

# Stoeger Calls in Air Power

Does this new line of adult air rifles live up to Stoeger's reputation or are they just a bunch of hot air?

By [Scott E. Mayer](#) | Posted: 2009-12 | Categories: [Reviews](#) , [Rifles](#)



All X-Series airguns are .177-caliber, powered by a single-stroke, barrel-cocking spring system, have click-adjustable fiber optic sights, are dovetailed for scope mounts, and have automatic safeties.



With the barrel in the broken open position, a .177-caliber pellet is simply inserted into the breech for loading.

A polymer muzzle shroud provides a little of that Italian design pizzazz Beretta Holdings brands are known for, and also a better gripping surface when cocking the airgun. As common with other adult airguns in this power class, the X20 was stiff to cock requiring approximately 34 pounds of effort. Initial break-open is easily accomplished with a smart downward rap with the heel of your hand, but you'll want to eat your Wheaties before an extended shooting session.

With the barrel in the broken open position, a .177-caliber pellet is simply inserted into the breech for loading. When shooting an air rifle of this power, I've started following a pellet treatment tip I found in our sister publication, *Shotgun News*, in an article by Tom Gaylord. Gaylord recommends putting a small sponge in the bottom of your pellet box and adding a few drops of two parts Hoppe's Gun Oil and one part STP Engine Treatment to coat the pellets. According to Gaylord, pellets at higher velocities can cause barrel

leading, and the light lube prevents leading without causing "dieseling" in the airgun.

Cocking the barrel simultaneously activates the tang-mounted safety button. A white dot on its top provides a visible cue that the safety is on. Simply pressing the button forward disengages the safety so the gun can be fired.

On the sample X20, the trigger had about ¼-inch of take-up followed by almost as much creep before breaking at 6 pounds pull. While not the kind of trigger you would want on an Olympic-grade air rifle, it was entirely functional for the purposes of a field airgun like the X20. After a few shots for familiarization, the trigger became a non-issue to accurate shooting.

Test shooting was at 10 meters with Daisy Quick Silver, Gamo Match and RWS R10 lead pellets. Full accuracy results are in the accompanying table and were in line with what to expect from a field-grade air rifle. Greatest accuracy and most uniform groups were from the Daisy pellets while the Gamos tended to string vertically.

Shooting Results		
Pellet	Average Velocity at 3 Ft (fps)	Average 10 Meter Accuracy
Daisy Quick Silver	860	0.58
RWS R10	847	0.63
Gamo Match	807	1.15



Test shooting was at 10 meters with Daisy Quick Silver, Gamo Match and RWS R10 lead pellets. Greatest accuracy and most uniform groups were from the Daisy pellets.



True to spring-action airguns in general, the X20 did not like to have its fore-end rested on a firm or semi-firm surface. There is a lot of harsh spring action that compresses the air inside a spring gun upon firing, and the jarring action can throw your shots when using a firm front rest. Best accuracy was when resting my hand in the front pedestal, and the fore-end of the X20 in my hand.

My opinion, and I rate it nothing more, is that the jarring of an air rifle can be used as an important tool for teaching or practicing shot follow through. Follow through smoothly, and your groups will tighten. Don't and your target will show it.

Stoeger Airgun's target market for the X line is "...pretty much everyone--minus competitive shooters," according to Gates. She points out that, "[t]he X5's are such a great platform for youth/beginners," and, "[t]he power of the X50 lends itself to some varmint and small game."

The X20 I tested (and the X10) falls somewhere in the middle. It's a full-size gun, which has to be taken into consideration with youths, as it may not fit folks with smaller frames. As for its hunting effectiveness, I took it to a local woodlot to see how it performed on Eastern grey squirrels. Head shots were immediately fatal, but a shot in the heart/lung area resulted in a delayed reaction--especially when the range was stretched to more than 15 yards. If you're planning to hunt small game with an X-series airgun you'll want to upgrade to the power of the X50. If you have the skill and patience to take only head shots, however, an X10 or X20 is effective.

Outside the realm of serious competition shooting, the X-series appears to deliver a well-made platform for general shooting practice, and within limits, small game hunting. If cost and availability of ammo has kept you off the range, or if you want a tool to help hone basic shooting skills, an adult air rifle is something to seriously consider adding to your gun collection.