

Monster Watcher Process Documentation

[Optional: Game image]

Description

Top-down 2D "monster-watcher" where you research creatures and collect data for your journal by using your trusty camera and various other tools to record their activities!

<https://nathanalexbremer.itch.io/prototype-3-monster-watcher>

Playtests

Internal Developer Playtest (Week 4)

[Optional: screenshot]

Build used: <link>

Setup

Playtest Goal (i.e.: what are you looking to find out?) - I want to figure out whether the concept of an "ecosystem" (as I have it set up, with creatures attacking each other for food and battle) enhances the experience of the game, or becomes an annoyance.

Pre-playtest Instructions (intro to game, any prior information needed, details to ignore)

- This is a "monster-watcher" game where your goal is to take pictures of creatures doing various behaviors to fill out your research journal.
- WASD to move, P to take a photo, O to change your current action (you'll unlock new actions as you fill out your journal), J to open/close the journal, and A/D to switch journal pages while the journal is open.
- Things to ignore
 - There is no audio or animation.
 - The UI is heavily work-in-progress.

Learnings

PT1 Notes

- Not sure of the macro goal
- Controls are okay, camera speed is slow but maybe okay
- Click and drag would be nice
- Info on screen is good, different color for state under animal
- Tone down food

- Not enough interaction
- Scare/distract
- Different sizes not coming through
- Creatures could seem more unique
- Very confused by journal
- Pet is not helpful, but figured out how to control behavior
- Food balance is off
- Crashes oh no
- Player has to stretch fingers a lot
- Wants more mouse controls
- Doesn't fully understand what creatures are doing
- Often missed what a creature was doing
- Frustrated by inability to get a creature to hunt
- Inability to get a creature to a state was frustrating

PT2

- Should've told not to pay attention to debug
- Individual vs speaking name
- Reluctant to use interact modes, overwhelmed?
- Not many photos
- Hard to remember things
- Make z order better
- Make it more clear the picture does something
- Not clear that number of photos is important
- Spamming photos optimal?
- Zoom?
- Attached to creatures
- Liking the ecosystem
- Not using interact modes
- Looking into the lore
- Art is good
- Looking for specific states can get frustrating, waiting for a specific state is disengaging
- Better mechanics for announcing leaving
- Pop density could be better
- Omniscient perspective isn't popular
- Physical exploration
- Population density felt low
- Controls were fine but add a review
- Explain stats
- Keep pictures

3

- Tried to drag move

- Scrolling is updating
- Very confusing!
- Flash is intense
- Color is confusing
- Mouse controls would be nice
- Art is well received
- Controls confusing
- Map feels like it should be larger
- Interaction is fun
- Play is confusing
- Disappointing colors don't show up
- Z levels still annoying
- Descriptions figured out
- Poison is confusing
- Make it more clear a state has been captured
- Creature spawning in isn't shown off as well
- Make combat more enticing
- Need to move creature around
- Spam is fitting
- Progress isn't clear enough
- Desire for more ways to interfere
- Desire for zoom
- Hints in the journal are enjoyable
- Completionism is enjoyable
- Got distracted
- Bored of waiting
- Leaving isn't clear
- Confusing state action
- Completionism might be frustrating
- Fun to interact
- Random action because wasn't sure what things did
- Hard to tell if something does things
- Petting and poking were clear
- Keyboard is bad, split keyboard controls is annoying
- Zoom was a desire to optimize finding states
- Zoom is fun
- Hard to tell how the interactions played out
- Gets kind of samey
- Play into the puzzle element
- Had to make his own fun
- Move food and creatures?
- Visual for growing fruit
- More environmental interaction
- Not overwhelming

- Maybe underwhelming
- Make notifications better
- More visual “celebration”

What was the answer to your goal/question? - From what I can tell, the “ecosystem” concept was appreciated, and people enjoyed seeing the new creatures. I received a lot of valuable feedback regarding many problems with the game, but it doesn’t seem like inter-creature interactions were one of them - if anything, testers seemed disappointed that there wasn’t more to them. Overall, though, it seems like having multiple interacting types of creatures is something that appeals to people.

What did your tester enjoy? What did your tester not enjoy?

Things that players enjoyed:

- The art was fairly popular.
- Interacting with the creatures was enjoyable.
- Players seemed to really enjoy the beginning of the game, when there was still a lot to discover.
- The “ecosystem” element was popular, although some players were disappointed with how little it played out, or were confused when creatures fought back.

Things that players did not enjoy:

- Players had trouble keeping track of their goals, specifically what they had already done/seen.
- The controls were not popular. In particular, a lot of players wanted more mouse controls, and reaching the J/O/P keys was frustrating.
- The inability to influence a creature’s state was frustrating, especially for players who tried to complete the journal.
- The journal itself was very confusing, and progress in general was unclear.
- The omniscient perspective wasn’t specifically “unpopular”, but multiple people have suggested a player character of sorts.
- Players just did not enjoy their inability to influence and interact with the game in general.

The things I personally noticed:

- The z-levels of a lot of text and objects were confusing and overlapping.
- Players were missing the updates often.
- Spamming the camera is optimal.
- The ecosystem is unbalanced - because the predators can also eat fruit, they rarely ever starve, and the hedgehogs never starve at all since they can photosynthesize (and their poison keeps them safe), so the mice tend to go extinct.

Did anything surprise you?

I was surprised at just how unintuitive the controls were, and how fixated some players got on trying to 100% complete the journal in just a short playtest. I suppose I was also almost surprised at how much people enjoyed the creatures, since everything felt a little bare-bones to

me - it's not quite on the level of emergent gameplay that I'd like just yet, but apparently it was still fun enough to watch for a time.

What are **three tasks** that you will implement before your next playtest as a direct result of this playtest's feedback?

The big three:

- I want to redo the controls to be more comfortable to use. (This should be simple, remapping all the keyboard actions to be on the left side of the keyboard, though I might try to see if I can add dragging camera controls, too.)
 - DONE: Remapped photo to Space, journal to E, cycle interact mode to Q
- I want to make it clear to the player what states they've seen already (by marking seen states), and redo the journal to maybe add hints for how to do things.
 - Partly done - seen states are now shown in yellow as a creature wanders
 - Journal now displays "unseen" lines as gray, rather than black (still not obvious)
 - Plans: What if the journal, rather than saying "locked", gave hints as to what is being looked for?
 - What if some journal entries gave hints about others? For instance, if the mice get tired out by being pet, then the "Pet" journal entry could allude to that, making it easier to find the "Rest" journal entry
 - DONE: The journal has been rewritten, but it's still sort of confusing - I'd like to redo it further.
- I want to add more states and state variants to the game, primarily silly things with a random chance of occurring, to make the game more enjoyable to just watch.
 - Plans:
 - "Rare variants" of some states? A slight chance for some states to take on a different look, just for some visual flair
 - "Random behaviors" - things like the mouse creature just sort of digging, or the predator getting the "zoomies", behaviors that trigger mostly at random and serve to make them seem like they're doing stuff, so there are strange things to discover
 - DONE: The creature's "play" and "rest" states now have rare alternate sprites, and each creature has a couple of silly bonus behaviors (the creature can stretch and dig, the predator can zoom and yawn, the plant creature can sneeze and roll)

