

= Metroid Prime Hunters =

Metroid Prime Hunters is a first @-@ person action @-@ adventure video game published by Nintendo and developed by its Redmond @-@ based subsidiary Nintendo Software Technology for the Nintendo DS handheld game console . A part of the Metroid series , it was released in North America in March 2006 ; in Europe and Australia in May 2006 ; and in Japan in June 2006 . The game features a single @-@ player campaign in which is set between the events of Metroid Prime and Metroid Prime 2 : Echoes . There , players assume the role of bounty hunter Samus Aran as she investigates a mysterious message that originated from the Alimbic solar system .

Hunters contains more first @-@ person shooter aspects than the previous titles in the Metroid Prime series , with removal of assisted aiming , more action @-@ oriented gameplay , and various multiplayer modes . The game was created to utilize the Nintendo DS hardware , such as Wi @-@ Fi and voice chat capabilities , and introduced other bounty hunters with unique weapons and alternative forms . Metroid Prime Hunters was announced by Nintendo at the Electronic Entertainment Expo 2004 . A pack @-@ in demo version of the game , titled Metroid Prime Hunters : First Hunt , was included with the Nintendo DS when it launched in 2004 .

Reviews were generally favorable towards Hunters , with much praise to its gameplay and graphics , although it faced criticism to its control scheme . Metroid Prime Hunters received several honors ; including an " Editors ' Choice " award from IGN , which also named the game the " Best DS Action Game " of 2006 , while Nintendo Power gave it awards for " Best Graphics " , " Best Shooter / Action Game " , and " Best Wi @-@ Fi Functionality " . Over 410 @,@ 000 copies of the game were sold in North America in its first month of release , and it was the fourth best @-@ selling game during its debut month in Japan . Metroid Prime Hunters was re @-@ released on the Wii U 's Virtual Console service on September 30 , 2015 in Japan , and on June 2 , 2016 in North America .

= = Gameplay = =

Like the previous titles in the Prime series , Metroid Prime Hunters is generally classified as a first @-@ person adventure to highlight the focus on navigation and discovery . However , the game differs from its predecessors with the removal of assisted aiming , more action @-@ oriented gameplay , and the inclusion of an online multiplayer mode . The player controls Samus Aran , who is equipped with a Power Suit that allows her to access her gunship from anywhere . She can scan almost any object in the game ; the gunship will return relevant information retrieved from its database . An Arm Cannon is attached to the Power Suit , which she uses to attack enemies . To enter small tunnels , Samus can roll into a Morph Ball , an alternative form of the Power Suit that decreases her size substantially . In this form , she is given an unlimited supply of bombs but is only allowed to use three at a time . She can use the bombs to defend herself and destroy small objects .

In Metroid Prime Hunters , the Nintendo DS 's top screen shows Samus 's HUD as seen from her visor , which displays the amount of remaining ammunition for the currently selected weapon along with her health ; in multiplayer games , the number of kills and time remaining in the round are also shown . The bottom touchscreen displays the radar . When using the default control scheme , movement is controlled using the D @-@ pad , and aiming is controlled by dragging the stylus along the touchscreen .

Metroid Prime Hunters features a multiplayer mode that supports up to four players and includes voice chat capability . In it , the player is able to control Samus or one of six other bounty hunters featured in the single @-@ player mode . Each bounty hunter has a unique alternative form , such as Samus 's Morph Ball , and a special weapon . The game host can set options for point and time limits , and restrict the use of radar . Computer @-@ controlled players of varying skill levels can be added to games if the minimum of four players is not met .

= = Synopsis = =

== Setting and characters ==

Metroid Prime Hunters takes place between Metroid Prime and Metroid Prime 2 : Echoes , and is set within the Alimbic Cluster in the Tetra Galaxy , where it was once ruled by the Alimbic race . One day , the Alimbic race disappeared without warning , leaving artifacts scattered throughout the solar system . In the present , the dormant Alimbic race telepathically broadcasts a message to bounty hunters and other intelligent species , stating the key to the " ultimate power " resides in the Alimbic solar system . The solar system consists of two planets (Alinos and Arcterra) and two space stations (the Celestial Archives and the Vesper Defense Outpost) .

The protagonist of the single @-@ player " adventure mode " is bounty hunter Samus Aran , who investigates the Alimbic Cluster after the Galactic Federation receives a telepathic message . During the investigation , Samus is confronted by six other bounty hunters : Sylux , a deadly sharpshooter who harbors a strong hatred for the Federation and Samus by association ; Weavel , a cybernetic Space Pirate warrior who was injured in a battle with Samus ; Trace , a feared member of the Kriken Empire ; Kanden , a lab experiment and a supersoldier that was invincible ; Noxus , a bounty hunter of the proud and reclusive Vhozon race ; and Spire , the last of the silicon @-@ based Diamonts .

== Plot ==

The governing body of the galaxy , the Galactic Federation , receives a strange telepathic message . The Federation broadcasts a message to bounty hunter Samus Aran , asking her to investigate and retrieve the " ultimate power " , and should it prove irretrievable , to keep it secret or destroy it outright . Six other bounty hunters intercept the transmission and proceed to the Alimbic solar system to claim the power for themselves .

