the most cards from other players' packs wins (this will be the player who mated the most).

Three Player Game

When playing with three players, each player should draw until they have 3 cards in their hand instead of just 2.

Tips

Speed Counts - The player who uses all of their cards has an excellent chance to win the game.

Two by Two - Pay attention to what cards other players use. Each pack starts with exactly two copies of each creature.

Wrong Way - You should almost never make the call located on the left side of your card, one step counter-clockwise from the large portrait of your creature. Experiment with one, two or even three steps clockwise instead.

Friendly Benefits - If a player is consistently mating (being "honest"), keep meeting with them. But don't give a player who frequently hunts an opportunity to take advantage of you.

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Some cards have instructions in parentheses to help determine if you qualified. A player with more than 2 face-down creatures at the Watering Hole may not score an Objective. Players do not need to fulfill their Objective to win, but it helps!

Multiple Rounds

For competitive score-keeping, play a match that lasts a predetermined number of games. At the end of the match, add up the scores from each game. The player with the most points wins.

Mating Bonus

Score 2 points for each creature in your den that is from another player's pack, and the standard 1 point for each of your own creatures. This makes mating worth 4 points (2 for each player) and eating worth 3. After all, how can a good meal compare to meeting the love of your life?

No Hunting

This option may be used for an introductory first round, or for children who are too young for the full game. In this version, players may not hunt; they must make the call of the creature they have on the table.

FAQs

Q: If someone is making the same sound as I am, do I have to meet with them?

A: No. One of the key decisions in the game is choosing whom to trust.

Q: What happens if my last card is avoided?

A: The game is over. Announce it before anyone else can score more points! If you discarded or revealed your own last card, however, you may not end the game.

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The Double Cross - You can turn the tables on someone who is hunting. To double-cross a player you suspect is hunting, meet them by making a call that is two steps clockwise from the creature you are holding. You can find this call in the lower right corner of any card. The hunting player will expect to eat you but you will eat them instead!

Hate the Player - Using the double-cross is an effective revenge against a player who has lost your trust. It will be very difficult for your opponent to score in the resultant meeting. If your opponent is trying to mate, neither of you will score. If your opponent is hunting, you will score 2 and they will score 0. If your opponent is also trying to double-cross, neither of you will score. That's a good sign that the trust is broken on both sides and it's time to meet with someone more trustworthy. Or you could try to triple-cross their double-cross!

Example: Pete is calling "Chee Chee" (the sound of a Wiffaloon) but Sarah believes he is hunting, as usual. That would mean that Pete actually has a Fizzalisk, which eats Wiffaloons. Sarah looks in the lower-right corner of her cards for the "Chee Chee" call, and finds that she has one — the Snerlep, which eats Fizzalisks. Sarah returns the call of "Chee Chee." Pete is more than happy to meet, thinking he will eat Sarah's Wiffaloon, but when the cards are flipped, he sees that his Fizzalisk has been eaten by Sarah's Snerlep instead!

Optional Rules

Objectives

After a few rounds of the Basic game, try adding Objectives. At the beginning of each game, shuffle the Objectives Deck and deal one to each player, face down. All players read their Objective to themselves before play begins. At the end of the game, each player who fulfilled their Objective scores points equal to the number at the bottom of the card.

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Q: What happens if I have two of the same creature in my hand?

A: You must either play one of those creatures or discard and draw.

Q: I try to play honestly and I always lose! Does the game reward players who lie?

A: If two players trust each other, they can score nine or ten points very quickly, leaving players who are mistrusted in the dust. That said, some guile is necessary to be successful at the game. You may enjoy playing "sheriff" and punishing wrong-doers with the double-cross.

Q: Why are the exchange mechanics so specific when meeting?

A: It may feel counterintuitive to reveal the other player's card in the middle of the table. But once you get used to it, the exchange prevents misunderstandings and creates a fun, suspenseful moment between releasing your card and flipping the other player's. If you are tempted to flip your own card, make sure you are laying your card flat rather than holding a finger or thumb under the edge.

Q: Do I have to put out a card?

A: You can choose to wait until someone else makes a call before you respond. But you do have to put a card face-down on the table and make a call before you can meet.

Q: Can I play this game with younger kids?

A: Absolutely! You can play without hunting, and your kids will have fun making the calls and trying to make matches as fast as possible. Substitute the term "Match" for "Mate" if you feel that's more appropriate for their age group.

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