Stretch goals:

- I'd like to implement a "lure", or perhaps even a click-and-drag mode, to allow the player to move creatures around. (DONE - I actually did both!)
- I'd like to make petting a creature more useful, either by having states that happen on low feistiness or by making petting also increase tiredness or something. (I don't remember if I did this)

- I'd like to rebalance the game a little bit to keep the predators and plant creatures from taking over. (I did this!)
- I'd like to implement a zoom feature.
- I'd like to implement either weather or a day/night cycle to provide impetus for more states.
- I'd like to add more information so the player can tell what a creature is thinking. (I did a bit of this, but I think I need to add a bit more)
- I'd like to add spots on the map that creatures will interact with (bushes, puddles) - I think full-on pathfinding might be a bit much right now, so obstacles probably shouldn't be involved, but it would be nice to have regardless. (I did this, sort of - I added bushes!)
- I'd like to add more unique behaviors to each creature, or at the very least give them different reactions to being poked.
- I'd like to randomize the look of the map with a tilemap plus procedural generation, as an experiment.

External Developer Playtest (Week 7)

[Optional: screenshot]

Build used: <link>

- Adorable creatures
- Names are silly
 - Lowercase is confusing for names
- Wondering about foods
- Finding things is fun
- Adorable
- Journal is more intuitive
- Attempting to move awkwardly
- Creatures seem cute
- Enjoying this a lot
- Very satisfying to watch creatures do things
- Almost nervous to miss something
- Progress is satisfying
- Variants are confusing - are more variants unlocked as the player progresses?
- Third creature is an intriguing tease
- Names are hard to pronounce
- Interact mode not being switched, playtester is sticking to check
- Wish for a more obvious indicator of new progress
- Make it more clear that you've unlocked something
- Petting is fun
- Personalities are recognized
- Add more interactions
- Green indicating maxed-out piece of the journal is intuitive

- Wants a zoom feature
- Add compound states (creature in state + interaction)
- Enjoy how cute they are
- Completion isn't obvious - variants are believed to be the cause
- Lots of experimentation
- Instinct is to experiment
- Not using check much
- 1/3 is still confusing - doing it more than once (number of times) is first instinct
- Seeing a new creature type is super exciting
- Switching is tricky
- Forgot the drag
- Documenting is fun
- Petting is fun
- Wish stats could be up while doing other things
- Numbers are hard to remember
- Add interactions between specific types
- Hints are easy to miss
- Really liked how the game played - Pokemon Snap plus combination games
- Controls feel good, switching to the tool you want is tricky - button might need to change, an icon might be better since it's easy to scroll
- New creatures are really exciting to see
- Journal entries unlocking would be nice if you knew you got a new one
- Never realized she unlocked a new interaction mode
- Really exciting to see new creature types
- Setting up the right situation to unlock something is exciting
- Unlock the ability to play/give toys!

Setup

Playtest Goal (i.e.: what are you looking to find out?) - I would like to figure out whether the game is satisfying to just... exist in, or whether the player gets bored or overly focused on completing the journal.

Pre-playtest Instructions (intro to game, any prior information needed, details to ignore)

- This is a "monster-watcher" game where you can take pictures of creatures performing various behaviors to fill out your research journal.
- Controls are: WASD to move, Space to take photos, E to open your journal (A/D to move between journal pages), and Q to swap interaction modes (you need to unlock them by capturing enough states)
- There is no audio or animation, so please keep this in mind!

Learnings

What was the answer to your goal/question? - Surprisingly, the answer seems to be that the game is, in fact, satisfying to just exist in. The journal for my most recent playtester was a satisfying-enough piece of inspiration for progress (though it could be made better), but there

was also constant interest in the goings-on of the creatures even when it wasn't something especially new.

What did your tester enjoy? What did your tester not enjoy? - My tester really enjoyed the art, first and foremost, and really seemed to enjoy the feeling of seeing something new. The core of the game seems to be satisfying! On the other hand, she was confused by the UI and missed a lot of notifications and hints, and the interact mode switching in particular was a source of frustration.

Did anything surprise you? - I sort of had a "happy accident" here where one creature type just did not show up for ages (in fact, one should have spawned in from the start, but then it left before she could see it). I expected this to be a point of frustration, but when one did finally show up, it got the biggest reaction out of anything in the entire game! I underestimated just how exciting "unlocking a new creature" could be. My playtester also assumed that there were more "match game"/Doodle God-style mechanics where certain conditions or combinations needed to occur to create new states and invite new creature types in, which was interesting to me - I'm not sure if I want to fully lean into that, but I think adding elements of it would make for a great way to incentivize experimentation.

What are **three tasks** that you will implement before your next playtest as a direct result of this playtest's feedback?

The big three:

- I plan to upgrade the UI to better alert the player to when the journal has been updated, and make it more clear which entries have been updated.
 - Done, partly! In the end, I'm no
- I plan to make it incredibly obvious that a new interact mode has been unlocked.
 - Done to an extent, though I'm still not sure whether it's truly obvious.
- I plan to make it so that creatures beyond the basic type will only show up when a certain condition is met (may just be "x states captured", may be something else).
 - Done, so far - for now it's simply "x states captured".

Stretch goals:

- I'd like to rework the journal slightly to make it more satisfying to work with.
- I'd like to make unknown creatures "locked" to not spoil the surprise before the player sees them in the field.
- I'd like to rework how interact mode selection works, so that selecting an interact mode isn't as tedious.
- I'd like to add a zoom feature.
- I'd like to add more states/state variants that come about when the player interacts with a creature that's in a specific state
- I'd like to add more states that occur only between two specific creature types.
- I'd like to add more creature types with distinct spawning conditions.
- I'd like to add weather and a day/night cycle for the sake of influencing creature behavior.

- I'd like to add a couple more pieces of environment for creatures to interact with.
- Major stretch goal: I'd like to implement the ability to see the photos you've taken.
- Major stretch goal: I'd like to implement procedural generation for the map, just to make it more interesting.

Target Player Playtest (Week 8)

[Optional: screenshot]

Build used: <https://nathanalexbremer.itch.io/prototype-3-monster-watcher>

[Optional: link to playtest video]

Setup

Playtest Goal (i.e.: what are you looking to find out?) - This time, I want to test whether having a controllable player character is fun, or whether I should return to my original, "omniscient" perspective for the player's camera.

Pre-playtest Instructions (intro to game, any prior information needed, details to ignore)

- This is a "monster-watcher" game where you can take pictures of creatures performing various behaviors to fill out your research journal.
- Controls are: WASD to move, Space to take photos, E to open your journal (A/D to move between journal pages), and Q to swap interaction modes (you need to unlock them by capturing enough states)
- There is no audio or animation, so please keep this in mind! There is also no main menu!

