

= Chao ( Sonic ) =

Chao ( / ʧʰaʊ / ; Japanese : チョウ ) are fictional life forms in the Sonic the Hedgehog video game series published by Sega . They are small , childlike creatures that go through a complex life cycle and exist in several visual forms depending on how they are raised . Developer Sonic Team incorporated Chao into the games to encourage players to explore levels and support the good ? evil dichotomy of Sonic Adventure 2 .

Chao have appeared in many games in the series , beginning with Sonic Adventure in 1998 . They usually take the form of digital pets , but have also played parts in the story and figured into other gameplay elements . Most notably , the character Cream the Rabbit has a Chao named Cheese , whom she uses to attack enemies . They have also appeared in games outside the series , the Sonic the Hedgehog comics , and the Sonic X anime , as well as being featured in promotions and merchandise . Critics have given mixed opinions on Chao and their integration into Sonic gameplay , generally praising their worth as a diversion but criticizing Chao minigames ' low interactivity .

= = Conception and characteristics = =

Sonic Team 's Takashi Iizuka stated in an interview with video game publication 1UP.com that Chao were incorporated into Sonic Adventure " so that new players would be forced to go out , explore the action sections , and find Flickies and things . " Chao were designed as a " relative neutral entity " in this game . However , to remain consistent with the good ? evil dichotomy of Sonic Adventure 2 , they were designed so that the player could raise them as " Hero Chao " or " Dark Chao " . Chao were given the ability to socialize and interact in Sonic Adventure 2 in order to make the game unique , and to more resemble " a real artificial life form . "

Chao are small creatures with a pudding @-@ like body and behave much like human infants , with pleasant and relaxing personalities . Professor Chao , a minor character in Sonic Adventure 2 , states that Chao are cute , and enjoy toys and being held or petted . However , they dislike being held while the player jumps , spins around , or throws them . Chao 's diets consist of tree fruit and coconuts . Chao hatch from eggs found in Chao Gardens . When the player spends enough time with a Chao in the Chao Garden , the Chao develops a cocoon ; it hatches from this as an adult . Eventually it develops another cocoon . If the Chao has been treated well , the cocoon is pink and the Chao is reincarnated as an egg ; the cycle then restarts and the Chao remembers the player . If , however , the Chao has been treated poorly , the cocoon is gray and the Chao dies , removing every trace of itself from the game . Chao can breed to produce fertile eggs .

= = Appearances = =

= = = In video games = = =

Chao have appeared in numerous Sonic the Hedgehog video games as digital pets . They made their first appearance in the 1998 Dreamcast game Sonic Adventure . The player can raise them , enter them in races , and export them to Chao Adventure , a game for the Dreamcast 's VMU peripheral . The player can also trade Chao or post their high scores online using the Dreamcast 's Internet capabilities . The Chao raising feature was expanded in Sonic Adventure 2 ; Chao may become " Hero Chao " or " Dark Chao " depending on whether the game 's " hero " characters ( Sonic the Hedgehog , Miles " Tails " Prower , and Knuckles the Echidna ) or " dark " characters ( Shadow the Hedgehog , Doctor Eggman , and Rouge the Bat ) are nicer to them . Chao can enter karate competitions in this game , as well as racing . The Game Boy Advance ( GBA ) games Sonic Advance , Sonic Advance 2 , and Sonic Pinball Party feature a " Tiny Chao Garden " , similar to the Chao Gardens of Sonic Adventure and Sonic Adventure 2 but with minigames in place of racing and karate competitions . Chao can be transferred between Sonic Adventure 2 : Battle and Sonic Adventure DX : Director 's Cut ? Nintendo GameCube ports of Sonic Adventure 2 and Sonic

Adventure ? and the GBA games featuring a Tiny Chao Garden . Unusually , a generic Chao is playable in the party game Sonic Shuffle .

Chao have also appeared in the series as minor characters and gameplay elements . Two Chao ? one Normal and one Dark ? who drive Chao @-@ styled mechas are playable characters in the two @-@ player battle mode of Sonic Adventure 2 : Battle . On the Sonic the Hedgehog @-@ styled pinball board in Sonic Pinball Party , one of the player 's objectives is to hatch several Chao eggs . Each world in the 2004 GBA game Sonic Advance 3 features Chao @-@ inspired minigames to earn extra lives for the player , and a sidequest that involves finding Chao to obtain Chaos Emeralds . 2007 's PlayStation Portable installment Sonic Rivals 2 hides Chao throughout levels to be found in a free play mode . In the 2008 Nintendo DS role @-@ playing game Sonic Chronicles : The Dark Brotherhood , Chao eggs are hidden throughout the in @-@ game universe for the player to find and hatch . The resulting infant Chao can be equipped to characters . This affects the characters ' performance in battle ; for example , one kind will increase the character 's hit points . The game features a multiplayer mode in which Chao can be traded between players who each have a copy of the game . Chao take the form of an item in the " Panel Flip " party game of the 2009 Wii and DS game Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Winter Games . Each player 's object is to claim as many panels as possible in a six @-@ by @-@ six grid ; finding a Chao upon flipping a panel claims all panels in a given row or column for the player . One mission in Sonic Generations ( 2011 ) involves racing against Cream the Rabbit to collect lost Chao in a city location .

