

Ecco The Dolphin FAQ/Walkthrough

by mst3kman

Updated to v2.0 on Jan 3, 2017

This walkthrough was originally written for Ecco The Dolphin on the GENESIS, but the walkthrough is still applicable to the SEGACD version of the game.

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ECCO THE DOLPHIN FAQ ver. 2.0

by "T3"

Updated: 2014-- Ten years later, I came back to this FAQ to add some information I've gathered, improve the strategies for a few of the stages, and I've added a new trivia section at the end. Additionally, I've done extensive rewrites mostly because I can't handle my awful writing style from a decade ago.

In particular, I've added stage info for City of Forever, The Machine, and I've included a clever glyph-bypass trick I never knew about until very recently!

Meanwhile, this FAQ has been viewed over 20,000 times! Thank you for your interest, and I hope this guide has been helpful to all 20,000 of you!

Updated: 3/14/2005-- Clarified some rather ambiguous instructions on rescuing the first dolphin in "The Vents". Thanks to Pure Mind for pointing this out!

7/26/2004

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0. INTRODUCTION

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This is (hopefully) a comprehensive guide for the Genesis/Mega Drive version of Ecco the Dolphin. That is to say, it doesn't contain info for the few stages exclusive to the Sega CD version, but most of the information otherwise applies. Keep in mind also this is based on my experience playing the US version of the game, with only a few differences in the Japanese version mentioned, only if I happened to know about them.

I recall this as being one of the most infuriatingly difficult games I'd ever played when I first got it back in the Genesis heyday. It took about ten years before I finally beat it, and its steep learning curve drove me to the brink of insanity on more than a few occasions. Despite that, my recollections of the game are mostly fond ones, and its great, weird, beautiful aesthetic is like nothing I've seen in a game since. It goes to show that processing power isn't worth much without the creative power to put it to use.

There may be some reading this who are old school Ecco fans that want to finally find out exactly how to get past that damn inscrutable battle with the Asterite on the twenty-first level. Or, maybe there are some new players turned on by the recent re-releases on Steam and the 3DS Shop. Either way, it's easy to imagine some of the games' archaic (and at times, punishingly difficult)

design philosophy might limit one's ability to enjoy what this game really has to offer. I hope this guide can help as many fans as possible enjoy a weird and wonderful old game that, despite its shortcomings, has a definite capacity to be a significant cultural influence for those who enjoy it. Whether it's the intriguing (if geologically inaccurate) prehistoric stages, or the surreal, Geigeresque nightmare that is the final sections of the game, or the trippy prog-rock-inspired soundtrack they eeked out of the Genesis' old synthesizer chips, there's a lot that can provide a tangential learning experience for anyone who's interested.

With that in mind, on with the FAQ!

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1. CONTROLS

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No game I can recall designed with the Genesis' 3-button controller had terribly complicated controls, but I might as well cover a few things before moving on.

The A button will shoot out a wave of sonar. Holding down the A button will cause the sound wave to bounce back, displaying a map of the immediate vicinity. Hazards, enemies, air pockets, and other objects will be highlighted.

The B button will send Ecco charging forward. You can build up more force if you hit B while stationary. While moving, the B button will simply give you an acceleration boost.

The C button pushes you forward a little. The more rapidly you hit the C button, the faster you'll go.

Some time into the game, you can learn special sonar attacks. To use these attacks, hit the B button while stationary, and hit A before you charge forward. The resulting sonar blast will either confuse or injure enemies.

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2. ENEMIES

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Here's a catalog of enemies in the game, in alphabetical order:

Clams - Some clams emit healing bubbles when you "sing" at them. The one with a reddish tint to their shells are poisonous.

Crabs- Surprisingly dangerous are the crabs in this game; they jump at you and won't leave you alone until you're out of their range. They come in much larger varieties in the arctic stages.

Dark Starfish - Not to be confused with the brightly colored starfish which you can use to loosen boulders. Circles of these things will fan out and try to hit you.

There's not many of these, but they can do some damage if you're not careful.

Dunkleosteus- These green jawfish appear only in the prehistoric levels, and function just like sharks. In terms of realism, they should have been extinct long before the time period Ecco visits, but they make a pretty cool inclusion anyway.

Jellyfish - alone, they're not much trouble. As you'll soon find out, though, they can be very annoying in numbers. A single charge is enough to kill them, but it's usually best just to avoid them if possible. Singing at them causes them to freeze momentarily.

Nautiloids - These come in two forms: skinny, light-colored ones and larger, dark colored ones. The skinny ones travel in lines, like rays, but the large ones move diagonally.

