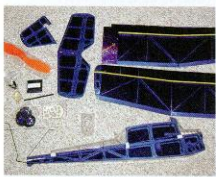


Maxford USA Butterfly on Floats

Floats add a new dimension in fun to this gentle flight trainer.

ASHLEY RAUEN



The Green Models Butterfly is one great little airplane. If this model looks familiar to you, it's probably because Jeff Troy reviewed the ROG version in the Spring 2008 *Park Pilot*. Now it's back, and I've got it for you on floats.

The ARF Butterfly is a simple build, guaranteeing you will be at the flying site in a short time. The first steps require mounting the motor, which is very simple with Maxford's detailed 10-page instruction manual. After that, the clear canopy and cowling are screwed into place. The transparent look is sleek, and convenient for quick inspection of all the internal fuselage components.

The motor is what I consider to be the hardest part of this assembly, although it was still simple enough. After the motor, I mounted the servos, then hooked up the control rods and linkage. It all goes together smoothly. The vertical fin and horizontal stabilizer were next, and my Butterfly was very nearly finished.

The wing is next, and I just have to add that these wing panels are great! They attach securely to the model, but are also easy to remove for traveling when necessary. Removal also prevents those embarrassing dings against doorways.

Distributed by Maxford USA, the Butterfly comes as an almost-ready-to-fly kit with conventional landing gear for taking off from paved surfaces or grass. I opted for Maxford's add-on floats package, something very new to me. The floats come in all the same colors as the model — blue, orange or red — so you can fashion-coordinate your floatplane in high style. I chose got the orange floats because I thought they complimented the pin stripe running along my wing.

Assembling the floats is just as simple as the model. The float hardware screws into the bottom of the Butterfly fuselage. Factory-drilled holes are in the fuselage so you know without a doubt that you are putting them in the right place. Once the hardware is attached, the floats slide onto carbon fiber rods and secure with two small screws. Sweet! It's done.

Instructions for the Butterfly recommend a two- or three-cell 900mAh LiPo. In my feeble attempt to "Go Green," I just recycled one of the extra batteries I had on hand. I needed a bit of nose weight to balance the Butterfly, so I went with a three-cell LiPo. I soon found out that the added power of the extra cell is a distinct advantage when flying from water. It helps get the model on the step faster.

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| TYPE | Almost-ready-to-fly |
| WINGSPAN | 47 inches |
| WEIGHT | 17 ounces |
| LENGTH | 30 inches |
| PRICE | \$99.95, \$42 for floats |
| INFO | www.maxfordusa.com |

RTF FEATURES

- Factory-built, laser-cut airframe components
- Factory-applied, lightweight film covering
- Brushless motor and speed control
- Crystal-clear canopy and rear deck
- Optional in-wing lighting system (\$10)
- Available in transparent red, blue or orange
- Complete hardware and fasteners package
- Control horns, pushrods and linkage
- Music wire landing gear
- Slow and gentle flight characteristics
- 10-page instruction manual

Always make sure that the power system components you select are compatible. I found that my particular battery was quickly overheating because it was trying to turn a propeller that was too large. A smaller propeller made all the difference. The kit came with a 10 x 4.7 propeller, so I went down to an 8 x 4.3. This took enough load off the system for all the components to stay cool, and the thrust from the motor was still strong.

The battery I chose is only slightly larger than the recommended pack, but I was unable to get it into the hatch — leading me to believe that the suggested battery may also be a tight squeeze. The hatch isn't too small, but the lip for the magnet is in the way, which makes sliding the battery past it nearly impossible. To solve this, I removed the plastic cowl and slid the battery through the firewall where my ESC is, and the battery connector feeds down into the hatch compartment. I actually prefer this set up, and I know that my battery is secure.

The pond in front of the AMA building served as the perfect location to test my model. The Maxford floats are sturdy enough for taking off from grass as well as water, so there is no need to use the landing gear unless you don't fly from water.

My flight tests were all successful. My first takeoff was from grass, and it didn't take the Butterfly long to climb skyward. I think the name for this model is perfect, as it really does float through the air.

Takeoffs from the pond met with equal success. The large floats skim gracefully across the surface, and I even flew back down for a few wet touch-and-goes. The floats are very well sealed by the covering and proved to be tight as a drum.

My Butterfly flies great at half throttle, and will pull off a few loops if you up the juice. I do not see any flight issues from adding the floats, and I just love the way they pop out visually against the clouds.

One more design feature you should be aware of is the way the motor mounts. The motor attaches to a stick, and the stick is supported by a spring. The result of this clever design is a shock-absorbing action that allows the motor to push softly back into fuselage. While this does nothing at all for flight, I know that if I nosedive into the grass, all my important parts are slightly padded from impact.

Float flying isn't hard. It's fun, and they're pretty darn sturdy. I love my "Floatin' Butterfly." It's cute and flies wonderfully, and a great choice for anyone new to floats. I like it so much that I'd fly it right now, but it's raining. ☔



Following a trim flight from grass, Ashley Raven's second takeoff was from the pond at AMA Headquarters. The large Maxford floats allow the Butterfly to taxi gracefully across the surface and get on the step quickly.