Notes

Playtest 1:

- Likes names
- Likes the silly creatures
- Like the art style
- E might not be intuitive for journal
- Journal prompt is visible
- Environment is charming
- Why would it leave?
- Wants to grab an apple
- Missing the photo is rough
- Easy to miss photo and fall behind
- Tab might be better, or Q, for journal
- New state is popular
- Wants to be able to interfere at least
- New creature is exciting
- Enjoys taking photos
- Wants to make them stop fighting
- Thinks it's nervous around the player
- Assuming a relationship system with player

- Excited to pet
- Wants to unlock things
- Interprets journal as progress
- Enjoys watching interactions, it's charming
- Something to unwind with - perfect
- Plant creature is exciting
- Bird is scared, this was figured out quickly
- Dragging looks fun
- Plays with dragging
- Wants to separate creatures
- Can they die?
- E very unintuitive
- Annoy is a state
- Easy to lose creatures
- Leave/joins aren't intuitive
- Assumes joins/leaves are randomized, and that there's a world outside that creatures spawn in from
- Assumed different name conventions per species
- Keeps mistaking camera for a mode
- Green = complete is intuitive
- Assumed eating makes tired
- Seeing a new creature type come back is exciting too
- Wants to figure out how to fill things out
- Assumes taking a set amount of photos is the way to make progress, but maybe it's variants?
- Not sure about poison color
- Naturally experiments, does plant creature like food?
- Seeing states is fun
- Figured out poison
- Likes the bush guys
- The creatures fighting feels bad
- Assumes predator-prey
- Wants to poke the bird
- Figured it you can make it like him
- Unsure about whether creatures can interact with the player
- Seems to mix up clicking
- Keeps pressing E
- Thought they wandered away
- Art style is popular, as well as interactions
- If this was the final art style it'd be really cool
- Enjoyed just observing, and trying to keep the peace
- The way they interact with each other
- Confused about how journal progress works - colors aren't as effective
- Obvious once the player is told, but not initially clear

- Controls are great, but maybe use Q/E to move back and forth between pages?
- It all feels pretty fluid, no input delay
- Feels responsive
- Enjoys playing, but no initial direction - make it more clear what you're meant to be doing
- Not knowing where the progress indication was, not knowing whether progress was being made
- Likes petting
- Wants more ways to interact with and take care of creatures
- Wants a reaction to dragging
- Played like 3 of these games
- Something to unwind with, something you can just get into without comparing yourself
- Being able to interact with creatures, being able to tame creatures that are normally mean
- Building up affinity
- There's stuff to do, do it, don't worry about other people
- Wants BGM and sounds

Playtest 2:

- Movement feels robotic
- Flash is nice
- Make mouse first somehow
- Make it more obvious you can swap pages
- Wants to grab food
- Assumes it's the same anime different color (note: what was this supposed to mean)
- Names awkward
- Early game is frustrating
- No pathfinding sucks
- Environment is enjoyable
- Eating is cute
- Should be able to gather food at first
- Like having different animals
- Pathfinding would be nice, should have higher range
- Wants fighting
- Make it even more obvious when things happen
- "Taking lots of photos unlocks new state" obvious
- Wanted to save photos
- Click mixing up
- Kiiind of understanding what's going on with the color state names
- Assumes turquoise means the most
- Assumes green meant you've totally got it
- Mixing up white border and green
- Excited to see bird
- Confused about dragging
- Wants to be able to shake them and make them dizzy

- Lots of fruit now, but can't interact so doesn't matter
- Sort of aimless
- Don't hate going aimless, but as a gamer wants more incentive -
- Poison effect is confusing
- Add reminders for tasks on main screen
- Add reminder for what's been unlocked
- Assumed purple = poison
- Assumes the default is just to observe rather than interact
- Assuming looking until something happens
- Completionism isn't the most fun here
- Likes all the different states
- Assuming red = angry
- Don't think about the names of the creatures
- Maybe create a list of names instead of randomly generated
- Feels like a game that would take time to complete
- Feels immersed in the role of a researcher
- Doesn't feel much about creatures leaving
- New states are still fun to see
- This is fun
- With a bunch of stuff to find, this would be enthralling
- Want more creatures, fewer states to find per
 - Likes rainbow collections
- Chase state hint isn't obvious
- Add status indicator for poison
- Assumed other color was shiny
- Chase and angry too far apart
- Enjoy the act of taking pictures, the act of capturing a moment
- The beginning was frustrating, should be able to move fruit
- Wants to be able to see photos
- Make objective more obvious
- Got lost with how much there is
- Maybe hide creatures before they're found?
- Reorganize the book
- Area should be larger, have clusters of monsters appear in some areas more than others
-
- Not many cozy games - have trouble spending money on games
- Felt nice to have something that doesn't push to objectives
- As a regular playthrough, might feel better, but the Playtest mindset pushes to complete
- Too much text - info overload
- Enjoys being able to sink in a lot of time, doesn't feel like it's mocking you for putting in a small amount of time or a large amount
- Feels like it's taking a weight off, not
- Honestly really enjoyed it, hyped for what's next

- Opening was frustrating though, let the player interact with the food or just make the opening interactions more exciting
- Maybe clicking on food makes it into a lure?

Playtest 3:

- Assumes food for animals
- Assumes density causes fighting
- Enjoy the silly names
- They're fighting, stop it
- First instinct is to give food
- Fighting is stressful
- Discovered petting
- Somehow lost the idea that he can pet
- Assumes personality has to do with being angry (correct, kind of)
- Bit of excitement when setting a new creature type
- Mostly just trying to see photos
- Assumes leaving is based on age
- Pencil swirl looks like a G, so assumes G opens menu
- A bit bored, waiting for new things to happen
- Likes the bush
- Bit of excitement for dragging
- Laughed when annoying creatures
- Interested in 100%ing things
- Creature population die-off is real
- Content
- Want a different environment
- Growing a bit bored of the area
- Exhausted the options for new things
- Still not intuitive that states have progress
- A bit exciting
- Poison is a more obvious now
- Progress from interspecies interactions
- Wants to break up fights
- Likes it well enough conceptually
- Reminds of that media manipulation Flash game
- Just trying to get as many photos of animals as possible
- A bit tricky to get idle Sonicoo
- Make more obvious that Sonicoo is fleeing the player
- Looking away from screen around 20 min in
- Bored, because there's just diminishing returns
- Have to wait for things to happen
- But then new things right when that happens
- Speaks to the creatures like they're, well, living things
- Sonicoo is trickier

- Playing is cute
- Keep trying to move toward the same food
- Figured out green/complete states finally
- Need to up spawn rate when it's below a certain threshold
- Experimenting with interact modes to see what makes things tired
- Taking enough photos to make things green is "kinda cool"
- Assumed only one photo of each was necessary
- Birdwatching documentary - fairly similar feeling, kind of waiting for stuff to happen, probably not for everyone
- Logbook isn't the most compelling as-is, just filling out things - being able to see pictures would help a lot
- Different varieties of the same creature would be nice
- Research quests
- Continuing to fiddle with the game
- Took a while to get used to the controls
- Q is weird
- On-screen prompts would be helpful
- Character feels clunky because of no walking animation
- Enjoyed seeing all the little drawings of the creature states
- Taking photos is enjoyable
- Just figuring out the controls
- Having to wait
- Took a while to figure out you could take photos of the same situation - but that was fun to discover
- More on-screen text or a tutorial
- Wants to be able to see photos
- Hide creature names before they're discovered