Octopus - A glyph contains the tip "swim slowly past eight arms." Just tap the D pad slightly when going past one, or else it'll deal a near fatal blow with its tentacle.

Pufferfish - After they inflate their bodies, they usually start chasing after you. They can actually cause a lot of damage, if you don't get rid of them or loose them right away.

Sea Horses - Rarely seen (thank god) these huge creatures block your path in and out of caves. They'll launch baby sea horses at you when you strike them; otherwise they just float there. Invincibility shields are very useful.

Sea Worms- When you pass near these sessile creatures, they grab ahold and attempt to hold you until you drown. To escape, point yourself diagonally away from them and charge in a straight line, occasionally alternating to pumping with C to reorient yourself.

Sharks - They come in several forms, some are aggressive and others barely notice you. In either case it's best to keep your distance, because they can deal massive damage and take quite a bit of effort to kill.

Sting Rays - They drift along straight lines. Avoid touching them as best you can.

Trilobites - These bottom-dwelling crabs are able to penetrate walls and barriers to chase you down. They're inexplicably fast and dangerous. Kill them as fast as possible.

Vortex Drone - They only appear in the penultimate and final stages of the game. You must attack them with your sonar as a projectile; they take two hits each. Careful of the injured ones; they move more quickly and can gang up on you.

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3.          WALKTHROUGH
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i. Home Bay
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This is a basic, open-ended stage to let you get acclimated to the controls. To trigger the story event, you must build up speed and jump as high into the sky as you can. (Note, you must do this in an open area- it won't work if you're behind the cliffs on the edge of the stage.) After the whirlpool, head to the small save on the far right, where you'll find the exit.

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ii. Bay of Medusa
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(Note that you now have a health and air meter.)

First, jump the first small island and head down. Go left into the air pocket and jump over the small rock pillar which bisects the chamber. Now swim down, right, down some more, and right again. Touch the key glyph and go back the way you came. The exit is found at the rightmost extremity of the stage. Use your sonar to dislodge the glyph and exit.

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iii. Undercaves

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Head up and touch the first glyph. To your left is a barrier glyph, use your sonar to knock it down. Charge by the next pit before the current pulls you down. Go under the big rock in the next chamber (the current above can't be overcome) and charge the shells until you have cleared a path.

Swim up until you see 3 jellyfish near a small cave. Head right (might want to surface in the air pocket.) Further right down the tunnels is a key glyph, with several puffer fish blocking the way.

Once you get the key glyph, head back out to the main chamber. On the small platform in the upper right is a glyph and a conical shell. Push the shell off to the right and maneuver it into the vertical barrier of round boulders. The shell will destroy them, allowing you to pass through. Within the cave is a barrier glyph, knock it out to proceed to the chamber with the octopus.

There are two methods for getting past this area. First, the "official" method: position yourself upward, and tap the D pad so as to go SLOWLY past the octopus. Once past, go left to get a key glyph, and double back. Hurry so you don't drown, but remember to go slowly past the octopus on the way down too.

A sneakier method is possible. When you get to the octopus, rather than going up to get the key glyph, simply head down to the left side of the barrier glyph. Charge, and swing Ecco back facing the opposite direction as soon as you reach the glyph. If you manage it right, Ecco will be bounced by the glyph repeatedly, eventually being squeezed down into the chamber below without having to remove it. (NOTE: There are only a few occasions in the game where there is enough of a gap where this is possible. It's worth noting that this is a design oversight which was fixed in the Japanese version of the game.)

Once past the glyph, head left. Allow the upward current to push you into the ceiling, and move past the spikes. In the chamber all the way left is a key glyph. Get it, head back, and remove the final barrier glyph blocking the small cave to the exit.

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iv. The Vents

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This stage is a welcome change of pace. To exit the stage, simply head as far right as you can go from where you start. Below the floating island is a tunnel with an upward current and a loose boulder you can use to go down. At the very bottom is a pair of tunnels, the bottom of which is blocked by a glyph. The unblocked tunnel is the exit.

However, this stage has the first of two optional side-missions, which involves rescuing three lost dolphins. It's worth doing this, because you'll be rewarded with a powered-up attack.

You'll notice a dolphin nearby when you start the stage. Talk to her to begin the mission.

FIRST DOLPHIN

You'll find the first dolphin by heading straight down (use the loose boulder just to the right of the upward current to make your way down) and entering the third cave on your left. Swim just in front of him and he'll follow you. While you're here, head into the chamber below where you found the dolphin and get the key glyph.

