

GOATFISH

Written by Ervin Pajor in 2020
Goatfish and food graphics by Wayne Psaila
Goatfish designed by Antonia
Urchins by Zoe

Hello, and welcome to Goatfish.
Part fish, part goat, all glutton!

Running the game

To run Goatfish from disk, insert the disk and type:
RUN"GOATFISH.BAS

To run from tape, insert the tape and type:
RUN"

Playing the game

On the main menu, press I for instructions, C for credits, or any other key to play.
To control Goatfish, press FIRE or SPACE to swim, and joystick or arrows LEFT/RIGHT to turn.
The object of the game is to eat all the food that appears, and satisfy Goatfish's hunger.

Prince of Persia Gesture

Since Goatfish loves to eat, I thought it would be ideal to include a tribute to Prince of Persia's potions, so I drew a potion bottle and included it as the most valuable item in the game.



Development History

4 months ago I was full of enthusiasm.
I wanted to create a game that felt a *little* bit like the classic Sega game Nights Into Dreams.
And I wanted to use a rotational scroll effect for the visual presentation.
My daughter had created the Goatfish character, and I thought it would be an ideal fit for my new game.

I spent a long time creating the rotational scroll effect, and tweaking the controls and collision detection. I was very satisfied with how development was progressing.

However, during the last two weeks, panic set in, as time was running out, and I still didn't have any actual gameplay. It was really still just a tech demo.

Unfortunately the released version of Goatfish is incomplete.

I ran out of time.

There are a number of things I am very happy about with Goatfish.

The character (created by my daughter) is wonderful.

The Goatfish sprite, and the food sprites (drawn by my very good friend Wayne) are beautiful.

The rotational scroll is an effect I am very proud of.

The collision detection is quite complex and (mostly) works very well.

However, there are far more things that didn't go to plan...

My first mistake was to choose to use double-buffering. This left me with only 32KB for code, graphics, data etc. As a result of this, I was constantly fighting (and losing) against low RAM.

I spent far too long on the technical aspects of the game. The rotation scroll works well, but is too subtle, and some players may not even notice it.

There is too much slowdown in areas with several objects on-screen. I need a better method of scanning for objects to draw, and to check collisions against. Perhaps I should have used a smaller screen.

There are some minor graphical glitches, and some strange collision detection glitches when food is too close to walls.

Due to time problems, and constantly running out of RAM, I had to drop **several** features, and a lot of working code (that took a long time to write) had to be removed. The data structures are bloated with unused fields, but I couldn't remove these because it was too late to adjust relevant parts of the code.

The game has ended up being a little uninteresting and frustrating to play, and the level of challenge is inconsistent. I didn't spend anywhere near enough time on level design or gameplay considerations.

Regardless of my disappointment, I wanted to release the game.

It would have been a shame not to, after all the work that went into it.

Ervin Pajor