

RCM PRODUCT TEST

Craft-Air's J-BIRD



The J-Bird is a 97" span sailplane designed by Hi Johnson and manufactured by Craft-Air and advertised as a "high performance trainer."

The J-Bird was reviewed primarily with a novice builder and flier in mind, knowing that Craft-Air's advertising comments "easy to build, easy to fly, hard to destroy" would certainly attract a fair share of this group. We found this very excellent glider lives up to its advance notices and then some. But more about the flight performance later.

First of all, upon opening the kit we found a continuing series of pleasant surprises. All instructions are on the face of the plans with no separate manual or booklets to be misplaced. Directions to build are clearly written, easy to follow, and practically guarantee a properly constructed aircraft. Especially worthy of note is Hi Johnson's use of perspective sketches illustrating the various stages of construction. These drawings are a welcome aid for even the older veterans and will really be appreciated by the novice. They illustrate the fuselage and crutch assembly, total wing construction, and key portions of the empennage. As a matter of fact, the plane could almost be built from the perspective drawings alone. Add to this the usual top and side view plus the aforementioned step-by-step written instructions and it can be understood why we rate the plans and instructions as excellent. Also included in the kit is the following hardware: hinges, control horns, nylon clevises and rods, fiberglass wing rod tubes, control rod keepers, steel wing rod, and miscellaneous hardware.

Digging into it further, we discovered the kit was full of first rate material that, like the plans and printed instructions, will be

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IMPRESSIONS	E	G	A	F	P	IMPRESSIONS	E	G	A	F	P
Packaging	●					Pre-Shaped Parts	●				
Plans	●					Parts Match to Plans	●				
Written Instructions	●					Overall Parts Fit	●				
Quality of Hardwood		●				Ease of Assembly	●				
Quality of Fiberglass			NA			Fidelity to Scale			NA		
Other Materials	●					Flight Performance	●				
Accessories		●				Overall Appeal	●				
Die-Cutting			NA								

E=Excellent / G=Good / A=Average / F=Fair / P=Poor

SPECIFICATIONS

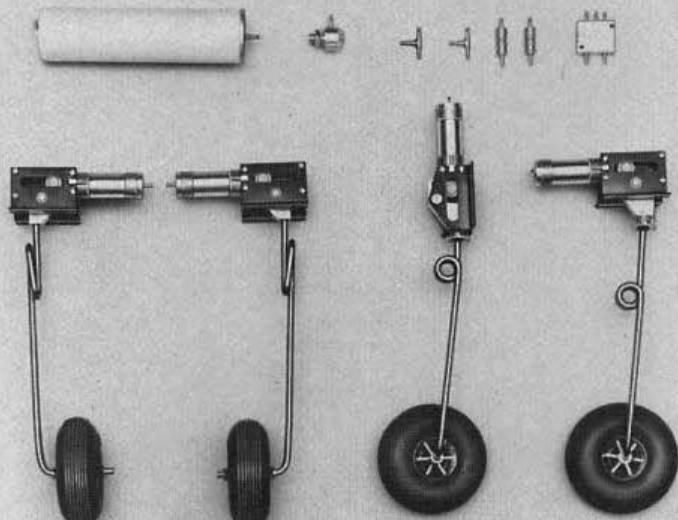
Name	J-Bird
Aircraft Type	Sailplane
Manufactured By	Craft-Air 7851 Alabama Avenue Canoga Park, California 91304
Mfg. Suggested Retail Price	\$59.95
Available From	Mfg., & Retail Outlets
Mfg. Recommended Usage	Competition & Sport
Wing Span	97 Inches
Wing Chord	10" (Avg.)
Total Wing Area	921 Square Inches
Fuselage Length	42½ Inches
Radio Compartment Dimensions	(L) 10" x (W) 2" x (H) 2"
Wing Location	Shoulder Wing
Airfoil	Undercamber
Wing Planform	Constant Chord — Center Section Swept L.E. — Tips
Polyhedral	1¾" — 2nd Panel 3¼"
Stabilizer Span	24 Inches
Stabilizer Chord (incl. elev.)	7" (Avg.)
Total Stab Area	173 Square Inches
Stab Airfoil Section	Flat
Stabilizer Location	Top Of Fuselage
Vertical Fin Height	12½ Inches
Vertical Fin Width (incl. rud.)	7½" (Avg.)
Mfg. Rec. Engine Range	NA
Recommended Fuel Tank Size	NA
Landing Gear	NA
Recommended No. Of Channels	2
Rec. Control Functions	Elevator & Rudder
Basic Materials Used In Construction:	
Fuselage	ASA Plastic
Wing	Foam & Greenskin
Tail Surfaces	Balsa
Hardware Included In Kit	See Text
Plan Size	35" x 50" (1 sheet)
Building Instructions on Plan Sheets	Yes
Instruction Manual	No
Construction Photos	No
Kit Includes	Shaped Parts
Mfg. Rec. Flying Weight	46 Ozs.
Wing loading based on rec. flying wt.	7 oz./sq. ft.