SECOND DOLPHIN

After returning the first dolphin to its mother, head back down and enter the third cave on your right. Use your sonar to knock the barrier glyph out of the way, and grab the other key in the cave at the top of the large chamber. Head below, and break through the shell wall and move the next barrier glyph out of the way. Head up through still another shell wall. Further up, there's another key glyph. Further up still there's another barrier, behind which is the second dolphin. Bring him back the way you came, grabbing key glyphs and knocking out barriers as you come across them.

THIRD DOLPHIN

Once you've returned the second dolphin, make your way to the right and jump over the islands. Once you've passed the 4th island, head down and use the rock to swim downward. On the second cave to the left you'll find another key glyph. Use the boulder near the mouth of the cave to swim down to the bottom of the pit and get rid of the final barrier. Inside the cave behind said barrier is the third and final dolphin. Return him and you'll get the charge sonar move, accomplished by hitting B and pressing A immediately after.

The cave just above where the third dolphin was is the exit.

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v. The Lagoon

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Here is featured the second of the optional rescue missions. Since dolphins can be found mostly in places you have to go to get through the stage, it's worth doing for another upgrade.

FIRST DOLPHIN

From where you start, head straight down past the sharks, where you'll find a trapped dolphin. Lead him back to the top of the pool, and jump over the island to your right.

SECOND DOLPHIN

Once he's returned, head back the other way and jump over the next 3 islands and head down until you see another cone-shaped shell. Run it into the round boulder in your way and head through the gap to your right. Get the second dolphin and grab the key glyph in the cave below you. In the upper right-hand corner of the cavern there's some starfish. Use your sonar to direct them back to the round boulders, which have respawned by now. Running the stars into the boulders will destroy them somehow. Return the second dolphin and head back to the pool you started in.

THIRD DOLPHIN

Head down and enter the second cave on your right and destroy the shells in your way. Enter the cavern nearer the bottom and find the cave with the starfish in it. Direct them back into the larger cavern and then straight up towards the octopus. (This one's far easier to avoid.) Use the starfish to destroy the boulder just behind the octopus and proceed right. (Make sure not to get hurled up by the current here.) Further in the cave there's a barrier

glyph. Get rid of it and head down. Enter the cave on your left, head down, and head left again. Lead the dolphin out the way you came and bring him back to his pod. Your song will now immobilize sharks.

Go back past the octopus, head all the way down the cave this time. (Avoid the worms; see 'enemies' section for details on how to escape.) Destroy the shell wall and hurry past the crabs. Get some air, and take out the nearby pufferfish. Enter the lower cave and hurry past more crabs. At the end of the tunnel head up and left. In the upper right hand corner of the big cave are some more starfish. Direct them diagonally down and straight into the cave near the bottom of the screen. (Also they make a good shield against the crabs.) At the end of the tunnel are some boulders; again use the starfish to destroy them somehow. Go up and to the right until you see a huge tunnel leading upward filled with shells. Survive the barrage to reach the exit.

NOTE: If you have trouble making it past the later half of the stage, a somewhat sociopathic (but effective!) method is to take a stray dolphin with you; if your health bar drains to zero while doing an escort, the other dolphin will disappear and your bar will refill, essentially serving as a second life bar. This necessitates that you not complete the rescue mission, though.

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vi. Ridge Water (aka "Deep Ridge")

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Head down from the starting point and use the rock to go down against the upward current. Near the bottom to the left is a cave; enter it and try to grab the cone shaped shell. Run it across the bottom and into the wall at the end of the cave. Now swim around the landmass in the center of the chamber and swim all the way up to the small cave with a key glyph.

Head back to the main chamber and go above the landmass in the center. Direct the cone shaped shell down into the wall blocking your way to the lower cave. Make your way straight through the tunnel and get rid of the barrier glyph. Head up into the next big cave, continue to go diagonally upward into the long tunnel full of sting rays. All the way at the end are some starfish. Use your sonar to push them back along the way you came. Once at the end of the cave, push them downward and take out yet another wall.

In the next chamber, head downward and swim into the small tunnel near the bottom. Once at the end of the tunnel, head upward and get the starfish from the small tunnel. Bring them down to the tunnel near the bottom, and push them along to the right. Eventually you'll take out two boulders. Swim ahead and head up into the next cave, and go into the tunnel to the left. Head diagonally up past the sinking shells, and go left once you're in the huge bay. To the far left is a small cave with an orca and a key glyph. Grab the key and head back to where you entered. Next to the cave you came through earlier is a barrier glyph. Knock it away and get past the 2 sharks to the exit.