Playtest 4:

- Observing
- Forgets controls
- Tried interacting with you
- Thinks he can pick things up
- Mouse is confusing vs space bar
- Very cute
- Needs to get used to controls
- Forgets what Q does - add a notifier that you need to unlock interact modes
- Figured out interact mode
- Figured out that Q affects interact mode
- Super cute
- Thinks he can pick up the food?
- Eating is delightful
- Hunger should be 0 low 100 high like the others maybe
- Bird is as fast as I hoped

- Getting used to controls
- Journal is still a bit confusing
- Reading the journal
- Take photos hint is useful
- Names are helpful - Sonicoo is the bird guy
- Controls should be displayed somewhere
- Wants to answer the questions in the journal
- Pictures unlock certain things
- Understands the need to take pictures of animal behaviors
- Doesn't understand burning bush
- New mode unlocked mechanic is helpful
- Figured out state labels
- And the journal unlocking
- First instinct is to click to take photos
- Missed the pop-up that a new interact action is unlocked - needs to be EVEN MORE obvious
- Pencil is somewhat intuitive but needs something more obvious
- Still has not realized he can't pick up the apples
- Figured out the plant creature doesn't like apples
- Doesn't understand if dragging is abstract or physical
- Creatures were very cute and personified
- Seem realistic, have personalities
- For people with weaker memory, need reminders
- Kept forgetting what Q does/how to change interact modes, and how to place food
- Not obvious that new modes happen
- Nothing was outright confusing
- Wanted to interact with the journal more
- Sometimes it wasn't obvious that the journal was being filled in
- Make the notification of "you got something new" more specific
- Not obvious when you're getting something new

Learnings

What was the answer to your goal/question? - The testers seemed to unanimously enjoy the control scheme and controlling the player. Nobody ever mentioned the concept of an omniscient perspective, and everybody acclimated nearly instantly to the player character - my fifth (unrecorded) playtest, with a fellow classmate, also had them note that the character (combined with the increased feedback) was a massive improvement. I think the player character is decidedly the way to go.

What did your tester enjoy? What did your tester not enjoy?

Things the testers enjoyed:

- The art style!
- Observing the creatures

- Seeing new creatures and interactions
- Interacting with creatures
- The act of taking photos
- The act of waiting was contentious - at least one player noted that they were kind of pushed to see everything by the nature of playtesting
- Seeing creatures fight was contentious - some players tried to break up fights, at least one was excited by it

Things the testers did not enjoy:

- Beginning can be VERY slow
- Controls (namely buttons) can be confusing
- Want more direction/more obvious objective
- Randomly-generated creature names are confusing - maybe a pool of possible names, instead?
- Players really want to be able to save and view photos they've taken
- Players want too much text
- Players want to interact with food
- Information overload
- Players got somewhat bored when there wasn't anything new

Did anything surprise you? - Honestly, I was a bit surprised at how well the new bird creature actually worked in terms of presenting a challenge to the player. I was also kind of surprised at the journal not being more obvious as a goal, because I literally opened with that every time - maybe I need to add more of a tutorial. I was also surprised at how often players thought they would be able to interact with food somehow - I may need to change how that works, but I'm not sure how.

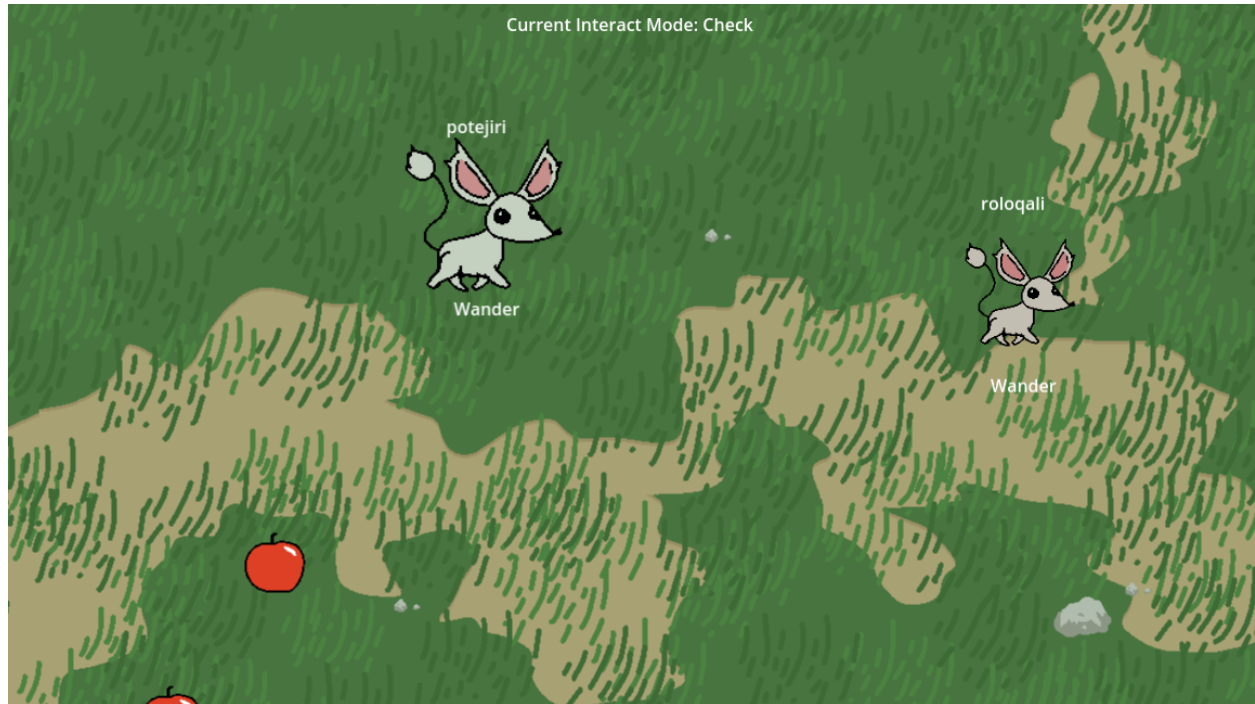
What are **three tasks** that you will implement before the end of the quarter as a direct result of this playtest's feedback?

1. I want to add at least one more creature, namely a frog to go along with the rain (done!)
2. I want to add reminders of which buttons to press in order to do certain things (along with more notes which point the player toward progress), and maybe reorganize the buttons, as well. (partly done)
3. I want to replace the randomly-generated names with a pool of potential names for each creature type (ideally making use of JSON files). (done, albeit without JSON files for now)

If possible, I'd like to add a "quest" system, as well, and perhaps even more creatures and some rebalancing. I think I'll save a rework of the quest system for next quarter, since it's doing the job as-is.

Process Journal

Week 2



What did I do this week? - This week, I focused on refactoring my state machine to make adding and modifying states easier and more modular. This might actually be less efficient overall, but at the very least it feels nicer. I unfortunately wasn't able to do much else, but since I'm working from a pre-existing prototype, that's probably okay.

