



Pat Farey wonders whether the new Daystate AirWolf will be a howling success...

The new AirWolf will make a mean hunter – and a good Hunter Field Target machine too

Daystate are at the cutting edge of hi-tech airgun design and their latest offering, the AirWolf, combines the high shot capacity of the mechanically-operated Air Ranger with the ground breaking electronic action of their Mk3 range. In fact it looks very similar to the Ranger, except the standard buddy bottle capacity is 400cc instead of 500cc (although the larger bottle is available as an option). The loading bolt is different too, being

polished steel instead of matt black. But as noted above the biggest difference is hidden beneath the surface, as the AirWolf uses the patented CDT (Capacitive Discharge Technology) electronic firing system designed and developed by Dave Snook and Steve Harper. This system operates twice as fast as a conventional trigger mechanism. It also gives a smooth and quiet firing cycle with efficient use of air; hence a 240-shot capacity in .177 calibre from the 400cc filled to 200bar. Approx. 350 shots are

available with the optional 500cc bottle and a .22 version returns approx. 340 with a 400cc and an amazing 550 with a 500cc.

In addition the electronic action can easily be programmed to activate functions that include:

- Shot count reminder (in increments of 10 shots)
- Magazine shot count reminder
- Power setting (fine tuning to your pellet choice in 15 power increments)
- Resetting to defaults
- Single shot mode (so that you have to turn the gun on for each shot)
- Safety catch light (to switch the light function off)

Despite all this and more, you need never access any of them if you don't want to, yet the electronic CDT system has so many other plus points that it is still worth having. Personally, although I experimented with programming the

The Gary Cane stock is good looking and ergonomically sound; note the extra colt's foot grip cap and spacer on the test gun



first Mk3 I ever used, I've never touched the programming on any of the other electronic Daystates that I've tested – including this one – and I've never felt the need to. If I actually owned a programmable rifle, probably the only function that I'd access would be to finely adjust the power output to my chosen pellet.

A by-product of the electronic action is that it can be isolated, therefore making the gun totally safe simply by turning a key-operated lock at the front of the trigger mechanism. The onboard, maintenance-free 12-volt battery can be charged en-gun via a mains adaptor. The nickel-metal-hydride cell will give up to 5,000 shots between charges and can be topped up at any time. If the battery does get really low on charge, the red display light on the rifle's safety switch will flash.

Leader of the Pack

The AirWolf was no doubt designed to build on the success of the Mk3, which after initial scepticism by some shooters has now become one of the most popular and effective rifles on the



At the rear of the action is a manual electronic safety catch made of clear plastic. This glows red when moved to the right to turn the action on.

Moving it to the left extinguishes the light and also shows a green dot indicating the safe position. The control is an important part of this rifle, as it is also used for accessing the programming options.

The Lothar Walther barrel has a bull shroud with an integral 'spring and baffle' sound moderator, so making the gun almost totally silent. The 400cc air tank sits directly beneath the barrel, and is charged in situ via a quick fill adaptor on the underside of the forend, directly beneath the air gauge. Continuing back you find the trigger guard, with the key-operated lock at the front, the battery charging socket at the rear, and two holes in between to allow access to the trigger adjusting screws for setting 1st and 2nd stage weight and 1st stage travel.

Magazine and Loading Tray

The AirWolf comes with a 10-shot rotary magazine, which can be set by the user to load from the left or right. A single-shot loading tray is also available as an option. On occasion I've had a few problems removing and fitting the mags; sometimes they don't want to go in, but more often they just seemed to jam solid for no reason on the way out, then just as randomly they slide in or out easily. At first I thought it was me, but other Daystate users have mentioned it too. So while at ETL FT Club, I and others were trying to unravel the mystery when Brett Wilkinson, the Club President, took one look at it and had it sorted in minutes.

Basically, there's an angular 'shoe' at the base of the magazine tray that slides back and forth, indexing the magazine when the bolt is operated. It only has to be slightly off its 'at rest' mark at the front of the receiver and it will stop the mag

The AirWolf action with oversized chrome bolt and 10-shot magazine – note also the extended forend under the buddy bottle

(left) In 'Safe' mode (seen here) the plastic safety switch is clear and a green dot will be seen to the right

(right) When the rifle is in 'Fire' mode the safety switch glows red and the green dot disappears



Hunter Field Target circuit.

