

# SNOWBIRDS

PRINT and PLAY<sub>2017</sub>



Created by Brian Garthwaite

## Overview

*Snowbirds* is a solitaire card and dice game in which you guide a flock of snow geese along their annual migration south. The flock must manage their limited resources to travel, forage for food, and fight the exhaustion of an arduous journey. Can you lead them there safely?

Approximate playing time: 10 minutes

## Components

*Print-and-Play:*

30 Action cards

15 Map cards

2 player aid cards (*Journey Play Order and Scoring*)

4 tokens\*

1 player mat (3 cards)

*Provided by Player:*

2 six-sided dice

\* Printable tokens are provided, though any convenient marker is suitable to track game status.

## Gameplay Summary

Your objective is to migrate your flock of birds from North to South, along a series of 10 randomly drawn journeys. At each stop, you will need to make the best use of your limited actions to keep your flock healthy, well-fed, and always on the move. Success depends on balancing the resources available against the risks of the journey.

Each Action card may be played in one of 4 ways, but is a single-use resource. Once played, it is gone. Your goal is to reach the South before running out of actions, with points awarded for any cards left unspent.

You'll also manage your flock's health throughout the game. Exhaustion and Hunger loom. Left unchecked, they will sap your resources and eventually kill your birds.

Each game turn proceeds in a set play order, using your Action cards to progress to new locations.

- 1) Draw a new hand of cards on a NEW DAY. Place a new location and prepare for the journey. The Distance, Risk, and Hunger shown on the map dictate the difficulty ahead.
- 2) Play REST cards to remove Exhaustion, which can elevate a journey's Risk.
- 3) Play FORAGE cards to decrease Hunger.
- 4) Play FLIGHT cards to move to a new location.
- 5) Roll dice for VIGOR and compare to RISK. A failure increases Exhaustion by 1.
- 6) If desired, play TENACITY cards to overcome the journey's Risk.

Upon reaching your destination, your flock's Hunger increases. A new day begins, bringing your flock ever closer to safety.

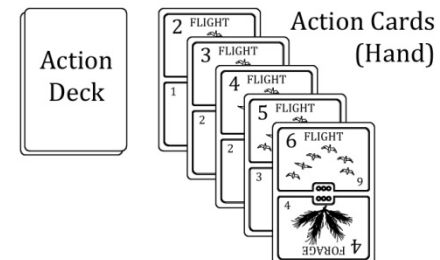
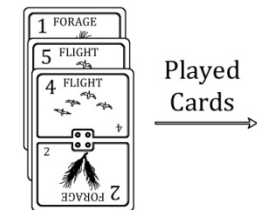
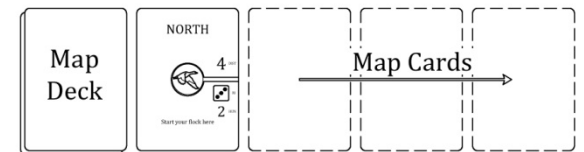
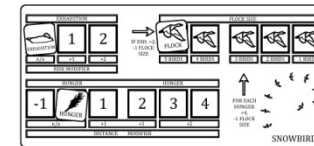
## Setup

Shuffle the Action and Map decks.

- All Action cards in one face-down pile. Starting hand is 5 cards. Once played, these cards are not reshuffled or reused. Play each one wisely.

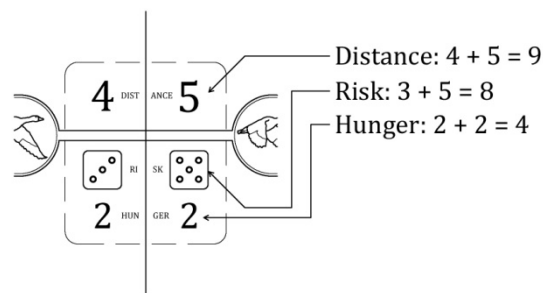
- Build a random Map deck of 9 cards, plus North on top and South at the bottom. These are your 10 journeys. Flip over the North card, setting a token at the start.

- Set out the player mat, with tokens at 0 Exhaustion, 0 Hunger, and 5 Birds.



## Maps & Journeys

Two Map cards, combined, create a JOURNEY. Each journey is defined by its DISTANCE, RISK, and HUNGER; sum the numbers on both cards to determine their values. Hazards must be offset with ACTIONS (see ACTIONS & PLAY ORDER below).



## Flock & Health

Your flock's health is tracked on the player mat. EXHAUSTION, HUNGER, and FLOCK SIZE will all inform your choice of actions.

A journey's Risk may increase Exhaustion, which itself amplifies Risk. Modifiers are noted beneath each value. *You gain 1 Exhaustion point for a Risk failure.* (See RISK & DICE for detail.) A Risk failure at 2 Exhaustion reduces the Flock by 1.

Each journey also increases your flock's Hunger upon landing in a new location. Your birds must be well-fed enough to survive the flight; if your Hunger increases past 4, you lose 1 bird for each point over. Hunger then remains at 4.

Birds will fly when hungry, but the effort makes distance seem longer. Modifiers are noted beneath each value. To prepare for a long journey, your flock may gorge themselves to -1 Hunger.

Flock Size is your hand size. At each new location, draw new Action cards up to a full hand. These

cards are all you have to reach the next location. Cards not played during a round remain in hand for the next round. Birds lost during migration may not be regained.