Cream , a prominent character in the series , has a Chao named Cheese as a partner . In a move to keep her image safe , she often uses him to attack enemies instead of doing so herself . Other notable Chao include Chaos , guardian of the Chao , who serves as an antagonist in Sonic Adventure ; Omochoa , a robotic ( often described as annoying by players ) Chao who appears in several games as a means of player tutorial ; and Chocola , Cheese 's twin whom Cream , Amy Rose , and Big the Cat search for over the course of Sonic Heroes .

Chao have also made appearances in video games outside the Sonic the Hedgehog series . In the 2004 PlayStation 2 game Sega Superstars ; the player uses points earned during the game to please a pet Chao . Marking the introduction of the character Sonic the Hedgehog to the 2008 Wii game Super Smash Bros. Brawl , Chao and other characters from the Sonic the Hedgehog series appear as collectible trophies and stickers .

= = = In other media = = =

Chao were recurring characters in the Sonic X anime that ran from 2003 to 2006 . In the episode " Little Chao Lost " , Cheese becomes lost while swimming in a stream . The main characters find him at the stream 's end , in a Chao colony , where Doctor Eggman shows up to steal a supposed Chaos Emerald from them until he is defeated . Later on , in " Flood Fight " , a colony of Chao appears after a battle with Chaos ; they turn out to be Chaos ' old friends and embrace it as it leaves with Tikal the Echidna to return to the past .

Chao have also made occasional appearances in Archie Comics ' Sonic the Hedgehog comic book series . They debuted in an Sonic Adventure @-@ based story arc , where they work together with Tikal to defeat Chaos . At one point , Sonic , Tails , and Knuckles find a Chao garden and one Chao followed Sonic home , and after spending time around his Robotized father came to resemble Omochoa . However , Eggman destroys the garden , and the Chao migrate to a lake . Much later , Cream and her mother Vanilla protect a frightened but incompetent group of Chao from Eggman 's assistant , Snively . Cream 's friend Amy Rose realizes they are the same group from the lake and , to Cream 's delight , suggests that the lake can be converted to a Chao garden . Following the comic reboot , Cheese continued to accompany Cream while Chocola was revealed to live with her mother Vanilla and Gemerl ( from Sonic Advance 3 ) . The heroes would also discover a Chao Garden hidden in an undersea cavern whose inhabitants included an ancient Chao named Aquarius and a guard dog @-@ like Chao named Crusher .

= = Reception and impact = =

Chao and the Chao @-@ raising system have received mixed to positive reviews . In a review of Sonic Adventure , GameSpot 's Peter Bartholow stated that " [ w ] ith the Chao @-@ breeding simulation and the minigames , Sonic offers much more beyond the completion of its story . " IGN stated that " SA more than has the extras department covered . " This enthusiasm was extended to IGN 's reviews of Sonic Adventure 2 , Sonic Advance , and Sonic Adventure DX : Director 's Cut . GameSpot 's Shane Satterfield was critical of the Chao raising feature in Sonic Adventure 2 : Battle , stating that " there 's little in the way of interactivity " and that " the [ C ] hao training aspect using the Game Boy Advance is little more than a novelty . " However , GameSpy 's Shane Bettenhausen praised the feature in the game , comparing Chao to Tamagotchi digital pets . GameSpot 's Frank Provo noted the appeal to " those people who might only enjoy pinball in passing " that Chao brought to Sonic Pinball Party . 1UP.com 's Chris Baker called the Chao feature in Sega Superstars " ultimately worthless ... but some might find it amusing . " In a review of Sonic Chronicles : The Dark Brotherhood , GameSpot 's Shiva Stella praised the level of strategy that the game 's Chao system added . Destructoid 's Jim Sterling voiced a similar opinion , although saying that Chao had been " rubbish " in previous games .

A Chao keychain was released as part of a Sonic X character keychain series . Between July 27 and September 8 , 2002 , Sega hosted events at Tokyo @-@ based department stores to promote upcoming Sega video games . Attendees could download " Chao Mini Garden " s and exclusive Chao to their copies of Sonic Advance . Chao clothing clips , along with accessories based on other Sega characters , were available .

Chao 's notability extends beyond the Sonic series and related media ; Mary Jane Irwin of IGN used " Chao program " to describe Pokémon Channel in her review of the game .