Through investigation of the planets and space stations that orbit the Alimbic sun , Samus gradually pieces together the history of the Alimbic race . She discovers that they were a peaceful , spiritual , highly evolved society . The Alimbic utopia was shattered when a comet struck the planet (Alinos) , and out of it emerged a monstrous creature named Gorea . The creature copied the cellular structure of the Alimbics , physically mimicking them and their weapons , and destroyed their civilization . Unable to stop Gorea 's rampage , the last of their race transformed themselves into focused telepathic energy , then confined Gorea into a " Seal Sphere " , which they placed in a starship called the Oubliette . The ship was launched into a dimensional rift called the Infinity Void , to be released only when eight keys called " Octoliths " were assembled .

After warding off the other bounty hunters , Samus retrieves the eight Octoliths and opens the Infinity Void . Here , she and the other six hunters confront Gorea , who originated the telepathic message in an attempt to free itself . After the beast absorbs the powers of Samus ' rivals , she defeats Gorea using the Alimbic weapon called the " Omega Cannon " . As Samus and the other hunters evacuate the exploding Oubliette on their respective ships , three Alimbic spirits appear before an armorless Samus , and honor her with a salute .

== Development ==

The development team for Metroid Prime Hunters at Nintendo Software Technology (NST) was led by the game 's director , Masamichi Abe and the lead technical engineer , Colin Reed , who had both previously worked together on several games , including the Nintendo games Pikmin and 1080 ° Snowboarding . The team for Hunters was composed of thirty people , which Abe noted was larger than the development team of most other Nintendo DS games . Kensuke Tanabe of Nintendo came up with the original idea for the game . Retro Studios , which developed previous Metroid Prime games , was unable to develop Metroid Prime Hunters because it was already working on a game . Therefore , Tanabe contacted NST with the idea , and let them develop it instead . NST developed the game instead of Nintendo themselves because Nintendo wanted the division to influence Metroid Prime Hunters with western ideals , styles , and presentation .

While developing the game , most of NST 's efforts were focused on its multiplayer aspect because of its first @-@ person shooter gameplay , and to take advantage of the Wi @-@ Fi and voice chat capabilities of the Nintendo DS . One of the game 's designers , Richard Vorodi , noted that " the hardware kinda dictated [their focus onto the game 's multiplayer mode] . " Wanting to introduce a new element to the Metroid series , Abe created several new bounty hunters after he realized that the game 's multiplayer mode and the new bounty hunters could both be implemented seamlessly into the game : " We had this idea early on and thought that would be a good way to introduce [Metroid Prime Hunters] and [the new bounty hunters] to the gameplay and take advantage of that in the multiplayer . " Metroid Prime Hunters includes several references to previous games in the Metroid Prime series . Samus ' ship is from the original Metroid Prime , and her suit is the same one that appears in Metroid Prime 2 : Echoes . The developers decided to add them because they wanted to show that the technology has evolved , and they also wanted to include something that was instantly recognizable to those who had played previous games in the series . On level design , Abe said that as the game 's controls shifted from an analog stick method to touchscreen aiming , " our real focus in designing the levels was just to make sure that the actual gameplay didn 't get more difficult or the actual control didn 't get more difficult . "

Metroid Prime Hunters was first revealed at the Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3) 2004 , with IGN gave the game their Best Nintendo DS Game of E3 award . When Nintendo received negative feedback at E3 2005 about the game 's lack of an online feature , the company announced in August 2005 that the game 's release would be delayed to give the developers time to implement Nintendo WFC support . After the game 's release was delayed to give NST time to implement the multiplayer feature , the developers took the time to make more changes . They worked on the game 's framerate to make the graphics move more smoothly . The game 's visuals were improved ; a developer added reflections to the Morph Ball . The other developers admired the effect , and added it to other parts of the game . NST collaborated with Retro Studios , the company behind several Metroid games , to design the game 's art and characters to make sure that they fit into the overall Metroid series . When asked why Metroid Prime Hunters was placed between Metroid Prime and Metroid Prime 2 : Echoes chronologically , Reed noted that the game was not influenced by the story of either game , so there were no continuity issues . He described Hunters as a side story to the Metroid Prime series .

= = Marketing and release = =

A preview of Metroid Prime Hunters was featured at E3 2004 , which players control different colored variations of Samus in a deathmatch . A demo version , titled Metroid Prime Hunters : First Hunt , was included as a pack @-@ in game with the Nintendo DS when it launched in North America on November 21 , 2004 . As a single @-@ player game , it consisted of training scenarios with no specific plot , while the multiplayer portion allowed up to four players to compete via the Nintendo DS ' local wireless communications . GamesRadar wrote a positive review for the demo , citing it as " a fine showcase for demonstrating what the [Nintendo DS] hardware is capable of " . In early 2006 , a preview video for Hunters was made available for download through the DS Download Station . A playable demo was also available from the Download Station in North America .

