

Contents for Comet Busters!

Comet Busters! is a high-speed arcade game based upon the popular game A*teroids.

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1 2 3 4 Buttons

Press one of these buttons to start a new game with a given number of players. For example, press **1** to play by yourself, **2** to play with two players, etc.

Start/Stop Button

If a game is not currently in progress, press the **Start** button to start a new game. The number of players in the new game will be the same as the number of players in the previous game.

If a game is already in progress, press the **Stop** button to stop the game and return to the attract mode.

Players Button

Press this button to set game options and control preferences for each player. A dialog box will pop up.

Players

Select a player number from the list box. All other fields in the dialog will change to reflect the settings of that player. Changing a field will affect the player that is highlighted in the list box.

Control

Select **Keyboard** for keyboard control, **Joystick** for joystick control if available. Press the **Setup** button to view/modify the keyboard assignments, or to calibrate the joystick.

Note: If the joystick selection is greyed, and the joystick is plugged in, you may have to go to the [.INI file](#) to activate the joystick.

Special Ability

These settings control what happens when a player presses the Special button on the joystick or keyboard. There are four options:

- None** Does absolutely nothing. Good to use as a handicap.
- Hyperspace** Creates a temporal flux around your ship, sucking it into a wormhole. The flux only lasts a few seconds, whereupon you are returned to normal space. However, due to the chaotic nature of temporal fluctuations, the location where you return is completely random. Also, there is a slight chance that you will come out of hyperspace severely distorted.
- Shields** Generates a high-Tesla magnetic field so powerful that it would make the boys at Princeton weep. This field is concentrated around the perimeter of the spacecraft, and any matter that comes in contact with the field disintegrates. The shields draw a lot of power, so they get drained with time and with contact with matter. They recharge, albeit at a very slow rate.
- Disruptor** This defense mechanism emanates a powerful reverse G-field from your ship, causing all objects in the vicinity to be repelled from it.

Attributes

The scroll bars at the upper-right corner of the dialog control certain aspects of your spacecraft which affect its performance. Drag the bar right for more, drag it left for less. However, when one attribute is increased, the others are decreased by a small amount. This way all the attributes balance evenly.

- Bullet Speed** Controls how fast your bullets go. Careful; if they go too fast they might miss small objects.
- Thrust** Controls the acceleration of your ship.
- Maximum Speed** Controls the aerodynamic properties of your ship. The further right this bar goes, the less friction.
- Rotation Speed** Controls how fast your ship turns right or left.
- Special Ability** Depends on what special ability you have. For hyperspace, this controls how often you come back distorted. For shields, this controls how fast the shields recharge. For the Disruptor, this controls the strength of the negative G-field.

Pressing the **Reset** button (the one on the screen, not the one on your computer!) sets all

attribute values to the midway point.

Game Button

Press this button to set game options that affect all players.

Difficulty

Sets the difficulty level of the game. Settings are **Simple**, **Challenging**, and **Impossible**. The higher the difficulty level, the more rocks are present, the faster the flying saucer goes, and the more cronies are hatched.

Stars in Background

Check this box if you want a background of colorful stars. Unchecking it leaves only black space, and improves performance by a small amount.

Fragmented Explosions

Check this box if you want objects to turn into a cloud of particles when exploded. Explosions slow down the system a good bit, so if you have a slow 286, you may want to deselect this option.

Pause When Inactive

If this box is checked, the game will pause when you switch away from the program using Alt-Tab or some other method.

Pause Button

Press the **Pause** button to pause the game. Then when you are ready to continue playing, press the **Continue** button.

Sound Button

Press this button to toggle sound effects on and off. When sound is enabled, the button should read **Sound**. When sound is disabled, the button will read **(sound)**.

If the program can not access a sound device, this button will be grayed.

Note: The program will not use the PC-speaker sound driver, or any other asynchronous sound device.

Music Button

Press this button to toggle music on and off. When music is enabled, the button should read **Music**. When music is disabled, the button will read **(music)**.

If the program can not access a MIDI device, this button will be grayed.

Note: You must provide your own MIDI files to hear music during the game. See the section on .INI file configuration.

Rules of the Game

Rules!?!? Don't tell me you haven't seen this game before...!

Okay, okay, the premise is very simple. Fly your spaceship around and shoot anything that moves. Your spaceship can turn left, turn right, or thrust forward. It can shoot up to four bullets at once. It can optionally be equipped with special abilities such as hyperspace, shields, or the Disruptor.

Here are the various objects in the Comet Busters! world:



Your spaceship. No neon ground effects, no hydraulic jack, no subwoofer in the trunk. Just your basic spaceship with a V-6 and a broken AM radio.



A *comet chunk*. When you hit a big one, it turns into two medium-sized ones, and you get 20 points. When you hit a medium-sized one, it turns into two little ones, and you get 50 points. Little ones get you 100 points each.



A *flying saucer*. You may think he's taking aim at you, but he's really shooting in random directions. If you bag him you get 250 points.