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vii. Open Ocean

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Simply head right and avoid the droves of sharks that are out for blood. You may have an easier time if you stick to the bottom as much as possible.

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viii. Ice Zone

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You've finally reached the far north, where the Big Blue is supposed to go to die. The levels here are divided into sections, separated by huge chunks of ice. Get to a different area by jumping on top of the ice and sliding across it.

Start this level by jumping on the first mass of ice to your left. Fall into the fifth body of water you see. (This is counting ones that are frozen over.) Swim down, but watch out for arctic crabs and jellyfish. A ways down, there's a cavern with a key glyph; hit it and go back up the way you came. (If you need it, there are some edible fish two areas to the right.) Slide back to the area where you started, and swim down until you find a barrier glyph. (Use your sonar map to make sure you're going the right way.) The exit is to the right.

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ix. Hard Water
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You'll start this level surrounded by sharks. Fortunately they are all docile, but they still do damage if you run into them. Avoid them and jump up onto the ice on your left, and slide into the first open water that you see.

Going down, you should see a huge block of ice moving back and forth in the current. (One weird current...) Go straight down, darting past the blocks as soon as they move out of the way. At the bottom, there's a bunch of arctic crabs and a key glyph. Get it and head up the path to the right. Yes, there's more moving ice blocks. Avoid them as best you can until you've reached the surface. Leave through the opening that you entered and slide as far to the right of the screen as you can. Go down (for some reason, the tiger shark here has AI like a regular shark. i.e.: he'll attack you) and get past yet more ice blocks.

Below, there's a huge open area with lots of erratically moving ice blocks. Stick as close to the ice mass to your left as you can. Only one of the nearby ice blocks should move diagonally and come close enough to crush you, dart past when it moves away.

Hit the barrier glyph, go up and pass by yet more ice blocks, and get the hell out of dodge!

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x. Cold Water
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From where you start, head down and to the left, and swim up the narrow opening as quick as you can. (There's some jellyfish, but they shouldn't be too much of a problem. Just avoid them and fight the current.) Jump out to your left, and grab the key glyph hovering just above the surface. Jump back on the ice, jump over all the hazards you come across, and fall into the first opening you see. (Make sure to plan your first jump; don't wait until you're right in front of the hole or you'll run right into the spikes.)

Some ways down the narrow opening to the right (under the two glaciers you'll see) there's a barrier glyph. Swim under the next big chunk of ice you see, past the glyph, and keep going until you see the giant blue whale. (Hard to miss, really.) Talk to him, and now your next goal is to find the being known as the Asterite. Leave the way you came (hurry, you'll probably be running low on air by this point.)

Use the key glyph to knock away the barrier glyph a second time. Fight your way back to the opening by which you came in, and jump to the right as far as you can go. Going down, you'll see a shark. Just behind him is the exit. (Note: the exit isn't accessible until after you've completed the dialogue event with the

Big Blue.)

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xi. Island Zone

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Jump over the first 4 or so islands (jump no less than 4 and no more than 6) and head down into the huge chasm filled with pufferfish. There's a cave to the left a ways down, go in there and grab the key glyph all the way to the upper left. Go further down into the main pit and up into the right part of the lowest cavern. Here is one last octopus to sneak past, same as with the rest. Go over into the next chamber and rid the world of another barrier glyph, and head into the network of tunnels.

Simply head straight down until you get to the bottom, and head left. Here is one long tunnel, keep going as far left as you can until you get to a huge open cave. (Remembering to stop for breath periodically...) The next chamber is full of sharks, which will be fully aggressive again. In the upper half of the chamber there's a glyph. Hit it and head back into the long tunnel. Pass the first tunnel going upwards, and keep going until you come upon a second tunnel. Head up and take out the barrier glyph.

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xii. Deep Water

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The main strategy for this stage is to head down as quickly as possible. There are very few air pockets, so breathe at every opportunity. Firstly, head down under the big chunk of rock and head straight down the hole. Enter the second tunnel on the left. Going further down, you'll enter and exit another long tunnel, and at the bottom of the next cave is yet another set of tunnels.

Continue going down, and when you see 2 tunnels take the left one. Take the first right, then go down, then right again. Talk to the Asterite and exit the level by heading straight left.

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xiii. Marble Sea

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Head left from the tunnel where you begin; there will be a large ruin with a tunnel leading underneath it. Go into this tunnel, soon enough you'll find a strong current pushing up. Head to the left and there'll be a large block sitting on a brick surface. Push the block into the current and trail behind it, leaving enough room to charge at and destroy the chains in your way. Once past this obstacle, head left for an invincibility statue.