The Gary Cane-designed ambidextrous walnut stock combines elegance with functionality. It has a large thumbhole, high cheekpiece with slender bridge and an extended base to the forend, so your forward hand can hold wood instead of the metal buddy bottle. The pistol grip is fitted with a rosewood 'colt's foot' cap and contrasting ivory toned spacer.

On the left side of the forend is a 'U' shaped cut-out, in which sits an air gauge – a nice touch and a far better position than at the end of the reservoir, as on many other rifles. Bolt operation merely indexes the magazine and loads the pellet, as setting the trigger is all done electrically, as with the Mk3.





The buddy bottle is filled in situ using the quick fill connection recessed into the under side of the forend



A useful air pressure gauge is handily situated on the left of the action



Daystate's 10-shot magazine – the slot locates the magazine and the reversible pin stops it passing right through the receiver



The single-shot loading tray is a very handy accessory – especially for FT and HFT competition

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Name	Daystate AirWolf
Action	Multi-shot, PCP, CDT electronic firing system
Stock	Walnut ambidextrous thumbhole
Sights	N, action block grooved for mounts
Weight	8lbs un-scoped
Length	40.8"
Barrel	17"
Trigger:	Two-stage adjustable
Safety	Manual/electronic
Silencer	Integral
Power	11.2 ft/lbs with Daystate FT pellets
Air charge:	200bar
Calibre	.177 on test, .22 available
Price	£1066
Extras	Optional single-shot pellet tray, £10
Contact:	Daystate, 01782 791755

going in or out. What you actually have to do is return the bolt slightly, which edges the shoe back into position and the magazine will then slide in and out of the receiver easily. It sounds so simple, and it is. Needless to say, once we knew what to do, the magazine operated perfectly.

I also had a problem with the loading tray. On the bottom are two small lugs and a pair of magnets, which locate and secure it in the port. It looks well made and foolproof, so imagine my reaction - after my initial problems with the magazine – when I couldn't get the bolt to operate properly with the tray fitted. The probe wouldn't clear the channel in the tray. Everything was fitted properly, but for no apparent reason it wouldn't work, so I wrongly suspected that it hadn't been machined correctly and gave up...

Only when I got home did I find the problem. While cleaning the rifle I noticed a finger smear on a previously unnoticed thin layer of dry clear grease on the magazine receiver. I wiped it clean, refitted the tray and it worked perfectly. It was machined to such close tolerances that just a fine layer of hard grease was enough to stop it sitting perfectly flush in the receiver!

This just goes to show how fine the tolerance is on Daystate's superb machining work – especially when compared to this reviewer (i.e. virtually no tolerance at all...)

The Wolf's Share

On the range performance was brilliant. Nowadays it's quite usual to find that PCPs are accurate enough for long-range hunting and HFT straight out of the box, but to my mind the AirWolf is

exceptional - well capable of accuracy even at the furthest limits of FT targets.

The test rifle (.177") came fitted with a Bushnell Legend 5-15X40, Mil-Dot scope, pre-zeroed to 35-yards using Daystate FT pellets. From there it was easy to work out aim marks on the dots (at X15) for 40mm targets at 40, 45, 50 and 55 yards.

Once ranged in it was almost impossible to miss 40mm kill zones on FT plates even out at 58-yards. We tried a reduced 25mm kill zone even this was being hit more times that not.

The best 5-shot groups formed a fingernail sized hole at 35- yards, although for some reason a few of the groups were stringing horizontally (but with each hole still touching) even though there appeared to be little, if any, wind – so maybe this could be put down to driver error.

Whatever way you look at it, the accuracy of the AirWolf is impressive. In my opinion the 400cc reservoir gives the rifle even better balance than the 500cc Air Ranger. This may just be a personal preference but shooting unsupported both standing and kneeling showed that the handling is really good, and I can see a great future for it in HFT.

As for hunting, this rifle has all the accuracy, power and capacity that a pest controller could want and the bull barrel, with its integral moderator, makes it virtually silent in operation – even the electronic action is soundless.

Forget about the gimmicky side of the technology and concentrate on what it offers in terms of downed targets – whether vermin or FT plates. It's not cheap, but quality rarely is, and at the moment this rifle is as good as it gets. **SS**



The bull barrel conceals an extremely effective sound moderation system; note also the 400cc buddy bottle – a larger bottle is optional