

THE RULES OF

# evolution



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Our planet is teeming with life! There are over eight million unique animal species on Earth. Darwin suggests this incredible biodiversity shares a common ancestry.

Animals better adapted to their environment are more likely to survive and pass on traits to their offspring. Over millions of generations, this iterative process of natural selection leads to the astonishing variety of life we find on our planet...

# Welcome to evolution

## COMPONENTS

- 1 Rulebook
- 1 Watering Hole
- 1 First Player Marker
- 129 Trait Cards
  - 17 Carnivore Trait Cards
  - 7 of each other Trait Card
- 20 Species Boards
- 40 Wooden Markers
- 144 Food Tokens
- 12 Ten Value Food Tokens
- 6 Food Screens
- 2 Player Aids

# SET-UP

- Place the Watering Hole on the table.
- Place the Food Tokens aside. This is the Food Bank.
- Give each player 1 Food Screen.
- Shuffle the deck of Trait Cards and place it facedown on the table. This is the Draw Deck.
- Randomly determine the first player. Give the First Player Marker to that player.



Player 1

Extra Wooden Markers

First Player Marker

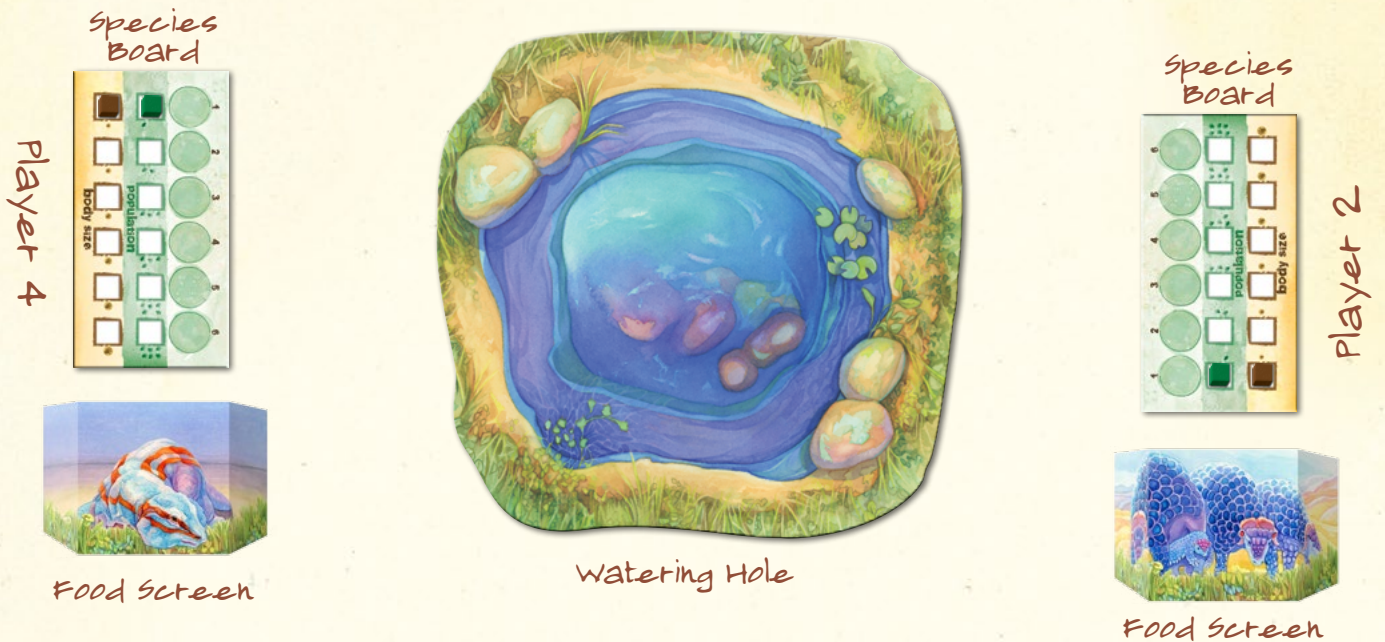
Species Board

Food Screen

Draw Deck

Discard Pile

Detailed description: This block shows the setup for Player 1. On the left is a pile of brown and green wooden markers. Next to it is a green dinosaur silhouette labeled 'First Player Marker'. In the center is a 'Species Board' for Player 1, which has a top row for 'body size' (5 boxes), a middle row for 'population' (5 boxes), and a bottom row for 'body size' (5 boxes). To the right is a 'Food Screen' showing a blue dinosaur. Further right is the 'Draw Deck' with two cards: 'evolution Trait card' and 'Symbiosis'. To the far right is a 'Discard Pile'.



