

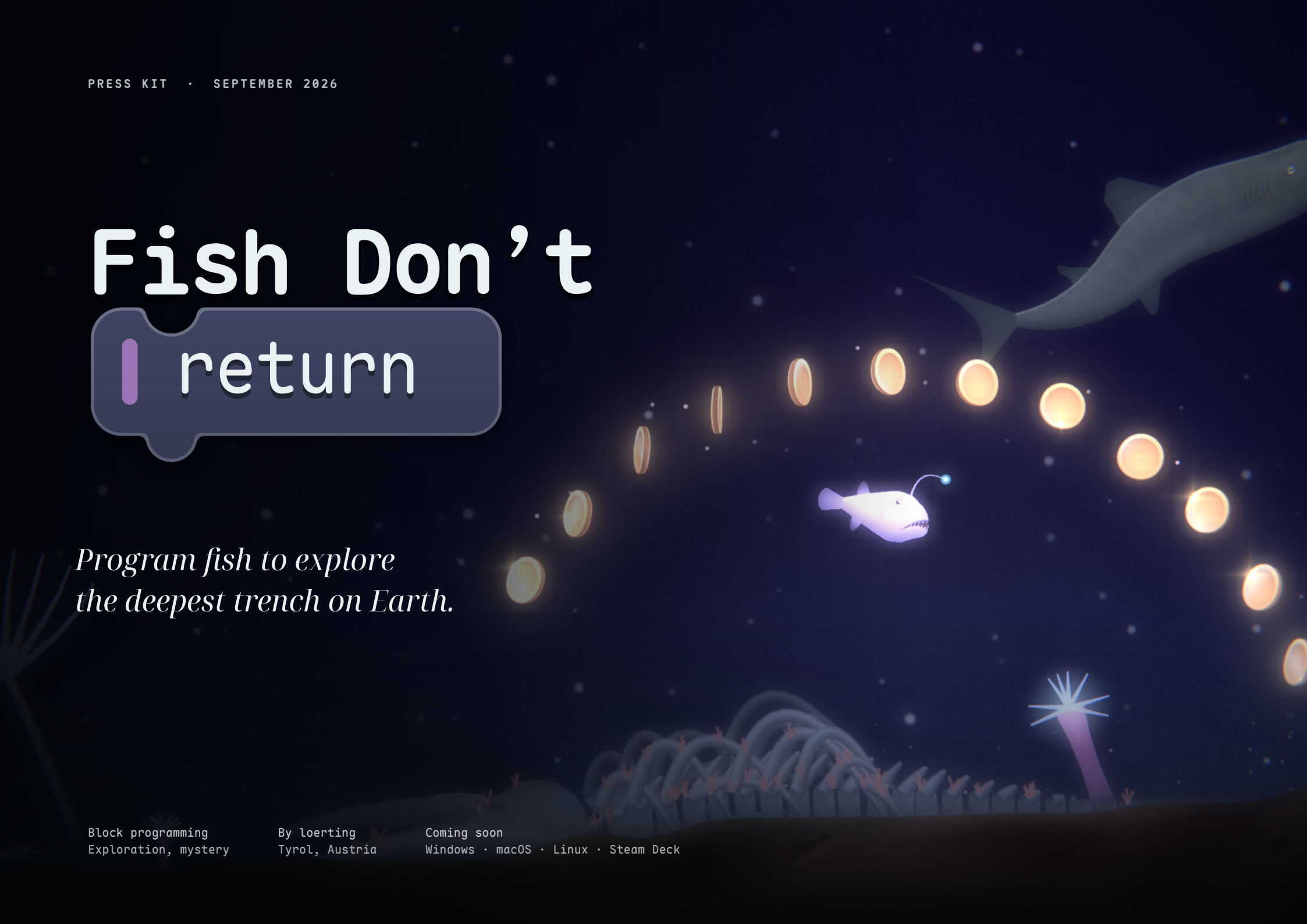
Fish Don't I return

*Program fish to explore
the deepest trench on Earth.*

Block programming
Exploration, mystery

By loerting
Tyrol, Austria

Coming soon
Windows · macOS · Linux · Steam Deck



AT A GLANCE

A programming game in the Mariana Trench

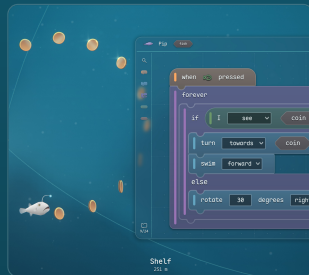
In *Fish Don't Return* you buy a fish with coins, drop it into the sea and give it a program made of blocks. Once you press play it acts alone, doing exactly what its program says as it works its way down the trench after coins and chests. A fish can be programmed to come back up, but most of them never do. Whatever they find is yours to keep: coins for the next fish, new blocks and new kinds of fish.

At the bottom lies a ship broken in two. She went down in 1966, far out over the deepest water on Earth, and her searchlight is still turning.



01 Drop a fish in

Buy a fish with coins and drop it into the sea by hand.



02 Program it

Drag blocks into its program, like swim, turn and "do I see a coin?", then press play.



03 Keep what it finds

Chests hold coins, new blocks and new kinds of fish, and they stay yours after the fish is lost.

FACT SHEET

DEVELOPER & PUBLISHER

loerting

BASED IN

Tyrol, Austria

RELEASE

Coming soon

PLATFORMS

Windows · macOS · Linux · Steam Deck

PRICE

To be announced

GENRE

Programming · Exploration · Mystery

PLAYERS

Single-player, offline

CONTROLS

Mouse and keyboard

LANGUAGES

English

ENGINE

Godot 4

PRESS CONTACT

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STEAM

store.steampowered.com/app/5270480



How a dive works

Once a fish is in the water, its program is all it has. It sees what is in front of it and nothing through rock, so when the program asks "do I see a coin?", the answer depends on where the fish is and which way it faces. You decide when it turns, how long it waits and how deep it goes. While it swims you can pause the water or speed it up.

Coins lie in trails that lead into caves. Chests sit on ledges and at the ends of side passages, and the one a fish swims into might hold a block that lets your fish tell how deep they are, or a Hauler, a slow and heavy fish that can take a beating.

Fish are lost all the time. A lost fish stays where it sank, and you can open it to read the program it was running and see where it went wrong.



