

Ngel2 took map 3. Last time he took map 3 in 4 player game (table#558669595) he took a university where it helped with a project more than university. On a map 3a (535257832) there we no habitats projects. On table 531907665 there were no habitats projects. On table 516788141 he failed to take a partnership where I would have 100%. So I think he's more likely to go for universities.

Trademark Y took map 7. I have not found a recent 4p map 7 game.

Eit22 took map 5. On table 558832787 he preferred a university where I would have taken a partnership. So I expect him to take a university here.

I would instead to R2 project Europe, so would keep Eagle Owl. Round 3 and 4 projects will probably be Habitats and Species, so I don't need Savannah. I would keep the Tapir and Caracal for this reason. The forth card is a tough choice between Capuchin, Elephant and Savannah. I lean Capuchin because we'll probably take the Americas partnership for Habitats, and we have small animals endgame card. I'm not that comfortable keeping four animals, but we wouldn't play savannah or science institute short-term anyway. A possible plan is:

| Turn | Slots: |
|------|---|
| 1 | Only yellow may take partnership. Keep: Eagle-Owl, Tapir, Giraffe, Caracal. Likely to need all for species/habitats before wanting to release with Savannah |
| 2 | b(2) |
| 3 | b(kiosk) |
| 4 | a(European Partnership) |
| 5 | b (2) |
| 6 | x-s |
| 7 | x-c |
| 8 | n(eagle owl + caracal) |

Tomoaki keeps the elephant instead of the Caracal, which surprises me since the Caracal helps with Habitats, species, (and Savannah, if we had chosen to keep it). If the round goes long enough, we could even play it with the eagle owl. **HELP**
 Since I didn't have any species-related sponsors or bears in my starting hand, I judged that I was at a disadvantage in the race for the first slot of Species Diversity, and didn't aim for it as a top priority. Instead, I focused on Asia due to having many Asia icons and the inherent strength of the Asian Elephant.



1. Here I would select either Europe and Asian Partnership. Given the projects, it's very possible they could be taken by Blue and Red, so I would definitely take one now. Which one is a tough call. I would go for Europe, for two reasons. Firstly, the Eagle Owl is a great early card. Secondly, I would prefer to project Europe 3rd slot, and a better slot for Asia later. Thinking again, and based on my research of my opponents playstyles, I don't think we need to race for a partnership, and I would build first, as above.

Tomoaki takes the European Partnership. **Tomoaki; how do you feel about the kind of opponents preference research I did above?**

I've never conducted opponent preference research, so I'm genuinely impressed. During the game, I simply thought, "Lucky that no one is taking partner zoos." Even if I had done such research, I doubt I'd use it as a basis for essential decisions, like securing a must-have partner zoo. I believe players may make moves that deviate from statistics based on their hand situation and skill level, and if I misread and it became fatal, I'd deeply regret it. I can't control what moves my opponents make. Especially in the flat, information-less early game, I generally assume they could make any type of move.



2. I would build a "2" over the "1-rep".
Tomoaki agrees.



3. We could aim to play the owl and capucin before the break:

| Turn | Slots: | | | | |
|---|--------|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Only yellow may take partnership. Keep: Eagle-Owl, Tapir, Giraffe, Caracal. Likely to need all for species/habitats before wanting to release with Savannah | n | c | s | b | a |
| 2 b(2) | b | a | n | c | s |
| 3 b(kiosk) | b | a | n | c | s |
| 4 s-x | s | b | a | n | c |

From my experience, when starting in the west, I rarely feel the need to place the first kiosk anywhere but this position. With Cable Car, we can use the partner zoo bonus while placing it, and if we orient the petting zoo in a V-shape, it's fine too. Since the variety of cards we might draw with perception is too wide, I usually don't plan strategies beforehand and instead make decisions after seeing what I draw.



4. Note all three opponents took universities, as expected. I'd play the Owl, as above, preferring it to clevering S and trying to play the Capuchin this round also.

Tomoaki agrees. For perception, we have:



The Experts on discord think Fur Seal is the best early animal in the game, because of the value of an extra worker. That's not map specific, and here there is no great place for it next to the lake. We could build 5 over the draw/range, and upgrade animals from the partnership, but it feels slow and I'm not sure how to value the extra early worker on Map 2.

The Peafowl appears a no-brainer; it's a great card, and it's our fifth asia icon. If we're taking peafowl I'd probably keep the fur seal with it. I don't need a release, and have the capuchin, and don't see taking an Africa partnership soon enough to make the Macaque worthwhile. Tomoaki keeps the peafowl, and serengeti instead of the fur seal. It's a question of which has the most long-term potential.

