

BETTER TOGETHER

By Johanna Knox

Most games we play are competitive – we're trying to beat other players. But it's fun to change a game's rules to make it co-operative. In co-op games, players don't compete against each other. They try to beat the *game*.

We can dream up new ways to bring nature into our games, too.

Try these co-operative, nature-themed versions of three games you might know well.

To win a co-op game, everyone has to work together and think in new ways ... Important to practise if we want to save our world and its creatures!



Illustrations: Adele Jackson

18

WILD Things



Bush squeeze

Based on musical chairs

Goal: Fit all the native creatures into a shrinking patch of native bush.

For 4 or more players

How to play

- One person is Boss. Everyone else decides on a bush-loving native creature to be.
- Put out the same number of cushions as creatures. Those cushions are bush.
- Boss plays music, while the creatures move round the cushions.
- When Boss stops the music, each creature finds a cushion to sit or stand on.
- Boss chops down some bush, by removing one cushion.
- Boss plays music again, and the creatures keep moving.
- Boss stops the music, but this time, there aren't enough cushions for one each, so the creatures must find a way to all fit onto the cushions.
- Keep repeating this, with the boss removing one cushion each time.
- Carry on till a single cushion is left. Can all the creatures somehow fit onto this tiny patch of bush? If so – they win.

Variation:

Each time Boss stops the music, flip a coin. Heads – Boss chops down bush. Tails – Boss restores some by adding a cushion. How long can the game continue?

It's SO much easier for the creatures when there's more bush.



Push off, predators!

For
2-3
players

Based on Scrabble

Goal: Get rid of nasty, native-killing predators from every corner of the land! Cover all four corner squares of the board with letters, and on the way, make as many native plant and animal words as you can.

How to play

Get out your Scrabble board, and use normal Scrabble rules, with these differences:

- Don't record scores.
- Everyone sees everyone else's letters.
- Players can negotiate to swap letters with each other any time.
- Each player has a set number of chances during the game to ask for help thinking of a word. Decide, before you start, how many times each player is allowed to ask. (It can be different for different players.) Keep track of asks, so no-one goes over their limit.
- During the game, everyone tries to make as many names of native plants or animals as they can. You might not be able to do this often, and think hard. Sometimes it's better to forfeit a good *native* word for another word that better helps your group win in the end.
- If the group covers all four corners of the board before the letters run out, they've rid the land of predators. They win – and so do *all* our native animals!
- Once the game's over, count how many native animal and plant words your group used. Note this, and next time you play, try to beat your score!

It's useful to have a long list of native animals and plants beside you before you start playing.



For
2
players

Cloud-ocean-rivers

Based on rock-paper-scissors

Goal: Keep the world's water cycle going for as long as you can, by winning equal numbers of rounds.

How to play

Play each round like rock-paper-scissors, except:

- a fist is cloud
- a flat hand is ocean
- scissor-fingers are rivers.

Decide who wins each round like this:

- Ocean gives water to cloud, by evaporating (so ocean wins).
- Cloud gives water to rivers, by raining (so cloud wins).
- Rivers give water to ocean, by flowing into it (so rivers win).

A player gets a point for winning a round. Keep track of points. Try to make sure no player ever gets four points ahead of the other. If they do, the game ends. Keep the game going for as many rounds as you can. Then next time you play, try to keep it going for even longer!

Here's a short version
... Play 10 rounds and
try to win five each.
If you do – you've
beaten the game!