Head down and right to a small tunnel. Destroy the puffers and crystals in your way. Along the tunnel somewhere is a block, which you'll need to run into the chain at the end of the path to destroy it. In the room at the end of the path there's a key glyph. Head back the way you came, using the starfish to break the chain, and go down further through the tunnel on the left. All the way at the bottom there is a glyph that, when hit with your sonar, will say "Access granted". Head into the path above you, head right, and take out the barrier glyph. If you hit the Access glyph, the exit will be open.

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xiv. The Library

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Head left until you get to the large chasm. Head down until you see a big chain stretched across the span of the hole. Head left into a large hallway and go up at the end. Somewhere above you is a statue which will render you temporarily

invincible when you shoot your sonar at it. Use the block you see sinking down and push it over the large brick walls. Use it to destroy the chains. (I recommend periodically heading back for more invincibility so you don't run low on air. It will also let you work on moving the block without being attacked.)

Once that's done, proceed to the right and watch out for the huge stone plungers that move rapidly up and down. Watch their movement for a bit and dart through at just the right moment, or you'll be crushed. At the end of the next chamber is a tunnel leading upward. Watch out again for these crystals that sink down towards you, as they can cause a lot of damage. A single charge will destroy them.

Now head left, avoiding the crystals mounted on the floor and ceiling (these ones can't be destroyed) and keep moving until you get to the exit.

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xv. Deep City

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This level starts out with a tremendous wall you have to jump over. Back up and get a running start to build some speed. Charge as soon you reach the surface and hopefully you'll clear the wall in less than 50 tries. (Ignore the chamber below where you start; as far as I've ever been able to tell it's some kind of red herring.)

Next, swim all the way to the right. Head down and destroy the gold colored chain by charging into it. Head all the way down and to the right, then down again. (Use the block to fight the current, and try keeping to the right.) When you see the barrier glyph, keep going further down and you'll find its corresponding key glyph. Now blast the barrier away and use the invincibility statue to restore your health and air.

Head up and over the wall, taking out any chains you come across. When you're going down, you'll see two paths. Take the higher one and head upwards until you see another, larger tunnel. Follow the winding tunnel, taking out the crystals as you see them, until you see a pit heading down. (Be sure to make use of the invincibility statue here.)

Head straight down using the block and then dart left. Get the glyph to grant you access to the exit, and head back up and to the left. There are a few strong current pulling upward; dash past them or you'll have to use the blocks to fight the currents back down to the main tunnel. (and this is a very tricky and tedious task...) Dart quickly past the second current and you'll have reached the exit.

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xvi. City of Forever

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There are two ways to get through this stage: the standard method and a massive short cut. Skip below to see it; I provide the standard directions for completion's sake.

The standard method involves following the path from the beginning right, up and around to the left. As you head left through the large hallway full of diamond-like hazards, keep an eye out for a lone jellyfish. Press into the ceiling near the jellyfish; you'll find a hidden passage going up into the first pool.

(Note: it is possible to jump into the first pool from the leftmost vertical tunnel, but it's extremely difficult. I'm not sure what, if anything, the glyph

at the end of the diamond hallway does in the US version. In the Japanese version, you must sing to it to open the hidden vertical path I just described.)

Now, you must leap over the walls to the right until you fall a long ways down into a large open area. Down and to the right is a glyph that will make you invincible. To the upper right is a forked path, with a current pulling upward and another pulling to the right. Avoid getting pulled up, and head to the right while staying close to the ceiling. A small upward path will appear in the ceiling; make sure you get in there before the current pushes you past it. Keep moving along, until you find a huge chasm opening below you with diamond like objects drifting laterally. Get to the bottom, where a glyph will open a doorway. Go back up, and destroy the gold chains in your way, jump over the mound, heading left.

Eventually you will find a green block to push down against an upward current. Get past it, and then it's an easy track leftward until you find the time machine.

THE EASY METHOD:

From where you start, head right past the jellyfish. Eventually you will have to head upwards, and you might see a large greenish block. Swim further upward and to the right; in the upper extremity you'll see a greek statue. Hit it with you sonar and you'll see the message "Access Granted." Head back to where the green block was and swim into a chamber with a glowing circle. Enter the circle and you'll be warped straight to the end of the stage! Now just swim up and hit either of the time machine's dishes with you sonar.

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xvii. Jurassic Beach

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From where you time warped, head down and to the left. Watch out for the Dunkleosteus; these function just like sharks and are unvaryingly aggressive. Talk to the glyph, and it will summon a Pteranodon for you. (Despite what it says, you don't need to sing into the sky.) Head back up and to the right and jump into the air. The Pteranodon will catch you and bring you to another pool.