Nintendo promoted the release of Metroid Prime Hunters in the United States with a television commercial , featuring a gravedigger burying dead bounty hunters in a futuristic setting . It was directed by Len Wiseman , known for his work on the Underworld series , and was produced by the Leo Burnett Worldwide , while the special effects were handled by Ntropic . According to Wiseman , the commercial intends to " give the players a sense of how high the body count is going to be in this game , the amount of mayhem , and just how vicious Samus can be . " On May 20 , 2006 , Nintendo of Europe and HMV held the " Hunt Is On Tournament " tournament in several locations throughout the United Kingdom , with BT Openzone provided a video link .

Metroid Prime Hunters was released on March 20 , 2006 in North America . This was followed by the release in Europe on May 5 , 2006 ; in Australia on May 23 , 2006 ; in Japan on June 1 , 2006 ;

and in South Korea on December 6 , 2007 . The game was later re @-@ released on the Wii U 's Virtual Console service , in Japan on September 30 , 2015 , and in North America on June 2 , 2016 .

= = Reception = =

Metroid Prime Hunters was given " generally favorable " reviews , according to Metacritic . Several reviews praised the amount of value that Metroid Prime Hunters offered on the Nintendo DS handheld video game console . GameZone considered the game phenomenal , and believed that it used the DS to its maximum potential regarding graphical ability and innovation . The Toronto Sun remarked that the graphics were big enough selling points on their own for the game , and The Press called Metroid Prime Hunters the best @-@ looking game for the Nintendo DS . The Australian agreed that the graphics are " outstanding " and push the Nintendo DS to its limits , and The Independent asserted that Metroid Prime Hunters was perhaps the best first @-@ person shooter ever for a handheld console . GamePro 's review stated that " it 's hard to imagine how Nintendo squeezed Hunters into a tiny DS cartridge . " Despite a few " small quirks " , the magazine noted that Hunters " is a very polished game " . The Times concurred with these claims , remarking , " A lot of thought has clearly gone into making the most of the DS 's touch @-@ screen capability here , and it works gloriously . "

Game Revolution admired the " high @-@ quality work " found in the game 's production design and smooth online play . 1UP.com asserted that fans of the Metroid series should recognize the technical achievements that the game showcases . GamesRadar lauded Metroid Prime Hunters ' gameplay , and believed that the game was strictly for hardcore gamers " who live for fragfests " . Convinced that making a Metroid game different from its slow @-@ paced adventure predecessors into a " nail @-@ biting wrecking ball " was a " risky trick " , they appreciated the results , stating , " Damn did it ever work . " Both GameSpot and Game Informer enjoyed the game 's " worthwhile " and " electrifying " multiplayer mode . Nintendo Power praised the game as a " new @-@ school , action @-@ packed " game that makes a " great addition to the growing collection of Wi @-@ Fi titles " , and The Guardian claimed the game 's multiplayer aspect as their favorite feature . The Sunday Times wrote that Metroid Prime Hunters does a " staggering job " of replicating the style of previous Metroid Prime games .

Complaints about the game stemmed primarily from its control scheme . IGN found that the high learning curve and " cramp @-@ inducing " control scheme made it difficult to play . This sentiment was shared by Electronic Gaming Monthly , which claimed that placing the interface used to switch visors and weapons on the touchscreen made the process unnecessarily complex . The magazine was also disappointed with the game 's single @-@ player mode , claiming that it does not live up to the experience offered in previous games in the Metroid Prime series . They criticized the levels as " contrived and predictable " , and noted that the designs felt too formulaic " after a few worlds of hunting for keys , fighting repeat bosses , and escaping before the bomb blows " . The Washington Times agreed that the game 's repetitiveness eventually grew tiring , and that " manipulating the DS controls will be a painfully cramped endeavor " .

Concurring with this sentiment , GameSpy noted that using the stylus to play the game felt a bit strange . Eurogamer also expressed their disapproval of the control scheme , predicting it would lead to " the coming years of physiotherapy on [their] arms " . They were also unhappy with the game 's " flimsy " multiplayer experience , noting that it is best used when played locally with friends who also have the game . X @-@ Play had particularly negative sentiments about the game , stating , " This feels like yet another genre shoehorned poorly onto hardware that just isn ' t equipped to handle it . "

Metroid Prime Hunters was the fourth best @-@ selling game in its debut month in Japan , selling 32 @, @ 467 units , and has since sold over 90 @, @ 000 units there . Over 410 @, @ 000 units of the game were sold in North America in its first month . Hunters received several awards and honors . IGN gave it an " Editors ' Choice " award , and named it the " Best DS Action Game " of 2006 . The game also received the awards for " Best Graphics " , " Best Shooter / Action Game " , and " Best

Wi @-@ Fi Functionality " from Nintendo Power for 2006 .

= = Legacy = =

Sylux made a minor appearance in Metroid Prime 3 : Corruption , where he follows Samus in the game 's ending . Tanabe said in E3 2015 that he wanted to create a story that centers around Samus and Sylux , noting that " [t] here 's something going on between them . I want to make a game that touches upon [it] . " With the upcoming Nintendo 3DS game , Metroid Prime : Federation Force , Tanabe hopes that Federation Force 's plot will lead to future Metroid Prime games based on the relationship between Samus and Sylux , with additional involvement from the Galactic Federation marines .