

Hippo Genocide 01: Where the Hippos Died

By Stephen aka Astray Penguin

Welcome to Hippo Genocide. This is the first in hopefully many pointless articles on Magic the Gathering and the EDH format. The purpose of these articles won't be to teach you to play Magic better or improve your DCI rating, but just things about Magic or the Magic community that have got on my nerves or amused me. If you think of them as five minutes entertainment, you will be on the same track as me.

So firstly I need to introduce myself. I've been playing Magic since Shadowmoor and starting playing Magic Online (MTGO/MODO from here on out) with the release of Alara Reborn. My preferred formats are Limited and EDH, but when I play Constructed I tend to be a combo player and enjoy the Extended format. In EDH my favourite general is [Phelddagrif](#) and I'm generally running good stuff decks. I rarely play decks without white mana symbols due to my preference for answers and the fact that White has answers to everything under the sun. I play Commander several times a week on MTGO and currently it's the main way I play Magic and by far my favourite.

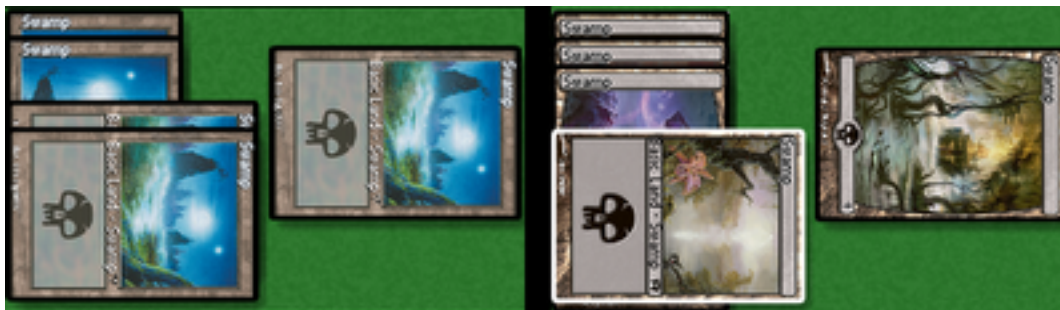
So with that crap is out the way it's time to get to the content. This week I shall be rambling on land in decks, or to be more exact, the type of art on lands in decks. This topic is completely anal and nitpicky but I may as well start as I mean to go on by complaining about pointless things.

There are four types of basic land in Magic: Old border, New border, White border and Full art. Each of these lands has a character to them, when you see someone playing them it brings forth an emotional reaction. I've found it is usually along these lines.

- [Old border](#) is cool, it's now been long enough that it became non-standard that the novelty is there and if you get ones with good art people really dig them.
- [New border](#). It's the standard, no one's impressed unless it's a promo one.
- [White border](#). Cheap and nasty. Why would you ever use these things?
- [Full art](#). Most people consider these the greatest of all lands, since Zendikar we see everybody using them. In my opinion using full art lands at this point is less impressive than just a new bordered one. It's so over done it's like saying WASSSSUP or quoting Austin Powers a few years back.

When putting together a deck most people just grab whatever land they have laying around and jam it in there, but I'm saying why not consider what lands you're using and use matching art and even art that matches the theme of your deck?

Decks with matching lands look better on the table. They seem more cared about, neater and just generally all round better. Below is a picture of the exact same amount of lands in the exact same deck, one is using my old bordered Swamps and one is using a random selection of lands.



The left pile is more organized and like your deck is better planned. If you're still looking for some helpful tips to becoming a better magic player and winning more then here is the closest you will get. If you take the time to put all the same art on your lands in a deck you seem more professional and dedicated, it's not much but it could be a slight edge on being intimidating to a newer player, on the other hand using disorganized land in a high level event could give the rogue deck an edge as you may come across as just some lucky scrub. But if you're going to put that much effort into metagaming, you may as well just put the time into playing more games and getting more familiar with your deck.

Below you can see 3 different Blue generals, with a matching land. [Wydwen](#) has a very soft pallet of blues and purples, so the Shadowmoor island fits nicely with her, [Wrexial](#) has prominent colours similar to the Time Spiral land and in [Isperia's](#) case the sky is similar in tone but also the feel of the Sphinx suits a classic border more than a new one. Older Generals tend to suit classic bordered land as well, it just feels right.



Adding matching lands can make the deck feel more unified in this way. Instead of just your random islands or those “cool” full art lands you always play, why not consider how much better it would be to have your entire deck themed around your general instead of just your spells? At the Zendikar pre-release I opened my sealed pool and was in Esper, so when I went to the land box I picked out my land all with Esper art, it didn't make my deck any better or make me play any better, but it was a minor novelty that I found made the deck more memorable to me. Whenever I see an Esper land I always think of that pre-release and that deck, this is part of the fun having one land art can have for you, they start to become characterful in their own right. Maybe you won't use that Bant Forest any more because whenever you do you have bad luck, or maybe that Lorwyn swamp brings you luck. A lot of people have suspicions or rituals with dice, part of the fun of meeting other gamers is exchanging these stories. Why not build such stories among your friends with lands as well?

At this point there may be some people thinking I'm a complete idiot (and hey I am, who else would be writing articles for CommanderCast?) but if you've ever drafted Scars on MTGO I'm sure you've noticed Scars uses Zendikar lands and it makes it feel a little less special than it would be with the correct ones.

Obviously non-basics are fixed and unless you have the artistic skill or money to get them edited they won't fit with your general but that can't be helped and maybe you would even consider that because you just want to pimp your deck that much more. So they're just being

ignored for this because who in EDH isn't going to run at least a [Reliquary Tower](#)?

That's all for this week, hopefully you will have found something interesting here in my rambling and will consider how your lands look on the table and how they influence the feel of your deck. If you have any feedback or thoughts send it to hippogenocide(at)gmail(dot)com or drop me a line on MTGO where my username is Astray_Penguin. I hope to hear from all three of you soon.