# FISH

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| **Name:** | **Fish?** |
| **Company:** | **Atari** |
| **Programmer:** | **Mike Albaugh?** |
| **Year:** | **1983** |
| **Released:** | **No** |
| **Notes:** | **Discovered in 2025** |

**Talk about your wild discoveries! Fish (at least that's what the file was called) is an entirely unknown game that was discovered in a programmers personal folder on a backup tape from one of the old Atari mainframes. That alone makes for an interesting story, but the more cryptic part is that this was the Atari Coin-Op division's mainframe, not the Consumer Engineering Division's mainframe which was the one used by the Atari 2600 programmers. Why this game was on the Coin-Op mainframe is anyone's guess, but it may be that Coin-Op programmer Mike Albaugh was playing around with some 2600 programming in his spare time (he wouldn't be the first Coin-Op programmer to do this). Another explanation is that the real programmer sent the game to Mike for his feedback.**

**Mysterious origins aside, what exactly is Fish? Fish is a cute little action game where you control the titular fish in an effort to eat everything in sight. You can move the fish up and down around the screen and also swim forward or backwards which makes the fish move in a little 'chugging' motion like he's actually swimming. At first you'll only see worms moving back and forth across the screen. These worms are completely defenceless and can be eaten without worry. However after a level or two the game will begin to introduce new elements including eggs, power balls, enemy fish, large enemy fish, large worms, and even squids.**

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| **Worms** | | **Worms are your basic enemy and can't actually hurt the player. However if left alone too long they'll turn into eggs. Worms can be gobbled up for 50 points each.** |
| **Giant Worms** | | **Giant Worms are what happen when you shoot the power ball at a regular Worm (don't try this at home kids). They're still harmless but now worth 100 points.** |
| **Eggs** | | **Eggs move across the screen like worms but will turn into Enemy Fish if you don't eat them fast enough. They're worth 100 points** |
| **Power Ball** | | **Eating a Power Ball will allow the player to shoot a magic bullet. Power Balls are worth 350 points** |
| **Squids** | | **Squids can be summoned by shooting a magic bullet at an Egg or Enemy Fish. Eating a squid will turn the player into a big fish and award them with 450 points.** |
| **Enemy Fish** | | **Enemy Fish appear if an Egg is left alone too long or as regular enemies on higher levels. Enemy Fish can actually eat the player if they lunge at you. The secret to defeating them is to carefully eat them first and not be in front of their mouths. Eating an Enemy Fish is worth 500 points.** |
| **Giant Fish** | | **As the name implies Giant Fish are an even bigger version of the Enemy Fish. Giant Fish are larger, quicker, and more dangerous than their smaller cousins but can be eaten the same way. Eating a Giant Fish is worth 1000 points.** |

**To Actually eat an enemy you must push the fire button as simply touching an enemy will make you go right through it. Pushing the fire button will make your fish lunge forward and gobble up whatever is in his path (Enemy and Giant Fish attack you in the same way). After eating all the enemies you'll move onto the next wave. There are 99 waves in total and you can select a starting wave in increments of five (5-95) on the title screen. This is a nice touch for people who want to see how difficult the game gets at the later levels. The higher levels include features such as the enemies moving in a wave pattern around the screen instead of just back and forth in their rows and super dangerous Giant Fish.**

**If you see and gobble up a power ball you'll be able to shoot out a 'magic bullet' of sorts. This bullet will move forward for a short distance and then drop down towards the bottom the screen (it will also bounce off the sides of the screen if it touches them), so make sure you're close to your target before you shoot or towards the top of the screen. The bullet has different properties depending on what you shoot with it. If you shoot it at a worm it will turn it into a giant worm which is worth double the points. However if the bullet hits an egg or enemy fish it will summon the squid which can be eaten to turn the player into a big fish for a short period of time. When the player is in 'big fish mode' everything they eat is worth an extra 100 points, but seems to provide no other benefit.**

**Fish is a fun little game and seems to be complete with sound (which changes every level), music, and a demo mode. Fish even features a pause mode (using the Colour/B&W switch) which was just starting to become the norm for 2600 games at this time. It's unknown if Fish was ever supposed to be a real game or if the programmer was just having some fun in their spare time, but given how much work went into it it's probably the former. Assuming it was meant to be a real game, it probably would have had to be 'beefed up' a bit with a little more variety and content. As is the game is only 4K which is absolutely tiny at the time (late 1983) when most games were 8K or 16K in size.**

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