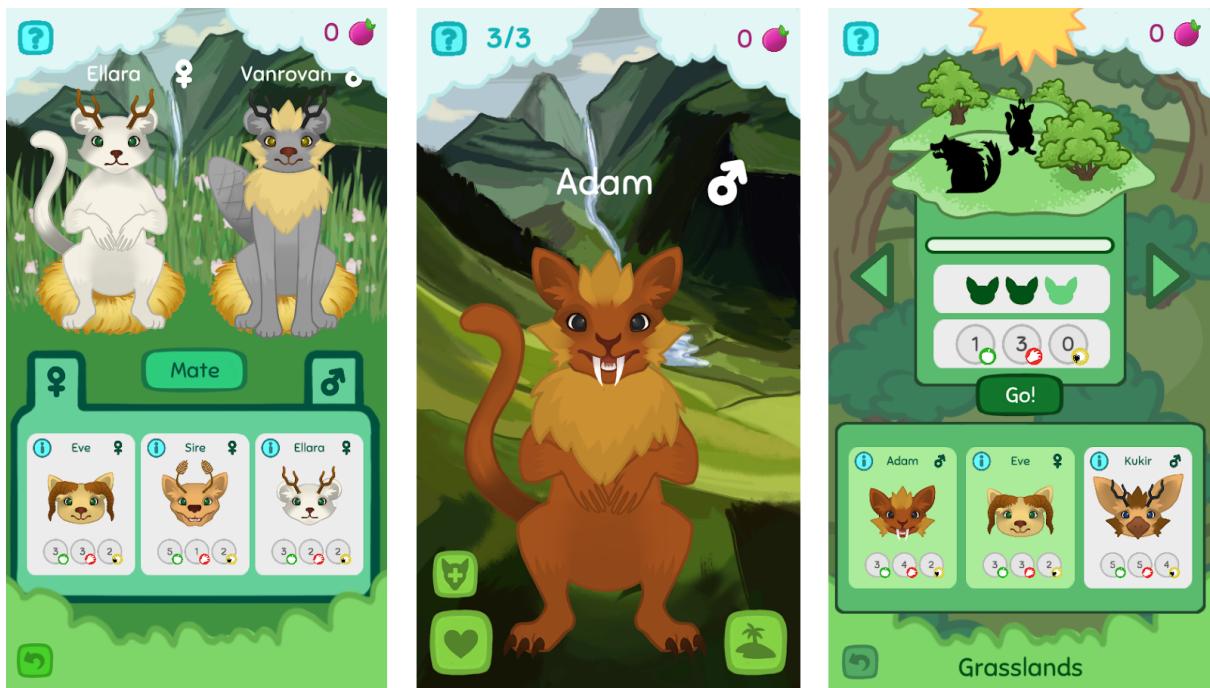


Niche - Breed and Evolve

Game Design Document



a game by:



Introduction

Short Description

After selling 250'000 units on Steam and winning multiple awards, the simulation/strategy game “Niche - a genetics survival game” is now making its way to mobile devices with a brand-new adventure! As with the first game, the new mobile game is all about breeding, genetics and evolving your own species of animals, adapting to all kinds of different biomes like deserts, swamps and snowy mountain peaks. The genes, heredity and evolution in Niche are based on real science. The option to mate/trade animals with friends to get rare genes adds a social aspect to the game.

Key Information

Genre: Breeding Simulation

Mode: Single Player with social components

Platform: Phones & Tablets (potentially browser and Steam as a second step)

Controls: Touch

Engine: Unity

Planned Playtime: endless (procedurally generated progress)

Planned Year of Release: 2020

Monetizing Model: Freemium (free download with options to buy genes/island packs)

Key Features

- Breed animals based on real genetics.
- Adapt your species to the challenges of the various islands.
- Mate/Trade your animals with friends to get rare genes.
- Millions of different possible breeding results.
- Send your animals on quests for resources and other surprises.
- Encounter a variety of different story elements and special events.
- Ingame time correlates with real time. Sending an animal out in the morning might have different results than sending it out in the evening.

Target Audience

“Niche - Breed and Evolve” is a casual to mid-core game about genetics. Anybody interested in genetics, breeding and cute animals and playing mobile games is part of our broader target audience.

