

The moveable beast

WACKO

Just how wacky a game is *Wacko*? Aside from the game's cabinet, which looks like the Leaning Tower of Pisa, *Wacko* isn't very wacky, crazy or zany. On the contrary—you are the one that gets wacky after playing just one game.

Unlike your garden variety shoot-em-up, *Wacko* requires you to blast your victims in some semblance of order. Bad guys must be shot in pairs—that is, your first shot freezes the monster it hits and the second shot, hitting another creature of the same species, kills them both.

You are represented by a gremlin-like creature that is perched on top of a "kroozer" which, for all practical purposes, is a flying saucer. This disc is piloted by a trackball. Laser blasts are aimed and fired with either the left or right joystick. You can fire in four directions and fly anywhere except off the borders of the playfield.

The mechanics of play are quite simple: Just shoot the beasts in pairs. During the first three rounds you'll encounter an increasing number of bad guys. It is to your advantage to vanquish them quickly since bonus points are awarded on the basis of time. In a pinch, you can shoot any number of the creatures to momentarily freeze them. By all means, do so when you must save your skin—but you'd be wise to get in the habit of killing off pairs with a minimum of stray shots in between. This is good practice for later rounds when things get a bit more confusing.

If you are an avid fan of *Centipede*, *Millipede* or *Missile Com-*

mand, forget everything you know about handling a trackball. All of these games require you to literally whip the controller from side to side with very little precision work necessary. To an extent you must do the same in *Wacko*, only here control and accuracy are of the utmost importance. Unlike the previously mentioned games, your

tremendously. If two back-to-back blasts hit unmatched creatures, the pair becomes a hybrid—a cross between the two. If, by chance, you create a pair of hybrids that are identical to one another, one shot at each will destroy both of them. Unfortunately, this is a rarity. If by mistake you create a dissimilar mutant pair, a second shot at each will unscramble them.

If a hybrid pair does appear, leave it alone in the interest of time and concentrate on the matched sets. By doing so, you are able to keep track of your shots. Confusion breeds hybrids. □



kroozer does not operate in a safe zone. It, like the monsters, has full run of the screen. You must move around them. All too often I found that a hastily executed move put me right in the lap of a monster. Be careful.

The joystick allows you to fire in four directions, so get in the habit of using it to its fullest potential. The natural tendency among beginners is to move the kroozer horizontally in line with the target and then fire either east or west. This works well in the earlier rounds, but you'll find that it becomes increasingly difficult to execute this maneuver when the screen becomes clogged with creatures later on.

From the third round on, misplaced shots can mess you up

