"Lost at Sea" Game Concept

Slogan: "Getting lost finding the way"

"Lost at Sea" is a single player, ocean-based, open world exploration game. The game is intended for console and PC and will be in a 3D first person perspective, but its art style will be more stylized than realistic. The game is heavily inspired by the wayfinding traditions of Polynesian culture, where they would sail the ocean without any nautical instruments. In "Lost at Sea", players must sail to distant islands using only their knowledge of the stars and the world around them. This game pays homage to Polynesian culture and with that comes the importance respecting nature. The game's goal is to really make a connection between the player and the game's environment.

The story follows the player, a very new navigator, and the game begins with a mentor guiding the player on the first few trips, then leaving them, letting the player go off on their own journey. It turns out that there is this mysterious island that many people can't seem to pin down and the player's character decides to make it their goal to find that island. So, the player starts off with a single lead which is where the journey begins. As they explore these islands, they learn more about the world and the techniques they can use to help navigate through harsher conditions. The directions the player gains about potential islands can vary from simple cardinal directions to very scattered hints that eventually lead them to a final destination. As the player continues to explore the world, they will also gather little hints about the mysterious island, until they finally have information to go after it. Similar to the discovery system in another game, *Outer Wilds*.

In terms of gameplay, the player plays as the captain of the voyaging canoe. On each voyage the player can bring along a specific crew of people, being able to recruit more as they progress. The crew are mainly an efficiency tool; everything they can do the player can do too. It's just that they can specialize in specific tasks, working on them while the player is busy with something else. The crew tests the player's management skills while also giving them some company on the long voyages across the vast ocean.

The player guides the direction of the boat using things like the star compass, which would be a sort of map, or observation of wildlife and their patterns. These are the techniques that the player will learn more of as they explore. The player will also have to constantly react to environment, commanding the crew to manipulate and adjust the sails and such. During lull periods, the player can interact with crewmates or help them with activities, such as fishing or taking care of animals.

When the player arrives at an island, they will find that some islands are inhabited, and some aren't. In both types, the player can learn more about the world and can improve on their navigational techniques. On inhabited islands, the player can invest in the crew and interact with the locals and gather information through talking with locals. On uninhabited islands, there can be mysteries or ancient secrets that are waiting to be discovered. These island tidbits make it worthwhile to explore every location.

There will be some survival aspects, as in the player and the crew need food and water to survive, and the voyage ends if they run out of either. They can store food in the form of live animals as well as fish for more food, cooking food onboard the canoe as needed. The player also gathers fame for successfully reaching new islands, allowing them to recruit more people and more skilled crewmembers. Some interactions between NPCs may also be locked around

fame. Failing a voyage also reduces fame. The player may also earn improvements for their canoe if they complete side quests for villagers. These side quests may vary from simple activities that can be done within the island, to whole, standalone voyages.

Reference 1 - A model of a voyaging canoe taken from He Wa`a, He Honua – The Earth is Our Canoe

Reference 2 - On board a voyaging canoe from Papa Mau: The Wayfinder

Reference 3 - Crew navigating from [Papa Mau: The Wayfinder](#)

Concept Art 1 - Possible art direction from [Raft](#)