



FLAP TO THE FUTURE

Fun Facts About the Game Ecosystems

. Tawa's Ecosystem

In this floodplain from 200 million years ago, players explore a rocky environment dotted with plants from the era including seed ferns, horsetails, and cycads. Out of the swamp looms a carnivorous *Smilosuchus* with its impressive jaws snapping open and shut. *Smilosuchus* was not a direct crocodile ancestor, but rather a dinosaur (technically, a type of phytosaur) that occupied similar habitats as modern crocodiles and evolved a similar body plan. In the background, a group of *Plateosaurus* dinosaurs graze on the tall trees.

. Microraptor's Ecosystem

In this forest from 120 million years ago, players explore among the conifers. At the base of the trees an herbivorous *Psittacosaurus mongoliensis* munches away, with a tuft of bristle-like feathers clustered on its tail. Farther along, a small group of ancient *Eomaia scansoria* mammals clamber over a rock. A carnivorous *Huaxiagnathus* patrols along the ground and will snack on Microraptor if it gets the chance.

. American Robin's Ecosystem

In this modern-day farm environment, inspired by an agricultural station near the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, players can flap to the treetops, try to reach the top of a windmill, and explore the pile of hay. Along the ground, the robin encounters one of upstate New York's most common earthworms, *Lumbricus terrestris*, but must watch out for hazardous barbed wire and a roaming tractor. This scene is inspired by the real "Piglet Corner" that awaits the curious traveler.

. Future Bird's Ecosystem

In this version of the future, a marsh hosts a riot of fascinating plants in the shadow of a receding glacier. Among them are a carnivorous plant with sticky tentacles, a towering vine in full flower, and an extraordinary plant that has evolved parasol-like pods to help it spread its seeds. The radioactive waters would have been toxic to modern day species, but some organisms have adapted to thrive there including the horsetail and a crowd of small insects. Rocks and crystals dominate the geologic landscape. A descendant of modern-day apes swings in the treetops and a descendant of the mongoose that has evolved a drill-like horn searches for eggs to eat. The technology to manufacture viable eggs is maintained by a species of culturally advanced bird descendants.

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