Carri On: Details

Synopsis

A vulture is separated from its kettle by a strong gust of wind. After slamming into a tree, the injured vulture must return to his group before they begin their migration.

To keep his strength up, he must discreetly follow the top predators of whatever environment it explores, snatching up any fresh carrion before other scavengers take advantage of the free meals and looking around for any hidden grub in the environment.

Meanwhile, a nature documentary group is following the vulture in his quest to return home (with brief narration from the voice actor).

Genre

Linear 3D platformer & on-rails flight game

Team

Isaac S.

Formal Game Elements

Player Format

Single-player vs game

Objectives

Escape (in this case, get to the end of each stage)

Procedures

Platforming

- Direction keys (WASD/Arrow Keys): move player forward/left/backward/right
- Space: Jump (coyote physics enabled; jump buffer enabled)
- Shift: Duck (duck buffer enabled; attacks don't kill all animals)
- Ctrl: Attack (forward beak swing; attack buffer enabled)

- P: Pause game

- Duck on ground->Move: Crouch walk
- Move on ground->Duck: Ground glide (move forward quickly above the ground, stopping when hitting a wall or a few frames after moving past the ground)
- Move on ground->Duck->Jump: Rising glide (jump with plenty of vertical and horizontal reach, but begins with a low gliding position before tilting upwards)
- Jump in midair: Safety flap (double jump; forward momentum is halted at the start of the jump for extra height; can be done once at any time in the air before landing)
- Attack in midair: Beak spin (air attack; momentum is halted at the start of the attack for a hit box around the player; can interrupt any air-based actions)
- Duck->Jump: Wind rise (hi-jump; highest jump with minimal horizontal movement until reaching the max height)
- Duck in midair: Beak dive (slam attack; minimal direction movement influence; slight starting and ending animation lag)
- Duck->Attack: Beak stab (downward attack; long distance forward with little protection from the sides)
- Holding jump in midair: Air glide (glide forward at a fast speed, falling slowly towards the ground; release the jump button to stop gliding)

Flying

- Direction keys (WASD/Arrow Keys): move player up/left/down/right
- Space: Dash (dark dash; dash buffer enabled)
- Ctrl: Attack (vomit volley; attack buffer enabled)

Menu

- Direction keys (WASD/Arrow Keys): move cursor up/left/down/right
- Space: Select option
- P: Unpause game

Rules

- The vulture must make it to the end of the current level or defeat the boss in the current boss fight to make progress in the game.
- If the vulture gets hit without a defense powerup, they die and the player is sent to the previous checkpoint.
- There are no game overs.

- If the vulture falls into a pit or another obstacle without a safety draft, they die and the player is sent to the previous checkpoint.
- When the vulture triggers an apex predator's feeding animation, the player has a period of time to retrieve the carrion left behind.
  - If it's not collected by the time limit, other animals will eat the scraps, making the carrion uncollectable until the level is beaten or the vulture dies and respawns at the previous checkpoint

Resources

- **Carrion**: 3 hidden carrions in each stage, and a varying number of time-dependent carrions in each stage. If all carrions in the world are collected, the player can use vomit volley during a boss battle.
- **Powerups**: There is a defense powerup that lets the player take 1 hit for each one collected. After getting hit with a defense powerup equipped, the player will have some invincibility frames before being vulnerable to another attack. There is also a safety draft powerup that lets the player hover out of a pit. After reaching a set height, the safety draft will be destroyed and the player will begin falling again.

Conflict

Get to your group by traversing hazardous ecosystems, trailing predators to get meals while (hopefully) avoiding their detection.

Boundaries

The game explores the role of vultures in the ecosystem, with the film crew sharing information about the vulture and how it helps our environments clean by eating carrion riddled with infections. Hopefully this game will help players skeptical of vultures see how important they are.
The graphic imagery of carrion, death animations, boss battles, and musical tension when near an obstacle should also evoke the horrors of nature.

