

= The Legend of Zelda : Phantom Hourglass =

The Legend of Zelda : Phantom Hourglass (Japanese : ?????? ?????? , Hepburn : Zeruda no Densetsu : Mugen no Sunadokei) is an action @-@ adventure game developed and published by Nintendo for the Nintendo DS handheld game console . It is the fourteenth installment in the The Legend of Zelda series and the sequel to the 2002 GameCube title The Wind Waker . Phantom Hourglass was released in Japan in June 2007 ; in North America , Australia , and Europe in October 2007 ; and in Korea in April 2008 . The game was re @-@ released for the Wii U via the Virtual Console service in the PAL region in November 2015 and in North America in May 2016 .

The game features 3D cel @-@ shaded graphics with an overhead camera perspective , employs controls involving the console 's touchscreen and microphone , and takes advantage of the Nintendo Wi @-@ Fi Connection for online play . The game 's story follows that of The Wind Waker , focusing on series protagonist Link 's journey to save his friend Tetra from the story 's antagonist , Bellum , with the help of Captain Linebeck and his ship , the S.S. Linebeck .

Critics were generally positive towards Phantom Hourglass . Its control scheme was praised , while criticism focused on its online features , which were considered too simple . The game received several video game industry awards , including the Nintendo DS Game of the Year award from GameSpot , GameSpy , and IGN . Phantom Hourglass was the best @-@ selling game in its first month in Japan , with 302 @,@ 887 copies sold . In the United States , it was the fifth best @-@ selling game in the month it debuted , with 262 @,@ 800 copies sold . 4 @.@ 13 million copies of Phantom Hourglass were sold worldwide by March 2008 .

= = Gameplay = =

The Legend of Zelda : Phantom Hourglass is an action @-@ adventure game with gameplay similar to other games in the The Legend of Zelda series . The player controls Link , the protagonist , and explores the world to find new items , information , and allies to help him save his friend Tetra and defeat the antagonist Bellum . The game is divided into two gameplay types : sailing between islands , and exploring the islands and their dungeons on foot . While on land , Link discovers and utilizes many items , including the classic boomerang , bow , and bombs . When sailing , the game shows a map of the area on the Nintendo DS 's top screen , and a 3D top @-@ down view of Link and his nearby surroundings on the lower touchscreen . The player can bring down the map from the top screen to the lower screen to make notes . During certain events , including most boss battles , a 3D view is shown on both screens , allowing the player to have a wider view of their surroundings . The player controls Link with the stylus , moves him by pointing to the sides of the screen , and uses the stylus to interact with objects and people or attack foes by pointing at them . To travel between islands on the Great Sea , the player controls a paddle steamer called the S.S. Linebeck . The player can plot a course by drawing on a sea chart , redraw the course to make any necessary alterations , shoot at enemies that attack the ship using a cannon , and jump to avoid obstacles .

The game includes a one @-@ on @-@ one multiplayer battle mode . In an arena , one player controls Link , while the other player , on defense , controls three Phantom Guardians . Players of both sides are aided by power @-@ up items that appear on the playing field . Link 's goal is to grab a Force Gem and carry it to his base . The other player , controlling the three Phantom Guardians , must find and catch Link before he returns any Force Gems . When Link is caught , or if the round is over , players switch sides . Each multiplayer game consists of three rounds , and in each round , each player takes a turn at both sides . The maximum length of a multiplayer game is 12 minutes , assuming Link does not get caught . The game supports multiplayer both locally and online through the Nintendo Wi @-@ Fi Connection , as well as Download Play . The game is the third The Legend of Zelda game to include multiplayer , following Four Swords and Four Swords Adventures .

Phantom Hourglass introduces the game mechanic of a large dungeon central to the game 's story , in this case the Temple of the Ocean King . Link visits the Temple multiple times during the course of the game 's story , in order to obtain sea charts that allow him to sail to other parts of the ocean .

Throughout the game , the Temple has a curse placed on it that drains Link 's life whenever he is inside , but upon obtaining the Phantom Hourglass , Link is able to explore the Temple without being affected by the curse for a limited amount of time . In addition to the curse , Link must contend with Phantoms , a type of enemy exclusive to the Temple . Phantoms are invincible for the most part , necessitating the use of stealth in order to get past them . " Safe zones " are scattered throughout the Temple , and allow Link to avoid both the Phantoms and the Temple 's curse . As Link progresses through the game , he is able to access deeper levels of the Temple and stay inside for longer . The Temple , including the puzzles within , will reset whenever Link leaves , but as he obtains new items , he can unlock new routes and shortcuts that enable him to travel through the Temple quicker .

= = Plot = =

Picking up immediately after The Wind Waker , in which Link defeats Ganon who turns to stone and remains at the bottom of a now sealed away Hyrule , Link and Tetra travel over the flooded Hyrule called the Great Sea on board Tetra 's pirate ship . Along the way , the pair discover the Ghost Ship and Tetra enters it ; however , immediately after entering the Ghost Ship , she screams for help . While Link attempts to follow her , he slips and falls into the ocean . Washed ashore on an island , Link is awakened by Ciela , a fairy . Exploring the island , Link finds the Phantom Hourglass , filled with the Sands of Hours , and meets an old man named Oshus , who wants to help Link find the Ghost Ship and reunite with Tetra . To aid him in his quest , Link enlists the help of Captain Linebeck and his ship , the S.S. Linebeck , which Link , Ciela , and Linebeck use to visit islands across the Great Sea . While Linebeck was initially reluctant to team up with the two , Ciela makes mention of a huge treasure , prompting him to agree to help them .

