

HOBBY LOBBY

# Wing Dragon

Ready-to-fly fun for new pilots

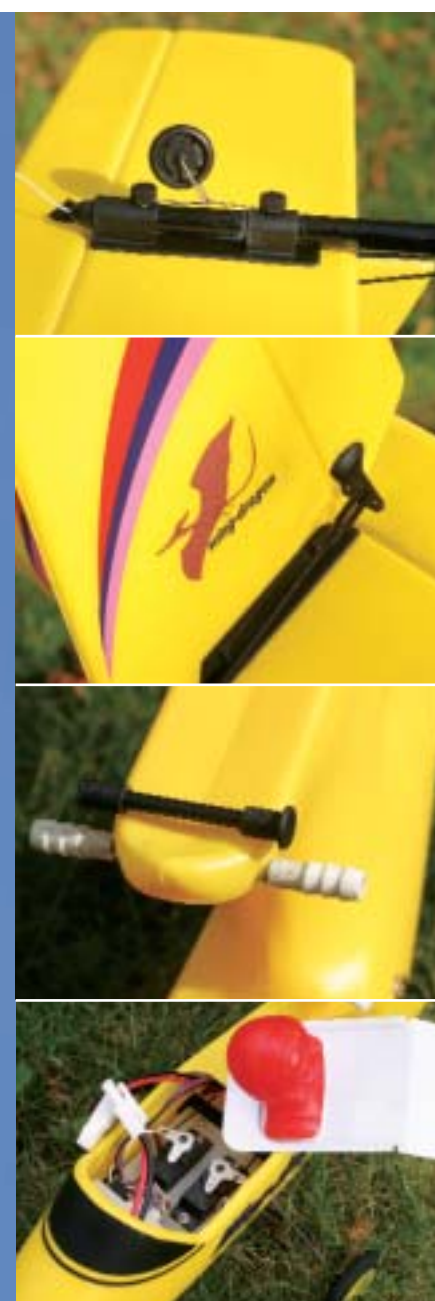
by Paul Dixon



Like the radio gear, the pushrods come preinstalled and connected. The tail wheel helps keep the Wing Dragon straight while taking off and landing.

The front wing hold down pin was too short for my fuselage, so I fashioned a replacement from threaded rod and vacuum barb fittings. A length of dowel would have worked just as well.

The Wing Dragon comes with all of the radio gear already installed. This can save a lot of hassle for a new pilot. The pilot figure makes a great handle for the cockpit cover.



## SPECS

**PLANE:** Wing Dragon**MANUFACTURER:** Art-Tech**DISTRIBUTOR:** Hobby Lobby**TYPE:** RTF Park Flyer**FOR:** Beginner to intermediate**WINGSPAN:** 42 in.**WING AREA:** 367 sq. in.**FLYING WEIGHT:** 24.3 oz.**WING LOADING:** 9.53 oz./sq. ft.**LENGTH:** 33.8 in.**RADIO:** 3 channels required; flown with an Art-Tech transmitter, receiver and servos (all included and installed)**POWER SYSTEM:** 380 motor, 8-inch prop, 10-amp speed control, 7-cell 1000mAh NiMH battery (all included)**FULL THROTTLE POWER:** 7.3 amps, 51 watts; 2.10 W/oz., 33.7 W/lb.**TOP RPM:** 10,530**DURATION:** 8 minutes at full throttle; 11-13 minutes cruising**MINIMAL FLYING AREA:** Ball field**PRICE:** \$119.90**COMPONENTS NEEDED TO COMPLETE:** 8 AA batteries

## SUMMARY

Hobby Lobby's Wing Dragon is a durable, easy-to-fly model for your local park or ball field. This predictable park flyer has enough power to complete mild aerobatics, yet it is simple enough for the beginner to fly. The light wing loading makes slow flight both predictable and controllable. This plane has enough power for ROG takeoffs from hard surfaces. The Wing Dragon is an affordable fun-to-fly package right out of the box, perfect for someone looking to get into the hobby.

Perhaps it was the thrill of controlling an airplane hurtling along at breakneck speeds when my primary transportation mode was a bicycle; it could've been the excitement of tearing up the backyard with an RC truck. Whatever the appeal, I was hooked on the exciting RC hobby for a few years in the mid 1980s. As I grew into my late teens, models gave way to their larger counterparts, and I let my RC interests lay dormant for the next 18 years. My life



The Wing Dragon is very complete and can be ready to fly 30 minutes after coming out of the box.

once again changed a few years ago with the birth of my daughter and the pronouncement that I was again "banned" from any activities requiring a crash helmet.

Looking to re-introduce a fun, safe, family activity back into my life, I turned to the hobby I had enjoyed so much as a youth. The Wing Dragon from Hobby Lobby was the perfect model for my return to RC flying. This low investment, easy to fly model is perfect for the first-time flier or for

Hand launching the Wing Dragon is easy. Just throttle up and give it a firm, level push into the air.