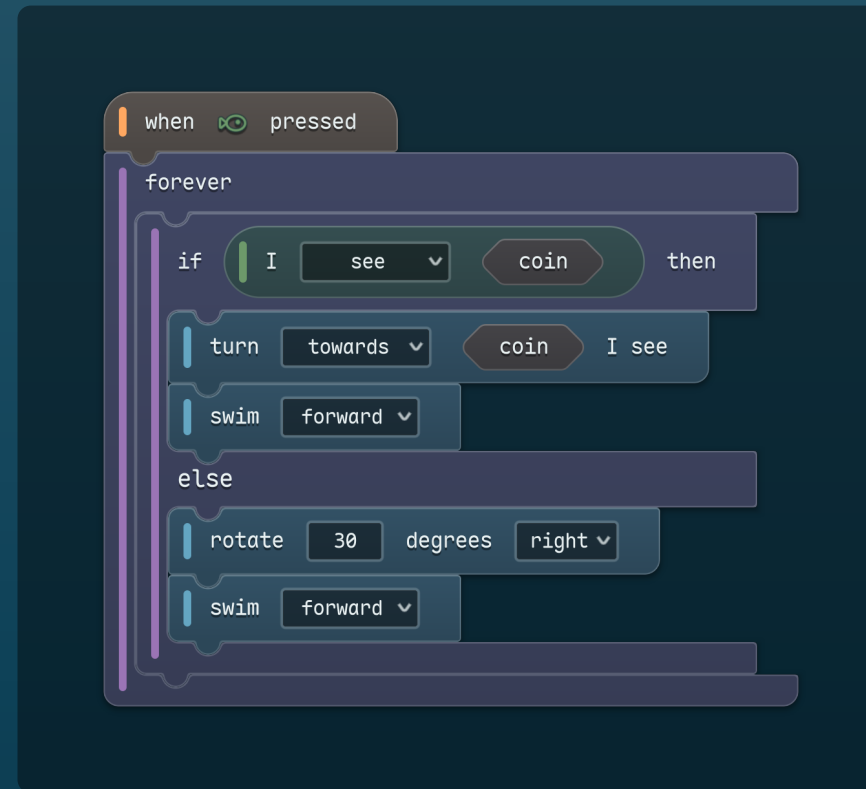
Programs you can read out loud

Fish Don't Return is the first programming game whose block programs read as plain English.

The program on the right is all a fish needs to start with: it turns until it spots a coin and then goes after it.

Blocks snap together, so there is no syntax to get wrong and nothing to memorise. That makes the game a good start for people who have never written a program, and for anyone who wants to learn.

Programs grow as the dive goes deeper: follow a wall, dive until 2,000 m, wait until a hunter looks away, head back up when health runs low. New blocks come from chests.



Pip's program, as the game draws it.



HUNTERS

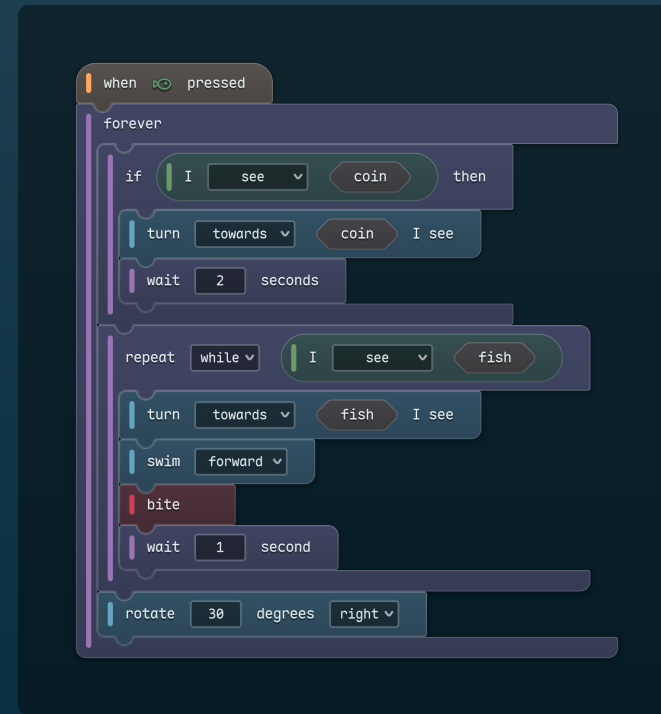
Hunters run programs too

The trench has its own hunters, and their behaviour is written in the same blocks your fish use. Click a hunter to open its program and read exactly what it will do, bites included.

The lionfish on the right stops to stare at any coin it sees for two seconds. Knowing that, you can write a fish that slips past behind it while it stares, or one that attacks it.

Some dangers stay put. Snappers grow out of the rock with a coin hanging in front of their jaws, and clams blow bubbles that push fish into the rock. Their programs can be opened too.

On the Shelf you can stop a fish and change its program as often as you like, so it is the place to try things out. Deeper down, a program is much harder to change once the fish is in the water, and a plan has to work before you let go.



A lionfish and its program, as the game shows it when you click on it.