Leap between the two sand bars and into the tunnel leading downward, into the huge cavern. Swim into the rightmost pool of lava (no sic) and grab the key glyph. Swim left, and enter the second-to-last large lava pool. Head down and take out the barrier glyph at the end of the large slope. Head all the way down and HURRY through the huge tunnel. It's filled with inexplicably deadly (and extant^{寶7}) trilobites.

At the end of the tunnel is an invincibility glyph. Take out the trilobites and head up and to the right. Get another key glyph. Head back to the invincibility glyph, and head left and then up. Take out the next barrier, and go all the way up. Now go right, where you'll eventually find the exit.

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xviii. Pteranodon Pond

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From where you start, head up and jump over the small island. Head all the way to the left and talk to the glyph. It will summon another Pteranodon. Now head back to the island and the Pteranodon will airlift you to another pool. Dive down and under the first ridge of rock you see. There's a key glyph there. Grab it, and continue heading downward. Eventually you'll see a barrier glyph. Dispose of it and head into the next cavern.

In the upper right hand corner there's an invincibility glyph. Make use of it

as you head to the left. Straight up the tunnel is another key glyph. Get it and head back down, hitting the invincibility once more before you swim down to where the barrier glyph is.

Head through to the next chamber, and swim straight down to take the left path. Hurry along counterclockwise in a circle. Near the bottom of the lower portion there's another key glyph. Grab it, and watch out for the trilobite nearby. Continue along the circle until you see the leftward current. Swim up and to the right to where there's yet another barrier glyph.

Head up and to the right, riding the current through the tunnels. Once you cannot go any higher up, go left and down another tunnel. Check your sonar map for an area with 2 glyphs. The one in the room on the other side of the rock ridge is an invincibility; you can still reach it with your sonar so get it. The nearby glyph is a key glyph. Grab it and head back to the first tunnel; this time head right into the wall near the top of the cave. In the next area, head down and get rid of the barrier glyph. In the cave below is another glyph that summons a pteranodon.

Head up to the surface, going towards the left so you're in the right pit. Leap up into the thing's claws and he'll carry you to yet another pond. Swim straight to the bottom, and the exit is on the right.

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xix. Origin Beach

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NOTE: See the trivia section below for some cool, non-essential information on this stage!

Head straight down from the starting point and into the center pit, where you'll find a glyph (watch out for the trilobite.) Swim up and to the right, and jump over the island. Head straight down and take out the barrier glyph.

Head right until you see a chunk of rock in the middle of a large cave. Go under it and swim down the pit. (Go all the way down for an air pocket.) Next, swim through the upper left tunnel. Keep going left, past the air pockets, and go down the lowermost tunnel. Follow the tunnel through the caves, and when you get to a series of tunnels branching out, take the rightmost one. Once you exit this tunnel, head left and exit the stage.

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xx. Trilobite Circle

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Head up until you reach the surface. Jump over the next 3 islands to the right and head down diagonally until you see an inexplicably massive seahorse. You can just barely squeeze over or under him into the next room, just wait for him to drift downward (or upward). The glyph in here is both a key and an invincibility glyph. Get both powers, and either slip more easily past the seahorse, or kill it to get by.

Swim down, and left once you're near the bottom. Take out the barrier glyph and continue left (though there is an air pocket at the top of the room just past the glyph.) Go left as far as you can, and go straight up, making sure to take the left path. Jump straight in the air to the... exit...

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xxi. Dark Water

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Head right until you see a tunnel leading down. Dive straight down there until you get to a big chamber with some dunkleosteus. (Watch out, at one point there is a shell that moves like those ice blocks from earlier.) To the far right is a tunnel leading down, but first go straight up and get the invincibility. Head back down, where there are 2 more death shells. Get past them, and go left and up through the small tunnel. Go left, and down toward the key glyph. Go back the way you came, until you get to the room with the invincibility. Get it, and swim over to the area where a current pushes you back. (There are two spikes on the roof.) Pressed as far to the ground as you can get, charge through the opposing current. Head up the path, take a moment to mock the barrier you just snuck past (there is a LONG path you would have taken to get the corresponding key to it; I just described a feasible shortcut), and head left. Take out THIS barrier,
and head up into the Asterite's chamber.

DEFEATING THE ASTERITE:

You must strike 4 globes of the SAME COLOR while avoiding his lightning attack. (No, the game gives you no hint whatsoever to do this.) There's a concentration of orange globes in the bottom left corner that are relatively easy to hit. Once you've done this, you'll warp back to the Deep Water stage.