RCM PROTOTYPE

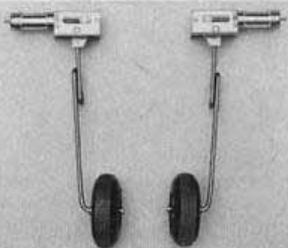
Weight, Ready To Fly	48 Ounces
Wing Loading	7.25 oz./sq. ft.
Covering & finishing materials used	Solarfilm & MonoKote
Engine Make & Disp.	NA
Muffler Used	NA
Radio Used	RS
Tank Size Used	NA

WHY ROM AIR

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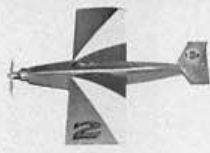
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SUPER LIBELLE

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full speed. The hand launch is the recommended take-off method for this autogyro and it is important that the rotors are spinning rapidly enough before launch. When the rotors are running fast enough, the model should be released in the normal flight direction similar to a free flight model. After launch, the flight direction has to be controlled by small movements of the rudder and the turns should be wide until you are familiar with this type of model. Ascent and descent have to be controlled by engine throttle, since the elevator is only effective at full forward speed. Do not try to dive the autogyro at full engine speed! If you want to land the "Super Libelle", throttle the engine and land with the engine running, this gives a softer landing than with a dead stick.

I am certain, this unusual concept of R/C flying will fascinate you and I wish you many happy landings. □

J-BIRD

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.... good news to the builder — novice or advanced. The foam wings were precision cut and all the instructions call for a routine inspection for any surface irregularities; none were found. The top and bottom slabs of foam that were left after the wing cores were cut are retained as protective packing in the kit. Their main function, however, serves as a saddle, or supporting foam bed to the wings during trailing edge installation, spar installation, skinning, sanding, and covering. Unlike conventional foam wings, the J-Bird does not use sheet balsa for skinning. A high density polystyrene foam called Greenskin is used instead. Greenskin is a bit over 1/16" thick and weighs almost the same as contest grade balsa. It can be cut and sanded like balsa and, when cemented onto the wing surface, adds immeasurably to its strength. Since it is foam, a low heat shrink covering should be used; thus, we covered ours with Solarfilm.

Next on the list of good things was the ASA plastic fuselage. This material should not be confused with ABA, Cyclocac, fiberglass, or any other plastic currently in use by the model industry. It is not brittle, and hard landings should have little, if any, effect on it. It can be drilled, cut, filed, sanded, painted, glued, and, to take a dent out of it (if you ever get one), just warm it up with a heat gun and press it back to the original shape. The fuselage comes in five separate pre-formed ASA units that require minor trimming with scissors for a final fin prior to assembly. A balsa framework, or

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YOU ARE INVITED TO BECOME A MEMBER OF



NRCHA

NATIONAL RADIO CONTROL HELICOPTER ASSOCIATION

Sponsored by R/C Modeler Magazine, the National R/C Helicopter Association has been established to promote and encourage active participation in sport and competition R/C helicopter flying. It is a vehicle whereby the R/C helicopter builder and flier will have a forum from which to discuss various ideas, helicopter competition rules, and provide a communications media with which to assist the Academy of Model Aeronautics in future programs in conjunction with helicopter contests. The organizational structure is very similar to other established organizations within the R/C framework such as the NSRCA for pattern fliers, the NMPRA for pylon racers and the LSF for sailplane pilots and will be structured in such a fashion as to promote helicopter activities within the existing governing body for all phases of model aviation, the Academy of Model Aeronautics.

