

## **Egg On** (english translation of the german game „Auweier" )

### **A mating game for screwy birds**

A game by Henning Poehl

A game for 2-4 players from 12 years

Playing time: 30-45 minutes

### **What's it all about?**

In this game, the players slip on the feathers of a male bird. Through the use of bridal gifts (worms) they try to convince the stunning females (in the middle of the table) that they would be the best fathers for their eggs. During the course of the game, the males try to mate with the females in order to achieve paternity over certain eggs.

However, not all the eggs are equally valuable. The first egg in a nest scores fewer points than the third. Also, there are females who are better suited for mating (they have the matching color) and their eggs thus earn a bonus.

The King of the Nest will, without a doubt, be the one who manages to mate with all the females, i.e. to collect eggs in all the colors.

### **Set-up:**

Each player gets a complete set of 28 cards in one color.

One set of cards consists of:

1 Male bird of a color

1 Female bird of the same color

3 Egg cards with 1-3 eggs of the same color

13 Worm cards with values from 1 to 7

1 Fake Worm (FW) card

2 Crow (K) cards

6 Wedding (H) cards

1 rules reference card

Each player places the male bird of his color face-up in front of himself on the table, so that everyone can see which color he is playing.

The females are then placed into the middle of the table and next to each is stacked her egg cards.

The egg cards are stacked so that the single egg is on top and the triple eggs are on bottom.

Then each player examines and sorts his cards into the order that he would later like to draw them.

Note: The cards are drawn from a face-down pile, so the ones at the back of the player's sorted pile will be the first ones he draws.

After he has finished organizing his deck, the player sets it face-down in front of himself and draws a hand of 6 cards.

A start-player is determined (by lot or by rolling a die) and that player receives the start-player card.

### **Course of the game:**

In a normal turn, the active player places any card from his hand in front of a female of his choice.

The played card should be placed so that it is clear to which female it has been assigned. The player then draws a replacement card from his draw pile. If his draw pile is exhausted, he plays the rest of the game with a reduced hand size.

The next player in clockwise order then takes his turn.

If a player plays a worm card next to a female where he has already played one or more worm

cards, he must stack them (from earliest to last played) in such a way that the values of each card are clearly visible. Players should always be able to easily tell the total value of worm cards every player has played in front of any female.

Play continues clockwise in this manner until a wedding card is played.

### **Play of a wedding card interrupts the normal course of play.**

As soon as a player plays a wedding card, the wedding phase begins.

No more cards may be drawn by any player (including the player who played the wedding card) until the wedding phase is finished and all matings are determined (see below). The player who played the wedding card now receives the start-player card.

All the other players now decide, in clockwise order, if they would also like to play a wedding card on any female. Then, any players who have played a wedding card decide if they want to play another wedding card on another female. This process continues until no players wish to play any further wedding cards. Then, players who have played one or more wedding cards may, in clockwise order, play a worm card in front of any female (including females where no wedding cards have been played). This process continues until no players wish to play any more worm cards.

Once a player passes, he may not play any more cards in that phase (e.g. no more wedding cards once he passes in the "play wedding cards" phase and no more worm cards once he passes in the "play worm cards" phase).

When all players have finished playing cards, an appraisal takes place to determine which male successfully mates with which female.

A male successfully mates with a female if it has played a wedding card in front of the female and it was the male who offered that female the highest value of worms (in the event of a tie, no mating occurs and the tied males get nothing). A male who successfully mates with a female gets the top egg card from her egg stack.

**Note:** If a male offered a female the highest value of worms, but don't have played a wedding card, there is no male who successfully mates with that female. And no male gets the top egg card from her egg stack.

Once the mating for each female is determined, the wedding cards and all worms from corresponding males are removed and placed on the discard pile. It does not matter if the male mated with the female or not. If the male played both a wedding card and worms at that female, all those cards are

discarded. Worms played in front of a female without a corresponding wedding card remain in place until later in the game.

All players now replenish their hands to six cards.

After the wedding phase, the start-player (the player who has the start-player card) begins normal play by playing a card of his choice.

### **End of the game:**

The game ends as soon as a player is required to play a card but is unable to do so. Since players are never required to play a card during a wedding phase, the game can never end during a wedding phase. The game also ends as soon as the last egg is awarded to a male.