In the Outdoor Areas strategy that doesn't focus on universities, one Association action per round up to Round 3 is usually sufficient, so additional workers have limited value. Fur Seal also seems less strong in this context. Serengeti, on the other hand, opens up the option of releasing relatively affordable large animals like the Secretary Bird or Cheetah, making it attractive for future turns.



5. I would build 2 for the partnership bonus. If we take the Asia partnership, we cannot play another animal this turn, so will have to discard two cards at the break. If we take Americas, we can play the Capuchin next turn, which would pilfer yellow. It's a difficult choice. In this situation I would take Americas because the capuchin gives us 5 appeal for \$6 and more importantly helps with species and habitats. And we're not in a rush for the Asia partnership since we have a round 2 project, so can take it round 3 if it's still available.

Whether to upgrade build or association is a difficult decision, and largely depends on whether we think we will build again before the break. After playing S for \$5, we will have \$10, and won't really want to play cards (we already have three we want to keep). With the \$11 break income, we will have \$21 for Round 2. We could build European Bison, using $3=5$ next to the gate and Kiosk (\$6) + Bison ($\$19-\$3*2$)=\$13, = \$19 total. Sponsor Magnet doesn't help us (though who knows after the break). Assuming a CP is worth 2 appeal at this stage (the 4th CP won't get us a special reward, we're paying $\$19$ for $6+2*2 = 10$ appeal, which is a good deal. We are snapping a card as well. The Tapir, probably the least valuable of our cards, is (assuming set up next to the gate) $\$17+1*\$2 = \$19$ total. Assuming the asia icon is worth 2 appeal, we're getting 7 appeal and one rep. The digging doesn't interest me any more than the sponsor magnet. And I wouldn't have to snap a card. Given all this, I won't snap a card, so my next two moves are S and B. While the S takes us to 9/15 there is no guarantee the break will happen before we B, this turn. So I would upgrade B, not A, in this situation.

Looking again, I thinking it's obvious we upgrade A; we will play Capuchin then have \$0.
Tomoaki upgrades association.



6. I would pilfer.

Tomoaki agrees.

Interestingly, yellow prefers to give a random card, rather than \$5. I had just assumed he would give the \$5. Perhaps, with the starting 4, it's more likely to not like your cards, and to have played the good ones. Whereas later in the game you've kept the ones you wanted.



7. Yellow snapped the Bison. I would S 5 here.

Tomoaki agrees.



8. Playing cards seems a waste already holding 5; if we snap we'd have to discard 3. But I don't see anything else to do. I would snap breeding cooperation. Through the break I would keep the Breeding Cooperation, the Elephant, and the Peafowl.

Tomoaki keeps the Chameleon instead of Elephant. This surprises me since we can't play both next round anyway, and the Elephant is two Asia icons. On the other hand, the chameleon is much easier to play. I'm not sure what Round 3 project Tomoaki is lining up; perhaps Habitats 1st slot taking an Africa partnership?

In retrospect I think Chameleon is better than Elephant here because it provides the Asia Icon we need for the Peafowl.

By this point, no one had played any species-related sponsors, so I judged that I could enter the Species Diversity race using Breeding Cooperation and shifted my strategy in that direction. While it's unfortunate, I couldn't afford to keep the Asian Elephant in hand (technically I could, but I prioritized the more efficient Peafowl for income and points).

In a game expected to progress quickly, Mountain Tapir's 1 rep was crucial for efficiently upgrading Animals to connect with Asian Elephant. Once I discarded Mountain Tapir, I decided it was fine to give up on the Asian Elephant as well.

My immediate plan is to play Breeding Cooperation by the beginning of Round 3, add two new species icons, and secure the first slot of Species Diversity.



9. Tomoaki turns out to have been correct in upgrading Association before build. Associating Europe (3rd slot), donating and upgrading build appears obvious. What project reward to take? \$5 would be very helpful; with \$22 we could build K+1+2 and have money for the chameleon. We could also build over the draw/range to get the wolf; but we don't need the Europe Icon and the "Pack" is wasted. This is what I'd do here:



I think a pavilion to boost the existing kiosk is more important than another kiosk.

Tomoaki updates build and takes the \$5, as suggested.

