

ECOPHIN'S ADVENTURE

GAME DESIGN TREATMENT

OVERVIEW OF EXPERIENCE

Ecophin's Adventure (temp title) is mostly a fun, but ultimately a sad experience about man's impacts on dolphins due to humans polluting the oceans.

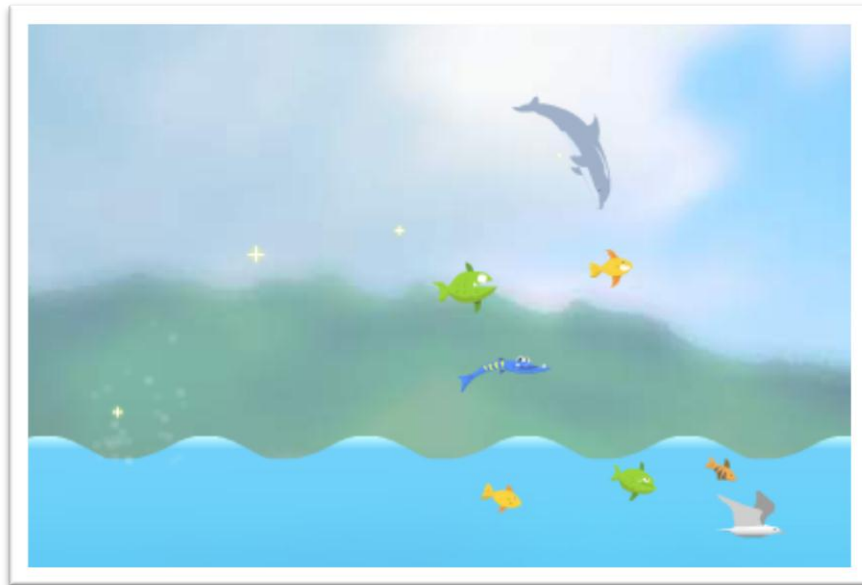
Players take the role of a dolphin, named Ecophin and can swim and play in the ocean, pleasing crowds on boats to gather cheers and applause.

But by the end (after 5 – 10 minutes of play), the ocean is too polluted with oil and Ecophin (the player) dies.

It is Passage meets Dolphin Olympics.



Passage by Jason Rohrer



Dolphin Olympics 2 by Alan Rawkins

HAZARD OBJECTS AND POLLUTION

Bumping into a cage or net will quicken the use of air and require resurfacing sooner than normal. It will also bring the player movement to a stop.

Swimming through polluted waters will use up air more quickly, requiring a resurface and have different effects on player controls, such as:

- Slowing down
- Reversing controls to simulate being confused

LOSE CONDITION IS DEATH

Ecophin dies when it can no longer breathe because of all of the pollution.

Ecophin loses the ability to breathe more and more as it comes into contact with pollution or other hazards.

When running out of air, air bubbles emit from its blow hole. Reaching the surfaces resets this instantly.

However, if the surface is covered in oil, the dolphin's ability to breathe under water decreases over time, eventually leading to death.

GAMEPLAY RULES (SUBJECT TO CHANGE) AND DESIGN PHILOSOPHY

As Ecophin, the player can:

- Swim up
- Swim down
- Swim leftward
- Swim rightward
- Tailride surface of ocean
- Spin body
- Blow air rings

Rules for the game

- NO points, only focus on the experience of being a dolphin
- First part is fun, second part shows the devastating impact humans have on the ocean and wildlife

SCORING = MEMORIES

Instead of blatant numerical scoring that conflict with the serious subject matter of the game, the better the player does, the more memories they “collect”. There are a number (to be determined) of memorable moments the player can trigger during play. They can choose to discover them all, but this will take multiple plays due to the limited time for each play.

When Ecophin is near death due to the pollution, the memories and accomplishments are played back to the player, such as a child laughing when watching the dolphin do a trick, a fisherman in awe at a really high jump, a memory of doing many flips in the air, and a memory of playing with other dolphins.

The memories serve two design purposes and one business purpose:

1. To encapsulate the life of a dolphin and its precious impact on other people and wildlife.
2. Player enjoyment in exploration and discovery of content.
3. To encourage replayability, because the more plays a game has, the more potential revenue it can generate on a Flash gaming portal.

MOMENTS BECOME MEMORIES

Moments become memories. Moments can trigger future moments. Such as playing ball with a kid, and then rescuing a turtle from a deflated beach ball wrapped around its’ head.

- Bouncing a ball back and forth with a child on a sail boat.
- Blowing air rings with other dolphins

- Highest jump
- Most flips in the air
- Longest tail ride on the ocean surface
- Crowds cheering on a cruise liner
- Fishermen taking pictures

DOLPHIN EXPERIENCE

- Do tricks in front of people on boats to get cheers, applause and photos
- Swimming very fast in the ocean
- Flying through the air gracefully
- Flying high into the air
- Seeing beautiful sunsets, clear skies, and bright starry nights with a full moon shining on water surface
- Interacting with other dolphins and fish in a fun playful way, blowing air rings, playing cat and mouse
- Seeing beautiful colored coral reefs

CONTEXTUAL CONTROLS

- Pressing space will be a contextual action
- Swimming towards the surface and breaking it with high speed initiates a jump
- Holding space is a tail ride when exiting the water
- Arrow keys are movement directions
- Players gain speed by swimming in currents or successfully jumping in and out of the water

GAMEPLAY FLOW

INTRO

Game fades in from black to show lightning storm, foreboding atmosphere, rain splashes on the rough ocean waves. Going deeper we submerge and come upon a lone dolphin stuck in a worn fishing net.

GAMEPLAY BEGINS

Player now has control, thrashes left and right, up and down to break a part the netting and get free. Music changes to more up-beat tempo. Weather is sunny. Player swims along seabed and sunken ships have the credits written on them, one by one.

Player is free to explore and have fun being a dolphin. They'll encounter children playing ball with dolphins, other dolphins playing and blowing air bubbles and other fun activities.

As time passes, they see more and more human encroachment and the resulting pollution.

- Sunken ships resting on sea bed
- Plastic trash vortex
- Trash from boats thrown in ocean
- Fishing nets
- Human waste pumped from large cruise ships into ocean
- Oil spills on surface
- Oil dispersants making oil sink below
- Oil spewing from pipes

OUTRO

When the dolphin dies due to oil pollution its body floats on the surface of the oil sludge. The land in the distance grows in size because the dolphin is approaching land. It is washed up on shore. View zooms out to show the whole Earth from space, all oceans are black with oil. The black spreads to cover the entire Earth. It morphs into a droplet of oil. Credit names appear, one by one in drops of oil. Fade out.

REFERENCES

- Dolphin Olympics 2
 - <http://www.rawkins.com/games/do2/>
- Passage
 - <http://hcsoftware.sourceforge.net/passage/>
- Harpooned
 - <http://harpooned.org/>
- Flower
 - <http://thatgamecompany.com/games/flower/>