The collected eggs are then scored.

### **Scoring:**

#### **Basic value:**

any first egg (shown as single Egg) = 1 point

any second egg (shown as double Egg) = 2 points

any third egg (shown as triple Egg) = 3 points

**Bonus points:**

Each egg of your own color = +1

Eggs of two different colors = +2

Eggs of three different colors = +5

Eggs of four different colors\* = +10

(\*Only possible in a four player game)

Whoever has the most points wins the game.

**Scoring example:**

The yellow player has won the following cards at the end of the game:

Yellow single Egg, Red single Egg, Yellow double Egg, Green triple Egg.

This yields the following basic scoring results:

2 x single eggs = 2 x 1 point

1 x double egg = 1 x 2 points

1 x triple egg = 1 x 3 points

2+2+3 equals 7 basic points.

The yellow player gets the following bonus points:

2 x the number of eggs in his own color = 2 points

Eggs of three different colors = 5 points

2+5 = 7 bonus points.

The yellow player's total for this game is 14 points.

## **Explanation of the cards:**

### **Male birds**

Show each player's color.

### **Female birds**

Worms are given to them.

### **Egg cards**

The egg cards show one, two and three eggs. They correspond to the first, second and third egg in a nest, since, as soon as a second egg is laid, there are two eggs in a nest, etc..

The male doesn't actually take the eggs from the nest but, rather, only receives the corresponding card as a voucher of paternity; the female continues to sit on the nest and incubate the eggs.

### **Worm card (value of 1-7)**

There are: 3 x value 1, 3 x value 2, 2 x value 3, 2 x value 4, 1 x value 5, 1 x value 6, 1 x value 7 and a Fake Worm (FW).

Worms are placed in front of a female of your choice. They remain there until you play a wedding card in front of that female. They are then removed from the game at the end of the wedding round.

Worms can only otherwise be removed from of in front of a female by Crows or the Fake Worm.

The two worms with an asterisk (\*) beside the number (1 each of value 2 and value 5) are worms which the Crows don't like and, therefore, cannot be eaten.

**The Fake Worm (FW)** can be played just like a normal worm but its value is zero. The active player can also, instead of playing a card normally, swap the Fake Worm from his hand with any real Worm he has already played or swap a real Worm from his hand with the Fake Worm that he previously

played. This swapping of Fake and real Worms may be done at any time when it is a player's turn and may be done throughout the game. There is only one restriction: during a wedding phase, a Fake Worm may be placed in front of each female only once, i.e. if a Fake Worm is removed from in front a female during a wedding phase, it may not be placed in front of that female again during the same wedding phase (it may be placed in front of another, however).

**Note:** If a Fake Worm ends the wedding phase lying in front of a female along with a Wedding card of the same color, it is placed on the discardpile just like all the other Worms of that color.

### **Wedding (H):**

The first Wedding card of a wedding phase (and, thus, the card which initiates the wedding phase) may only be placed in front of a female where at least one Worm card of the same color as the Wedding card has already been played. Additionally, the value of the worms in that color must be the highest currently in front of that female. Other Wedding cards played later in that wedding phase may be placed in front of any females. Worms need not be present.

### **Crows (K):**

Crows eat worms.

The Crow card is played on an opposing Worm. If the opposing player has several worm cards played in front of that female, the crow must eat the top Worm. Crows never eat Fake Worms (they're not suitable for crows) or worms that don't taste good to them (worms with an asterisk (\*) beside the number).

Crows may not be played during a wedding phase!

### **Tips for the first game**

Before the first game, players don't yet know what the individual cards mean and how their effects work. I suggest taking the following cards as your hand for the first game.

1 x Crow, 1 x Wedding, 1 x Fake Worm, 1 x Worm value 1 or 7, 1 x Worm value 2\* or 5\*, 1 x Worm value 3 or 4.

Your draw pile can simply be shuffled randomly but make sure that the wedding cards are distributed relatively evenly throughout.

During your first game, you will see which cards are not most suitable to your style of play and you can then sort them differently in subsequent games. However, you never know how the other players will sort their cards...

### **Special rules for two players**

For a two player game, place a third female of a neutral color (and her eggs) in the middle of the table. There will thus be more females than males. Otherwise, the game is played exactly as in the three or four player game.

### **Rules variant**

Auweier is a tactical game with only a slight element of luck. Players who prefer a more "luck-oriented" game or younger children might try this simple variant:

#### **Lucky eggs**

In this variant, the cards are not sorted during set-up.

Each player takes a Wedding card and the Fake Worm into his hand at the start of the game. Then he shuffles the rest of the cards, places them in a face-down draw pile, and immediately draws four cards, so that he now has a hand of six cards.

The rest of the game is played just like the normal game, with the exception of the Crows, who may now also eat worms during the wedding phase.

### **Explanation of the example diagram:**

You can tell by the fact that several Wedding cards are in play that we are in a wedding phase. Player A now has the start-player card because he played the first Wedding card and initiated the wedding phase. Since the only female where he has a higher value of Worms than his opponents is at

the yellow female, he could only play his Wedding card in front of her.

In response, Player B played a Wedding card in front of the yellow female. He is allowed to do this even though his worm total in front of the yellow female is less than that of Player A because the wedding phase has already started. Player C then played a Wedding card in front of the green female.

Player A chose to play no more Wedding cards and passed. It was then Player B's turn again and he played a Wedding card in front of the red female.

Player C then passed, followed by Player B. Since all players have now passed in the "play wedding cards" phase, it is now Player A's turn again, this time to play Worms.

All Worm cards shown in the diagram were played before Player A played his Wedding card. Now, all worm cards are safe from Crows until the end of the wedding phase; Player B has had some luck since his 6 Worm card will now survive. Since no cards may be drawn during a wedding phase, players A and C, who still have 5 cards in hand, enjoy a slight advantage over Player B, who only has 4 cards in hand since he played two Wedding cards. Now, in clockwise order, players could play worms in front of females, including females where they have not played a wedding card. They might do this, for example, in order to prevent another player from getting an egg there. The worm totals can thus still be changed.

For scoring illustration purposes, let's assume that the players have played all the worms they can or wish to and that we are at the end of the wedding phase. Player A gets the yellow female's double egg, while Player C gets the green single egg. Player B doesn't get any eggs since he doesn't have a higher total of worms than his opponents in front of any female.

Player C has the most worms in front of the red female but, since he didn't play a wedding card there, he doesn't get the red double egg.

Now that all successful mating pairs have been determined, all of Player A's cards in front of the

yellow female are discarded. All of Player B's cards are discarded since he played wedding cards at both females where he also had worms cards. Player C must discard all the cards he had played in front of the green female. All players now replenish their hands back to six cards and Player A begins the next normal game turn.

## **Background**

I got the idea for this game on the basis of the breeding behavior of the dunnock (*Prunella modularis*).

The dunnock (*Prunella modularis*) is a very common but also very inconspicuous bird of our native wildlife.

The males of the dunnock (*Prunella modularis*) have ranges independent of the females.

Each male tries to incorporate as many females as possible into his range. Unlike the game, however, females are not won by worms but, rather, competing males are driven out of their range. As a result, it can happen that females who roost in border areas of the male ranges can be claimed by several males. These females then usually mate with several males.

Later, during the raising of the brood, males assist the female in relation to how often they mated with her. Simply put, a male who mated frequently with the female assists in tending the brood frequently, since, in all likelihood, the chicks are his offspring. On the other hand, a male who only rarely mated with the female only helps rarely, since the likelihood is low that the chicks are his.

The first version of this game, that stuck exactly to the circumstances of the dunnock (*Prunella modularis*), was, unfortunately, completely unplayable. It was deadly boring and long-winded. As a result, I gave up realism and incorporated other biological aspects.

Those interested in further details can check out my homepage at [www.sphinxspiele.de](http://www.sphinxspiele.de).

I believe that the net result is a good, playable game which also allows you to learn something.

I'd like to make two additional comments here:

- 1.) the much vaunted fidelity of some bird species doesn't prove to be true with the one at hand.
- 2.) animal behavior should never be used as justification for human bargaining since nature knows no ethics and no morals.

If this game should receive halfway decent approval, it will be the first in a series of biological games that gives serious thought to the behavior of animals. "Nature" and I don't lack for ideas.

I wish you much fun with this game

Dipl. Biologist Henning Poehl

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