In terms of donating, I'm now not sure. Obviously \$2 for 1CP is great value, but it means we can only build 4 instead of 5 next turn (since the Chameleon is \$14), and we miss out on a kiosk. No-one has updated association yet, so we will get the \$2 slot next round (probably).

I asked the 2player experts in general about the 2-enclosure v \$5 reward, and received some interesting comments about the play to date:

“in that screenshot, I would arguably not do any project at all, just take asia partner zoo. x-down animals, build 3 size for peafowl, play breeding coop, then support whatever project is available for 5 money or maybe even X-back build, hope to snap frilled lizard by some miracle or find africa or australia with a cards action. Species doesn't matter, Tomoaki is not in a good spot to win it, nor is it necessary. with this map, winning habitat 5 would have been trivial with correct play, but Tomoaki just didn't seem to care?! now we're not in a great spot for that either. just doing small projects and then a big one with asia 5 should be the way to go, although Tomoaki also discarded Asian Elephant”

Taking Asia partner zoo here would slow down the tempo of Association actions, which I'm not keen on. In a game with two generally easy-to-obtain diversity projects, delaying Association tempo could result in losing the race and benefiting my opponents.

While I'm not in an advantageous position in the Species race, my opponents don't seem to be either, so I judged that I could aim for it relatively. I decided on this one turn earlier, but even if I had aimed for it from the start and picked Caracal, the situation wouldn't have changed much.

I'm not sure if aiming for Asia 5 would be enough. Given that eit22, a consistently strong player who's beaten me many times, is likely to expand using Aquarium + Hydrologist, it would be best to secure the base project's CP (occupy them first) and deny them to my opponent.



10. I would build as above, or grab the sheep. Since it's our fifth species, I would grab the sheep:

Tomoaki instead plays the breeding cooperation.

This surprises me because the dragon is so strong when Asia is a project, and we can play the sponsor next turn. See next turn for why Dragon is not the best snap.



12. Red drew 3 instead of snapping the dragon, which surprised me. Maybe I shouldn't be surprised; both Habitats and Species increase the value of random cards. I would play the Chameleon. In terms of what to snap, I still like the dragon but the Macaw is also great. Since the dragon also has an Asia symbol, I would take that.

Tomoaki instead snaps the wolf, which surprises me a lot for the reasons above. It is a 5th species, however, so does make sense. Being able to build a $2=4$ near the gate means it's the same cost as the sheep, for 2 more appeal (though a petting zoo would allow for cheap future animals, should we want them. On further reflection, predator is our fourth species so with Breeding Cooperation with can play first slot on the first turn of round 4.

I plan to support the highly contested Species first, which is why it's actually scheduled as my second turn of Round 3 (the first turn being the play of Wolf), not the first turn of Round 4 as you expected.



13. Cards seems the obvious choice. I would snap the dragon for the reasons above.

Primatologist would also be reasonable; as well as the \$3 when played it's likely someone will play the macaque, and we don't have a sponsor. We will have \$24 next round. \$9 will go on the wolf, so \$15 left. That's not really enough to build and play an animal. Another option is to "Clever" C for and X, so we can take a partnership and habitats 1st slot next turn. I don't see a threat to habitats, but I would like to get the extra worker, and the primatologist isn't that good, so I'd clever cards, assuming that the break will happen before our next turn. E.g. blue could break 5.

Tomoaki instead clevers sponsors, which surprises me a lot. I assume the plan is to draw cards after the break, but this seems unnecessary to me. I'd rather have S in a higher slot to force the break quickly since we don't have much to do next turn. **HELP**

As considered in the next turn, it's likely that blue will play Expert On Europe. If I take the Cards action here, red will trigger a break upon executing their Cards action, leaving me with only 2X tokens. This would mean that I'd need three more turns before holding 3X tokens and securing the first slot of Species Diversity. The break would give everyone money, and taking that many turns after the break would be a huge risk. Even if I didn't lose the first slot, I might still lose the chance to take a partner zoo (and a worker).

So, I chose to secure only X and play it safe. This isn't just for this game; in this Outdoor Areas strategy, it's generally safer to secure X-tokens by the end of Round 2.



14. Blue played expert on Europe, so Tomoaki's move turned out better than mine. We have species 5 for our first project in round 4 so want asia icons for the second. So either Dragon or Macaque. I would pick the dragon because I want to play the peafowl first so could easily get 10 appeal for it, especially since our opponents are motivated to play Asia icons.