The main target group of “Niche - Breed and Evolve” are girls and women between 9 and 20 years. After releasing our first game “Niche - a genetics survival game” on PC, we received countless requests to make the game available on mobile too. We decided to do so, but with a new game that focuses more on the breeding and less on the survival aspects of the first game. In terms of our target group, mobile (and potentially browser) seems to be a good fit, with almost 50% female players. On Steam, where we released the first game, 80% of the users are male.

Similar games / Competitors

Sales estimates based on Google Play (play.google.com/store) numbers:

Dragon Story	Storm8 Studios	10'000'000 + installs
Tinker Island	Kongregate	5'000'00 + installs
Zen Koi 2	Landshark Games	1'000'000 + installs
Bird Land Paradise	Cute Mobile Games	1'000'000 + installs

USPs

Compared with similar games “Niche - Breed and Evolve” offers the following unique selling points:

- Only breeding game on mobile that features real genetics on such a high complexity level.
- Millions of different possible breeding results because of high complexity breeding system.
- Ingame time correlates with real time.
- Option to mate/trade animals with other players.
- Unique mutation level up system that creates an endless gameplay loop.

Stray Fawn Studio

Company goals & Team

Stray Fawn Studio is an independent game studio based in Zurich, Switzerland. Stray Fawn was founded three years ago by Micha Stettler and Philomena Schwab and has now grown to 12 members. We mainly focus on the development of PC games, but recently started to venture into the console and mobile market too. We care very much about the personal development of our team members and try our best to help each other grow. Everybody works under the same conditions (same salary, same amount of holidays, ...) and we have a no crunch policy.



The core team for “Niche - Breed and Evolve” consists of:

Larissa Wild - Game Design & Artist, BA Game Design ZHdK

Philomena Schwab - Marketing & Advisor, MA Game Design ZHdK

Leander Schneeberger - Programmer, BA Game Design ZHdK

Past successes



250'000 copies sold
on Steam, Humble, GOG



50'000 copies sold so far
on Steam Early Access



Total of 300k
Steam Wishlists



Total of \$150k
raised on Kickstarter



87% Rating
on Steam



4/5 Rating
on GOG



Game Innovation Award



Best Game Design



Youtube

Over 20'000'000 views for videos of our games

Newsletter

Over 100'000 subscribers

Facebook

Over 7000 likes (studio page + game pages)

Twitter

Over 9000 followers (studio page + game pages)

Discord

Over 3000 members (our game Discords)

Game World

Setting

Niche - Breed & Evolve is set in a fragmented island-world. Each island offers their own rewards and challenges. In order to be able to explore the whole world, the Nichelings must adapt to the islands temperature and weather conditions as well as staying wary of its predators.

