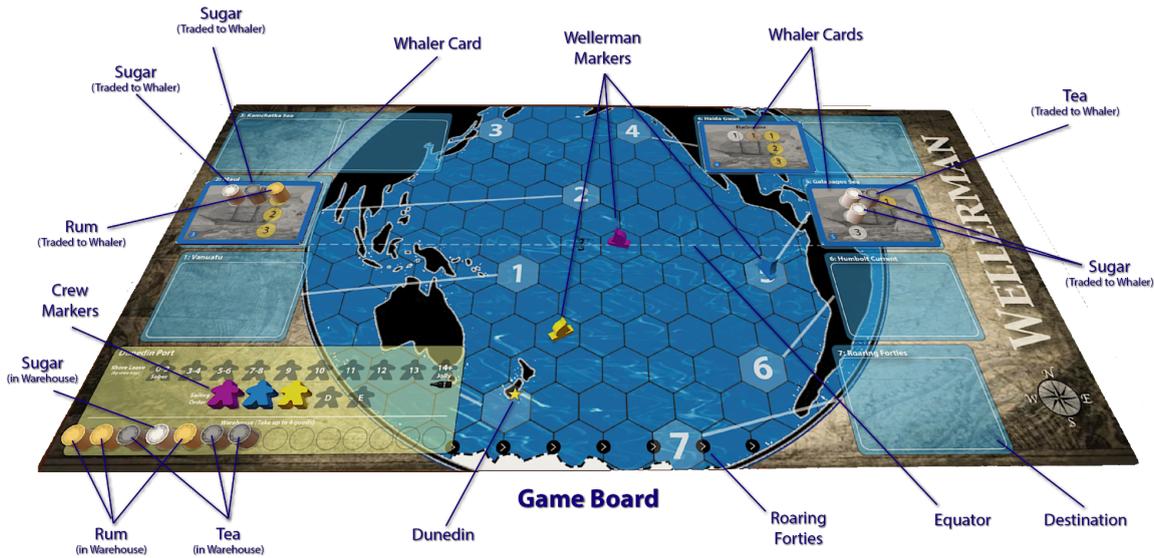


Wellerman: A board game for 2-5 players

You are captains working for the Weller Brothers. From your base in Dunedin NZ, you bring whalers the basic necessities of life: Sugar, Tea, and Rum. You exchange these goods for coins and return to New Zealand with your profits and some welcome shore leave! At the end of the game, the player with the most money in the bank wins.



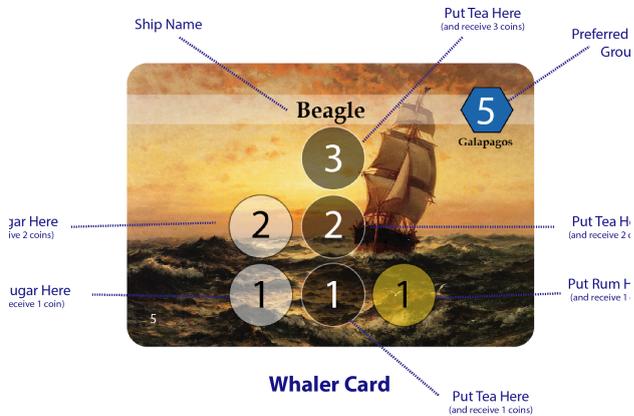
Overview

Each player is captain of a Wellerman supply ship. Each Wellerman has 4 cargo holds which can each hold one container of goods (sugar, tea, or rum), and a strongbox to hold the coins it earns on a supply run.

At the start of each season (round of play) the players load up with goods from the Weller Brothers warehouse in their home port of Dunedin in New Zealand and set out to the whaling grounds of the Pacific, seeking Whaling ships who purchase their goods. The desires of each ship's crew is shown by empty circles on the cards (white = sugar, brown = tea, yellow = rum). When a Wellerman reaches a Whaling Ground containing Whalers, the player puts a good into each empty circle and takes the number of coins indicated. Fully satisfied whalers go to the player who provided the final good.



Wellerman Card



Whaler Card

Game Set Up

1. Start In Port

- Give each player a Wellerman card, the matching color Wellerman & Crew Markers, a Turn Sequence reference, and a Beat for Home card.
- Place each player's Wellerman Marker in the Dunedin hex (the gold star on New Zealand's south island)

2. Scrub Decks

- Shuffle the Wind Cards and place them in a draw pile
- Shuffle the Whalers and make a draw pile containing:
 - 2 players: 8 Whalers
 - 3 players: 10 Whalers
 - 4 players: 12 Whalers
 - 5 players: 14 Whalers



Wind Card

3. Load Cargo

- Each player's Wellerman starts the game fully loaded. Place 2 rum, 1 sugar, and 1 tea in each Wellerman's holds.



