

Pokémon Snap for Nintendo Switch is almost here: The game designed to 'catch them all' is charming and laid back

April 29 2021, by Brett Molina, Usa Today



Credit: Pixabay/CC0 Public Domain

Yes, you've still "gotta catch them all," only this time you're doing it with a camera.

Pokémon Snap is the latest adventure starring Pikachu and friends for the Nintendo Switch launching April 30. The [video game](#) is basically what happens if you went on safari, only instead of finding lions and giraffes, you're seeking out Pokémon like Torterra and Swannas.

You play as a research assistant, working for Professor Mirror to explore islands in the fictional Lentai region. Some of the Pokémon and their environments carry a special glow, and it's up to you and the professor to learn why it's happening.

Typically, Pokémon games feature the player as a trainer who seeks out elusive Pokémon, captures them, then trains them for battle against other creatures. Snap seems to offer the trappings of your typical Pokémon game: lots of colorful creatures to discover and the opportunity to "capture" them. But Pokémon Snap is a more relaxing experience.

Players are equipped with a camera as they ride in a robotic vehicle called the Neo-One, slowly cruising through jungles, forests and other areas in search of Pokémon in the wild. If a Pokémon sits too far away, you can tap a button and hold to zoom. As you move further, you'll receive a scanner to uncover hidden spots and apples to help lure creatures out.

In many cases, you'll revisit these same regions at night, which means encountering different creatures or witnessing Pokémon exhibiting different behaviors.

The goal in each expedition is to capture the best pictures possible of individual Pokémon to add to your Pokédex, an index of every creature. At the end of each jaunt, you will present your pictures to Professor

Mirror for review.

Each photo is scored based on five categories: pose, size, direction they're facing, placement within the photo and whether other Pokémon are present.

As you complete sets of photos for each creature, you can then edit those photos with filters or stickers and share them with friends or family who also play.

Snap still provides the urge to find every creature available, but it's more laid back than previous Pokémon games. Did I just miss a flying Pidgeon? I can go back through again and look for it on the next expedition. The ability to replay runs through an island region takes the anxiety off whether you missed something.

Nintendo has proven itself master of the soothing video [game](#) experience, as witnessed by last year's smash hit "Animal Crossing: New Horizons." It delivers something just as charming and chill in "Pokémon Snap."

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Citation: Pokémon Snap for Nintendo Switch is almost here: The game designed to 'catch them all' is charming and laid back (2021, April 29) retrieved 2 May 2024 from <https://techxplore.com/news/2021-04-pokmon-snap-nintendo-game-charming.html>

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