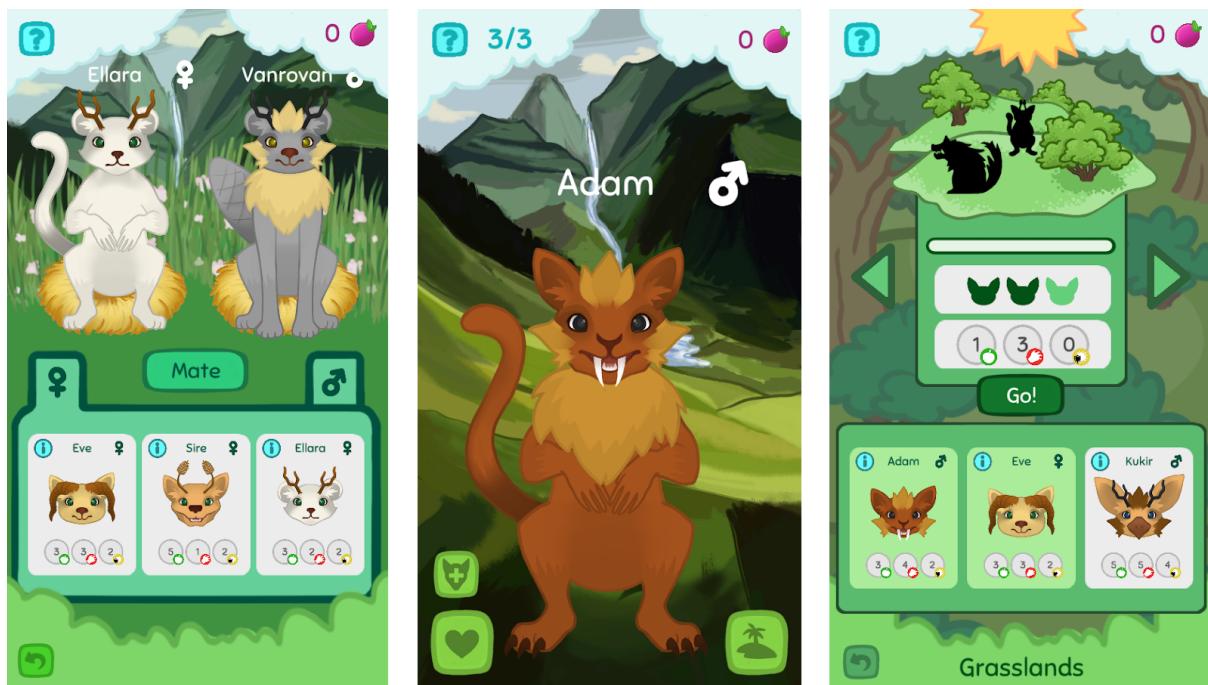
Story Intro

The Nichelings finally found a wonderfully peaceful island. Since there are no predators around, it is an excellent place to start building a thriving tribe. But there is only a limited amount of food available here. Brave Nichelings must venture out to explore new islands and bring home resources. Maybe they will even meet new friends or other species on their travels?

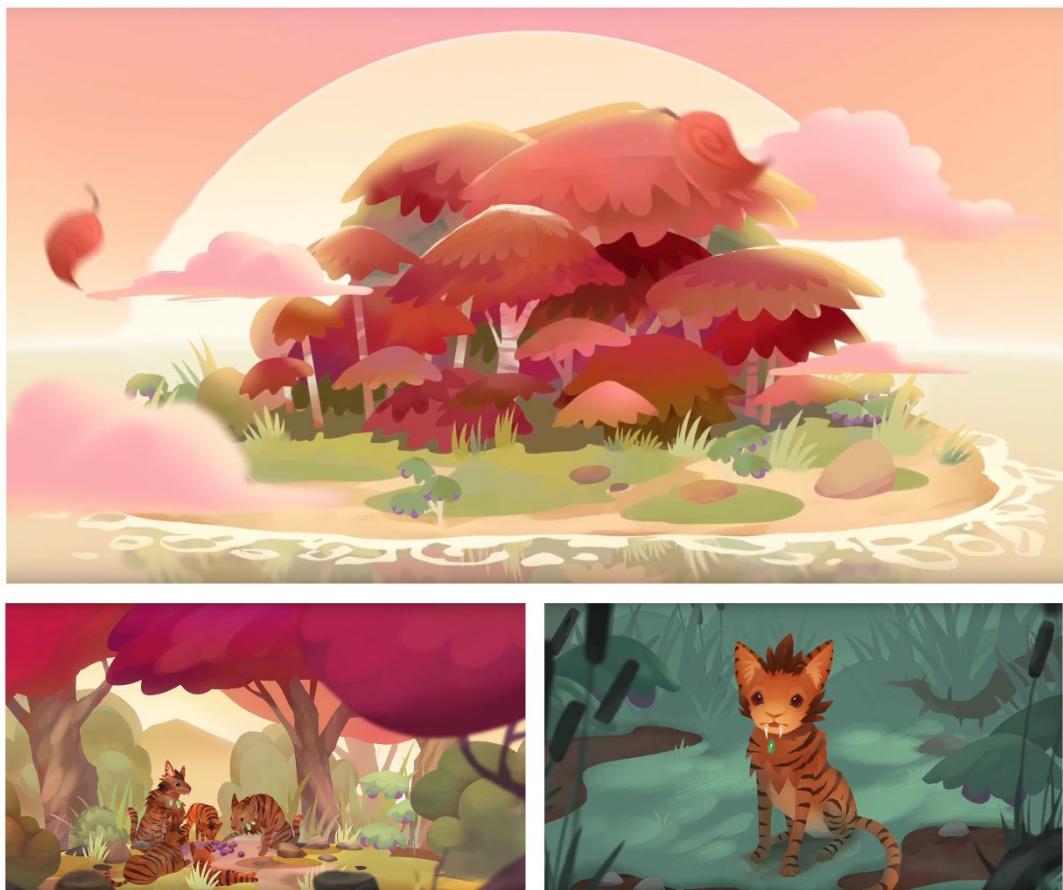
Graphic style

Many of the graphics and the UI are currently still placeholders.

