

# GUN TEST BIJOU BULLPUP

Chris Wheeler's been bitten by the bullpup bug, and goes walkies with the diminutive Artemis P15

**L**ove them or loathe them, bullpups are here to stay. Their compact proportions and fast handling – qualities that go a long way in the hunting field – have won these stubby rifles a loyal following, and the Artemis P15 looks set to continue that trend. While the P15 is designed and marketed by SMK, it's manufactured by Shaoxing Snowpeak Air Gun Factory of China. SPA has a number of successful air rifles behind it, and the quality improves with every new model.

The first thing you notice about the P15 is just how little there is of it: it is tiny. Measuring just 67.5cm long by 20cm high and 4cm wide, it weighs just under 2kg unscoped and is one of the shortest and lightest non-folding bullpup air rifles on the market. It's more of a bullpuppy than a bullpup.

It would be all too easy to dismiss such a tiny rifle, but the P15 punches well above its weight. Within its diminutive dimensions you will find a shrouded 45cm rifled barrel with 12

lands and grooves, sidelever loading of the multi-shot magazine and a regulator – yes, this is a regulated rifle. It's available in .177, .22 and .25 calibres (the test gun is in .177), and according to the manufacturer the dainty 235cc air reservoir is capable of eking out close to 200 shots in .177 from its maximum 250-bar charge.

The layout of the Artemis P15 is the conventional barrel-over-cylinder type,

aluminium, and engineering appears to be of a good standard. The fit of metal to wood in particular is outstanding – it is impossible to slide a piece of paper between the action and the stock, yet there is no sense of a forced fit.

## A BIT CRAMPED

While the small size and light weight of the P15 are real bonuses, some

larger shooters may find the shooting position they demand a bit cramped. With only 25mm

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mounted in a minimalistic beech wood stock. The quality of manufacture overall is impressive; the woodwork is European beech that is bare of any stippling or chequering, although this seems unimportant given the weight of the rifle. The finish is smooth, with no nibs or imperfections. There is a hard rubber butt pad, which sits securely against the shoulder and ends just 2.5cm behind the action block. The action, barrel shroud and cylinder are finished in black anodised

between the butt pad and the plastic panel that makes up the cheekpiece, it is necessary to hunch into the stock to get any sort of decent cheekweld. Think SWAT team and you will have an idea of what I mean. If you find this uncomfortable, a solution lies in ignoring the cheekpiece altogether and placing your jaw further forward against the magazine.

Forward of the cheekpiece is the well into which the multi-shot magazine drops. The mag holds 11 shots in .177, nine in .22 and eight in .25. Like some others in production today, the first pellet into the P15's magazine must be loaded tail-first once the internal rotor has been turned against the spring pressure, after which subsequent rounds are loaded nose-first into the remaining chambers. It's a procedure that seems a bit fiddly to begin with, but you soon get the hang of it.

The test gun's magazine initially appeared to have a slight mismatch between the alignment of the internal spring-driven rotor and the breech entry. This caused pellets to enter the breech at a slight angle, resulting in



The scope rail is lower than on some bullpups, making it easier to achieve good head and eye alignment







#### KEY SPECS



**MAKER:** Artemis  
([www.artemis-airgun.com](http://www.artemis-airgun.com))

**UK DISTRIBUTOR:** SMK  
([www.sportsmk.co.uk](http://www.sportsmk.co.uk))

**PRICE:** £599.95

**MODEL:** P15

**TYPE:** Multi-shot PCP

**CALIBRE:** .177 (on test), .22 and .25

**LOADING:** Multi-shot magazine

**ACTION TYPE:** Sidelever cocking

**OVERALL LENGTH:** 26 inches

**WEIGHT:** 1.99 kg

**STOCK:** Thumbhole

**SIGHTS:** Telescopic only  
(dovetail rail)

**TRIGGER:** Single-stage, adjustable

**TRIGGER-PULL:** 2lb

**SAFETY:** Manual

**POWER:** 10.9 ft-lb





The sidelever is located right back in the action near the shooter's ear – it's tricky to find at first, but becomes easier the more you shoot the gun

The magazine slots top-down into the action rather than from the side, as is usually found on more conventional designs

Stocks don't get much more minimalist than this, but weight and balance are good, and the P15 is fairly comfortable to shoot

inaccuracy downrange. However, it seems the magazine simply needed a few cycles to loosen it up: after a few sessions on the range, it now works well enough. In the meantime, I bought myself a single-shot tray from eBay, which enabled me to eliminate any doubts about loading alignment from my ammo tests.

One feature I really liked about the magazine was that it has a stop to tell you when the last shot has been fired – the bolt cannot be closed on an empty mag. This is a nice touch that will stop you wasting air.

The loading lever has a firmly weighted action, possibly due to the



The adjustable trigger, which features an integral safety catch, broke cleanly straight from the box

shortness of the lever. However, it is positive and reliable; cocking the hammer spring on the back stroke and loading a pellet into the barrel's rifling on closing.

With no vertical adjustment in the butt, it was necessary to order some high mounts for my telescopic sight in order to achieve decent eye alignment and avoid the P15 sitting on my collarbone. Be advised that the Artemis uses a fairly narrow 9mm dovetail rail, so make sure your scope mounts can cope. Mine would not bite, and I had to pack some plastic strip underneath in order to make the jaws grip the dovetail.