Tomoaki instead takes the Macaque. I'm a bit surprised; we're not going to take anyone by surprise with this, and it's unlikely any opponent will have have equal CP to us, so we're only getting 1 pilfer. Red has quarantine lab, so we can't pilfer him, and he appears the main threat at this point. **HELP**

Of course, I really wanted Komodo Dragon, but if someone took Japanese Macaque and stole 10 money from me or even if that possibility arose, I'd have to play defensively to preserve money in anticipation of it, which would significantly hurt me in Round 3. So I snapped up Japanese Macaque purely for defense. If I could steal 5 money with appeals, the cost difference would be almost the same as Komodo Dragon, so the loss would only be 3 appeals. In the end, red, my direct rival, got Komodo Dragon, resulting in a net loss of 6 appeals. If I had taken Komodo Dragon and red had taken Japanese Macaque, red would have only taken 5 money from me, so it wouldn't have been too much of a problem. However, at that point, I didn't know whether Japanese Macaque would end up with red or someone else, and I couldn't afford to take that risk.

By the way, red snapped Quarantine Lab in the first turn, and I was curious about their hand. After they gained Hydrologist and played Aquarium, I understood the situation. The quiet damage that Quarantine Lab dealt me was immeasurable—terrifying!



15. I would A+3x, taking the Africa partnership and projecting Habitats - first slot.

Tomoaki, instead plays the wolf.

I assume this is because species has more competition, and Habitats -first slot will still be available in round 4. Note that Blue has European Pond Turtle so just needs another small animal to be able to project species (1st slot). So I think this is a great move, that I wouldn't have thought of.

If I wasn't aiming for Species at this point, there wouldn't have been any benefit in taking the Wolf, which only gives 5 appeals.



16. Associating Species - 1st slot is obvious. Not that we accomplish this just before blue can, whereas no-one else is close to habitats. So Tomoaki's approach was clearly correct. I would play with 3x and take Africa partnership for our fifth habitat (with breeding cooperation). With

the CP rewards I would take the \$10 and the two rep. I would also donate. For the project reward I would take snapping and the primatologist.

Tomoaki instead takes the Asia partnership, the 2-enclosures and did not donate.

This surprised me; we don't have the money to play both animals this turn, and don't have a fifth habitat. I think species first slot will be much more difficult to get than asia first slot. **HELP!**

I didn't donate because I still needed to play many animals for future projects, so I played it safe. Since I was short on money and both animals in my hand had an Asia icon, I had no choice but to secure the Asia partner zoo.

By playing Japanese Macaque and Indian Peafowl, I can aim for the first slot of Asia next round.

Alternatively, I could play an animal with an Africa or Australia icon and aim for the first slot of Habitats.

I'm pursuing one of these options.



17. While I'm sure Tomoaki had a plan last turn, I'm not sure what it is. We want two projects in round 4, unless another project comes up that will be Asia and habitats. We have \$52 between the two rounds, which is plenty to play both the animals in our hand and build. I would therefore play the Macaque now, while blue has more appeal than us. Red has quarantine lab, and I don't think anyone will ever have as many CP as us. An alternative is to just play cards in order and push the break; perhaps playing both animals at once next round. We would build 5, S 5, play cards (maybe snap something if the break was close). A third alternative is to build so as to draw/range and take the primatologist, playing it next turn. With the Macaque, it's worth \$6, plus whatever primates get played in the future (I'm guessing not many). But just playing S is worth \$5 and breaks 5. Is it worth losing \$1 to break 5? Red will play his worker this turn, I assume, though I'm not sure on what. Blue's board is:



So it's ideal for him to have another three turns to grab a partnership. Our S5+C is 7. Yellow may well play cards, and red may break on 5 (depending on whether he has a sponsor). $2+7+2+5 = 16$, so we can encourage a break, so I'd skip the primatologist. Playing the Macaque before the break raises our appeal from 20 to 27 which raises our appeal-income from \$17 to \$19. I don't think \$2 is worth the loss in tempo, so I'd build 5 now:



1=3 next to the gate is for the macaque/peafowl. I avoid the draw/range and save them until later.

Tomoaki instead plays the Macaque now.

Regarding the un-upgraded Animals action, executing it at strength 2 with just one play doesn't slow the tempo that much. On the other hand, if I waited until strength 4, I'd generally lose out unless I aimed for strength 5 and two plays. That's how I see it.

So, I took Animals before Build, simply to speed up the tempo of playing animals. This shortens the time before I can play two animals next. This decision proved beneficial on turn 21.