Whaler Card

4. Prepare for Departure

- All Wellerman crews begin the game equally sober (or equally Jolly, depending how you look at it), we assign the first Season's turn order based on player sobriety (or through chance).
- Place Crew Markers on the Shore Leave Track, with the soberest player's crew on the 0 space. In case of dispute over sobriety, argue loudly and then place the Crew Markers in order by random draw.

Seasons (Game Rounds)

Each Season is played in six phases. All players complete each phase before the next one starts.

1. Thar She Blows!

Each Whaler card represents a ship at sea that will need resupply by a Wellerman.

- Draw and place a Whaler card on the board. If there is no room at the Whaler's preferred destination, place it in the next available destination clockwise from its preferred one.
- Repeat until there are four Whalers (2 players), five Whalers (3 players), six Whalers (4 players), or seven Whales (5 players). If there are not enough Whaler cards, the game is in its final season. *Note that you will always draw at least one Whaler each turn.*

2. Roust The Crew

Crews have been on shore leave celebrating their good fortune. The crew who got paid the most are jolliest, and will take the longest to get ready.

- Move the soberest Crew on the Shore Leave track to 'A' on the Sailing Order track. Proceeding from soberest to jolliest, move Crew Markers from the Shore Leave Track to the Sailing Order Track.
- Taking actions in Sailing Order means the crew in slot A moves first, then B, C, D, E, and F.



3. Check the Weather

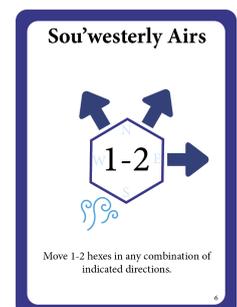
- Randomly deal five Wind Cards face down to each player. Players may examine their cards. Each player will have six cards in hand, including their Beat for Home card. If the wind deck is empty, reshuffle the Wind discards into a new Wind deck and continue dealing.



Wind Card

4. Put to Sea

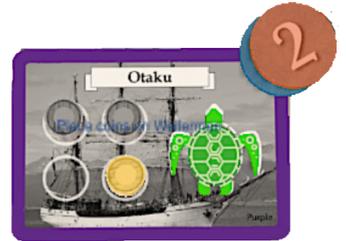
- Starting with the crew in slot 'A' and proceeding in Sailing Order, each player may take one of the following actions.
- **Navigate:** Play one Wind Card from your hand to the Wind Discard pile. Take action(s) allowed by the card to move your Wellerman. Movement is governed by the Movement Rules. If movement would carry your Wellerman across the Equator for the first time, see *Crossing the Equator*.
- **Following Winds:** Take action(s) allowed by the card currently on top of the Wind Discard pile, and THEN play one Wind Card from your hand to the discard pile. If you have no Wind cards remaining, you may not take this action. (Note, the top card *can* be from the last round, or from a discard due to someone beating for home)



Move 1-2 hexes
NW, NE or E

- **Trade:** If a player's Wellerman Marker starts their turn in a Whaling Ground and they have goods in their hold wanted by one or more of the Whalers present, they may trade.

- Move traded goods from your Wellerman to the matching color circles on the Whaler. For each good traded, take the value of coins shown in the circle and place them on your Wellerman (not your score pile).
- If all of a Whaler's circles are filled with goods, take the whaler card into your stack. The player with the most whalers gets 3 coins at game end.



- **Beat for Home:**

- Place your Beat for Home card in front of you.
- Return your Wellerman to Dunedin.
- Discard your remaining Wind cards, if any, in any order you choose.
- Move your Crew from the Sailing Order to the empty spot on the Shore Leave track matching the number of coins on your Wellerman (or more).
- Return any unsold Goods to the Warehouse.
- Collect the coins from the Wellerman to your score pile.



- Repeat until all players have Beaten for Home.
- If this is the final season, skip to Game End.

5. Restock your Hold

- Draw four goods randomly from the Goods Bag and add them to the Warehouse.
- In order from Soberest to Jolliest each player fills their Wellerman's holds as follows:
 - Add two random goods to the Warehouse from the Goods Bag.
 - Choose up to 4 Goods from the Warehouse to place on your Wellerman.
 - Fill your remaining holds by random draw from the Goods bag.



