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a game by Jonathan A. Leistikio

## The Story

Robot octopus? Oh no! Call Otter Squad!

Otters: Go! Swim! Taunt RoboOctopus and make it leave!

Hidden Otters taunt at night. RoboOctopus say "ping!"

Whack, whack, whack! Robot tentacle hits Otter!

Everyone change. Get more Otters!

## Object

The RoboOctopus tries to tag the Otters with a water noodle, while the Otters try to taunt the RoboOctopus for as long as possible without getting tagged.

(Hey, it's just Marco-Polo with a water noodle thrown in for kicks. The real object is to splash around, act silly, and have fun!)

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## You Need

- A swimming pool, ideally about 3 feet deep.
- A water noodle.

## Setting Up

One player starts with the water noodle. This player is the Roboctopus.

All other players start as Otters.

## Play

The Roboctopus grips the water noodle by one end. The game starts when the Roboctopus closes her or his eyes and waves the water noodle around over his or her head while counting to three. All of the Otters should disperse while staying within reach of the water noodle.

The Roboctopus wants to whack an Otter with the water noodle. The Otters are trying to avoid being whacked for as long as possible. Although the Roboctopus can't see, it may use its sonar by saying, "Ping!" The Otters all respond with a little Otter "Chirp!" Especially brave Otters can taunt the Roboctopus with, "Roboctopus can't get me!"

When an Otter gets whacked by the Roboctopus, the Otter and the Roboctopus trade roles, and a new round starts.

Whacks with the water noodle must come down from above. It's cheating - and more likely to hurt - if you sweep horizontally.

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## Winning

Although there are ways to play that keep track of points, we've found that it's a lot more fun to just play until everyone wants to stop.

## Origin and Credits

About a year ago or more, a nice grad student wrote a flattering email about our Game of the Month section. In this email, she mentioned the idea of doing a whack-a-mole game. This is the result of it.

By the way, if you're the grad student in question, drop us a line!

Many thanks to Ben, Natosha, and Sharon for playtesting.

In case you're worried, we four big kids played for about an hour, and no one was hurt. The noodles just don't whack that hard.

Credits:

Concept, development : Jonathan A. Leistiko

Editing : Sharon J. Cichelli

Graphic design : Jeremy P. Bushnell

Enjoyed this game? Let us know: [jonathan@invisible-city.com](mailto:jonathan@invisible-city.com)

## Appendix A: Variants

The Roboctopus is made out of two players, one who carries the water noodle, and another who rides on the first player piggyback style. The Roboctopus player with the water noodle still plays blind, but the other Roboctopus player gets to keep his or her eyes open. The Roboctopus no longer uses sonar to ping the Otters. Instead, the second Roboctopus player tells the first player where the Otters are. When an Otter gets whacked, it becomes the new Roboctopus eyes and the current Roboctopus eyes become the part with the water noodle.

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