For “Niche - Breed & Evolve” we are going with a very clear and easily readable artstyle in order to ensure a great casual to mid-core gaming experience on mobile devices. The color-palette is designed to be warm and welcoming. When sending out Nichelings to other islands, the design, UI and colors change to match the target islands’ biome in order to strengthen the immersion and get a better feeling of the islands mood.



The backgrounds for the final version will be painted by Stephanie Stutz. The style will be similar to the animated intro sequence we created for the Niche PC game.



Character Design

The animals are designed to be approachable and cute, which will appeal to a mobile audience. In the original game, the characters were designed in 3D. For the reason mentioned above and to ensure a quicker flow of asset production, the graphic style has been switched to 2D for the mobile game. The new design allows us to animate the characters more freely and caters to the tamagotchi aspect of the game.



Core Elements



Nichelings: Nichelings are a weird, highly adaptable animal species. Some call them dogs, others say they are cats, foxes! Deer! Or maybe bears? In truth they are a bit of a mix of all of them. And occasionally even feature bodyparts of insects, fish or birds. Something must be up with their genetic code!



They are an omnivorous species and enjoy living in medium to big groups. Usually they give birth to a single pup, with a small chance to bear twins. Nichelings are peaceful creatures in general, but they enjoy eating fish or meat so they won't let the Rabbil go if the chance presents itself. They are not at the top of the foodchain though and have to stay wary of bigger predators such as the Bearyena. A group of Nichelings is called a tribe.



Islands: There are countless islands, each with their own challenges and rewards. Some are uninhabited and can be used to gather all kinds of resources. Others crawl with wild Nicheling tribes, prey or even dangerous predators! Each island has its own unique environmental factors. In order to visit it, Nichelings must be well adapted. Some might require a certain heat or cold resistance, swimming or flying ability. Islands change according to day time.

Gameplay

Goal & Game Over

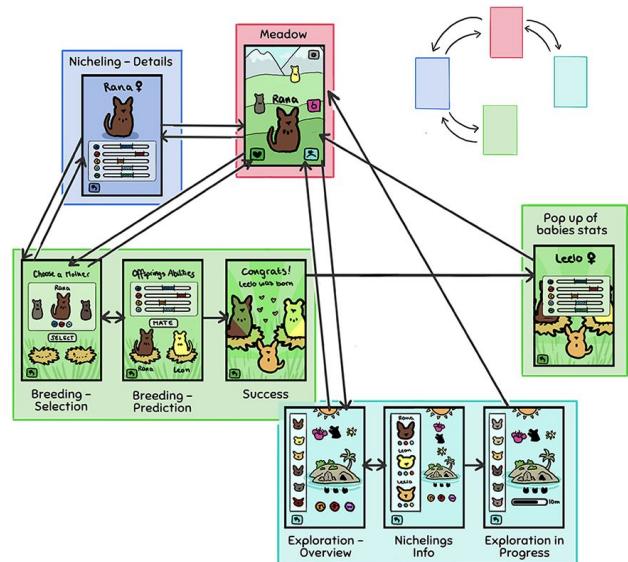
Since “Niche - Breed & Evolve” is a casual to mid-core game we decided to avoid a classic game over state. If the player makes bad decisions (mating animals non beneficially, sending animals on to islands they are barely adapted to, ...) they are punished only by the fact that their progression is slower. Nichelings can’t die, which is a huge change from the more survival focused PC predecessor. They can still get injured from predators or other dangers, but will recover after a while.

Gameplay Loop

The gameplay loop is simple, but effective. Players keep up to ten animals in the “Meadow”. There they recover their energy and can be selected for mating. After mating, pregnant females can’t leave the meadow until their pups have been born. Babies inherit their genes (and therefore their abilities) from their parents. Pups can’t leave the meadow until they’re grown up.

Mating however costs resources. These have to be gathered on island expeditions. Aside from a few starting islands, an island can only be visited if a Nicheling meets its requirements (such as swimming level 3 or cold resistance level 5). In order to meet these requirements, players must breed their animals smartly and pay attention to their genetics to achieve the desired result.