A *cronie*. These guys live in some of the larger comet chunks, and when you destroy their home, they come running after you. They look cheerful, but they really are quite deadly. They home in on the closest living thing, that is, your spaceship or the saucer. Pop off one of these and you get 250 points.

After you blast away all the rocks in one level, you get promoted to the next level, where the rocks are faster and more plentiful, and so are the aliens.

Multiple Players

It's fun to play with more than one person. When you shoot somebody else, it makes a satisfying *klunk* sound and knocks him temporarily out of control. You get no points for this, but it is satisfying enough anyway.

If two players collide, they both disintegrate. However, if one player hits an (unshielded) player with his shield, the other guy gets wasted. If two players hit each other with their shields, strange and chaotic things happen.

The ships are different colors depending on which player you are:

- Player 1: Steel blue
- Player 2: Burgundy
- Player 3: Slime green
- Player 4: Tan

The COMET.INI File

The COMET.INI is located in the same directory as the COMET.EXE file, and contains various settings for customizing the game. Most of these settings are accessible through the dialog boxes in the program, but a few are not:

[Game] section

```
Joystick=[0,1]
```

If this setting is 1, joystick control is allowed. If it is 0, joystick control is disabled. Since the joystick routines access I/O ports inside the application itself, enabling the joystick control may cause a General Protection Fault in some cases. If you are running Windows NT, you should set this switch to 0.

```
GameSong=[filename.mid]
```

```
EndSong=[filename.mid]
```

```
HighScoreSong=[filename.mid]
```

These settings specify MIDI files to be played through a sound device while the game is playing. **GameSong** is the song to be played while the game is in progress, **EndSong** is to be played at the end of the game, and **HighScoreSong** is played when a player achieves the high score.

```
FontName=[font]
```

This setting specifies the name of the font to be used for all messages on the game display.

Copyright

COMET BUSTERS!

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HAMCO Software, and the author, Steven E. Hugg, make no guarantees as to the correctness or applicability of this software. We are not responsible for any damage, consequential, incidental, or transcendental, caused by the use or misuse of this software.

Comet Busters! may be distributed freely provided that the five files (COMET.EXE, COMET.HLP, COMET1.DLL, COMETENU.DLL, SNDLIB.DLL) are distributed as a group, as in a single archive, that the files are not modified in any way, and that the distribution of the program does not profit monetarily any individual or organization.

Comet Busters! was written in Borland Pascal 7.0, with a few routines in assembler. The graphics were created with the BOB ray-tracer from the book *Photorealism and Ray-Tracing in C* by Christopher D. Watkins and Stephen B. Coy.

BOB is Copyright 1988,1992 Christopher D. Watkins and Stephen B. Coy

Contacting the Author

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[not yet implemented]

Controlling Your Ship

Here are the default keys for each player. They may be altered by pressing the **Players** button at the top of the screen.

	Plyr 1	Plyr 2	Plyr 3	Plyr 4
Turn left	Left arrow	A	Num 4	
Turn right	Right arrow	D	Num 6	
Thrust	Up arrow	S	Num 8	
Fire	Space bar	Left-Shift	Num 0	
Special	Right-Ctrl	Left-Ctrl	Num 2	

If you are using a joystick, here are the motions:

Turn left	Push joystick left.
Turn right	Push joystick right.
Thrust	Push joystick forward.
Fire	Push joystick button #1 (usually the trigger).
Special	Push joystick button #2.

Known Defects

- * The game does not look at all swell in 16-color mode. Sorry.
- * When your ship gets distorted after coming out of hyperspace, the colors will disappear in 256-color mode. This is a result of Windows' inability to map palette colors correctly when scaling images. If anyone knows a way around this, please let me know.
- * At high resolutions, when an explosion occurs at the far right edge of the screen, it'll sometimes leave "garbage" behind. This, I think, is attributable to a Windows bug.
- * Sometimes a player or an alien will be allowed to have more missiles in the air than he should.

If you find any other problems, or have any suggestions, please contact me [here](#).

Registration Info

Comet Busters! is a fully-functional shareware program. Support shareware and register your copy today. The registration fee is \$9.00 and should be sent to:

HAMCO Software

55 Elizabeth Ct.

Mandeville, LA 70448-7552

When you register, you will receive:

- * The latest version of **Comet Busters!**
- * A copy of **Nuclear Winter**, another classic arcade game with neat graphics and digitized sound.
- * **Full source code** to both **Comet Busters!** and **Nuclear Winter**, written in Borland Pascal (but adaptable to C).

Some of the modules you will receive include SPRITE24, which is a powerful Windows object-oriented sprite library that supports collision detection. IMATH is a collection of routines and macros for performing integer math, including fast square roots. JOYSTICK is a unit for using the joystick in Windows apps. KEYWND is a unit that displays a keyboard on the screen and lets the user choose key assignments. SNDLIB is a .DLL for playing sounds through the PC speaker, multiple digital voices through one or more sound devices, or MIDI files through a MIDI device. There are about 20 modules altogether. **I will grant you the right to use and modify any of the program's source code for any personal or commercial application, provided that the source code is not distributed, and that the product in which it is used does not look, play, or function similarly to Comet Busters!.**