How did that change my design? - This hasn't directly changed my design or plans at all, since I was basically only working under the hood, but this should enable me to both build out the existing state machine and create new state machines for new creatures easily, which should enable a lot of potential mechanical expansions.

What are my goals for next week? - This next week, I want to brainstorm up new features, particularly new forms of interacting with the creatures and new behaviors to observe. I might also experiment with a second creature type, maybe a sort of "predator", to get the basic systems established for handling multiple species. Some new features I'm considering include bushes for creatures to hide in, puddles for creatures to play in/drink from, a ball that can be placed down for creatures to play with, a lure that can be placed down to bring creatures together, and more advanced terrain (would require better pathfinding and depth sorting/dynamic z levels). Oh, and I'll need to clean up the code to get rid of the old state machine content, too.

1/14 - Discussed potential next steps for expanding the game - weather, time of day, and seasons seem like the best way to quickly prototype changing conditions, and more creatures also seem like a strong option, to build out an “ecosystem”. I think starting with additional creatures makes the most sense, since I spent a lot of time trying to make my state machine more modular.

Some creature brainstorming:

- Some sort of fox-like canine creature, which acts as a “predator” of the mouse creature (perhaps even a fiery fox?)
 - Very feisty, loves to play
 - Perhaps territorial? Maybe they pick a “home” or mark down an area as “theirs” somehow and get angry if they see another creature in their claimed territory?
 - Or perhaps they’re a pack creature? If they don’t have a pack and they come near a friendly creature, they create a “pack” and try to avoid moving too far away, and communicate hunting targets with their “pack”
 - Afraid of rain/water?
 - When hungry, hunts the mouse creatures, which will flee unless they’re both feisty and have high HP
 - Perhaps has a separate “fireball” attack that they only use when they want to fight, not hunt?
 - Perhaps they signal to their pack with fire breath or use it to scare off other creatures?
- Mole-like creature which pops in and out of the ground
 - Mostly hides underground?
 - Pops up to grab food before burying back underground?
 - Only hangs out outside of their holes on overcast days?
 - Fights with the mouse creatures sometimes?
 - Digs up flowers?
- Plant-creature that grows food
 - Wanders around dropping food sometimes?
 - Frequently rests or sits still?
 - Afraid of fire?
 - Scatters poison or something to scare off mouse creatures (which are attracted to them and try to steal their food)?
 - Strong relationship with a butterfly-like creature?
- Moth-like creature which creates pollen or flowers
 - Gathers pollen from plant creatures?
 - Causes plant creatures to become “pollinated” if visiting while covered in pollen?
 - Spreads flowers that mouse creatures like?
 - Attacks moles (which dig up the flowers)?
- Pigeon-like bird creature
 - Mostly just silly and goofy
 - Sings songs
 - Always returns to a “nest” to sleep (chosen starting point)

- Drives attackers away from the nest?
- Likes to be near other birds
- Will sleep next to another bird if one is sleeping nearby?
- Will scatter when a threat comes nearby?
- Usually hops around, only flies when in danger or returning to nest?
- Maybe instead, they only fight back if there's a lot of them nearby?
- Hawk-like bird creature
 - Maybe lightning or light themed?
 - Very territorial, attacks anything that comes nearby
 - Laser beams?
 - Can't be outrun
 - Will attempt to intimidate other birds?
- Frog-like creature
 - Only comes out when it's raining
 - Hops around
 - Ribbits

I think it makes the most sense to start with one or two more creature types, probably the fire fox and the plant creature, and focus on fleshing them and their interactions out.

Predator creature

- Idle -> Wander
 - If have partner and far enough away, move toward partner
- When hungry, look for Food
 - If food (fruit) spotted and hungry enough, move to food
 - If prey spotted, chase
 - When close enough to prey, attack
- When tired, rest (if partner isn't resting)
- When feisty
 - If moderately feisty and partner wants to play, move to partner and play
 - If highly feisty, look for target
 - If target spotted, spit fire or chase
 - When close enough to target, attack
 - If highly feisty, randomly breathe fire
 - Scares nearby creatures
- When nearby same species
 - If neither have partner, become partners
 - If one or more has partner and feisty, intimidate
 - If feistiness low and partner not asleep nearby, run away when intimidated
 - Slowly drop feistiness until one relents?
- When attacked
 - If feisty enough and high enough HP, fight back (breathe fire?)
 - If feisty enough, attempt intimidation?
 - Call for partner?

- Partner's target becomes attacker
- Random
 - Breathe fire/fire "yawn"?
 - Mark territory with fire?

New actions

- Move to partner (get closer)
- Move to partner (to play?)
- Attack eat
- Spit fire
 - Needs a fireball projectile
- Scare nearby (send signal)
 - Actually maybe this should be stored in the creature?
- Intimidate
 - Drain the Feisty of nearby creatures?
- Call for partner

New conditions

- Partner not resting (partner state?)
- Partner resting (this and the other can just be NOTs of each other)
- Partner within range
- Found signal
- Partner signal
- Random number

1/18

I was unable to get any work done yesterday and I'm struggling to focus today, so I should probably lay out what I need to do this evening so I can focus properly.

To Do (in order):

- Add actions
 - Move to partner
 - Attack eat
 - Scare nearby?
 - Intimidate
 - Call for partner
 - Run away from target
 - Run away from signal
 - Set target to partner target
 - Set target to partner attacker
 - Spit fire
- Add conditions

- Partner state
- Partner within range
- Random number
- Build states
 - Move to partner
 - Attack eat
 - Scare nearby/breathe fire
 - Intimidate (call for partner? maybe that should be a part of attacked)
 - Flee scary (maybe one for signal and one for predator)
 - Attack spit fire
- Build new states for mouse
 - Flee predator
 - Scared/intimidated
- Code projectile
- Make sprites for predator
- Code day/night cycle?
- Code level system???

Week 3

[Optional: screenshot]

What did I do this week? - This week, I honestly didn't get nearly as much done as I'd hoped to. I mostly spent time trying to build out a second creature, the "predator", which involved learning how to best use my new state machine system (honestly, it's not the best, and the way I set up this second creature was horribly inefficient, but that's something I can take into account for future expansion). I'm hoping to finish this creature's base implementation in time for the first playtest, and while I wanted at least one other creature or a simple day/night or weather system, I may have to reconsider if I cannot increase the amount of time I spend over the next week. I mostly achieved my goals, though only in the barest sense - I didn't implement any further interaction or other mechanics, primarily due to some difficulties over the weekend.

How did that change my design? - Nothing has changed my plans outright just yet, but the difficulties in adding a second creature has made me somewhat reconsider the scope of my plans - particularly the awkwardness in some of the current behaviors, and some concerns regarding how to implement certain behaviors I want to add.