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xxii. Deep Water 2/ City of Forever 2/ Home Bay 2
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Same strategies as before. But once you return the Asterite's globe, you no longer have an air meter to worry about.

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xxiii. The Tube
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This whole stage is essentially an autoscrolling gauntlet. Here are some solid tips for getting through it:

☞ Early on, the walls are lined with these radiator looking things. You can maneuver back and forth to avoid them, but they can only be destroyed by a charge.

☞ As the level goes on, the auto scrolling becomes faster and faster. Soon, radar screen-like machines and gem-like antibodies will appear. They can only be destroyed by your sonar.

☞ There is only a short part of the level where both the radiator-looking barriers and the lightning cannons both appear together. After a while, it will be only lightning cannons. Stay in the middle, or near the top of the screen to reliably avoid at least some of the bolts. Most, but not all of the cannons only discharge a moment after appearing on screen. Keep pulsing your sonar to take out the patrolling antibodies before they appear.

☞ There appears to be a sort of "sweet spot" in the middle of the tube where you can travel more safely in the later phases of the stage. In the center, there is a strip of slightly lighter-colored background texture, with a bisection marking where the two halves of the tube mirror each other. Try to position Ecco exactly in a half of the light green strip in the center. If done right, you will assuredly bypass any radiator-looking obstacles on the walls as they appear.

NOTE: The US and JP versions of this stage seem to differ somewhat, so these tips might not work as well in the later.

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xxiv. Welcome to the Machine
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Welcome to hell! This is another autoscrolling stage, this one more over-the-top difficult even than the tube. Definitely infamous among Ecco fans as "That One Level." Finishing this stage takes about six minutes, probably not coincidentally about the same length as the Pink Floyd song 'Welcome to the Machine.'

This long, long autoscrolling stage can't really be FAQ'd easily, but here are a few general tips:

☞ Stay away from the edge of the screen. Keep shooting sonar blasts pretty much constantly in advance of attacking enemies, but be mindful that off-screen injured drones won't come on screen unless you stop for a second. If you don't take a break from your attack occasionally, you're liable to get swamped by the drones that have accumulated off screen.

☞ There is only one point in the entire level where you will go UP into a dark green tube-like area, and it doesn't happen until you go past it and double back.

☞ You will also go DOWN into a dark green tube at the left of the screen toward the end of the stage. Likewise, this is the only occasion where you do this.

☞ Sometimes your path is more or less bisected by a very thin block. You should stay to the RIGHT of these, especially when moving down.

☞ There are two occasions where you get corralled near a box-like structure on the left of the screen. The first time, stay OUT of the box, or you will get trapped. The second time, get in, and the screen will scroll over almost to the point of crushing you before doubling back. There is only ONE time where this happens, about two and a half minutes in.

☞ The stage is decorated with strange tank-like objects. Generally you should move AWAY from them unless you very obviously have to move toward them, and you should never go underneath one if given the option not to.

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xxv. The Last Fight
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This battle isn't all that hard once you get the hang of it, but be prepared to hate it none the less. If you get killed, you get sent back to the beginning of the Machine. (Although the JP version mercifully lets you start the stage over, and even has a recovery stage called the Stomach that triggers when you get swallowed.) Take note that, unlike the Tube and the Machine, your health does not regenerate during this stage.

☞ As soon as you start the stage, there is a drone waiting near the entrance. Start sonar-blasting as soon as you begin to take it out. Keep in mind that as soon as it's off screen, it will respawn.

☞ Next, swim down to either side of the monstrous green head. (That would be the queen.) Shoot sonar at one of her eyes until the pupil comes out. You should do blasts of three, and only when she drifts to the far side of the room, so as to avoid getting hit by the projectile spheres that issue forth when you hit her.

☞ Also watch out for the blobs that periodically come shooting out of the walls to the left, right and bottom of the queen.

☞ Once both her eyes are out, strike her jaw by charging into it. This is best done from the side, to avoid getting stuck in her mouth. (Also make sure she's not about to inhale before you do this.) Her jaw will stop regenerating after it's been knocked off 3 times.

☞ Once the jaw stops regenerating, start charging the roof of her mouth, and she'll flash red. You can actually charge her anywhere, but by facing upward you'll be in a good position to sonar blast the drones that come to her rescue when you hit her.

Eventually, she'll start flashing red and sinking off screen. Congratulations! That's the end of the game.

