



Savage Cruiser

SAVAGE BEAST OR MILD-MANNERED MOGGY? CRAIG NICHOLAS STEPS UP FOR A CLOSER LOOK AT SEAGULL'S PRETTY SEMI-SCALER

What's not to like? At 80" span it's certainly a good size and has great presence.

Originally produced in Italy and since acquired by Zlin in the Czech Republic, the Savage range are lightweight, kit-built aircraft with good handling and STOL characteristics which use a proven design (based on the Piper Cub) and traditional construction methods.

Surprisingly, and as reported recently in *Switch On*, Zlin Aviation also produces an RTF and ARTF version of the Savage Bobber, each made alongside the full-size. In 1:3 and 1:2.5 scales they're not cheap though making Seagull's new ARTF the affordable option. At £200, this offering brings you a laser-cut balsa

An updated Cub if you like, The real Savage Cruiser is made by Zlin in the Czech Republic.



and ply airframe that's suitable for both i.c. or electric power, and a rather large wingspan of 80" to give a scale of around 22%. Key features include a two-piece wing with joiner and functional struts. There's also an electric conversion kit, detailed cockpit with moulded seats, and a lightweight pilot figure that, as usual, is too small for the aeroplane. On the plus side there's a large instruction manual (albeit in need of good photography and illustrations) and various accessory packs for each assembly stage. Seagull suggests a .75 - .91 two-stroke or a 1.00 - 1.25

four-stroke engine, although I'd recommend the larger units in each case. An equivalent electric outrunner is another option, of course. Finally, eight servos are required for dual elevators, individual ailerons, individual flaps, rudder and throttle.

STRIKING

Splashed across the box are the words 'Oracover... simply the best' and the airframe does look resplendent in its rich red and white scheme. This is well done too with no lifting edges or wrinkles around the compound curves.

The build starts with the installation of the control surfaces. Here you'll find pre-installed cyano wick hinges that require aligning and fixing in place with a thin cyano glue. A lot of hard work has been done yet I did struggle a little with the wing strut mounts under the main wing panels, which needed opening up somewhat to allow the fibreglass anchor points to fit inside. Incidentally, the struts are functional, quite intricately made and with a bit of fiddling about I soon had them bolted together.

With this done I tackled the other big bundle of metalwork and sat the airframe on its undercarriage. The main part of this is a simple aluminium frame that's been well disguised with leg fairings. There are also some parts which bolt in place to mimic the full-size suspension, this before the beautiful glass spats and wheels can be fitted.

It was nice to see the effort that's been made to hide the radio gear under the pilot and passenger seats. Access to everything is through the removable cabin door and the only issue I had putting the gear inside was getting to the rudder and elevator servos, which fit half way down the fuselage into which only one hand will fit. Three servos sit side by side here with not much room between each servo horn. I considered raising the rudder servo slightly to aid clearance but didn't need to as in practice the rudder throw has been adequate.

BACK END

The tailplane and fin are next to be lined up and glued in place, the latter featuring a moulding which fairs in the fuselage lines. The model uses closed loop control for the rudder and has a good sturdy tail wheel and bracing wires to hold everything square.

Now, I'm afraid it wasn't all plain sailing for I found some problems with



...the model ran in a nice straight line with no tendency to pull to the left

Plenty of room for larger wheels here! Good news if your strip is a bit rough.

You can't argue with the integrity of the strut anchor points. Superb.

the linkage lengths. The M2 pushrods for the rear controls were too long by around an inch or so and had to be cut and re-threaded. The aileron and flap

controls were also too long by almost half an inch and received the same treatment. This is fine if you have the tooling but I didn't so had to call on the help of clubmates to borrow a die and die stock.

RADIO AND ENGINE

I fitted Hitec HS5485HD servos all round with a Hitec HS5056 for throttle. With the gear substantially in, the tail on, connected up and the model stood on its own legs, it was time to get to grips with the engine installation – Enter my big trusty old Enya!

Now, unfortunately, I don't have the option to reverse the carburettor and change the throttle linkage position which turned out to be a bit of an issue as the front of the Cruiser is a little strange. The tank is offset to the

Seagull includes a pilot but, as usual, he's too small. When will they get it right?



The tailplane bracing wires aren't essential but they're a nice feature.

If there aren't quite a few modellers out there looking at these pictures and counting their pennies, I'll be amazed.



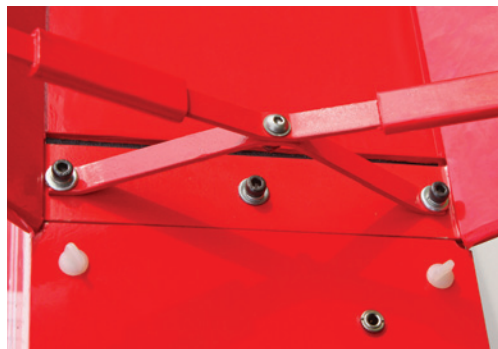
side and substantially below the engine. Similarly, the throttle linkage is routed to avoid the cockpit dashboard area, the very space I needed it to run through in order to drive my throttle! No matter what snake or cable I tried, I just couldn't get it to move without binding.

In the end I made the decision to remove the sticky detailed cockpit instrument panel and mounted a small 12g servo in line with my carburettor, the linkage passing through the bulkhead. I made a new infill panel, painted it black and re-used the instrument panel. This hid the throttle servo nicely and provided a slop-free link to the throttle arm, although it took two full evenings to complete what should really have been an easy section.