What are my goals for next week? - My primary goal is fully implementing my second creature type, which means fully testing and debugging its behavior, tweaking it to feel better and ensure it behaves as intended (which may require limiting play and redoing the partnership process), ensuring it behaves properly with the first creature type (which should also gain new behavior to flee from predators), and implementing sprites and a journal. If possible, I would also like to implement a very simple third creature (experimenting with a new, less messy method of handling differing states), as well as a very simple day-night cycle (creatures fall asleep during

the night and wake up in the morning). Setting up the framework for a “weather” system would also be nice. Ultimately, though, the big concept that I want to test first is whether a full “ecosystem” of creatures actively hunting and preying on each other is more fun or frustrating, and whether the “research” mechanics translate over well. After this, I’m also considering testing whether locking specific creatures behind conditions like weather or day/night is appealing enough, or I may perhaps try something else entirely if my next playtest doesn’t land strongly enough. I am worried about whether this is an ambitious enough change to test, but my fundamental game was well-received and this is the next step I’d like to experiment with.

1/23

Let’s think up a third creature type!

Plant-creature

- Idle -> Wander -> Idle
 - Spends a LOT more time idling
- When hungry, photosynthesize
- When tired, rest
- Occasionally, drop food
- When mildly feisty and creature is nearby, play (don’t move to play)
- When very feisty,
- When attacked and has poison, scatter poison (damage nearby monsters and scare them)
- When attacked and no poison, run
 - Chance to drop food when attacked

Known Bugs:

- Something miiiight be going wrong with the new creature spawning
- For some reason the Predators seem to flee for a lot longer than they should, or a lot less long - there might be some mix-up in who their attacker is or how far they need to be?
- Predators still get stuck in a partnership loop sometimes - it breaks eventually, but it’s weird and kind of annoying
- Predators might be able to get stuck in a loop of attacking their partner’s target - see about a “clear partner target” action (if the partner’s target is the same as the creature’s own)

Week 4

[Optional: screenshot]

What did I do this week? This week I tried polishing up my state machine and added a third creature, and really didn’t do much else. I also completed playtests,

How did that change my design? The additional creatures added some new dynamics to my game, but evidently not as much as I'd hoped, judging from the playtests - the changes I want to make do all stem from my playtests and the sense of boredom and confusion my players got. What are my goals for next week? Honestly with the GGJ coming up I don't want to promise too much but I do want to apply the feedback from my playtests and add some interactivity (I'm currently close to passing out so I will elaborate later).

Week 5

[Optional: screenshot]



What did I do this week? - This week, I was honestly pretty unproductive, because I was focused on Global Game Jam. I did, however, manage to implement a feature where a creature's name changes color when in a state that's already been captured, as well as modifying the journal to be slightly more clear (a work in progress), rebinding some controls, and adding the ability to drag creatures around with the new "drag" mode.

How did that change my design? - These changes should make the game a bit less frustrating to play by making things more clear, as well as giving the player more control with the drag mode. I may need to balance things slightly to compensate for the drag mode's power, though...

What are my goals for next week? - Next week, I want to continue adding more quality of life features to try and make the game more satisfying to play. If possible, I would like to add more content in the form of a day/night cycle or a weather system or even just new things for the creatures to interact with, but my top priority is fulfilling the additions and stretch goals I laid out after my playtest.

2/5 - Today I mostly fiddled with the Journal, attempting to rewrite it in order to have it provide clues toward other states, and to avoid specifically stating what needs to be done. I may rework the journal even further in the coming days to take the form of a few smaller "quest lines" instead of simply requiring the player to capture the same state over and over, or at least allowing multiple states to count for the same entry. However, my top priority right now is adding more rare states and silly behaviors, and rebalancing the game's ecosystem slightly to prevent one species from taking over.

Tomorrow my goals are:

- Add two more rare/random states to each creature /
 - Creature: Dig, yawn? Stretch?
 - Predator: Breathe fire (yawn?), zoom
 - Plant Creature: Roll, sneeze?
- Add support for sprite variants for states (for instance, "looking for food/fight" variants for the wander state, or rare variants of the play state) x
 - Add more clear signaling for when creatures are looking for something x
- Rebalance the game to prevent one creature type from taking over (either add a cap to each given creature type, or add new ways for creatures to leave, or both)
 - Add limitation on play for Predator so they attack sometimes x
 - Make plant creature leave when too feisty x
 - Make plant creature poison come back slower x
- Maybe require "unlocking" creatures for the journal?
- Consider rebalancing the journal into 5 "quests" of sorts
- Later: Add visual for fruit and poison to plant creature x
- Trying to rebalance food values x
- Trying to make food attract creatures x

2/7

Today I fixed up the food lure system to make it so that fruit placed by the player acts as a "lure" for creatures. I should maybe change the color of the food to make it more clear that it is in fact a lure, because otherwise there may be some confusion. I also rebalanced some movement, and added the ability to implement conditional sprite changes for certain states (so a creature wandering around can show that it's hungry, for instance).

Remaining goals for today:

- Implement a couple more silly behaviors for each creature
- Add ability for creatures to "hide"

2/8

So far I have added the new states for each creature - next up is implementing them into the state machines and adding transitions for them, and then testing. If possible, I would also like to add:

- Bushes for creatures to hide in x
- Improved/reworked journal "quests"
- Maybe puddles for creatures to splash around in?
- Limits to the amount of food/creatures of each given type

Ultimately, I added bushes and hiding, but wasn't able to add anything else today. Tomorrow I'll see about adding in limits to creature types, and then create and test a build.

2/9

I'm reworking the journal a bit as a band-aid fix to make it easier to use, but I'll need to save a full rework for later, because I'm still worried about it, and I'm not sure if I fixed the core issues. I want to see if I'm on the right track, though, with adding more "non-essential" states to stumble across. In particular, a few things I want to test are:

- Are "non-essential" states more of a welcome change, or a frustrating distraction/confusing?
- Can progress be made without an obvious percentage indicator? (Are "hints" welcome?)

I had to do a bit of last-minute* bug-wrangling and a couple of extra patches (making the Predator skulk properly, for instance), and I do think there are still some annoying bugs with transitions, but hopefully everything should play nicely enough. I will need to rework the journal again (and that'll probably be my next major step), and I will also need to fix various bugs and hacky temporary fixes (like bushes not always updating their texture properly),

Week 6

[Optional: screenshot]



What did I do this week?

This week, I:

- Rebalanced some creature states to hopefully prevent one type of creature from overrunning the rest.
- Redid the journal (partially) to make it more intuitive.
- Remapped the controls to allow for a left-side keyboard + mouse playstyle.
- Added multiple new states to each creature, alongside some variant sprites for certain states.
- Implemented the ability to drag creatures around.
- Added the ability to use food as a lure.
- Added bushes for creatures to hide in.
- Added hints to the journal.
- Redid some of the text to make it more legible.
- Completed two playtests, each on opposite ends of professionalism (one with my mom, one with Lizby).

How did that change my design? - Honestly, the playtests have notably shifted my next plans and generally made me feel a lot better about my game's direction. I was originally planning on spending these next few weeks trying to redo the journal, but I'm not sure if I'll actually need to make any super radical shifts like I was expecting. There are some quality-of-life changes I want to make, but the largest sources of joy seemed to be in finding new creatures and finding new ways to interact with them/watch them interact, so I almost want to focus more on that next. The changes I did make were mostly quality-of-life or just meant to introduce more silly behaviors,

but they did evidently make the game less confusing, easier to follow, and more exciting. Most notably, I think I've managed to handle one of the largest sources of frustration: the lack of a feeling of control. The food acting as a lure is a nice, early way to move creatures from one place to another, and

What are my goals for next week? I think my goals next week can be divided into two major categories.