18. I'd build 5, as above.

Tomoaki builds 5 but goes over the draw/range for the Flamingo, which helps with Habitats. I wonder if that's why Tomoaki played the Macaque before building?

No, I had no idea whether Flamingo would slide into my reputation range—it was just luck.



19. I'd break 5. I don't see a good place for the proboscis monkey, so I'd probably build the 2-enclosure next to the gate.

Tomoaki breaks 5 and builds over the draw/range to take the proboscis monkey.

The only place to play it is in the south-east corner, without using the gate's bonus. We are in a good position for both Asia and habitats, so we're not desperate for another project. On the other hand, on map 2 it's great to have 6 projects, and even with Asia/habitats we only have four. There are no others visible. So I see the benefit in the play, if only as a just in case.

With the game well advanced and no new projects appearing at all, Primates obtained through the Proboscis Monkey appeared valuable. I needed a fifth project after Habitats and Asia to end the game by Round 5, and this also fulfilled the 1CP condition for Breeding Cooperation.



20. I saw Tomoaki plays cards. One options is to draw three, hoping for a playable Australian Icon for 5 habitats. That's what I'd do.

Tomoaki instead snaps Zoo School, which I think is better because the rep will help us upgrade Animals.

I secured Zoo School purely as a 6-point card. Its 1 rep brings my reputation to 8, allowing me to secure 1CP with my last worker, giving a total of 2CP for 6 points. I judged that a certain 6 points (+1 draw) was better than a random 3-card draw.



21. I would play the Peafowl + Flamingo, putting pavilions either side of the kiosk. While we could reach marketing, we don't want to rush the round, so i'd rather S for Zoo School. Tomoaki agrees.



22. I would project Habitats 5, taking a worker.

Tomoaki instead pays an extra 2x for 2 rep, and upgrades animals, taking the 3x.

I would have used the extra worker for another project (e.g. Asia 2nd slot). Perhaps Tomoaki doesn't think there is enough time left in this round?

I agree with Tamoaki there is likely not enough time in this round to associate again with only 2X, so no point taking a new worker.

I also agree with not donating for \$7, which is about average but we need the money more at the moment, and are past 8CP.

The 2 rep gain, combined with Zoo School's 1 rep, was part of my plan to reach 8 reputation. As you suspected, there is likely not enough time left in this round, so I decided it was safer to secure it in this round rather than the next.



23. Now we have the monkey and can play it next turn, I would build 5 in the SE corner, clevering cards. Another alternative it to see that the opponents all have more reason to stay in the round than we do, and either S4 followed by C or S4+2x now. Red appears to be our main competitor, his board is:



I don't then he has much incentive to grab a zoo next turn, I assume he just wants to project.

So we could Build->Sponsor->Play cards. I'd build 5 and clever down animals; we're unlikely to need to play 2 very soon.

Tomoaki clevers cards. This makes sense. We can play S+x next turn to cause a break, if needed.



24. Obvious options are zoo school or break. If we don't break, blue will get his second partnership for a card upgrade, and yellow will project 5 Europe. Red just snapped alligator so will probably play it. The display doesn't look so good for snapping. I think Red is the main competitor, don't care if I can hurt blue/yellow, so I play zoo school in the northwest, probably drawing from the deck.

Tomoaki breaks 5 instead. Then with the 2-enclosure from the break he builds on the marketing for zoo school. This is much better than my approach.



25. I would play the marten and monkey.

Tomoaki instead A+x for Asia 2nd slot. I'm not sure why this first; No-one else has 4 Asia Icons. Perhaps we worry Red could have the sun-bear.

The game spins on Blue's move.

I chose A over N to avoid constriction. If N gets blocked, I can still manage, but if A gets blocked, I won't be able to finish the game in three more turns. Looking at red's board, you can see they don't have enclosures for the Sun Bear or eagles but do have the Reptile House, so you might be able to infer my reasoning from that.

However the next turns are obvious:

| Turn | Slots: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | App+ | Appeal | CP+ | CP | Points |
|------|--|---|---|---|---|---|------|--------|-----|----|--------|
| 26 | N(Marten + Monkey), 8rep worker uncovers 1CP | N | A | s | c | B | 13 | 57 | 3 | 21 | 96 |
| 27 | A+3x (Primates 3rd slot, take CP) | A | N | s | c | B | | 57 | 3 | 24 | 105 |

The analysis ends here, but I should mention that I ultimately won by a margin of 5 points over red, making it a close match.