After scouring the Great Sea , Link learns that he must use maps and clues hidden in the Temple of the Ocean King to find the Spirits of Courage , Wisdom , and Power , which in turn will help him locate the Ghost Ship . With the help of the Phantom Hourglass , Link finds the Spirits of Wisdom and Power . When Link asks Oshus where to find the Spirit of Courage , Oshus explains that it is in fact Ciela , after which she transforms into her true form . Now in possession of the three Spirits , Link , along with Ciela and Oshus , locate the Ghost Ship and find Tetra on board , who has been turned to stone . While Link determines how to save Tetra , Oshus reveals that he is the Ocean King and that he and Ciela had to change their appearances to hide from Bellum , a life @-@ eating monster that Link must destroy to save Tetra . Oshus also mentions that Bellum was the one who created the Ghost Ship and turned Tetra into a statue , and that he has taken residence deep in the Temple of the Ocean King . Linebeck quickly readies to abandon their quest ; outraged at the lack of treasure to be found . However , his loyalties instantly return when Oshus promises the captain one wish in return for his continued aid .

To defeat Bellum , Link learns that he must forge the Phantom Sword from three unique , " pure " metals located on nearby islands . After collecting and using the metals to forge the Phantom Sword , Link descends to the bottom level of the Temple of the Ocean King to face Bellum . After intense fighting , Link appears to defeat Bellum , and Tetra is freed from stone . After Link and Tetra hurry back to the S.S. Linebeck to find Oshus , Bellum emerges and sinks the ship , capturing Tetra and knocking Link unconscious in the process . Linebeck finally shows some devotion when he fights off Bellum while Link wakes up . Then , Linebeck gets possessed by Bellum , forcing Link to fight him , eventually defeating Bellum for good , saving Tetra and Linebeck , and releasing the sand from the Phantom Hourglass back into the sea . Oshus , now in his true form as a white whale , readies to depart with the three spirits , while Linebeck , surprising everyone , wishes not for treasure but for his ship back , and Tetra and Link teleport back onto Tetra 's pirate ship , where its crew tells them that only ten minutes had passed since the pair left the ship , insisting that their journey was a dream . However , Link still possesses the now @-@ empty Phantom Hourglass , and sees Linebeck 's ship on the horizon , knowing that his adventure was real .

= = Development = =

Development started in May 2004 , at which point the game still had gameplay similar to Four Swords Adventures . At a press conference in Japan for the Nintendo DS on October 6 , 2004 , Shigeru Miyamoto of Nintendo said , " We 're thinking of bringing Four Swords to the DS . " In an interview at E3 2005 , Nintendo 's Eiji Aonuma confirmed that they were working on a game for the Nintendo DS . In 2006 , Nintendo presented the keynote address at the annual Game Developers Conference , where they also revealed Phantom Hourglass for the first time and presented a demo . At the conference , Nintendo announced that the game would be released in late 2006 . For the holiday season , Nintendo launched two special edition Nintendo DS bundles , each in a different color , on November 23 , 2007 . One of the bundles , the Gold edition , was emblazoned with The Legend of Zelda 's signature Triforce logo and sold alongside Phantom Hourglass .

The same development team that worked on Four Swords Adventures also worked on what would become Phantom Hourglass . In the game 's first prototype , the action took place in the upper screen while the touchscreen was a flat map that allowed Link to be controlled . However , the developers believed that this interface caused the player to be too disconnected from the game 's action , thereby prompting them to switch the two screens . They felt that this interface would appeal to Japanese players , who they said prefer simple interfaces . The developers added a battle mode that was played over Wi @-@ Fi to appeal to American players .

The game takes advantage of the Nintendo DS 's stylus in several different ways . The player can draw shapes to open certain doors and plot out the path of ships on the ocean , among other tasks . The device 's touchscreen can also be used to direct Link 's boomerang . Phantom Hourglass features cel @-@ shaded graphics , similar to that of The Wind Waker , with some influence from Four Swords Adventures . Link and Zelda 's appearances in Phantom Hourglass closely resemble those from The Wind Waker .

At E3 2007 , Aonuma said that Phantom Hourglass " opened up the [Zelda] series and [gave] a fresh , new control scheme to the aging Zelda formula " . He also said that , despite the disappointing sales of The Wind Waker affecting him personally , he still wished to continue the game 's style in another Zelda iteration , leading to the inspiration for Phantom Hourglass . Aonuma believed that the game 's simple controls , with the help of the Nintendo DS 's touchscreen , helped make Phantom Hourglass the first Zelda game to attract casual gamers .

