

= Space Cavern =

Space Cavern is a 1982 shooter video game for the Atari 2600 developed and released by Games by Apollo . Players control a spaceship commander who has landed on a planet and must defend the ship against its hostile creatures . Games by Apollo founder Pat Roper was impressed by the game Demon Attack and tasked Apollo member Dan Oliver with making a game very similar to it . The game was later rereleased as Space Canyon .

= = Gameplay = =

In Space Cavern , players control the commander of an intergalactic spaceship that is traveling through a previously unknown area in space . The spaceship lands on a mysterious planet inhabited by creatures known as Electrosauri and Marsupods , who attempt to attack the crew of the ship .

The player character is situated at the bottom of the screen . Leftward and rightward movements of the joystick correspond to leftward and rightward movements of the character . Moving the joystick upward and downward induces the character to fire left and right respectively . Pressing the controller button results in the character firing upward . The player must shoot enemy creatures that come from the top and bottom before they shoot the player character . Enemy creatures fire beams that cause the player to lose a life whenever contact is made with the character . An extra life is awarded every 2 @,@ 000 points ; points are earned by destroying enemies , with 115 or 165 points awarded for killing an Electrosaurus and 200 points for a Marsupod .

There are twenty @-@ four gameplay variations included in Space Cavern ; all are playable by one or two players and activated by modifying the 2600 's difficulty switches . The variations differ in the number of enemies , their speed , the direction of their lasers , and the inclusion of Marsupods .

= = Development = =

Space Cavern was developed by Games by Apollo . Company founder Pat Roper had flown programmer Ed Salvo to a Consumer Electronics Show to show him the Imagic video game Demon Attack . Impressed with Imagic 's game , Roper decided he wanted to produce one similar to it . He told developer Dan Oliver what he wanted in the game without disclosing his inspiration . Space Cavern was released in 1982 . Game publisher Panda rereleased an identical version of Space Cavern under the name Space Canyon the following year , and an Atari 5200 port was started but not completed .

As development neared completion , mounting financial pressures came to a head and Games by Apollo found itself owing nearly \$ 5 million , half of which debt belonged to its advertising agency Benton & Bowles . Games by Apollo faced growing pressure from Benton & Bowles to repay its debts , and a few months after Space Cavern 's release , on November 12 , 1982 , Games by Apollo filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy . Although Roper expected Apollo to " return in smaller form " , the company closed in 1983 after reorganization attempts failed .

= = Reception = =

The reviewer for Arcade Express magazine was positive about Space Cavern . The review praised the graphics of the player 's death , while criticizing the design of the enemies , and finished the review by opining the game would be more suited for skilled players . TV Gamer 's review criticized it for being too simple and not requiring much brainpower .

Videogaming Illustrated compared the game positively to Phoenix , and believed that it was " arguably the best space game on the market " . The writer opined that it was Games by Apollo 's best game , and noted its suitability for both young and experienced players . In a review for Video magazine , Bill Kunkel and Arnie Katz did not agree whether Space Cavern 's control scheme was unnaturally " cumbersome " or " an exciting departure from the expected " . They wrote that the controls were " at least a little controversial " among arcade players . These comments were again

reiterated in Video 's 1982 Guide to Electronic Games where the control scheme was described as " a little unusual " . In a follow @-@ up review for Electronic Games , Kunkel and Katz concluded that the game would entertain arcade players hundreds of times over but criticized the graphics of the enemies . Space Cavern was an honorable mention in the " Best Action Video Game " category at the 1983 Arkie Awards .

Brett Alan Weiss , writing for Allgame , gave the game two out of five stars . Weiss wrote the game was not " a particularly engaging gaming experience " and referred to it as " an interesting failure . The designers had a couple of good ideas , but the execution of those ideas in conjunction with the shoot- ' em @-@ up action is second rate " . In his book Classic Home Video Games , 1972 ? 1984 , Weiss wrote that the game 's box art was better than the actual game .