



Posted by [Aaron Burgess](#)



Even though it plays a lot like *Pokemon* and *Magic: The Gathering*, [Xeko](#) trumps other trading-card games by having a social conscience beneath its surface. That's not to say kids will be turned off by Xeko's attempts at turning its players into activists. One look at the packaging -- a (sustainably farmed!) wood shipping crate with a "secret mission" inside -- and they'll be too jazzed about breaking into Xeko to question its makers' m.o.

And that's where Xeko is really clever: It uses a style of gaming with which kids are already familiar to school them on serious environmental issues. The objective, in ultra-simplified terms, is to build the strongest "Xeko-system" in one of several real-world ecological hotspots. You face off against opponents in the standard draw-and-battle style of *Pokemon* (demo [here](#)) and win by amassing the most "Eco-points" in your environment. The beautifully illustrated cards also teach you about the rare and endangered species you're saving.

Priced at \$30, with 4% of proceeds going to [Conservation International](#), Xeko starter sets include 40 booster cards, a rulebook, larger learn-to-play cards, and an oversized play mat/map. Kids can also send back the cards' wrappers for recycling and in exchange earn "green points" redeemable for landfill-sparing junk like screensavers and wallpapers. And, not only is Xeko's packaging made from recycled/recyclable materials, but if you order online from the company, you're likely to receive your game packed in a box that's been reused from a previous order.

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Comments



[Danny Priest](#) said:

I wouldn't say that Xeko attempts to create activists, if that were the case I would have steered clear. It does however raise awareness of the various species that exist around the globe and which are disappearing. My daughter actually recognized the logger-head sea turtle from Costa Rica while watching Planet Earth on discovery. That educational value can't be picked up from Pokemon. I'm really pleased with the product and I'm far from an activist.