Black Bass Fishing
NES
1988

Developers:
Hot B, Another Ltd.

Description:
Black Bass Fishing (BBF) is the sequel to the Japan exclusive Black Bass game for the Famicom and MSX home computer and is one of the original fishing simulators. Building on its predecessor's premise, BBF has the player compete in a bass fishing tournament across 4 lakes. The player starts each fishing run at sunrise and has until sunset to catch as many black bass as they can. Players earn points based on the number and weight of each bass caught and can only progress if the average weight of their haul passes a threshold. This task is complicated by several other fish (pikes, trout, etc.) that the player can catch but have no influence on their score.

Gameplay Overview:
Each run is split into two phases: planning and fishing. In the planning phase, the player can select a handful of luers and customize their color - which can influence the likelihood of a bite depending on the time of day. They can then select a spot on the lake to spawn in, starting the fishing phase. Here the game switches to a top down perspective and the player can aim, cast, and reel in their line. Catching a fish in this state triggers a minigame where the player must time their reeling inputs to simultaneously tire the fish out and not snap their line.

After every fishing run, the player returns to the planning menu and can switch out their lure, check their current spot for black bass, or move to a new spot on the lake. If a fish is caught during a run, the player can also view its stats before returning to the lake.

After a set time the player's fish will be tallied and weighted and they will either proceed to the next lake or need to repeat their current run. BBF also tracked player data with passwords given between successful fishing runs that the player needed to physically write down.

Genre Significance:
This was the first fishing game on a 'modern' gaming console (NES) and it established a handful of mechanics common to most fishing games today (chargable fishing gauge, luers and lines affecting your fishing success rate, etc.)

This game also sought to emulate the environment of competitive fishing but, since there are no real competitors, it mainly serves as a form of virtual fishing self improvement. The player is rewarded for learning the good spots on the map, keeping track of the luer colors and the time of day, and mastering the systems present within the game.

Recreated Mechanics:

We mainly focused on recreating the fishing phase of the game, as those systems appear to have influenced subsequent fishing games.

This includes:
- Aiming
- Casting
- Reeling
- Lures
- Fish stamina