

MURDER
MOST
fOWL

A GAME OF BIRDERS
BY TALEN LEE

CREDITS

Game, Rulebook: Talen Lee

Art: The art for this game come from Public Domain naturalism paintings from the late 1800s.

Creative Commons Resources:

Carl Olsen, Delapouite, John Redman, Lorc, Lord Berandas, Priorblue, Sbed, Viscious Speed & Willdabeast, via www.game-icons.net

SPECIAL THANKS

To my mum, with whom I watched a bunch of *Poirot*

To Æryn, for talking game design

To Fox and Elli, for walks and talks

To Qwrpline, for the word Thrumm



Murder Most Fowl is a game for two to four players, inspired by Agatha Christie stories of small-stakes activities being treated *very* seriously. You and your friends can play it as a simple pattern-matching, path-building game, giggling at the silly names of made-up birds. But you *can* start messing with them, you *can* push their limits, you *can* ramp things up... and if things are pushed too far, maybe one of you will be driven, in the pursuit of birding success...

...to murder

ACCESS

Murder Most Fowl is a game of building paths and reaching a communal deck of cards. It relies on open information, and players being able to interpret one another's cards.

And always: **Remember to respect the players and their needs.**

COMPONENTS

In your copy of *Murder Most Fowl*, you should have the following:

- A **Deck** of 70 Cards
 - 60 Bird cards:
 - 10 Birbles, numbered 1-10
 - 10 Grushes, numbered 1-10
 - 10 Piptits, numbered 1-10
 - 10 Runceys, numbered 1-10
 - 10 Thrums, numbered 1-10
 - 10 Wardlurs, numbered 1-10
 - 10 Wile cards
 - 4 Blocking Wiles, numbered 1
 - 3 Discard Wiles, numbered 2
 - 2 Swap Wiles, numbered 3
 - 1 **Murder** Wile, numbered 4

HOW TO PLAY

Play starts with the player who can name the most ridiculous Agatha Christie novel conclusion¹.

SETUP

First, make sure the deck is the right size for your players. The number of bird types you have in the deck depends on

¹ Or pick at random, whatever

how many players you have. The more players you have, the more bird types you need available. It doesn't matter which types you include, so pick the ones you think have the funniest names to keep. The fewer players, the fewer types of birds, like so:

Players	2	3	4
Bird Types	4	5	6

Then, when the deck is the right size, shuffle it up and set it in the middle of the players.

For each player, take the top card off the deck and set it next to the deck face-up as a discard pile, closest to that player. That's that player's discard.



Then, each player draws two cards. Each player should only ever have two cards in hand at the end of their turn.

TURNS

In *Murder Most Fowl*, each turn is the same: Each player **Draws** two cards, **Discards** a card, then **Plays** a card.

When you **Draw** a card, you can take a card from either the top of the deck, *or* a card from any of the discard piles. You *have* to take at least one card from the top of the deck each turn.

When you **Discard** a card, you put it from your hand into your discard pile.

When you **Play** a card you put the card on the table in front of you, directly next to one of your existing cards to

the left, right, or above or below it.

Cards have to be placed adjacent to one another, horizontally or vertically, but the order you place them isn't



necessarily the route you score.

If you have a 9 and a 2 early on, but don't see any 4s or 3s floating around, you could place them so you can loop back around.

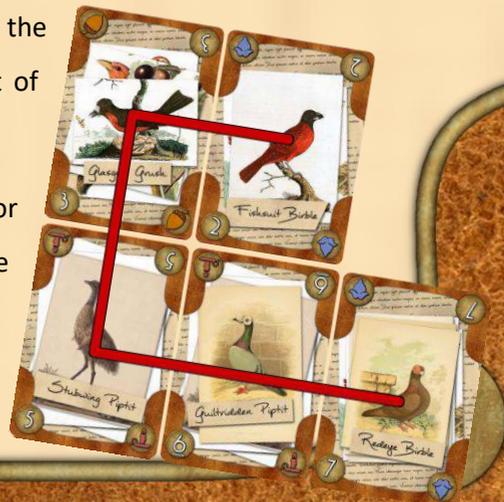
Your opponents may also want to interfere with your path by placing blocks in it, or making you discard cards from it. This means you'll always want to plan for the shape your path *can* take, and be prepared to change your plans.

GOAL

What you're trying to do is construct, amongst your notes of the birds you've seen, a route showing the judges a most excellent parade of birds, from a low number to a higher number. This is your **route**.

At the end of the game, you count how many cards you can map in this route, from the lowest number to the highest of the same Type of bird.

Provided your route is 4 or more cards, you score one point for each card. However,



if more than half your birds are the *same type of bird*, you score double points.

You're only tested at the end of the game for the *best* path you can make... or at the moment of *murder*.

SCORING

First, you need to draw a line in your path to show your route. This route:

- **Starts** and **ends** with a bird of the **same** type
- Must be **at least four** cards long
- Always increases in value; 1-2-3 is fine, as is 1-3-5. You can skip numbers, so long as you move to a higher numbered bird.
- If *more than* half of the path is the same type of bird, it is worth double

Then, the living player with the highest score is the winner!

WILES

Wiles are skull-marked cards that cause trouble for your opponents. A Wile card in your Route has no value for calculating points and doesn't impress the judges at all.

They're things that disrupt your path in some way. Wile cards have numbers on them, but that's for determining if the time is right... for **Murder**.

MURDER

First of all, you might ask, as any reasonable Birder would, *when is it justified to Murder someone?* You can play the Murder card just like any other card, on your turn, but the trick is *getting away with it*.

If you attempt to murder someone when there aren't **at least one of each other number of wile** in play, then you've jumped the gun! The bobbies collect you and take you away. You lose the game and stop playing.



These three wiles don't need to be similar in any way, and they don't need to be in your path, or all in someone else's path – they just need to be in *any* players' paths. If this is the case, then pick a player, play the murder card, and they are murdered. The murder card doesn't go into your path, but it is what you played this turn.

And what for the **victim** of this murder most fowl? Well, they stop playing the game. If this means there's only one player left, that player stops building their own path, and scoring begins.

But! You're not safe yet!

The victim *does* have the opportunity to ruin your plans! During scoring, the victim's hand is revealed. *Nobody can score a path which starts and ends with a bird of the types in the murder victim's hand.* Nobody – not just the murderer!

The murder victim may not be able to win – *but you have lost respect before the eyes of the Birder society.* And isn't that so much worse?