## Actions & Play Order

Every journey begins with a NEW DAY: place a new Map card, draw new Action cards to your hand limit. Do this at each location until the piles are empty. (See the diagram on page 4 for a recommended game layout.)

Each Action card may be played in one of 4 possible ways. These means of play occur in a fixed order during each journey. Card values played are additive; any number of cards from your hand may be played at any stage.

### Pre-Flight

- 1) REST (Face down) All Action cards are worth 1 Rest, which removes 1 point of Exhaustion. At game-end scoring, a Rest card is worth -1 points.
- 2) FORAGE (Forage side up) Foraging for food decreases Hunger; birds must eat *before* their flight.

### Mid-Flight

- 3) FLIGHT (Flight side up) Your flock's flight value must meet or exceed the journey's Distance, including any Hunger modifier. Excess points are wasted. Many flights will require 2 or more cards.
- 4) VIGOR (Dice) Roll two dice to determine your flock's Vigor, and compare against the journey's Risk value. You must meet or exceed that to succeed. (See RISK & DICE below.) A failure check increases Exhaustion by 1.

If your Vigor is lacking, you may play a card for TENACITY (Sideways), allowing you to change the value of a die. Replace one die with the pips shown

in the center of your card, or re-roll a die when using a card marked with an R.

### Landing

You may now move your token to the next location. Increase your flock's Hunger by the journey's marked value. Thus begins another new day, and the cycle repeats.

Note: Action cards are a limited resource. To use one for a task prevents its use for another. Once that card is spent, it is gone forever.

## Risk & Dice

During each journey's flight, you must compare your flock's Vigor against the journey's inherent Risk. Roll 2 dice and compare their sum against the journey's value. If your roll is less than the Risk value, you fail and become Exhausted. You have 2 options:

- 1) Increase your Exhaustion by 1. Future journeys will have higher Risk. If your Exhaustion is already at 2, reduce your Flock Size by 1; leave Exhaustion at 2. You may play a face-down Rest card in your next turn, after drawing a new hand, to remove the Exhaustion.
- 2) Play Tenacity cards to amend one or more dice. You are limited to unplayed cards remaining from the last hand.

Select a die to modify. If the card is marked with dice pips, replace that die with the number shown. If marked with the letter R, you may re-roll the die, replacing its value. Use the amended die or dice values to replace the original Vigor roll.

## Special Situations

If you can't fly safely to the next location, you may take a turn for only Rest and Foraging. Increase your Hunger by 1 to account for the time spent, adjusted for cards played, then draw back up to a full hand. Apply the additional Hunger point when drawing new cards. You may choose to take a rest day at any point pre-flight.

If a sudden decrease in Flock Size leaves you with an oversized hand, do not discard.

## Special Locations

Several locations have special effects, in addition to the journey's standard details.

1) *Plentiful food: +1 Forage bonus* – Food is abundant and almost effortless to find. Sum total of any Forage cards played increases by 1. No effect if no Forage cards played.

2) *Limited food: Maximum Forage 2* – Food is scarce here. Regardless of Forage card values played, you may only decrease Hunger by up to 2 points. If remaining for a rest day, you may Forage for up to 2 points on both days. (See SPECIAL SITUATIONS above.)

3) *Storms on the horizon: Any non-flight card played increases risk level by 1* – Thunderstorms are imminent. Any time spent Resting or Foraging makes subsequent flight more dangerous. Each Rest or Forage card causes +1 Risk when leaving this location. No limit on potential Risk increase.

## Success or Failure?

If any portion of your flock survives the journey the South, the migration is successful. There are two ways for your migration to end in failure:

1) If all of your birds die en route. Obviously.

2) If you spend all of your Action cards before reaching the end. The same applies if you are left with insufficient Flight cards to make the next journey. Your surviving birds should probably hope for a mild winter.

## Scoring

If you've been successful, your flock's performance determines your final score. As an example, assume your game ended like this:

+ [DISTANCE from unspent cards] (+4)

+ [FLOCK SIZE] (+5)

– [2 x EXHAUSTION] (2x1=-2)

– [HUNGER] (-1)

– [FACE-DOWN REST cards] (-3)

Score: 4 + 5 – 2 – 1 – 3 = 3 points

If you would like to estimate a score for a migration which fell short, calculate your score as above, then subtract 12 points for each incomplete journey.

## Final Score

Fewer than 0 points: Look, you made it. Some of you, anyway, and that's a victory.

0 – 4 points: Good attempt! No one said this migration thing was going to be easy.

5 – 9 points: Great work. You're a boon to goose-kind.

10+ points: Excellent flying! Whatever geese give for medals of valor, you've earned one.

## Game Difficulty

Too easy? Try your next migration on difficult mode: Start with 1 Exhaustion and 2 Hunger. When calculating your final score, double the point value of your surviving Flock Size.

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## Thanks!

A great big thank-you to all the BoardGameGeek playtesters who helped usher this game into existence: G. Uitz, Alex Cannon, Jon Paul, Israel Waldrom, C.L. (GreenTea532), darkyeoman, Mark Tuck, John Kean, Scott Allen, Richard Swan, Chris Hansen, janciorules.

Sample game layout:

