**ABYSSONAUT**

**A C64 SEUCK Game**

**By Anthony Stiller**

**6 days ago:** Deep Sea Research Station Crouch End 01 reports that core drilling has uncovered "samples of [REDACTED] far beyond our expectations."

**4 days ago:** Reports from Deep Sea Research Station Crouch End indicate an increase in magnitude of localised seismic activity that "has caused a section of the trench wall to fall away, revealing a great [REDACTED]."

**3 days ago:** Reports, occasionally confusing, speak of a malady that has struck down some researchers in the station causing hallucinations and severe paranoia.

**2 days ago:** Garbled and sometimes completely incoherent reports come flooding in from Crouch End. Panic, terror and insanity seems to have taken a hold of the entire research station. One communique speaks of marine creatures trapped, driven mad, mutated, and worse.

**1 day ago:** All contact with Deep Sea Research Station Crouch End 01 is lost

**Today:** You get the call.

As a Deep Sea Reconnaissance and Rescue Operative aka ABYSSONAUT, you have volunteered to brave the crushing depths and violent creatures, free any helpless marine life you find and discover what has happened to the Crouch End Research Station. You head out at once, plunging into the ocean on your DSRRO Manta class seascooter.

**How to Play**

At the title screen press the fire button to start the game.

Control your Abyssonaut using a joystick in port 2. Unlike most side-scrolling shooters ABYSSONAUT scrolls from left right.

During play, pressing fire unleashes one of the high explosive-tipped harpoons currently loaded into your twin harpoon launchers. Your harpoon launchers reload after a harpoon has either exploded or reached maximum effective range. As per DSRRO safety regulations only two harpoons can be 'hot' at a time.

GOOD LUCK!

**Hints and Tips:**

* ABYSSONAUT comprises of two levels. The second level has been deliberately designed to be more difficult than the first and its difficulty spike rises rapidly as you reach the end of the level.
* An extra life is gained at 10,000 points.
* Watch for trapped killer whales. These can be freed for bonus points.
* Other bonus points may also be discovered by a wary eyed ABYSSONAUTs.
* He or she who hesitates is lost.

**ABYSSONAUT Design Notes**

ABYSSONAUT was built in the Sideways SEUCK engine (created by Jon Wells) for the RGCD SEUCK 2015 competition run by Richard Bayliss.

This is my second SEUCK game. My first real attempt was Sopwiths & Pterrordons (Available here: <http://antstiller.itch.io/sopwiths-pterrordons>) which a surprising number of people liked. Also, I seem to have a thing for choosing enemies that are difficult to animate.

The choice for an undersea shoot-em-up happened almost immediately. After that I carved up the project and tried to approach it iteratively (if you know anything about the AGILE framework, yeah, something like that).

I initially wanted three levels in ABYSSONAUT however I needed to manage my scope so cut it back to two. I combined the ideas I had for the second and third end-of-level bosses to make what you see in the final release.

ABYSSONAUT is far more difficult than S&P. This was a deliberate design choice. At the time of writing these notes no one that I’m aware of has reached the end of level 2.

Although the difficulty is ramped up there are similarities to S&P. I have created deliberate set pieces, as it were, that need to be handled accordingly. The action happens in distinct waves, giving rest times for the player (I have, however, added a lot more variety in ABYSSONAUT with the game itself is about four times the size of S&P).

ABYSSONAUT took about 110 hours to create, including design (but not including playtesting by friends).

**Files**

abyssonaut.prg – compressed snapshot (tested to be compatible with SD2IEC and 1541II-U)

abyssonaut.d64 – uncompressed disk image (NOT compatible with SD2IEC)

abyssonaut\_data.d64 – the ABYSSONAUT SEUCK assets disk image

abyssonaut.docx – this document