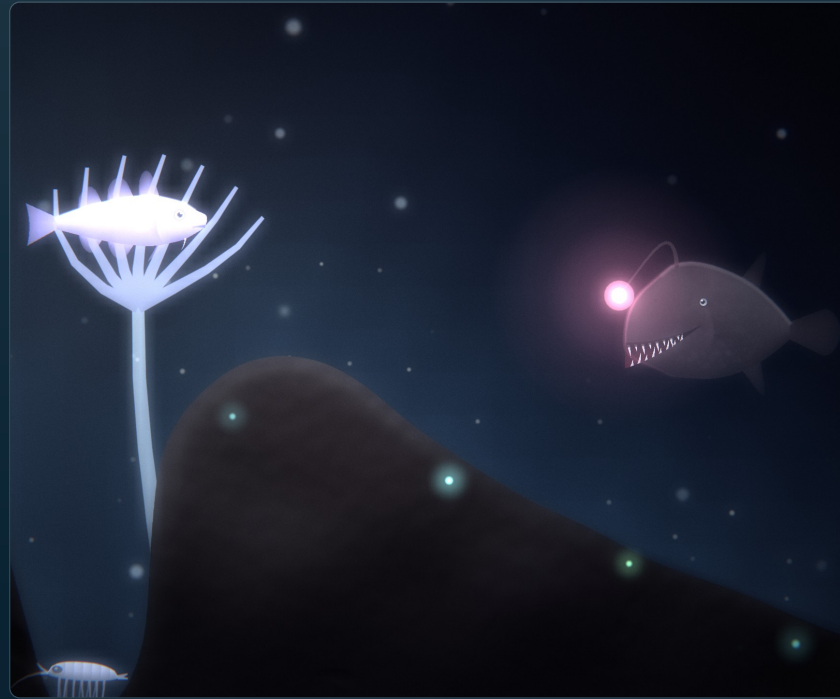


TWO OF THE HUNTERS



Marlin VENT FIELD

The marlin patrols the Vent Field alone and charges faster than any fish you can buy. It winds up before each charge, raising its sail, and that moment is a fish's chance to turn away. After three charges it gives up.



Anglerfish GLASS GARDENS AND BELOW

The anglerfish never chases. It hangs in the dark with a light in front of its mouth and waits. A fish whose program says "swim towards the light", which is a good plan almost everywhere else in the trench, swims straight in.





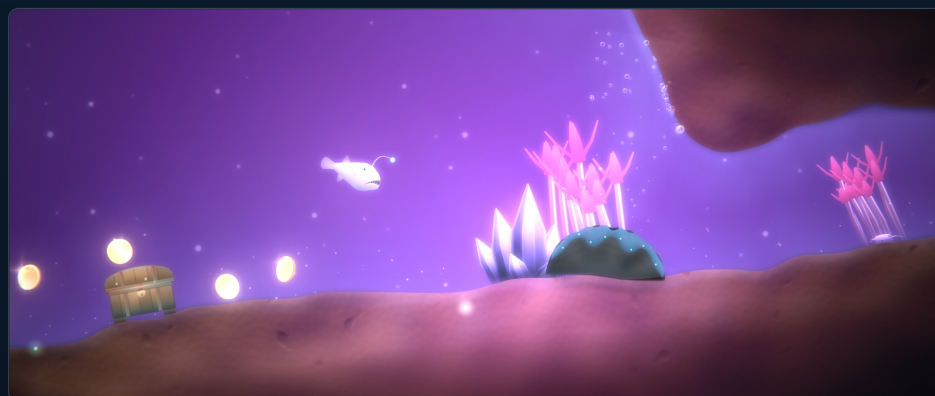
THE TRENCH

One hand-built trench, 11 km deep

The map is a single cross-section of the Mariana Trench, built by hand and the same for every player. It gets darker the deeper you go: bright at the surface, dim by the Narrows, and below the Vent Field the only light comes from your fish and the animals living there.

On the way down there are black smokers ringed with tube worms, a whale skeleton under an arch of coins, kelp that bends as fish swim through it, and crabs and shrimp that scatter.

And there are things that don't belong on the seabed. An anchor lies in the sand of the Shelf with its chain snapped, and more pieces of a ship are strewn down the slopes below it, all the way to the floor, where her searchlight still turns in the dark.



A crystal in a cave 3.7 km down. Inside its light, a fish's program can be changed again.



WHY PLAY IT

What makes it different

■ Programming in plain English

Blocks snap together into sentences a newcomer can read, so there is no syntax to learn before the first dive.