= = Reception = =

Phantom Hourglass was released in Japan on June 23 , 2007 , in North America on October 1 , 2007 , in Australia on October 11 , 2007 , in Europe on October 19 , 2007 , and in Korea on April 3 , 2008 . The game was considered to have received " universal acclaim " , receiving aggregated scores of 90 / 100 from Metacritic and 88 @. @ 82 % from GameRankings . Praise focused on the game 's use of unique Nintendo DS features , while criticism targeted its more casual gameplay compared to previous games in The Legend of Zelda series . Phantom Hourglass was the best @-@ selling game in its debut month of June 2007 in Japan , selling 302 @, @ 887 copies . In the United States , Phantom Hourglass was the fifth best @-@ selling game in its debut month of October 2007 , selling 262 @, @ 800 copies . As of March 2008 , 4 @. @ 13 million copies of the game have been sold worldwide , with 910 @, @ 000 of those copies in Japan .

Computer and Video Games called Phantom Hourglass one of the few " masterpieces " on the Nintendo DS , which made it " worth every penny " . Believing that Phantom Hourglass improves on everything that was great about its predecessor , The Wind Waker , GamePro predicted that the sequel would be another successful game in the franchise . Although feeling that the game does not live up to the standards set in Twilight Princess , Game Informer still felt that the adventure is worthy of The Legend of Zelda series , and noted that it " has enough great stuff going for it " for them to consider it one of the year 's best video game adventures . GameZone enjoyed the " spectacular blend of touch @-@ screen combat , brilliant puzzles , and Wind Waker beauty " in Phantom Hourglass , calling it a " can 't @-@ miss adventure " and one of Nintendo 's and the year 's best games . Hyper 's Jonti Davies commended Phantom Hourglass for its " perfect controls and

supreme world and dungeon designs ". However , he criticized the game for only giving around 30 hours of gameplay .

Game Revolution appreciated the game 's graphics , and noted that it uses the Nintendo DS 's features better than any other game for the console . Praising its " innovative " and " fun " control scheme , GameSpot felt that Phantom Hourglass " gives new life to several of the series ' age @-@ old concepts " . X @-@ Play wrote that Phantom Hourglass definitely felt like a The Legend of Zelda game , calling it another successful video game for the franchise and a " must @-@ have " for anyone that owns a Nintendo DS . The Onion 's entertainment newspaper The A.V. Club remarked that Phantom Hourglass exploits the Nintendo DS 's touchscreen to the fullest extent in an " imaginative and genuinely fun way " . In a perfect 5 @-@ star review , Empire stated that " Phantom Hourglass is one of Nintendo 's greatest achievements and a contender for the best handheld adventure in console history . "

Issues that were mentioned in reviews regarding the game included its more casual gameplay compared to previous The Legend of Zelda games , which was not well received by some . GameSpy felt that the game was both easy and approachable enough for casual gamers to play , but sufficiently rewarding and challenging to satisfy hardcore fans of The Legend of Zelda series . IGN believed the game to be " more casual than we 'd like " , but still found it captivating , entertaining , and " a true adventure worthy of the Zelda name " , calling it " different , but it 's still the real deal " . GameTrailers stated that the short dungeon levels and hand @-@ holding exploration are " outright disappointing " , but when comparing Phantom Hourglass to other Nintendo DS games , they conceded that it was still an impressive game , but just a good game when compared to The Legend of Zelda standards . 1UP.com pointed out that the biggest problem with Phantom Hourglass is that it falls back on using innovations from previous The Legend of Zelda games , rather than including new and original ideas : " Innovation arrives in tiny steps , touch screen controls be damned . "

Finding it difficult for hardcore gamers to fully enjoy Phantom Hourglass , Nintendo World Report claimed that the game 's lack of alternative control schemes was a telling sign that Nintendo did not have The Legend of Zelda fans in mind when creating the game . They still described the game as " decent " , but felt that " it ? s also a game apart from the rest of the series . It just feels different , and I think it demonstrates that Nintendo is reluctant to sail into the murky waters beyond Wind Waker . " The American newspaper The New York Times enjoyed Phantom Hourglass for the most part , but complained about the timer in the Temple of the Ocean King as unnecessary and gimmicky , remarking that the game 's dungeons are only " fun to go through once , but none of them are fun enough to go through 20 times " . They noted that the time spent traveling through dungeons " removed all thoughts of it being perfect " .

Several websites named Phantom Hourglass the 2007 DS Game of the Year , including IGN and GameSpy . It was also mentioned in Best of the Year lists from Wired , Time , and Edge . The game received Editor 's Choice awards from GameSpot and IGN . It was also named Best Adventure Game by 1UP.com. The game was designated the Best Handheld Game at the 2008 Golden Joystick awards , the 2007 Game Developers Choice Awards , the 2007 GamePro Editors ' Choice awards , the 2007 Spike Video Game Awards , and the 2008 Interactive Achievement Awards . At E3 2006 , Phantom Hourglass was designated as the Best Nintendo DS Game by GameSpot and the Best Handheld Game at the Game Critics Awards . The game placed 38th in Official Nintendo Magazine 's 100 Greatest Nintendo Games of All @-@ Time .