## CHARGED UP

With the scope now in place it was time to charge the air reservoir, which is done with the fill probe provided. The probe supplied with the P15 has a Foster fitting instead of the usual 1/8-inch BSP thread, so you'll need a quick coupler for this rifle unless you source the threaded version of the probe from an outside supplier.

Once connected to the scuba tank, the probe is inserted into the fill aperture by pulling forward on the sprung collar on the end of the reservoir. There is no particle filter in the reservoir, so it's good that this protective collar can never be forgotten or lost. Once the probe is pressed fully home, the reservoir can be pressurised to its maximum 250 bar – even if my tank could deliver 250 bar, I'd be happier keeping it to a more conservative 220 bar.

As a regulated rifle, the P15 should have a 'sweet spot' all the way through the charge. There's a manometer on the end of the reservoir. Although this is not the best place to locate the gauge from a safety point of view, it is becoming the most common placement on mid-priced airguns. It's safe enough as long as you view it from a slight angle and never with the

## ALSO CONSIDER...



**BROCKCOCK COMPATTO**  
£639

[www.brocock.co.uk](http://www.brocock.co.uk)

This semi-bullpup measures just 34 inches (864mm), but retains a full-length 18 inch (457mm) barrel and 150cc air cylinder.



**KRAL PUNCHER BREAKER W**  
Around £487

[www.kralarms.com](http://www.kralarms.com)

This edition has an improved barrel for better accuracy, a thumbhole walnut stock, and a magazine capacity of 14 shots.



**ZBROIA KOZAK 330/180**  
£539.99

[www.zbroia.com.ua](http://www.zbroia.com.ua)

The Kozak 330/180 is one of the best-handling rifles around, and its solid build makes it a good choice for the field.





The barrel shroud on the review rifle has been treated to some carbon-fibre tape; out of the box, the shroud is plain black

## “NOW IT HAS SETTLED DOWN, I HAVE A CARRY-ALL-DAY, HIDE- AND VEHICLE-FRIENDLY MINI-POWERHOUSE OF A RIFLE”

rifle cocked or with a pellet in the breech, even if the safety catch is on.

The safety catch is a crossbolt set on the rear of the trigger blade, similar to what Air Arms has used for years. It's simple, effective and accessible without having to remove your hand from the shooting position, though it's a bit more fiddly for left-handers.

With the scope fitted, the cylinder charged and the magazine loaded, it was time to shoot the bullpuppy. The barrel is hidden beneath a shroud that contains a number of cup-shaped baffles designed to redirect, capture and retard the spent air, and thus quieten the muzzle report. It works fairly well; but because the cups have a central hole large enough to cope with .25 pellets, they let through a bit too much air with a .177. Luckily the shroud is very easy to remove, and it is not hard to improve on the muffling with a few hair rollers, some felt and suitably sized washers.

The 45cm non-choked barrels are made in China by Artemis. Be aware that some Chinese manufacturers like

to pack the barrels of their rifles with thick rust-resisting grease – so be prepared to clean the barrel like you've never cleaned one before, because until this gunk is gone there will be no consistent accuracy. Even with the bore cleaned, I have never shot a rifle that was as pellet-fussy as the Artemis P15. I worked my way through 15 different types before I found one that was accurate and consistent, although others have apparently not had such difficulty.

It was during this ammo test phase that the P15's trigger showed its potential. The trigger unit is factory-set to a sensible 2lb out of the box, and breaks cleanly and predictably. If the feel of the trigger doesn't suit, it's easily adjustable once the stock is removed. I like my triggers a tad lighter and the adjustment took only a few minutes using the Allen keys supplied.

Once I had found the 'Holy Grail' of ammo, the H&N Sniper Medium 4.50, my shooting joy began properly. While this is no sniper rifle,



The fill port is protected by a spring-loaded collar that snaps back in place when it's not in use

## NOTABLE FEATURES



### UNUSUAL MAGAZINE

The first pellet into the magazine is loaded from the opposite side to normal, being inserted skirt-first – it may be a bit unusual, but it definitely works



### SIDELEVER

The sidelever is in a similar location to that found on other pups like the Daystate Renegade – it feels odd at first, but you soon get used to it

I was soon printing sub-25mm groups at 30 yards with the single-shot tray and the rifle making a healthy 10.9ft-lb – which is quite enough for dealing with small pests.

With all the caveats I have mentioned, is the Artemis P15 worth the money and the time you will probably have to spend on it? The answer from me is a loud "Yes!" I like the ergonomics of the P15 so much that I persevered with my testing; now it has settled down, I have a carry-all-day, hide- and vehicle-friendly mini-powerhouse of a rifle. It is also simple to work on. I can see this being my 'go-to' gun for the forthcoming rabbiting season. ●

## THE AIRGUN SHOOTER VERDICT

| LOOK & FEEL | STOCK | BUILD QUALITY | SIGHTS | COCKING | LOADING | TRIGGER | HANDLING | ACCURACY | VALUE |
|-------------|-------|---------------|--------|---------|---------|---------|----------|----------|-------|
| 8           | 7     | 7             | 7      | 8       | 7       | 8       | 9        | 8        | 8     |

OVERALL SCORE

77

"The P15 may be a bit of a pellet-fussy princess, but perseverance in finding the right ammo will reward you with a very capable and compact hunter"