

A new standard in
easy simple fun

by Tom Atwood

ReadyToFlyFun.com has made a name for itself by offering well-designed RTF aircraft that perform well. But that's not all; their kits come with extra parts and pieces that keep you flying even if you experience the occasional hard landing. Its T-Hawk pusher RTF, reviewed in our March 2005 issue (trainer version was reviewed in our September 2006 issue), was selected for two years running by the North Carolina State University Aeronautical Engineering Department as the model participating students would assemble and fly as part of a weeklong aerospace summer study program (for more details, visit www.engr.ncsu.edu/summerprograms).

The SkySeeker has a similar pusher, high-wing planform that has been optimized for soaring flight and simple, graceful aerobatic fun. It has a wing loading of only 11 ounces per square foot and an undercambered wing that is reminiscent of those often used in smaller families of model aircraft. Its fuselage is a one-piece molded polypropylene airframe that easily handles normal skid-landings.

When you open the box, the first impression is one of "extra items" that you typically don't see included in model kits. Not only do you find a fully pre-built fuse with servos, wire pushrods, receiver, speed control and connectors installed, you also get two 7.2V 600mAh NiMH flight batteries. You'll find two main wings, two sets of tail feathers (the first set already preinstalled with thumbnuts secured), three five-inch-diameter props (one installed, of course), a wall adapter AC charger and a 12-volt charger that will plug into your car's cigarette lighter.

With equipment



The 6-cell NiMH battery fits under the hatch in the nose of the plane. A rubber band holds the hatch down by gripping the exterior.



READYTOFLYFUN

SkySeeker
GT 370

SPECS

PLANE:
ReadyToFlyFun
SkySeeker GT
370 7.2V

MANUFACTURER: ReadyToFlyFun.com

DISTRIBUTOR: ReadyToFlyFun.com

TYPE: Pre-assembled park flyer glider

FOR: Beginner to expert

WINGSPAN: 40.25 in.

WING AREA: 167 sq. in.

WEIGHT: 13.2 oz.

WING LOADING: 11.4 oz./sq. ft.

LENGTH: 26.5 in.

RADIO: 3 channels required: flown with included FlyRite RC 3-channel FM transmitter, included FM 27MHz receiver and (2) micro servos

POWER SYSTEM: 270-brushed direct drive motor, 5 in. dia. prop, included speed control, 6-cell 7.2mAh 370-600mAh NiMH battery

FULL THROTTLE POWER: 8.5 amps, 47 watts; 3.6 W/oz., 57 W/lb.

TOP RPM: 13,200

DURATION: 8-10 minutes cruising, more if thermals

MINIMAL FLYING AREA: Ball field

PRICE: \$149.95 (complete package); \$99.95 (without transmitter, receiver or charger)

COMPONENTS NEEDED TO COMPLETE: None

SUMMARY

ReadyToFlyFun.com has done a superior job designing a few different variations of its ready-to-fly (RTF) pusher aircraft. The SkySeeker is one of the latest additions to the ReadyToFlyFun.com RTF hangar—it is a lightweight sailplane that embodies rugged simplicity and ease-of-use. It climbs out nicely, yet can fly so slowly on a lazy windless day its performance is reminiscent of a hand-launch glider design.

PHOTOS BY TOM ATWOOD AND THAYER SYME

AIRBORNE

This airplane is a delight to toss into the air—at full throttle, it immediately swooshes forward, or with a little up elevator, it scoots upward. The manual advises you to toss the plane horizontally (at the horizon), when launching, but also notes you can fly the airplane, once you have mastered it, in winds as high as 15 mph. I gave mine a “javelin toss” into the wind at a slightly steeper angle, leveled off after gaining a few of dozen feet in altitude, and it flew into the wind while slowly climbing with no problems. This aircraft is light and able to float along slowly, but it has enough power to penetrate a headwind if you are nimble on the sticks.

Loops from level flight at full throttle are no problem. You can take it to altitude and force a roll till you reach inverted flight with full down elevator, and then maintain that for a bit as you descend, but it’s not what the airplane was designed for. Hammerheads are easy and a delight.

Take it up 500 feet and do powered and dead stick loops. You’ll see this lightweight glider cutting through the air with ease. In modest dives, it shows no signs of fluttering. That’s when you’ll get a sense of, and hear, its efficiencies. Or you can adjust the trims for lazy circles at a 400-foot altitude and take a shot at thermaling. This airplane has a great glide ratio and despite its small size, is indeed a glider.



After landing, we found that the motor and batteries were cool, not hot. Removing the wing from the pylon on the fuse and placing the aircraft on the backseat of my car, I thought about how easy and fun this airplane is to fly.

installation already taken care of at the factory, all you need to do is charge the batteries and go fly! Be sure and cycle them a couple of times. I personally have seen nothing this easy to transport and fly that is also able to take the abuse of bouncing around in the back of my SUV.

The electronics—including an FM transmitter and receiver on the 27MHz band—performed flawlessly, and it was nice to have both AC wall and 12V DC charging options. The light yellow, molded polypropylene fuselage and pylon on this RTF design is durable and can easily handle the lightweight impact loads in normal landings. Also appreciated are the “hobby class” components. You can swap out your own ESC, receiver and servos, or use those included in this model in other models. Servos are shock-isolated and easily accessible under the canopy.



The receiver, speed control and motor are nested in the pylon that supports the main wing.



Detail of the engine mount shows the canted metal plate “fire-wall.”



Thumbnuts hold the tail feathers down.



Tail feathers are actuated by stiff wire pushrods that are pre-adjusted and centered at the factory.

CONCLUSION

After taking this plane out for a few flights, noting its lightweight and great performance, I concluded this is the aircraft I’ll offer to my son, Derek, to take that mighty jump from PC sims to the flying field. It’s also an aircraft I’ll keep in the backseat of my car. The engineers at ReadyToFlyFun.com have this one right, and I give it two thumbs up. 🍻

Links
ReadyToFlyFun, www.readytoflyfun.com,
 (866) 472-8697

For more information, please see our source guide on pg. 192.