PHOTOS BY THAYER SWINE





### AIRBORNE

I headed to a large open field for my first flight in a little over 18 years. It was a beautiful clear autumn day with just a slight breeze. I made sure that my flight controls were responding, that my motor was armed, and that my wife and daughter had taken adequate cover some distance away from my initial launch direction. I wound up the motor and, with a tentative heave, had the Wing Dragon airborne.

My initial goal was to climb to about 10 feet, cut the motor and glide safely back to earth. Well, never being one to take the safe approach on anything, I decided I had had enough practice in that short 10-foot climb so I continued with my flight, making a slow, climbing turn around the field.

I was impressed with the control I had over the plane after not flying for so many years. The Wing Dragon climbs very well and maintains altitude with only about 30% of the power applied. It is very easy to turn, and the control surfaces are more than adequate for any maneuvers you may need to make. My maiden voyage continued for several minutes until I stalled the plane at a low altitude and was not able to recover before striking the ground. To my surprise, the plane was not damaged in any way and I was able to continue with my flight after a simple wing re-adjustment.

The Wing Dragon is capable of controllable slow flight as well as faster flight in which you can perform mild aerobic maneuvers. I was able to make the plane perform loops with just a slight drop in the nose to gain additional speed. The plane is also very easy to recover from a stall, provided you have enough altitude initially. The powerplant is perfectly adequate for a novice to intermediate flier looking to have a good time with this park flyer. On average, flight time was 13 minutes; you'll notice pulsation in the motor when your time is about up. The Wing Dragon glides very easily after the power to the motor is exhausted, with the balance point being directly under the center part of the wing.

One of the most notable qualities of this plane is its durability. In a later flight, I caught a wing tip on some tall grass and cartwheeled the plane into the ground. There was a slight bow in the fuselage at the cockpit, and one of the servo rail screws had pulled through the exterior of the fuselage. Other than that, there was very little damage to the plane. The plastic fuselage has the same feel as a Wiffleball bat, although I would not recommend using it for that purpose.

those whose skills have gotten a bit rusty. The advancements in technology over the last 18 years including micro servos, electronic speed controllers, and modern battery technology is staggering.

One of the biggest impediments to RC modeling that I was accustomed to was the amount of investment in both money and time for that precious 15-minute flight. The modern era of RC modeling has enabled beginners to literally be flying a plane shortly after opening its box. The Wing Dragon is an all-inclusive ready-to-fly plane for first-time fliers that can be assembled in less than 30 minutes.

### TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Assembling the Wing Dragon was fairly straightforward using the included instructions. The instructions are a little vague on the assembly of the tail section, and they include the installation of the propeller, which was already installed in my kit. They also include additional flight adjustment tips, flight warnings, troubleshooting help, and other advice for first-time fliers. Despite what appears to be an English translation from Chinese, the instructions are quite helpful and worth reading.

The included CD-R contains an assembly video, decal placement guidance, and a video of the Wing Dragon in flight. The video has classical music in the background with a Chinese narration throughout. The video not only offered entertainment value but also aided in the assembly and operation of the plane. The CD-R is playable in any Windows-based operating system. Assembling the plane and positioning the decals took me less than 20 minutes.

This kit includes everything you need to fly the plane with the exception of 8 AA batteries for the transmitter. The kit includes a 7-cell 1000mAh NiMH battery and a charger. Figure about 3-4 hours to fully charge the battery with the included charger. I would suggest investing in a faster peak-detecting charger as well as a second battery to reduce the time between flights.

I made a few modifications to the plane in order to improve performance and durability. After the first "landing," it was evident that the

servo rail screws could easily pull through the fuselage—a problem quickly remedied by the addition of a few no. 4 washers behind the screws. Additionally, the forward wing hold down rod was too short to span the wing bed. This caused the fuselage to buckle on one side, making the wing mount slightly uneven. I fixed this by inserting a threaded metal rod in its place and then sheathing the metal with a part of a vacuum line junction.

I noticed that the battery was hot after my first flight. After the second flight, it was so hot that it actually started to melt the plastic casing on the battery. To remedy this, I drilled a small hole in the center of the nose to increase airflow. The battery has been significantly cooler ever since. I made one other modification that is not necessary, unless you cartwheel your plane, too. I re-laminated the plywood wing spar and glued the wing halves together using some 30-minute epoxy, and let it cure overnight.

### CONCLUSION

The Wing Dragon is a fantastic flyer that requires very little build time or additional modifications to have a great time on a lazy afternoon in the park. This plane is extremely durable with a few minor modifications and



Without cooling airflow, my battery got hot enough to melt the heat shrink covering. Drilling a dime-size hole in the nose of the fuselage provides all the necessary cooling.

easy enough for a beginner to fly, yet maneuverable enough for an intermediate flier to have some fun.

I would strongly recommend this plane to someone looking to get into RC flying. It is a low cost, fun-to-fly introduction. I can enthusiastically say that I'm looking forward to my next journey to the park with my Wing Dragon. 🐉

**Links**  
**Hobby Lobby International, Inc.,**  
[www.hobby-lobby.com](http://www.hobby-lobby.com),  
 (615) 373-1444.

For more information, please see our source guide on pg. \_\_\_\_.