Species Board

Player 4

Food Screen

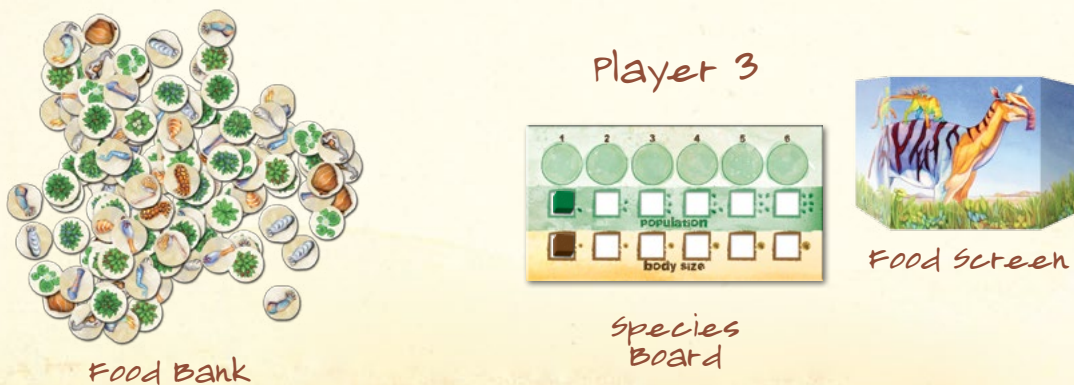
Watering Hole

Species Board

Player 2

Food Screen

Detailed description: This block shows the setup for Player 2. On the left is a 'Species Board' for Player 4, oriented vertically. Below it is a 'Food Screen' showing a blue and orange dinosaur. In the center is a 'Watering Hole' illustration. To the right is a 'Species Board' for Player 2, oriented vertically. Below it is a 'Food Screen' showing a blue dinosaur.



Food Bank

Player 3

Species Board

Food Screen

Detailed description: This block shows the setup for Player 3. On the left is a large pile of circular food tokens labeled 'Food Bank'. In the center is a 'Species Board' for Player 3, which has a top row for 'body size' (6 boxes), a middle row for 'population' (6 boxes), and a bottom row for 'body size' (6 boxes). To the right is a 'Food Screen' showing a yellow and black striped dinosaur.

## GOAL

The goal of *Evolution* is to thrive in the midst of an ever-changing ecosystem where food is scarce and predators lurk. You will get points for feeding your species, increasing their population, and evolving them to best ensure their survival.

At the end of the game, players get points for:

- The Food their species have eaten during the game.
- The Population of their surviving species.
- The Trait Cards on their surviving species.

## PLAYING THE GAME

A game of *Evolution* usually takes 5 to 7 rounds. There are 5 phases in each round.

When playing with 2 or 6 players, use the appropriate rules variation on Page 9.

## PHASE 1: DEAL CARDS

Place a Species Board in front of any player who does not have one. If this is the first round of the game, then every player will get a Species Board. Put a green Wooden Marker on the “1” space of the Population track and a brown Wooden Marker on the “1” space of the Body Size track.

Deal each player 3 cards from the Draw Deck, plus 1 card for each Species Board they have in front of them.

**If the Draw Deck runs out (or if it ran out when a species went extinct on the previous round), this will be the final round of the game.** Shuffle the Discard Pile into a new Draw Deck.

## PHASE 2: SELECT FOOD

The number at the bottom right of each Trait Card represents an amount of Plant Food.

Each player secretly chooses 1 Trait Card from their hand and puts it facedown on the Watering Hole. These are the “Food Cards” that will be revealed during the Feeding Phase to determine how much Plant Food will be available for the round.



## PHASE 3: PLAY CARDS

Starting with the First Player and moving clockwise around the table, a player may play as many or as few Trait Cards as they want. There is no limit to the number of cards a player can save in their hand for a later time. Play will go one time around the table which means every player will only get one turn during this phase.

There are three possible things a player can do with each Trait Card. They may be done in any order and multiple times each:

### 1) Play a Trait

A player may place a Trait Card **face down** above one of their species. A species may not have any duplicate Trait Cards and may not have more than 3 Trait Cards.



