

English Translation of Hols der Geier

(Literally, "Vulture take it;" idiomatic for "Confound it!")

A card game for 2-5 players by Alex Randolph

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Goal

Each player tries to take as many Mouse cards (positive points) as possible, while avoiding as many Vulture cards (negative points) as possible. Vulture points are subtracted from Mouse points - whoever has the most points at the end of the game wins.

Setup

Each player takes one deck of cards of the same color - green, blue, red, etc. There are fifteen cards in each deck, numbered uniquely from 1 to 15. Each player takes these cards as his/her hand - all fifteen are available at once. The fifteen animal cards with Mice and Vultures are shuffled and placed face down in the center of the table. Turn the top card of this pile face up.

The Game Begins

Each player secretly selects one of his/her fifteen cards to play, and places it face down in front of him/her. When all players have chosen a card, turn the cards face up.

If the animal card (Mouse or Vulture) is a Mouse, the highest card played by the players wins the Mouse card. In the example shown on p. 4 of the German rules, Player B wins the trick and takes the 5 Mouse as five positive points.

If the animal card is a Vulture, however, the lowest card played wins the trick. In the example on page 5 of the German rules, Player C wins the trick and takes the -4 Vulture as four negative points.

Thus high cards are always good - they either take a positive trick or avoid a negative trick. Too bad you don't have all high cards...

Summary of play:

- The top animal card is turned face up;
- Each player chooses a number card secretly and places it face down on the table;
- All turn their number cards face up at the same time;

- The highest number card wins a Mouse trick; the lowest number card wins a Vulture trick;
- Played number cards are out of the game.

Repeat this process until all fifteen tricks have been resolved.

Special Cases

- 1 If two or more players have the highest cards on a Mouse trick, they cancel each other. In this case, the next highest card wins the trick. Likewise, if two or more players have the lowest cards on a Vulture trick, they cancel each other. In this case, the new lowest card takes the trick.
- 2 If all number cards cancel each other, as shown on p. 6 of the German rules, then the number cards are discarded and a new animal card is turned over, added to the existing animal card on the table. Players now compete for this new trick, which consists of both cards. If the sum of the animal cards is zero or positive, highest card takes both. If the sum is negative, lowest card takes both.
- 3 If the fifteenth trick is a tie all around, no one scores the animal card(s) in question.

Game End

After the fifteenth round, everyone will have played all their cards and the animal deck will be exhausted. The game is over. Each player adds his/her Mouse cards together and then subtracts the sum of the Vulture cards from that total. High total wins.

You can, of course, agree beforehand to play multiple rounds (three rounds is a common game), in which case the player with the highest total after the agreed number of rounds wins the game.

Two-Player Version

Each player shuffles his deck of fifteen cards and, without looking at them, sets three of the cards aside. Likewise, three animal cards are removed without looking at them. Play only with these 12 cards - thus, neither player is sure which cards the opponent has, nor which animal cards have been removed.