As mentioned, the primary purpose of the NRCHA is to encourage the dissemination of information between R/C helicopter pilots as well as to establish and create a self-improvement and achievement program similar to that utilized by the League of Silent Flight. A five step Grade Level Proficiency Program has been established with gold proficiency pins awarded for each grade level you complete successfully.

The Association is a non-profit organization whose administrative and clerical details are handled by the R/C Modeler Magazine staff on a gratis contributory basis. Membership dues have been deposited in a separate account in the name of the organization and those dues are used for actual expenses of membership cards, and physical materials necessary for the initial operation of the organization. A full accounting of all funds will be made on a periodic basis and will be certified by a public accountant. Additional funding has been donated by R/C Modeler Corporation.

As a member, you will receive a membership card in the NRCHA and will be assigned a registration number which you can use on your helicopter which will consist of the letter N followed by a number issued on a first come, first serve basis followed by a letter designating the district in which you reside. These registration numbers will not only serve as an indication of your membership in the organization, but will enable the model magazines to be able to identify the owner of a helicopter in contest photographs by simply checking the organizational file for the individual membership card bearing that number. As a member you will also have the opportunity to associate with individuals across the continent whose interest in the hobby parallels that of your own. It is our hope that each and every one of you will participate in any degree possible within the organizational structure, contributing ideas, building information, flying tips, and/or working and serving on the various committees that will be established in the future. Any assistance that you can render will be appreciated by each and every R/C helicopter pilot in the country. The annual dues have been established at \$4.00 per year to cover postage, printing, etc. All additional costs will be absorbed by R/C Modeler Magazine.

YOUR DUES WILL EXPIRE 12 MONTHS AFTER DATE YOU SEND IT IN. YOU WILL BE BILLED 1 MONTH PRIOR TO EXPIRATION DATE.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

NATIONAL RC HELICOPTER ASSOCIATION
R / C MODELER MAGAZINE
P.O. Box 487
Sierra Madre, California 91024

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NAME _____ AMA # _____

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★ ★ Failure to indicate whether you are renewing, will result in loss of old number and a new number being issued.

J-BIRD

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crutch, is installed inside the fuselage to give added strength. The empennage construction is easy, straightforward and conventional. We covered ours with MonoKote.

The proof of the pudding is in the eating, and it is in the flying department that this glider really excels. We had installed the tow hook slightly too far aft and, as a result, the plane began a gentle weaving action during our initial Hi-Start launch. The generous rudder area gave us the upper hand and allowed a straight easy climb out to be maintained until the gentle disengagement at the peak of the launch. And, here the sheer fun of flying this truly great sailplane began. And, if anything that Hi Johnson is more outstanding on than others, it has to be his airfoils. And this one is a winner! Coupled with light wing loading and plentiful control surface area, the end result is an easy-to-fly, forgiving sailplane that has no bad habits. Attempts at stalls gave it gentle nodding motion with no tendency to fall off on either wing. Downwind turns were accomplished with ease. Total control at all times is a rule and, yet, when left alone it will fly "hands off" the transmitter, and do a great job of it.

As Hi Johnson said, "The J-Bird will teach you to fly quicker and easier than any ship you can obtain. It will stay together long and build faster and easier than most." To which we can only add . . . be you new to the hobby or not; champion of your club or bringing up the rear; this is your chance. The J-Bird is what true flying is all about. There is nothing more we can say about this superb aircraft. □

OSHKOSH '76

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per day or \$25.00 per week per family for EAA'ers.

There's lots to do at Oshkosh besides look at airshows and the gorgeous antiques, classics, and home-builts. (Nobody brings a ratty airplane to Oshkosh.) Every day, and into the night, there are free seminars on everything from high performance design considerations to airplane fabrication techniques (including the latest foam and glass construction for home-builts) to progress reports from the purveyors of the most sensational plans and kits, such as Burt Rutan's spectacular VariEze. The serious RC'er can pick up a lot of info at these seminars which could transfer to his projects.

The rotorcraft area featured a passle of Bensen gyrocopters, and Rotor Way
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