If players run out of space for their animals, they can “retire” older members of the tribe. These animals leave the meadow, but can be brought back by offering them a snack.



Progression & Motivation

The two main motivations of “Niche - Breed & Evolve” are to collect all genes (similar to Pokémon) and to progress through the various islands in order to unlock new story snippets and special surprises. The game features an endless progression system, based on a gene mutation level up system. Whenever a new pup is born, there is a small chance that one of its genes might mutate. If they do, the gene becomes a better version of itself, for example Claw level 2. This new gene improves the animals’ abilities and can be passed down to the next generation.

Islands can be procedurally generated by checking which abilities players have in their tribe and on which level these are. Based on that, islands that provide just enough of a challenge can be infinitely generated.

Multiplayer Aspects

Multiplayer/social aspects help to improve a game's longevity and are useful for word of mouth marketing. In "Niche - Breed & Evolve" players can mate their animals with each other. This is especially important to spread rare genes. At the start of the game, each player receives one of 3 unique genes that can't be found anywhere else in the game. In order to collect all genes, players must trade/mate their animals with friends. This is similar to Nintendos' "Starter Pokémons" in Pokémons games and "Unique Fruit" in Animal Crossing system.

We hope to also utilize this feature to engage influencers (such as the big Let's players of the first Niche game). By providing them with a unique gene, they would gain a lot of attention from the community who will all want to trade/mate animals with them now. They in turn can reward their most loyal followers by giving them the gene first.

Controls

The game is controlled via touch (for the Android build) and with mouse (for the PC build).

Select animal Tap / Left Click

Navigate menus Swipe / Tap / Click & Drag / Click

Marketing

Publishing

We self-published our first two games and are planning to continue to do so. However releasing on mobile platforms is something our studios hasn't done before. So for this game we are considering to work with a publisher. We have already received an offer and are currently investigating the pros and cons of a possible collaboration.

Monetizing

After meeting up with App- and Google Play Store representatives at Gamescom and listening to their advice, we decided to go with a freemium monetizing model. This means that players can download the game for free and will be confronted with a pay wall after playing a couple of free islands. We are not sure yet, whether we want to have a "pay once and never again" paywall which would be between \$3 - 5 or let players buy individual island packs for \$1 each. We might also offer an option to keep playing the game with ads instead of paying. However we're still investigating if ad network filtering can satisfy our moral requirements while remaining profitable.

Strategy - Community

During the development of our two previous games, we integrated players in the development process by involving them in the decision-making process of game features. This has lead to the formation of a strong and dedicated fan-base, which we hope to reactive with "Niche - Breed & Evolve". We tried our best to build up channels that allow us to easily reach our players again (forums, newsletter), but also invested time in social media presence:

Stray Fawn Newsletter	Over 100'000 subscribers
Stray Fawn Forums	Over 4000 people registered
Facebook	Over 7000 likes (studio page + game pages)
Twitter	Over 9000 followers (studio page + game pages)
Discord	Over 3000 members (our game Discords)

Stores & Platforms

"Niche - Breed & Evolve" will first and foremost be released on the Apple App Store and Google Play Store. If the game breaks even we might also consider to release it as a browser game and eventually on Steam as well.

Development Plan

Milestones

We're estimating a development time of 6 months until release. The game is planned to be released on the App- and Google Play Store in Q1 2020. In Q4 we will start testing the game with members of our existing community. We're also considering to further test the game with a soft launch in Q4.

Financing - Budget Expenses

	CHF
Fees/Wages author and producer	
Salary team members (author, producer, art, technical, etc).....	60'000
Overhead expenses	
Office Space	3000
Software Licenses	2000
Marketing, promotion	
Ads, Events, Promotion.....	2000
Miscellaneous (specify)	
Various (website, research material, testing devices).....	2000
> Total expenses: 72'000 CHF	

Financing - Budget Receipts

Contributions of depositary	
Funds invested by studio.....	37'000
Expected income sale	
Mobile Game Sales.....	280'000
Expected contribution from Pro Helvetia	35'000
> Total receipts: 352'000 CHF	

Thanks & Contact



We can't wait for the Niche community (and hopefully many new people as well!) to start playing. There are so many things we want to add and we're sure that our players will have countless new ideas for it too :)

Thank you very much for considering our application!

If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to us: info@strayfawnstudio.com