### 2) Create a New Species

A player may discard a Trait Card faceup into the Discard Pile to get a new species. They take a new Species Board and put a green Wooden Marker on the "1" space of the Population track and a brown Wooden Marker on the "1" space of the Body Size track. The new species must be placed either to the left or the right of the player's existing species; it may not be placed between existing species.

### 3) Increase Body Size or Population

A player may discard a Trait Card faceup into the Discard Pile to increase the Body Size or Population of any one of their species by 1. A species cannot move its Wooden Markers beyond Body Size 6 or Population 6, but a species can effectively have a larger Body Size with a trait like **Hard Shell**.

A player may remove a Trait Card from any of their species any time during their Play Cards turn and place it faceup in the Discard Pile. This may be done to make room for another trait or because the trait is no longer advantageous to the species. Players do not get any other benefit.

When everyone has had a chance to play cards, flip all of the newly played Trait Cards faceup.

## PHASE 4: REVEAL FOOD

Check around the table for any Trait Cards that have this icon on the top left corner. These cards have effects that might trigger before the Food Cards are revealed. If a player has more than 1 of these cards in play, they choose the order in which their traits activate.



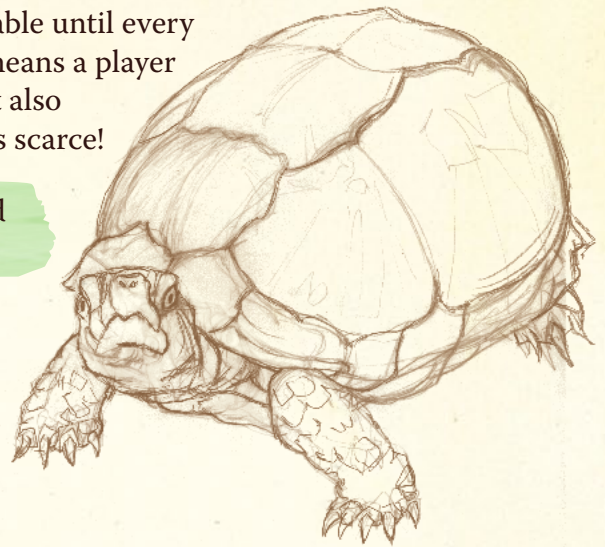
The First Player reveals the Food Cards on the Watering Hole, adds up the Food numbers on these cards, and places that much Plant Food from the Food Bank onto the Watering Hole. If the total on the Food Cards is a negative number and there is Plant Food on the Watering Hole, remove that much Food. The revealed Food Cards are placed faceup on the Discard Pile.

## PHASE 5: FEEDING

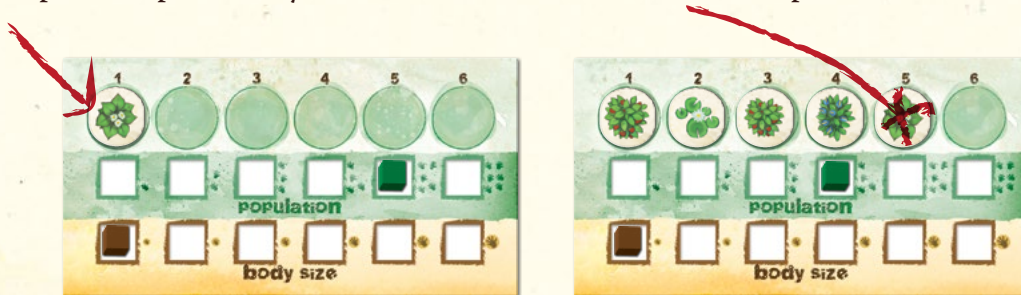
In this phase, players will take turns feeding one species at a time in a rush to eat from a limited supply of food. Play will move clockwise around the table until every species is done feeding, or all *hungry* species cannot eat. This means a player might get several feeding turns during the Feeding Phase, but it also means that a player might not get a single feeding turn if food is scarce!

Several words in this section are defined terms: *take*, *attack* and *hungry*. See the Glossary on Page 9 for definitions.

Beginning with the First Player and continuing clockwise, each player must feed one of their species. A player may pass only if none of their species are *hungry*, or if it is not possible to feed any of their *hungry* species. Passing on a feeding turn does not prohibit a player from feeding on a future feeding turn in the same Feeding Phase.