Polish/UI: I know that this is primarily the focus of Capstone 2, but since the game is largely about observation and one of my most common complaints is that it's hard to tell when something new has been unlocked or discovered, I want to make things more obvious.

- Finish cleaning up the journal (some text wasn't replaced properly). x
- Make the journal easier to peruse by breaking up the different lines.
- Rename/redo a couple of states to make it more clear what's going on (namely, rename "Poison" to "Poison Dust"). x
- Allow the check screen to stay open while using other interact modes. ?
- Add an easier way to move between modes/see what your current interact mode is (custom cursor?).
- Make the "new interact mode" alert even more obvious. / (TODO: Add flashing or just make it look better)
- Make it clear with an indicator when the player has updated their journal. / (TODO: Make this cleaner and more obvious)
 - Mark newly-found/updated states in the journal
- Maybe replace the numbers with bars.
- Redo the name system slightly so that creature names are easier to read and are more obviously names. x
 - (Also hopefully added a check to stop potential slurs from being generated as names)
- Add a cooldown to the camera, finally. x
- "Lock" journal entries until after the player first takes a picture of the creature.

New features: These are a bit more ambitious and honestly might not be necessary, but finding creatures and seeing their interactions is popular, so I think adding more of that will be helpful.

- Make it so that new creature types only begin to show up as you collect new states or after certain things happen. /
- Add more "combination" state/sprite types for specific types of interactions - for instance, a unique sprite/state for petting a creature while it's asleep, or a unique behavior specifically between two different types of creatures.
- Update the journal to accept multiple state types as valid for a journal entry's progress (or maybe even start tracking how many variants of a state have been recorded) - I think "progress trees" don't make much sense for a game as freeform as this, but a sort of "checklist" of states/variants might be fun,
- Add weather, specifically rain.
- Add a new creature that shows up only when it's raining.

- Maybe add a day/night cycle, to provide a period of relative peace?
- Maybe add a new creature that only shows up at night.
- Add a creature that only shows up if you have a certain type of creature already present. (Perhaps a spider creature that can lay down webs, plus another bug creature that'll sometimes get stuck in a web while you aren't looking and will stick around if you free it?)
- Add trees (for things like webs and as a hiding place)?

This is probably way too much for one week, and so this week I'll focus on the UI/journal updates, some more state variants, and the rain, probably.

Week 7

[Optional: screenshot]

What did I do this week? - Honestly... I really didn't do much this week. I was really caught up in trying to finish assignments for my other classes, and then trying to rest up after getting it all done. I'm really, really frustrated, honestly, because it feels like I'm running out of time and falling behind. I'm going to try and focus more on this class specifically in the coming week, because I'll need to in order to make sure I'm ready for Capstone 2. But, what I did do:

- Cleaned up the journal just a bit to remove some old text.
- Slightly improved the "new interact mode" popup.
- Added a popup that marks that you have new information in the journal.
- Made it so that some creatures only show up after a set number of states are discovered.
- Hopefully added a rudimentary profanity filter.
- Added the very basics of a rain system (for now just a random chance to start/stop every few seconds and a screen overlay)

How did that change my design? - Honestly, it didn't really. If anything, maybe I need to tone down my plans more... I just feel a bit lost as to what to do next at this point, and just picking one and going with it didn't happen.

What are my goals for next week? - I should probably be a bit less ambitious next week. I think that time spent on polish at this point isn't helpful, so, to focus on experimenting with new content instead:

- Add a rudimentary weather system - have a "raining" state that turns on and off rarely which causes some minor effects for creature states and prevents the fire foxes from spawning/drives them away.
 - Add a "rainmaker" that lets the player manually turn the rain on and off.
- Add a new monster which only appears when it's raining.

Stretch goals:

- Add trees for the fire foxes to hide under during rain.
- Add a monster which can only spawn if a tree is poked. Maybe a bee/moth that "pollinates" the bush creatures and spawns flowers?

- If possible, add a new monster which only appears if there's a ton of food/flowers? A big gluttonous creature.
- If possible, add a new tool or two locked behind getting enough research on a specific creature.

My goal is to add more simple creatures to play with, and experiment with different "discovery" mechanics to try and build a nice interest curve. (One creature that unlocks with a set number of states, one that unlocks on a certain event that the player can control later, one that "unlocks" when the player gets a new tool, maybe one that unlocks specifically from a new tool you get from researching another creature to simulate bringing a creature into an unfamiliar environment, or one that unlocks specifically from an interaction between two other creatures).

Ideas from discussion:

- Player character plus larger environment to add more element of actual discovery (and less control)
- The world naturally does things, the player can influence those things to make them go faster
- Need to pick one of observer or interactor
- Weather
- Think about the grand finale!

2/19 - Today, I finally sat down to do some more real work, now that I have a proper direction in mind and I don't have any pressing assignments in my other classes. I actually got a lot done in a short period of time, too!

- I replaced the player's omniscient perspective with a player character - this was very easy to do, since I already had a CharacterBody2D that I was using to prevent the player's camera from going out-of-bounds. I just changed the hitbox to fit a smaller sprite that I whipped up.
- I altered the camera to be a box which follows the player's mouse, rather than a full-screen capture. I will need to play around with controls, since it feels a bit weird for a box moved by the mouse to not be activated by clicking, but I already use the mouse for other tools. Maybe one can be a right-click?
- I altered the capture effect such that creatures' states now turn a cyan color when their picture is taken. (There's even a slightly darker shade for when a state isn't in the journal!) This should hopefully make photos feel a bit more impactful and add more immediate feedback.
- I drew up some sprites for my next creature!

My plans for tomorrow are:

- Create a larger map, so that the player feels like they have more room to roam about. I think that, for now, I might just effectively copy-paste my current map a couple of times, since I want to save a more detailed environment for when I actually have the time to implement more geographic features like water, elevated terrain, and trees/rocks/etc.

- Implement this new bird creature! For now, it'll mostly be a copy of the mouse, except that it'll be really fast and easily startled by the player. This should help test both of the key changes of a player character vs. an omniscient observer: the physical presence of the player, and the player's limited camera area.
- Try to figure out how to implement the interaction modes with regards to the new player character! I'd like to limit the range at which the player can interact (so you can't poke something from across the screen), but with the player's camera reticle always following along, I worry it might be too much information to show both the validity of an interaction and the camera.

2/21 - Today kind of ended up being a rest day, since I was completely out of it, and that was very helpful. However, I did manage to get a bit of work done, too. I fixed up the bird creature (which I mostly implemented yesterday, but because of how the player scene was set up it was always fleeing from the player in the same direction), and I also tried fixing up the new creature unlocks (not quite working yet) and hiding unseen creatures on the journal.

