

Soft level cap of Sacred Phoenix

Pokémon Sacred Phoenix has a soft level cap based on the player's progression in the main quest. This progression is measured through **the number of talismans** and determines the experience multiplier to be applied according to the current level of its Pokémon.

Note: The tag “xxx defeated” is indicative and corresponds to the order of confrontation advised to the player, some Augurs can be done in the order of his choice or even be optional. Also, it is possible to do the League with only 9 of the 10 talismans, the fight against Houarnon (†) being optional and his talisman not increasing the levels.

As soon as the League is completed, this is the line that will be taken as a reference, even if a talisman is missing.

Level tiers chart

Number of talismans owned	XP ×8 Tier	XP ×4 Tier	XP ×2 Tier	XP ×1 Tier	XP ×0.5 Tier
0 (before the ceremony)	Nil	Nil	Nil	≤ 15	> 15
1 (Gwydion's ceremony)	Nil	Nil	< 7	7 to 18	> 18
2 (Awena defeated)	Nil	< 5	< 12	12 to 23	> 23
3 (Meirion defeated)	Nil	< 10	< 16	16 to 28	> 28
4 (Aedan defeated)	< 5	< 15	< 20	20 to 33	> 33
5 (Blodwyn defeated)	< 10	< 20	< 25	25 to 37	> 37
6 (Arianna defeated)	< 15	< 25	< 30	30 to 45	> 45
6 or 7 (Houarnon defeated) †	† No influence	† No influence	† No influence	† No influence	† No influence
7 or 8 (Erwana defeated)	< 20	< 30	< 35	35 to 50	> 50
8 or 9 (Cerridwyn defeated)	< 25	< 35	< 42	42 to 57	> 57
9 or 10 (Neñvel defeated)	< 30	< 40	< 50	50 to 75	> 75
League completed	< 40	< 50	< 60	≥ 60	Nil
Loss of dread at level up	-1	-2	-4	-8	-16
Influence on the dread balance	+5 per missing level from the ×2 tier, capped at +150			No influence	-25 per excess level

The XP ×0.5 tier corresponds to the overleveling threshold. This is where there start to be penalties on **the balance point of dread** (and therefore rub off on obedience, which acts as a second soft level cap). The level taken as a reference for the balance of dread is decreased by 4 for outsider Pokémon. This difference of 4 levels only concerns the dread (no impact on the XP tiers).

The XP ×1 tier is the recommended level range. XP gains are normal.

XP ×2 tier and above correspond to an underleveled Pokémon. It therefore gets an XP boost to compensate for this. Thus, the player can more easily make up for the delay taken by a Pokémon added along the way. The Pokémon will also be a little more fearful, but to a much lesser extent than the loss of dread when overleveling.

Each level gained also incurs a dread penalty depending on the current level: the more powerful the Pokémon is (compared to the experience of its trainer), the more the level up will strengthen its self-confidence.

Conversely, the impact will be mitigated in the event of an underlevel. Indeed, if a high-level player decides to train a very low-level Pokémon (therefore XP which rises very quickly), the trained Pokémon will quickly have a low dread with a rate of -8 at each level taken. It will then risk to disobey, which is not the goal here.

Soft level cap for catching wild Pokémons

Inspired by the system that appeared in Pokémon Sword and Shield and was refined in Scarlet and Violet, it is possible to encounter wild Pokémons that are “*very strong-looking*”. This happens when they are encountered at a level higher than your catch limit, resulting in a significantly lower catch probability and a lower starting friendship.

These thresholds are slightly lower than those for overleveling (generally 3 levels lower).

Number of talismans owned	Maximum level before penalty on capture and starting friendship
0 (before the ceremony)	15
1 (Gwydion’s ceremony)	15
2 (Awena defeated)	20
3 (Meirion defeated)	25
4 (Aedan defeated)	30
5 (Blodwyn defeated)	35
6 (Arianna defeated)	40
7 or 8 (Erwana defeated)	45
8 or 9 (Cerridwyn defeated)	54
9 or 10 (Neñvel defeated)	65
League completed	No further restrictions
Influence on initial friendship	-25 per excess level

Catch probability penalty for excess level:

The formula is as follows:

$$\text{Probability divisor} = (2 + \text{Excess levels}) / 2$$

It impacts the deflection threshold by multiplying with it (which forces you to really weaken the wild Pokémon, even forcing you to put it to sleep or freeze it - the only way to be 100% sure that this won't happen), as well as the catch probability.

Unlike Sword and Shield, this level cap is “soft”, meaning that it remains possible to capture such a Pokémon. One level too many will have a minor impact (probability of capture divided by 1.5); but 20 levels too many will result in a probability divided by 9, provided the creature hasn't deflected the Pokéball. Because at this level of deviation, the Pokémon will use all its willpower not to let itself be captured!

Impact of reduced friendship in the event of an excess level:

Acting as a second soft level cap, a wild Pokémon encountered at too high a level will have its starting friendship (450 by default) reduced by 25 for each excess level.

This has two impacts:

- From 3 levels too high, it will start below 400 of friendship, making it more aggressive in battle (increased critical hit rate and Speed). The effect increases with the level gap.
- If the creature is captured, its initial loyalty will be weaker. Here too, the effect is progressive, with a risk of disobedience starting at 3 levels too high, and increasing as the gap between levels widens. This is reversible if the Trainer takes care of it, increasing its friendship and bringing it above the 900 of loyalty threshold (sum of friendship + dread): no need for additional Talismans!

This system is close to that of Scarlet and Violet, where a wild Pokémon captured at too high a level immediately disobeys (and where the only way to correct this situation is to acquire the missing badges).

Why this system rather than the Gen 5 / 7 / 8 XP formula?

This mechanism has 4 advantages:

- A rebalancing role: to prevent the extreme values caused by the official formula where the XP gain is weighted by the level ratio raised to the power 2.5 ... This gives monster XP gains at level 1 (up to 750,000 XP on a level 100 Blissey), but a very high XP penalty when you grind at low level, because you are “only” level 10 and you only have level 3 wild Pokémons to slay. ($0.3^{2.5} = 0.05!$)

Conversely, the effect diminishes at high levels and this official formula no longer plays its anti-overgrind role (since mathematically, the level ratios approach 1).

- To illustrate the concept of “recommended level”: training a weak Pokémon is easier (especially in order to complete the Pokédex with evolutions), but overgrinding is still possible (malus limited to $\times 0.5$) while marking this threshold well. (A $\times 0.5$ malus is easily noticed.)

- Role play reason: to emphasize the fact that the experience of the trainer is as important for the acquisition of knowledge as what you face, these tiers being dependent on the number of badges owned and not on the level of the Pokémon faced.

- Since the under/overleveling ranks are fixed for an identical progression, this intensifies the influence of the difficulty setting which changes the level of the opponents. (In normal mode, there is a small margin of 4 levels above the next Gym leader. In hard mode, being right at his level corresponds to the overleveling threshold. And in easy mode, the player will be almost at $\times 2$ tier if he is still a few levels behind the next Augur).

And a 5th reason that is directly related to the Loyalty Overhaul mechanisms:

- Training a magical creature beyond the level limit needs to be earned: your Pokémon will be aware of its superior strength and will fear you less. However, this dread penalty is gradual (it's

proportional to the level difference, so no threshold effect on obedience) and can be totally compensated by friendship. If you have cherished your creature, it will remain faithful to you.