■ Read the enemies

Hunters, snappers and clams run programs you can open. Read one, find its weak spot and write a fish that uses it.

■ Piano and string orchestra

Every region has its own piece: piano played by the developer, set for strings, and the music changes as your fish go deeper.

■ Watch your fish explore

You write the plan, then watch a fish carry it out on its own, down caves and past hunters you have never seen.

■ The wreck of the Nadir

A ship lies broken at the bottom of the trench. What is left of her lies along the way down, and each piece tells a little more of what happened.

■ Lost fish tell you why

A lost fish lies where it sank with its program still inside, so a failed dive shows you what to change.

FISH TO BUY



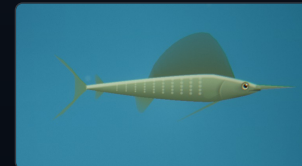
Minnow

Small and cheap. Slips through narrow gaps.



Scout

The all-rounder. Nothing special, nothing lacking.



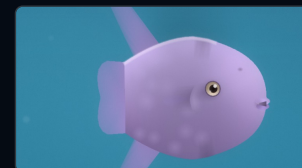
Dart

The fastest thing in the water.



Lantern

Lights up the dark, but everything sees it coming.



Hauler

Slow and huge. Takes a beating and hits hard.



Thinker

Room for long programs. Thinks a little slower.



THE NADIR

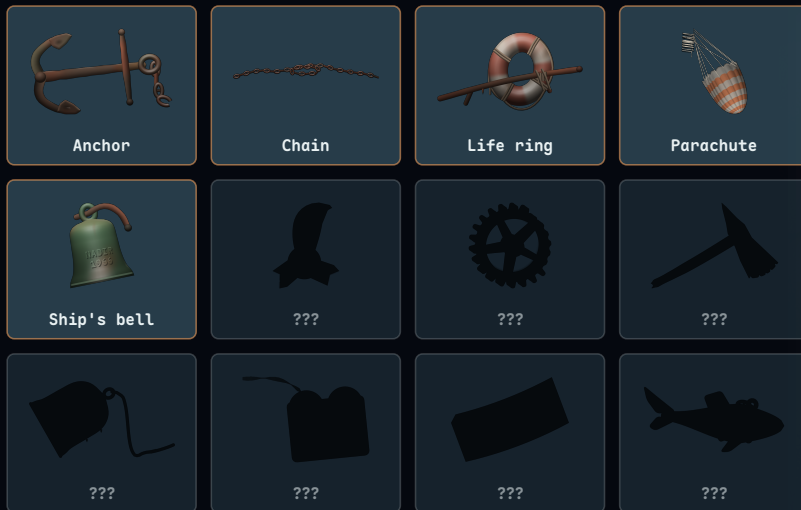
What happened to the Nadir?

At the bottom of the trench lies a ship broken in two. She went down in 1966. Her searchlight still sweeps the dark, and when one of your fish comes near, the beam stops and stays on it.

Twelve things from her lie along the way down, starting with an anchor on the Shelf. Each has a line or two of text, and read in order they tell her story. The game tells nothing else, and your fish have to reach every one of them.

*Silk, still breathing in the current.
Nothing is tied to the end of it.*

The parachute, 3.5 km down, as the game describes it.



The artefact menu. What your fish have not found yet is blacked out.



THE STUDIO

About the developer

loerting is Leonhard Kohl-Lörting, a solo developer in Tyrol, Austria who studied computer science at the University of Innsbruck.

The previous game, *Vena*, a roguelike automation game on a hex grid, won Godot Wild Jam #85. The design, code and music of *Fish Don't Return* are all by the same person.

COVERAGE

You are welcome to stream, record and publish videos of *Fish Don't Return*, including monetised ones. Review builds, full-size screenshots, logos and key art are available on request.

CREDITS

DESIGN, CODE, MUSIC	Leonhard Kohl-Lörting
ENGINE	Godot Engine (MIT licence)
TYPEFACE	Maple Mono (SIL Open Font Licence 1.1)
PALETTE	Ancient Heritage 30

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