


Crab Fragment
Labs presents

Ducks in a Bucket



A free Dice Game
for 2 to 6 Players

Summary: *Ducks in a Bucket* is a press-your-luck dice game. Each round, players try to collect the best hand by rolling five dice and keeping some of them in a “bucket.”

You are allowed to keep only certain dice, depending on the sixth “Boss Die.” You can re-roll dice to improve your hand. But be careful, or you might lose them all!

Players: 2 to 6

You Need: Six dice, including five white dice and one die of another color, plus a way to keep score. It also helps to have a button or other token to indicate who goes first.



Overview of Play: You will keep score over a series of rounds. In each round, each player makes a hand.

On your inning, you are trying to build the best hand, sometimes using several dice rolls. After each player has made their hand, those hands are ranked and scored, and another round begins.

A full game lets each player go first the same number of times, usually once or twice around the table.

Playing Your Turn: Start by rolling all six dice.

Your goal is to move white dice from the dice pool into your final hand (your “bucket”). To do this, you must have permission from the blue die (“the Boss”).

Moving dice into the bucket is called “promoting” them. There are two ways to promote your dice: by matching or by adding.

Matching: You may put *any number* of white dice into your bucket if they match the Boss die *exactly*.

Adding: You may move *one set* of white dice into your bucket if they *add up exactly* to its value. Below are some examples:



Above, you can promote the 2 + 3, or both of the 5’s, but you can’t promote 2 + 3 + 5 + 5. (You could also promote just one of the 5’s if you wanted to.)



Here you may promote 1 + 1, or the 2, but not both.



Here you can promote any one set of numbers that add up to 6, for example 1 + 1 + 2 + 2.



Unfortunately, you cannot promote anything on the above roll. None of the white dice are equal to, or add up to, the value of the Boss.

This player will have to lose a white die and roll again.

About the Bucket: Once they are in your bucket, dice are locked and can't be re-rolled. Only the dice in your Bucket will be included in your final hand!

The 2's ("ducks") are *wild* in the bucket, and they can therefore be used as *any rank*. However, they act like normal 2's outside of the bucket.

Stopping: You can choose to stop after any roll where you promoted *at least one die*.

When you decide to stop, record your hand on the score sheet, converting the wild 2's into whatever rank is best for the hand. Now your inning is over.

Failure to Promote: If you can't promote anything, or simply choose not to promote anything, you must re-roll all unbucketed dice (including the Boss).

Before you do this, you must *throw away* one of the unlocked white dice. If you run out of white dice in this manner, you also lose the dice in your bucket, and you will score nothing for the round.

You must re-roll after any roll where you don't promote a die. After you promote at least one die, you have the option to stop or to re-roll.

Hand Ranks: The rank of hands is similar to poker, except that a *Straight* beats a *Full House*:

Five of a Kind

Four of a Kind

Straight (five numbers in sequence)

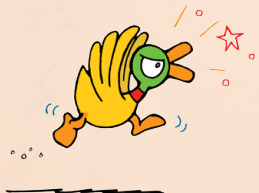
Full House (three of one rank and two of another)

Three of a Kind

Two Pair

One Pair

No Pair



Breaking Ties: Higher dice are better, so a pair of fours is better than a pair of threes.

In comparing two similar hands, higher kickers are better (kickers are other dice alongside the pair, etc.) A kicker is better than nothing. For example, **3-3-2** is better than **3-3**. If two hands are identical, then the tie is broken in favor of the player who went *earlier* in the round.

Scoring: After everyone has played their turn and completed a hand, assign points to each player based on the order of their hands, as follows:

The highest hand gets points equal to the number of players. The next hand gets one point less, and so on down to the worst hand, which gets one point.

However, if a player lost their bucket, they get zero points for the round (that's called a "goose egg").

Here is an example scoring round:

Player	May	Kent	Will	Barry	Dwana
Hand	3-3-1	4-4-3	-	6-5-4-4	5-6-6
Points	2	3	0	4	5

Dwana's pair of 6's is highest, so she scores 5 points for this round, because there are five players.

Next in line are Barry and Kent, both with a pair of 4's. Barry's kickers are higher than Kent's, so Barry gets 4 points and Kent gets 3.

May is lower with their pair of 3's, so they score 2 points. Will lost his bucket and earns a goose egg.

Your score sheet should have two lines for each round, as shown above: one line for the hands, and another for the point values assigned to the hands.

Passing the Button: Use a button or other type of token to designate who goes first in each round, and pass it to the left after each round.

Winning: The game ends after everyone has gone first the same number of times. For a decent length of game, this can be just once or twice per player.



At the end, total up each player's score, and the highest total wins.

Ducks in a Bucket was designed by James Ernest, Joe Kisenwether, and John Kovalic for the **2018 Bike the Barns / FairShare CSA Coalition** charity event. James Ernest is the Chief Creative Officer for Crab Fragment Labs, where you can find many lovely free games just like this one, as well as a few games for sale!