When a species *takes* Food, place the Food in the space above the Population track starting with the “1” Population space. A species may never *take* more Food than it has Population unless it has **Fat Tissue**.



### Feeding Non-Carnivores

Take 1 Plant Food from the Watering Hole and place it onto the Species Board of the species you are feeding. Some traits (like **Foraging** and **Cooperation**) modify the amount of Food a species *takes* from the Watering Hole.

## Feeding Carnivores

A species with the **Carnivore** trait is a **Carnivore**. **Carnivores** can never take Plant Food, not even with the help of traits such as **Long Neck** or **Cooperation**. They feed by *attacking* other species. A player may *attack* any species including their own. **Carnivores** continue to *attack* even if the Watering Hole runs out of Plant Food.

A **Carnivore** can *attack* another species only if all of the following are true:

- The **Carnivore** is *hungry* (or has the option to eat because of a trait like **Fat Tissue**).
- The **Carnivore's** Body Size is greater than the Body Size of the species being *attacked*.
- The **Carnivore** has the traits necessary to overcome the *attacked* species' defensive traits.

After a **Carnivore** has *attacked* another species:

- Reduce the Population of the *attacked* species by 1. If this reduces its Population to below the amount of Food already eaten, place the excess Food behind the *attacked* player's Food Screen. If this reduces its Population to 0, see Extinction on page 8.
- *Take* Meat Food from the Food Bank equal to the *attacked* species' Body Size and place it on the *attacking* **Carnivore's** Species Board.



## IMPORTANT FEEDING RULES

- A species must eat if it is *hungry* and there is Food available. This means a **Carnivore** must eat a species with **Horns** if it is the only legal target, even if it is that player's own species!
- When a species eats from the Watering Hole, it *takes* 1 Plant Food (unless a trait modifies this amount).
- When a **Carnivore** *attacks* another species, it *takes* Meat Food **equal to the Body Size** of the *attacked* species.
- **Non-Carnivores** normally eat Plant Food, but they can also eat Meat Food with traits such as **Scavenger** or **Cooperation**. A **Carnivore** may never eat Plant Food under any circumstance.
- A species can never *take* more Food than Population unless it has **Fat Tissue**.

## End of Feeding

Feeding ends when all species are unable to eat, or when those species that have a choice (because of **Fat Tissue** or **Intelligence**), choose not to eat.

- If a species did not eat Food equal to its Population, all *hungry* Population from that species are lost. Move the Population marker down to the number of Population that received Food. If all of the Population on a species are *hungry*, it goes extinct. See Extinction on page 8.
- Players remove the Food from their Species Boards and place it behind their Food Screen.
- Any Plant Food remaining on the Watering Hole stays there for the next round.
- **The game ends** if the Draw Deck ran out during *Phase 1: Deal Cards* of this round or if the Draw Deck had to be shuffled due to a species going extinct on the previous round. See *End of Game Scoring* on the next page.
- If the game did not end, pass the Incredibly Awesome First Player Marker to the left and begin a new round starting with *Phase 1: Deal Cards*.

## EXTINCTION

If the Population of any species is reduced to 0, it goes extinct and the owner does the following:

- Discards the Trait Card(s) on that species and draws 1 card from the Draw Deck for each discarded card. If the Draw Deck runs out of cards, shuffle the Discard Pile into a new Draw Deck. The next round will be the final round of the game.
- Discards the Species Board and places any Food on that Species Board behind their Food Screen.
- If the species that went extinct was between two species, close the gap between the adjacent Species Boards.

**Reminder:** If a player loses their last species, they will receive a free one at the start of the next *Deal Cards* phase.



## END OF GAME SCORING

Scoring is an attempt to gauge how well your species flourished during the game and how likely they are to thrive in the future. The amount of food a species has eaten over time is a proxy often used by evolutionary biologists to measure the relative success of a species.

The game ends if the Draw Deck ran out during *Phase 1: Deal Cards* of the current round or if the Draw Deck had to be shuffled due to a species going extinct on the previous round.

### Scoring:

- Each Food behind a player's Food Screen is worth 1 point.
- Each surviving species is worth points equal to its Population.
- Each Trait Card on a surviving species is worth 1 point.