FINAL BITS

The fuel tank, as I say, is in an unusual position in that it sits under the engine inside a ply cage, this to preserve the cockpit space. A tank is supplied but I found it impossible to achieve a good seal and had to replace it from my own stock. Luckily I discovered this before gluing the plywood box together in which the tank fits. With the tank plumbed the

This is a good, tough version of the real undercarriage that looks good and should cope with mild abuse.



cowl could be cut to clear the engine and fitted with its retaining screws before the supplied spinner finished things off.

As I mentioned earlier, the pilot is too small and dressed more like a plant machine operator than a recreational aeronaut. You'll find he needs a cushion or two to sit on so he can actually see through the screen! By the way, the windscreen and the other cockpit glazing must be glued into place and it's not very clear from the instructions how to do

this. In the event, I decided not to bond the top rear section of the central overhead glazing which allowed me to lift the panel and get excellent access inside for rigging purposes. Until now I've been using clear Sellotape on the trailing edge of the overhead screen to stop it from vibrating. A more permanent solution is being considered.

CRUISER CONTROL

For final assembly the wings fit over a 19mm tube and are secured using M6 nylon wing bolts. With the wing struts fitted I got my first real look at the finished airframe and it really is pretty. One point to note is that if you go with an electric power option then changing the battery pack might be a bit of a chore. The hatch is underneath the model, the battery sliding into position before being secured to a tray. All very well but it just looks a little fussy to me.

For the first flight I lined her up, with no flap deployed, eased the throttle open and she ran in a nice





If you've been toying with the idea of buying a Decathlon, you really should consider this too.

My old Enya 1.20 provides bags of lovely power and is perfect for the aeroplane.



landing is no problem and she looks great three-pointing onto the field. The flaps push the nose up instantly and a good amount of down elevator is required if you extend the flaps with any sort of engine power above a high tick-over. The best approach with flap deployed, then, is with a pronounced nose down attitude until the flare.

The model really does seem happier carrying more speed than I would consider to be scale. Mind you, on one flight I forgot to set my timer and ran out of fuel. The resulting dead-stick landing was uneventful, the Cruiser gliding around the circuit quite nicely with just a nod of the nose indicating the stall point.

After a while I found that the vibration from the big Enya had damaged the brittle plastic pilot seat. So much so that the seat back had completely parted company with the



rest of the aircraft. It'll glue it back of course, but I suspect the pilot may loose his head next. The only other issue that's become evident are the different throws across my elevator halves. I noticed that Seagull had two attempts at drilling the elevator

Taking off, you'll find, is a joy.

straight line with no tendency to pull to the left. With this the Cruiser effortlessly left the runway, climbed away, and settled into a level circuit.

A few clicks of left aileron trim were required plus a load of up-elevator, suggesting that the nose was slightly heavy although nothing too onerous. I was using the recommended settings which felt a little sluggish but had the presence of mind to set rate switches for higher throws. These were much better and the first flight proved uneventful.

With a few sorties under my belt I set up a small coupled aileron / rudder mix to help in the turns and to stop her from dragging her tail. Surprisingly, she's quite aerobatic, indeed on higher settings the ailerons have good authority for point rolls, while snap rolls and spins exit predictably. Stall turns prove effortless too, and with the 1.20 up front these can be carried out at the top of a long climb. Inverted flying needs quite a bit of down elevator, although flaring for



DATAFILE

Name:	Savage Cruiser			
Model type:	ARTF semi-scale			
Manufactured by:	Seagull			
UK distributor:	J. Perkins Distribution www.jperkinsdistribution.co.uk			
RRP:	£214.99			
Wingspan:	80" (2030mm)			
Fuselage length:	53" (1346mm)			
Wing area:	1001 sq. in.			
All-up weight:	9.7 – 10.4 lbs (4.4 – 4.7kg)			
Wing loading:	22oz / sq. ft.			
Rec'd engine:	.91 two-stroke, 1.20 four-stroke, or electric equivalent			
Engine used:	Enya 1.20 four-stroke			
Functions (servos):	Aileron (2); elevator (2); flap (2); rudder (1); throttle (1)			
Quality:	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Poor</td> <td>Acceptable</td> <td>Excellent</td> </tr> </table>	Poor	Acceptable	Excellent
Poor	Acceptable	Excellent		
Assembly:	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Easy</td> <td>Intermediate</td> <td>Difficult</td> </tr> </table>	Easy	Intermediate	Difficult
Easy	Intermediate	Difficult		
Flying:	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Novice</td> <td>Improver</td> <td>Experienced</td> </tr> </table>	Novice	Improver	Experienced
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CRUISER CRITIC

Anyway, to sum up, Seagull's Savage Cruiser is a well-presented airframe that's covered and finished very nicely only to be let down by the hardware items and an instruction book that's awkward to follow in places. This being the case a good dose of common sense and some previous build experience is needed to complete the model properly, so it isn't really for novices. That said I

reckon it would make an ideal first scale model, not least because it would be a good introduction to flaps. Moreover, you have to admit that it makes a refreshing change from the numerous Cubs and Decathlons (yawn) that you see on the flightline. Where handling is concerned you'll find that it copes with gusty conditions quite well so it's not a fair weather machine either. All in all, I like it.

horn on one side but did not think that the slight difference would be noticeable. It is and, sadly, I can't really mix it out on my radio.

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