Movement Rules

- **Wind Cards:** Play a Wind card and move your Wellerman as permitted on the card.
 - You may move in any combination of permitted directions.
 - Most Winds cards allow movement up to a maximum number of hexes. Typhoons require movement to an exact distance and require you to discard one good from the Wellerman.
 - There are more cards that blow westwards than eastwards, so plan accordingly.
- **Roaring Forties:** The winds south of 40°S are extremely powerful, and always blow eastwards. Each time you use a move to enter one of the most southerly hexes in the game, you must move your Wellerman an additional hex directly east. This effectively doubles eastward movement and prevents westward movement in the Roaring Forties. These hexes are marked with an eastward-pointing arrow.



- **Running Aground:** You may not cross a hex boundary that is entirely land (black). If your move would take you overland, drop anchor and stop in the last legal hex. This can be used to your advantage.
- **Crossing the Equator:** The **first** time you cross the Equator, King Neptune comes aboard, drinks **one barrel of Rum**, and makes you a Shellback. Take a **Shellback Marker** and place it on your Wellerman Card. You may not cross the Equator unless you are a Shellback, or you have a barrel of Rum.¹



Game End

- When a whaler cannot be drawn because the Whaler deck is empty, the game is in its final season (round).
- After everyone has Beat for Home, the player(s) with the most whaler cards get three coins directly into their score pile(s).
- The player with the most money in their score pile wins.
- Ties go to the jolliest (least-sober) crew.

¹ This is a reference to the traditional Line Crossing ceremony.

Historical Notes

- The Weller Brothers (Joseph, George, and Edward) operated whaling supply ships out of Dunedin and Otaku. Their first ship was the Lucy Ann.
- The Line Crossing Ceremony, in which King Neptune comes aboard to induct any crew who had not yet crossed the Equator is a traditional hazing or initiation ritual practiced in the 18th and 19th centuries. Rum is traditionally poured overboard in Neptune's honour.
- Sailing ships in this era could seldom travel more than about 15 degrees into the wind. We have somewhat exaggerated this effect to make for interesting gameplay decisions.
- Winds are named for the direction they come FROM, which is why an easterly gale blows you to the west.
- South of 40 degrees south latitude (the "Roaring Forties") there is almost no land to obstruct winds or waves. Winds blow very strongly east and build up huge waves. Sailing ships can travel eastward very quickly in this zone. The Furious Fifties, even farther south, are open seas all the way around the globe.
- The Polynesians were masters of using winds and currents to navigate long distances in the Pacific.
- No whales were harmed in the making of this game. The historical practice of hunting whales for oil, baleen, and spermaceti was brutal, unsustainable, and exploitative. But like piracy, colonialism, or warfare, it makes a great backdrop for a song... or a board game.

Inspirations

We wish to express our gratitude for:

- The traditional sea shanty "[Wellerman](#)", particularly as popularized by Nathan Evans
- "[Rolling Down to Old Maui](#)" by Stan Rogers.
- Patrick O'Brien's Aubrey-Maturin novels.
- The board games Puerto Rico, Power Grid, Ticket to Ride, and Concordia.

None of the above are affiliated with or have made any endorsement of this game.

Credits:

- Phil Northcott (game concept and lead design)
- Allan Noordvyk (publisher, co-designer, and graphic design)
- Art and photograph images used under license from [Shutterstock](#), [Adobe Stock](#), [Unsplash](#), and the [Noun Project](#).
- Roaring Forties whaler card art by Torsten Dederichs (via [Unsplash](#))
- Play-testing: Harvey Dueck, Roger Leroux, Sandy Eix, David Mather, David Sloboda

“Wellerman” (traditional)

*There once was a ship that put to sea
And the name of the ship was the Billy of Tea
The winds blew up, her bow dipped down
O blow, me bully boys, blow!*

*Soon may the Wellerman come
To bring us sugar and tea and rum
One day, when the tonguin' is done
We'll take our leave and go.*

*She had not been two weeks from shore
When down on her a right whale bore
The captain called all hands and swore
He'd take that whale in tow.*

Soon may the Wellerman come ...

*Before the boat had hit the water
The whale's tail came up and caught her
All hands to the side harpooned and fought her
When she dived down low.*

Soon may the Wellerman come ...

*No line was cut, no whale was freed
The Captain's mind was not on greed
But he belonged to the whaleman's creed
She took that ship in tow!*

Soon may the Wellerman come ...

*For forty days, or even more
The line went slack, then tight once more
All boats were lost (there were only four)
But still that whale did go.*

Soon may the Wellerman come ...

*As far as I've heard, the fight's still on
The line's not cut and the whale's not gone
The Wellerman makes his a regular call
To encourage the captain an' crew, and all*

Soon may the Wellerman come ...