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4.          PASSWORDS
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The Undercaves: SYCIACCE
The Vents: MWVLACCS
The Lagoon: VDIYTAJG
Ridge Water: KCLABVNG
Open Ocean: TGQLBVNJ
Ice Zone: ZOTAEVNS
Hard Water: UOAXDVNQ
Cold Water: WZWAWJNJ
Island Zone: HGIETJNO
Deep Water: HHULTJNX
Marble Sea: JKSPVJNR
The Library: BRLTVJNN
Deep City: GZZLVJNG
City of Forever: QVEXVJND
Jurassic Beach: RHZIMCLE
Pteranodon Pond: ZESMMCLG
Origin Beach: IPLQMCLX
Trilobite Circle: XMAFCZLA
Dark Water: IXIQUNLV
City of Forever 2: BCAJGPLS
The Tube: KXGFKMLZ
The Machine: TNOBKMLC
The Last Fight: LYWMLMLU

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5.          CHEATS
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Here are some helpful cheat codes for this game:

☞ Turn Ecco back and forth and pause when he is facing you. Now press R,B,C,B,C,D,C,U. A cheat screen should come up.

☞ Enter a level password, and hold A and Start when the level name comes up. Hold A and Start until Ecco appears on the screen. Unpause and you are invincible.

☞ Enter 'LIFEFISH' as a password to get unlimited air.

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6. TRIVIA

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Here I'll provide some information which is not so much related to playing the game but which I think will be interesting to fans of the series.

¶ The original instruction manual for the game included an excerpt from *The Living Sea* by Jacques-Yves Cousteau. It also included pages of real, non game-related facts about dolphins, including anecdotes from aquarium workers. You don't see that kind of dedication in most game packaging!

¶ The manual also had a list of recommended books about dolphins:

Dobbs, Horace, *Follow the Wild Dolphins*. St Martin's Press, 1982

Howorth, Peter C., *Whales- Dolphins- Porpoises of the Pacific*. KC Publications, Inc., 1985

Patent, Dorothy Hinshaw, *Dolphins and Porpoises*. Holiday House, 1987

Seligson, Marcia, *Dolphins at Grassy Key*. Macmillan, 1989

Time-Life Television Books, Editions of, *Whales & Other Sea Mammals*. Time-Life Films, 1977

Watson, Lyall, *Sea Guide to Whales of the World*. E.P. Dutton, 1981

¶ Speaking of books, creator Ed Annunziata shared in an interview with DARK SEA some of the works that inspired the Ecco story:

Lightning by Dean Koontz, *Sounding* by Hank Searls, *Center of the Cyclone* by John Lily (and other works by Lily).

He also mentioned the Terminator films and the art of HG Geiger as influential to the concept!

¶ The (now seemingly defunct) Arkonviox Ecco fan site had a fascinating interview with Annunziata, where he shared details of the plot of Ecco. It is there that the backstory for Origin Beach was first divulged, as well as confirmation that Ecco 2's mysterious 'secret password' was meant to unlock content in the as-yet unmade Ecco part 3. At some point, Annunziata also mentioned that the mysterious 'double' who you encounter a few times early in Ecco 2 was in fact Ecco from the future, after using the time machine at the end of Ecco 2!

¶ On Origin Beach: This level contains the remnants of what was supposed to be an even explaining how Ecco's ancestors first started living in the water. Swim to the far left and far right side of the level, and shoot your sonar diagonally up into the air, where you'll be treated to two secret messages from the land-dwelling Pakicetus, the small dog-like creature that began the evolutionary track that includes all modern whales and dolphins. In regards to the plot, Ecco always wondered why his kind lived under water if they had to breathe air, and in this moment he becomes the unwitting answer to his own question! The planned sequence was cut due to time restraints.

¶ The art for the prehistoric levels was largely borrowed from the book *'Life Before Man'*, which included illustrations by Czech painter Zdenek Burian. Burian was a highly influential paleontological artist with a career spanning five decades. Odds are, any image you have in your head of a dinosaur or any

other prehistoric life form was influenced by his imaginings.

¶ However, it's worth noting that many of the creatures we see in the prehistoric levels seem to have been culled from various parts of the book, which covered many millions of years of geological history. With a few exceptions, most of the plant and animal life seen in the game should have been long extinct as of 55 million years ago! (Of course, the question would remain as to why trilobites of all things would be billed as the deadliest of all prehistoric enemies.)

¶ On Twitter, Annunziata mentioned that SEGA's marketing department originally wanted Ecco to be named Botticelli the dolphin, apparently in response to the enormous popularity of the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, all of whom were named after famous Italian figures. Fortunately, he was able to talk them out of it.

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7.      LEGAL STUFF
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