Add up each player's points to determine the winner. If there is a tie, the player with the most Trait Card points is the winner. If there is still a tie, the player with the most Population points is the winner. If there is still a tie, then you must immediately order pizza (either a meat lover's pizza or vegetarian pizza) and play again.





## 2-PLAYER RULES

The 2-player game is played with the same rules as the normal game with these exceptions:

- Remove 40 random Trait Cards from the deck before playing.
- A species can have a maximum of 2 traits instead of 3.

## 6-PLAYER RULES

The 6-player game is played using the Quick Play Variant rules.

## QUICK PLAY VARIANT

During *Phase 3: Play Cards* all players play their cards at the same time without looking at what their opponents are doing.

## TABLE SPACE ISSUES

If table space is an issue, players should flip their Species Boards over and play them vertically.



vertical orientation

## GLOSSARY

### Attack

When you feed a **Carnivore** during your feeding turn, it *attacks* another species instead of *taking* Plant Food from the Watering Hole. See *Feeding Carnivores* on Page 7.

### Defensive Traits

Trait Cards with a white border that provide protection against **Carnivores**.

### Food Bank

The unlimited source of Food used to fill the Watering Hole. The Food Bank can be accessed by certain traits such as **Long Neck**, **Intelligence**, **Scavenger**, and **Carnivore**.

### Hungry

A species is *hungry* if it has less Food on its Species Board than its Population. Each Population that does not have Food is a *hungry* Population.

### Take

When a species *takes* Food, it places a Food Token on its Species Board above the Population track. See the bottom of Page 6 for details.

**Defensive Traits**

**Carnivore Traits**

**Eating Traits**

**Other Traits**



**Ambush**

Allows a **Carnivore** to *attack* a species protected by the **Warning Call** trait.



**Burrowing**

A **Carnivore** cannot *attack* this species unless one or more of its Population is *hungry*.



**Carnivore**

This species can *attack* another species during feeding if its Body Size is greater than the Body Size of the species being *attacked*, and it has the traits necessary to overcome its preys' defensive traits. **Carnivores** may never *take* Plant Food, even with other traits such as **Long Neck** or **Cooperation**.



**Climbing**

A **Carnivore** cannot *attack* a species with **Climbing** unless it also has **Climbing**.





### Cooperation

Every time this species takes Food, if you have a species to the right of it, that species also takes 1 Food of the same type (Plant or Meat) from the same source (Watering Hole or Food Bank). This means **Cooperation** will get triggered by traits such as **Long Neck**, **Scavenger**, **Intelligence**, and even another **Cooperation** (but not **Foraging** or **Fat Tissue**). Don't forget that a **Carnivore** cannot *take* Plant Food even with the help of **Cooperation**.



### Defensive Herding

A species with **Defensive Herding** may not be *attacked* unless the *attacking Carnivore* has a Population that is greater than the Population of the species with **Defensive Herding**.



### Fat Tissue

This species has the option to *take* Food even when it is not *hungry*. Place the *taken* Food on the **Fat Tissue** card instead of the Species Board. The Food stored on **Fat Tissue** may not be greater than the Body Size of this species.

Immediately before the Food Cards are revealed next round, place the food from **Fat Tissue** onto the Species Board (up to its Population). Food on **Fat Tissue** is placed behind the owner's Food Screen if the trait is discarded, the species goes extinct, or at the end of the game.



### Fertile

Before the Food Cards are revealed, this species gains 1 Population if there is Food on the Watering Hole (for instance, from the previous round).



### Foraging

This species receives an additional Plant Food from the same source (Watering Hole or Food Bank) anytime it *takes* Plant Food (unless it does not have a *hungry* Population for the additional Food). The additional Food does not trigger an additional *take* action.

**Foraging** is only triggered by traits that *take* such as **Cooperation**, **Long Neck**, and **Intelligence** (or by going to the Watering Hole).



### Hard Shell

Add 4 to this species' Body Size when determining if a **Carnivore** can *attack* it. A species with Body Size 6 and **Hard Shell** will have an effective Body Size of 10. **Hard Shell** does not increase the amount of Meat Food that a **Carnivore** *takes* after an *attack*.



### Horns

When a species with **Horns** is *attacked*, the *attacking Carnivore's* Population is reduced by 1. The reduction in Population occurs before the **Carnivore** *takes* Meat Food for the *attack*. This means it is possible for a **Carnivore** and its prey to both go extinct if they each have a Population of 1. Only **Scavengers** would get Food in that circumstance.