Outcome

Win or don't win

Assets

Music

Level Theme

- Hopefully one for each level
- Also should be two versions for each level; a regular version and an incredibly tense version when near an enemy/obstacle
- Smooth looping

Menu Music

- Use the sounds of nature, with a calm melody

Art

Art will be low-poly, with a dark art style focused on slightly distorted animals (with body parts and bones protruding farther out than normal) for a bleak, dark humor tone.

Level Design Assets

Enemies

Bosses

- Bald Eagle
- Lion
- Saltwater Crocodile
- Orca
- Wolf

Regular Enemies

- Bat
- Golden Eagle
- Crow (or Murder)
- Cow
- Human
    - Skydivers
    - Tourists
    - Gator hunters
    - Expeditioners

- - Lumberjacks
- Red-tailed Hawk
- Zebra
- Hyena
- Gazelle
- Hippo
- Frog
- Toad
- Python
- Cayman
- Giant Fish
- Shark
- Narwhal
- Dolphin
- Whale
- Bear
- Raccoon
- Woodpecker
- Deer
- Porcupine

Obstacles

- Zipline carts
- Boulders
- Grass
- Freezing water
- Thunder clouds
- Plane
- Helicopter
- Dunebuggy
- Flash photography
- Cactus
- Steaming water spout
- Mud
- Trees
- Nets
- Iceburg
- Wobbly ice platforms
- Boats

- Fireplace
- Pointy shrubs
- Traps hidden with leaves

Sound Assets

- Hiss
- Grunt
- Intense sting
- Landing
- Gliding
- Liftoff
- Beak swipe
- Beak spin
- Beak slam
- Hawk scream
- Roar
- Bellow
- Whale groan
- Whistle
- Howl
- Whimper

Animations

Vulture

- Glide
- Jump
- Eating carrion
- Walk
- Wing flap
- Grounded glide
- Rising glide
- Beak swipe
- Beak spin
- Front flip
- Upwards launch
- Beak slam
- Beak stab

- Victory animation
- Glide turning animation
- Death animations
  - Eaten by large animal
  - Spin and fall over
  - Fall into bottomless pit
  - Neck snapped, exposing bone
  - Swallowed whole
  - Pinned down with a chunk of flesh ripped off
    - Continue moving if an animal is continuing to eat it
  - Burn alive
  - Carried away

Other animals

- Pounce
- Eat
- Roar
- Howl
- Swim
- Flap wing
- Soar
- Fall over

UI Assets

The UI will use bone drawings with dark shadows.
- Drop shadow
- Pause menu
  - Resume
  - Controls
  - Main Menu
    - You sure? (Yes/No)
- Save icon
- Load icon
- Main Menu
  - Start new game
  - Load current game
    - Load save screen
  - Exit game

○ Controls

Level Design

- The player is traveling to the end of the stage.
- The levels are ~5 minutes long (so I should be able to beat them in 2.5 minutes with a handicap).
- Dense, compact 3D level design with little breathing room between platforms and obstacles.
- Timed sections raise the tension by requiring the player to pursue carrion before it gets eaten by other animals.
- Mix of platforming and gliding.

Story (first draft)

A vulture is blown away by a strong wind from its kettle. It smacks into a tree at a far-off forest, injuring its wing and preventing it from flying normally. Now, the vulture must travel through the forest, the arctic ocean, a savannah, a swamp, and the skies to return to its group. At the start of each major area, the vulture takes notice of the apex predator in the area, following its path to acquire food from leftover carrions. However, at the end of the area, the predator spots the vulture and attacks it, forcing the vulture to take the unfamiliar path of confrontation to survive. Finally, after reaching the highest mountain in the sky and killing a threatening bald eagle, the vulture glides to its kettle, reuniting with its family.

Meanwhile, a nature documentary group follows the vulture to each area, growing increasingly more invested in the vulture's plight, much to the detriment of the team's health and resources. Eventually, after following the vulture to its group, only the cameraman remains, falling over from starvation as the vultures spot him and waddle towards his dying body.

The story should be somber and tense, but with a sense of hope and adventure.