My plans for tomorrow are:

- Run a playtest with my Dad!
- Try implementing the rain more fully, as well as the frog-salamander creature I drew up.
- Implement a limited range for the interaction modes, maybe?

Week 8

[Optional: screenshot]

What did I do this week? - This week, I did quite a bit! I:

- Added a player character, rather than an omniscient perspective, coupled with a mouse-controlled camera.
- Added a range limit to most interaction modes.
- Upgraded the journal to mark newly-discovered journal entries.
- Added a new creature, a bird that's very fast and difficult to take photos of.
- Added a system to color in creature state names when the state has been seen once (or enough times to complete that journal section).
- Hid creature appearances until first captured on camera.
- Tested out a larger map (though for now I've decided to stick with the smaller map for ease of testing).
- Partially implemented the frog-salamander creature. (But I still need to fully implement the "hopping" system I'm working on, as well as the tongue I have planned and some unique states!)
- Added right-click as an alternate control for taking a photo.
- Improved the journal notification.
- Rebalanced the progression a bit.

How did that change my design? - In terms of playstyle, I think this changed quite a bit. Now, taking a picture is a more deliberate action, the player feels more like they're a "part" of the world, there's more to discover, and there's just more information, as well. In terms of design

direction, I do think that the player character was decidedly the correct choice and I will be going forward with it,

What are my goals for next week? - Next week, I have even more polishing work to do on the UI and information, and I want to finish implementing the rain and this frog-salamander creature. I also want to sort through all this playtest data (I had three playtests on Tuesday alone) and prioritize from there, and if possible, I'd like to implement the "quest" system for playtesting, as well.

Week 9

[Optional: screenshot]



What did I do this week? - This week, I honestly didn't do a whole lot, since I was extremely caught up in finishing a project and another paper. I plan to maybe do some work tonight (and a LOT of work tomorrow). Still, this week I implemented (most of) the rain system and the frog creature, which right now is mostly a copy of the mouse creature but does have a couple of fun systems.

How did that change my design? - While a relatively minor addition, this does also mean that there is now a functioning and relevant weather system, as well as creatures who will only show up when certain weather is active. This will need to be tested somewhat, and also expanded on a bit more.

What are my goals for next week? Next week, if time allows, I want to:

- Implement a rudimentary quest system (at certain points in the game, the player will receive requests for photos of certain states, which will give some sort of reward when completed - not sure what, yet).

- Implement trees for creatures affected by the weather to hide under.
- Rework some of the text once again to give the player more direction.

3/5 - Today, I cleaned up the Quest log implementation a bit, hopefully making it look a bit nicer and display things properly, and I began creating some quests! I've designed five so far, though a few will need a bit more work.

Some things to do:

- Actually add the quests x
- Make sure quest progress shows integers only x
- Figure out rewards!
- Add reward messages (With hints for more things) x
- Add a system to note whether Bittybush is dropping fruit or not for Poke/Stunned, and get the Bittybush quest to check for that (and add a new sprite variant when they happen)! x
- Prevent the journal and quest log from being open at the same time x
- Make sprites for the quest log

3/6 - Today, I did some polishing work for the quest log to get it working how I wanted, and then I also drew a tree.

To do:

- Make Charnine flee to under a tree when it rains, and not move from under it unless it's hungry
- Maybe make Frountain go to a puddle when it's not raining?
- Make trees catch fire like bushes, maybe? (unless it's raining)
- Add a new creature that spawns when trees are poked?
 - I'd like to add a spider creature that lays webs and a creature that gets stuck in those webs and has to be freed, but that can come later - I can implement bug creature as the one that comes out when the trees are poked for now, perhaps

Week 10

[Optional: screenshot]



What did I do this week? - This week, I implemented a simple quest system, added a simple tree, and added a few more hints to use specific keys for controls. I also added a (very very ugly) custom name system - I'm not actually sure if JSON files are the right call here, now that I look at them, but surely a giant Array is also a horrible idea for readability. I'll have to clean that up down the line. (I did a couple other things, too - I rearranged the journal pages in a super hacky way, and I made it so that clicking on food makes it into a lure, to make the early game less boring (though I do need to add an indication that it actually does something)).

How did that change my design? - I suppose it changed my design in the sense that now I have a new motivator for the player even if it's very greyboxed and doesn't actually have rewards attached just yet, and it also adds to the environment a bit more. However, I'd say the bigger element is what I DIDN'T do this week - I wasn't able to find time for a new creature type, which is annoying, since the design concept I had would have really tied things together.

What are my goals for next quarter? - I have so much I want to do next quarter, but I suppose that the big ones are:

- Polish the game! Clear out some weird AI bugs, add animations and sound if possible, and generally improve the flow. Not to mention make the UI look way nicer!
- Nail down both the journal and the quest system. The quests are honestly something I should have implemented earlier, and I'll need to run playtests outside of class to see what sorts of rewards people like, but reworking the journal to focus on a few more interesting/broad target states might be worthwhile for ease of parsing and completionism, too.

- Make the world feel a bit more lived-in and fun to explore - make a larger map, have certain areas more or less dense with creatures, add a few more environmental things for creatures to interact with, that sort of thing.
- Allow the player to save and view photos they take!
- Figure out a satisfying climax. I'm thinking that perhaps I could have a sort of "final boss" creature appear once you've seen everything else that's super difficult to placate, or perhaps one last quest that brings in a legendary creature once you've just about maxed out every creature's progress.
- Add a menu and a small tutorial.

I think all of this is reasonable to some degree in 10 weeks, but I'm not certain, especially since I'd really like to tap into some of my nice-to-haves, as well.

Beyond that, if I have the time, there are a few things I'd love to do:

- I'd love to break up the pace of the game a bit by giving the player a way to create downtime for themselves. Maybe I'd want a shop or research center after all, with money obtained for completing quests and taking photos that can be spent on new interaction modes?
- I want to add 3-5 new creatures, at least - I have very specific ideas of what to add and how they'd improve gameplay and flesh everything out.
- I want to flesh out the existing creatures a bit! A lot of them still feel really similar, especially Rodink and Frountain, so I want to give them more unique traits, silly behaviors, and habits that can be picked up on by the player.
- In the best case, I'd love to add a "leveling" system where creatures unlock new behaviors the longer they're around, but that's low priority.
- If I have the time, I'd really like to clean up the codebase and make everything just a bit nicer to look at and a bit more efficient.
- In the best case, adding two more areas or so to explore would really make me happy! But that would be a lot of work, too...

Overall, I'm honestly a bit disappointed in the amount of progress I made this quarter. I was busier and much more fatigued than I was expecting to be, and that ate into my development time, which ultimately hurt the amount of content I could experiment with. Now, in order to truly capture the essence of the game and polish it off, I feel as though I'll need to do some playtesting and implementation next quarter, as well (not that I think I could have really stopped myself anyways). I suppose I'm just worried that, if I can't kick things up a notch from this quarter, I won't be able to get my game to a respectable state - and I'll have an extra class next quarter, too. Maybe I should sneak some work in over the break?

Regardless, I'm also quite happy with the progress I did make. A lot of it was honestly just a sense of confirming what I already knew, but I at the very least don't think I lost the fun I already had,