

Museum of Mechanics: Fishing - Fishing Game Categories Guide

Due to similarities we've noticed during our research, we've categorized fishing games mechanics into 3 distinct types:

3 types of fishing games

Core Fishing Games (CF):

Games where fishing is both a central mechanic and the main goal/purpose of the game. Games in this category are classified by **having multiple types of fish to catch and an emphasis on equipping the right fishing line, bait, and lures for the core game loop.** Aesthetic customization of the rod, line, lures, and other elements is also notable. **Fishing is markedly more complex than the other categories, sometimes requiring multiple steps, choices, and actions (Ex: baiting lines, casting, hooking, and reeling) in order to successfully catch a fish.**

These games usually have less gameplay outside of fishing but can have elements of exploration or progression where the player discovers new fishing spots.

Lastly, these games tend to **focus on realism and providing an 'authentic' fishing experience.** As such, they rarely feature fantasy elements such as magical lures or mythical fish - though there are some exceptions.

KEY FEATURES:

- Fishing is main goal of the game
- Multiple fish to catch
 - Multiple variables on the fish (Size, weight, speed, energy/stamina, etc.)
- Multiple fishing tools (rods, lines, lures, hooks, boats, etc.)
- Fishing in stages (Picking tools, going to lake, finding fish, fishing)
- Exploration to find new fishing areas, lures, items, etc
- Progression through new tools or fishing areas
- Focus on realism

Side fishing game (SF):

These are games where **fishing isn't the main focus but plays a role in the game's core loop** – usually by providing some resource or bonus in exchange for caught fish. Unlike CF games, **Fishing here is a simplified side activity, streamlined through features like auto-casting, auto-reeling, simplified fish detection, and more.**

These games **generally require fewer inputs from the player but have some form of complexity that distinguishes them from a microgame** (exchanging fish outside of the fishing game or additional actions beyond a simple button to cast and reel).

Lastly, since side fishing isn't the central mechanic these games tend to have a looser adherence to realism and allow the player to fish in magical or mystical locations.

Key Features:

- Simplifies mechanics from CF
- Fishing isn't the focus but plays some beneficial role to the main game
- Fewer overall button inputs and choices from player
- Minor mechanics that make it more complex than a microgame
- Loose adherence to reality

Micro fishing game (MF):

These games are fishing in its simplest form, **requiring little more than a button click on the player's part**. Though these games can be mistaken for side fishing games, their main difference is that **they serve little to no purpose in the broader game and instead function only as microgames in their own sense**.

Key Features:

- Very few mechanics beyond fishing
- Fishing itself is simple
- No extra elements outside of fishing
- Easily confused with side fishing games
- Almost always Arcade game

Below are a few general heuristic features of each category

General Notable Core Fishing Game Features:

1. **Manual Casting**
2. **Manual Reeling**
3. **Customizing Rods**
4. **Customizing Lures**
5. **Multiple (real) Fish**
6. **Multiple Bait Types**
7. **Fish Hooking Mechanics**
8. **Multiple Locations**
9. **Focus on realism**
10. **Score system (Based on caught fish size or technique)**

Side Fishing Games Features:

1. **Auto Reeling**
2. **Auto Casting**
3. **Minimal focus on realism**
4. **Core gameplay bonuses gained from fishing (i.e., exchanging caught fish for an in-game resource)**
5. **Fewer actions to catch a fish**
6. **Simpler than a core fishing game but more complex than a microgame**
7. **Contained within a larger game**
8. **Score systems**

Fishing Microgame Features

- 1. Mostly only involve timed button presses**
- 2. Usually only consist of casting and catching, with both tied to a single button**
- 3. Usually brief arcade games**
- 4. Records player's scores mechanics**

That said, these categories aren't rigid. Fishing games of each type can contain any of these features. Games should be analyzed on a case by case basis to see which category they fit into.