### Intelligence

A player with **Intelligence** has the option to discard one or more cards from their hand during any of their feeding turns to gain one of the following effects:

- If the species with **Intelligence** is a **Carnivore**, each card discarded negates all copies of 1 defensive trait for this species' current *attack*.
- If the species with **Intelligence** is not a **Carnivore**, it *takes* 2 Plant Food from the Food Bank for each card discarded. This may be done in addition to the player's normal feeding turn and as many times as you want.

A player is never forced to use this ability, even if **Intelligence** is on a species that is still *hungry*.



### Long Neck

*Take* 1 Plant Food from the Food Bank (not the Watering Hole) before the Food Cards are revealed each round.



### Pack Hunting

This species' Body Size is treated as being equal to its Population plus its Body Size when determining if it can *attack* another species. For example, a species with a Population of 5 and a Body Size of 3 will have an effective Body Size of 8 when determining if it can *attack* another species.



### Scavenger

Take 1 Meat Food from the Food Bank anytime a species loses 1 or more Population due to an *attacking Carnivore*.

If the *attacking Carnivore* has the **Scavenger** trait, it gets an extra Meat Food for the *attack*. If the *attacked* species has the **Scavenger** trait, it gets a Meat Food after being *attacked*.



### Symbiosis

This species cannot be *attacked* if you have a species immediately to the right of it, and that species has a larger Body Size than the species with **Symbiosis**.



### Warning Call

If you have a species to the right and/or left of a species with **Warning Call**, it/they cannot be *attacked* unless the **Carnivore** has **Ambush**. **Warning Call** does not protect the species that has the **Warning Call** trait.

For rules questions, email [Evolution@NorthStarGames.com](mailto:Evolution@NorthStarGames.com)

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# evolution

The original concept for Evolution was developed by Russian biologist Dmitry Knorre as a teaching tool. Dominic Crapuchettes, a former professional Magic: The Gathering player, built upon the concept along with a team of designers at North Star Games to create a tournament quality board game. Catherine Hamilton was raised by a rocket scientist mom at NASA and a neurobiologist dad at Caltech. She joined the project because it merged her passion for natural science with her lifelong passion for watercolor painting. The result is an award-winning game that demonstrates the intricacies of a dynamic ecosystem.

Evolution has been used at the University of Oxford and many other classrooms across the globe. It was featured in *Nature*, the most prestigious scientific journal in the world:

**nature** International weekly journal of science



*"Evolution features sophisticated biology. Traits can be put together in a dizzying array of combinations, so each game can be very different. The theme of evolution is not just tacked on: it drives play."*

*- Stuart West, Professor of Evolutionary Biology, University of Oxford*



Check out these other titles which expand the world of Evolution. FLIGHT adds avian species to the ecosystem and CLIMATE adds fluctuations in climate and cataclysmic events like Ice Ages, volcanic eruptions, and meteor storms.

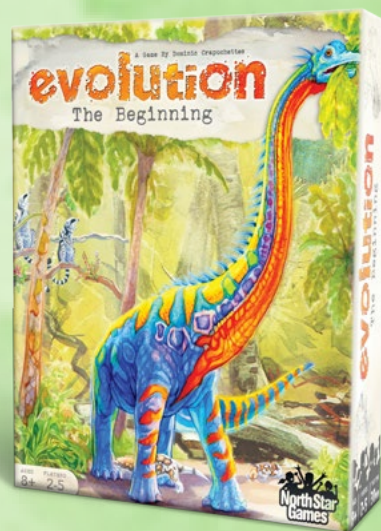
## GAME CREDITS

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## INTRODUCE EVOLUTION TO FRIENDS

Evolution: The Beginning is a streamlined version that can be enjoyed by families with kids. It is also deeply strategic when played as a 2-player game between experienced gamers.

**Available at Target.**



# evolution

## THE VIDEO GAME

North Star Games will soon release the highly anticipated Evolution video game. Immerse yourself in a dynamic ecosystem where you strive to keep your species alive. Try out new gameplay strategies against the challenging AI, or get matched against online opponents of your skill level!



Use your unique code shown on the sticker above to receive exclusive digital goods and in-game content at:

**[NorthStarGames.com/digital](http://NorthStarGames.com/digital)**