

# FIELD TEST



*“The X-5 offers the detectorist remarkable depth, the ability to hunt without tiring, a weatherproof control housing, and a wide variety of options to dovetail the detector to your current hunting requirements.”*

weight yet rugged construction, and raw power. For the novice detectorist, it can be used with the ease of any turn-on-and-go detector, using the factory preset positions; yet for the veteran detectorist it offers a wide range of optional settings to dovetail the detector to your current coinshooting or relic hunting needs. Coined by the manufacturer as an ATD (All Terrain Detector), the Shadow X-5 sets a new high standard and has gained near universal applause from its early users.

The Shadow X-5's versatility cannot be overstated. Designed to meet a wide variety of needs and hunting situations, the X-5 is an ideal detector for coinshooting, cache hunting, relic hunting, prospecting, beach hunting, and competition hunting. I guess if you plan on going diving for sunken treasure, this is not the detector for you, but for any other treasure-related application, the X-5 demands your serious consideration.

## **Initial Impressions**

Just out of the box, the X-5 proved very easy to assemble. With

## Testing The Troy Shadow X-5: An All Terrain Detector

**By Ed Fedory**

I heard the “Call of the West,” and I answered it. It wasn't long before my Georgia Boots were standing on Colorado soil. The beautiful Hudson River was behind me, and the majesty and grandeur of the Rocky Mountains stood before me.

There were several reasons why I followed that siren's call beckoning me across the Mississippi. I had never been to Colorado and I wanted to gaze at the mountains from

ground level, rather than from a height of 30,000'. I was going to the Rush to the Rockies hunt, put on by the Eureka Treasure Hunting Club—and I wanted to be there for the unveiling of the Shadow X-5, the latest release from Troy Custom Detectors. It was a journey with few disappointments!

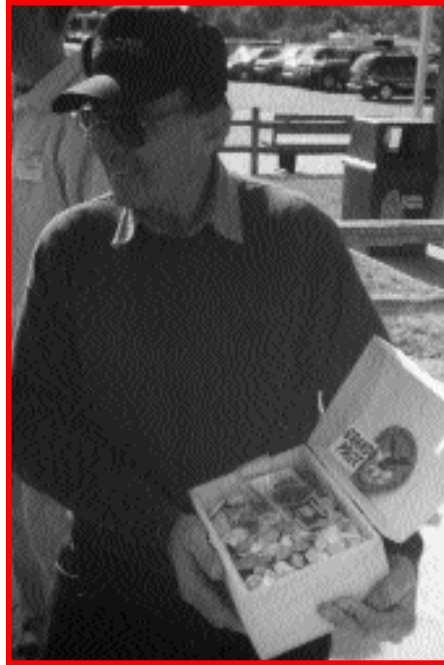
Long awaited, and after years of development, the Shadow X-5 bears little similarity to its predecessor, the Shadow X-2, except in color, light-

assembly complete, the first characteristic one notices is the extreme light weight of the detector... just a little over 2 lbs. with the standard 9" coil with which the X-5 is equipped. I found the detector to be very well balanced, with a control panel easily accessed with the touch of a finger. Terms like ergonomics and user-friendly had to be major design considerations in the early developmental stages of this detector. I sensed the X-5 was a detector that anyone could swing for an extended period of time without the least amount of tiring or fatigue.

Another feature of the X-5 that I especially enjoyed was the source of power, and the ease of battery installation. Simply depress the tab on the back of the control box, drop in a 9 volt battery, and you're all set to go for the next 25+ hours of detecting! There are no wires or connectors to mess around with, the battery compartment is weatherproof, and if you'd like to double your time in the field without battery changes, the X-5 can be powered by a lithium battery as well.

Another asset the X-5 has going for it can be found tucked inside the Owner Instruction Manual (which is both easy to read and understand, and is profusely illustrated)—the warranty card. The Shadow X-5 comes with a lifetime warranty to ensure years of problem-free detecting in the field.

Finally, one feature I really enjoyed was the fact that the X-5 is weatherproof. No more need of carrying plastic bags in your pocket, or a "raincoat" for your detector's control box. All the switches have been equipped with internal O-rings, and even the speaker is weatherproof. I don't know how many times I've been caught in the deep woods or far in the field when the sky sud-



*While none of my tokens got me into the Top 40, Ol' Slick was able to leave the field carrying a box full of heavy treasures. There seemed to be no end to the number of people offering to help carry the chest to his car!*

denly opened up and caught me unprepared. With the X-5 such concerns are a thing of the past!

### **Control Panel**

**MODE:** The X-5 has a three-position Mode switch. You can choose from All-Metal, Discrimination, or Beach Discrimination.

**All-Metal:** the X-5 utilizes four all-metal modes: a fast auto-tune, all-metal motion search mode; a non-motion, all-metal pinpoint mode with VCO; an all-metal, black sand motion auto-tune search mode; and an all-metal motion discrimination mode when the discrimination control is set for minimum discrimination.

**Discrimination:** The discrimination mode is a silent-search motion mode that enables the user to select, when used in conjunction with the Discrimination control, the a problem. It is also the best mode to use when detecting in areas of high electrical interference.

**GROUND BALANCE:** The Manual Ground Balance feature becomes of primary importance when detecting in highly mineralized or "hot" ground. This control works in conjunction with a 10-turn ground balance control. The function of this low range discrimination system is to tune out the ground signal and prevent it from interfering with the target signal. For most of us who have been blessed with non-mineralized soil, the factory calibrated Fixed Ground Balance will be all we'll need when we hit the fields, but as I found on a recent trip to Virginia, it's nice to have the additional backup of a manual ground balance system. The Sand Manual Ground balance is a final GB setting that can be utilized when searching in highly mineralized sand.

**DISCRIMINATION CONTROL:** This control is essential in selecting the range of targets you want the detector to respond to. When set to its minimum, the detector will target all metals... the higher the turn, the more types of metal are lost. This has always been one of those areas where individual preferences come into play. Depending on the site you are searching, you may opt to set your discrimination control near the minimum range. This is especially true in the area of relic hunting, where you may want to eliminate only small nails. In a park detecting situation, you may prefer a higher setting to eliminate foil as well.

Target Check is a unique operating feature of Troy Custom Detectors. It quickly enables the detector operator to compare target signals to factory-calibrated preset discrimination set-points. This three-position, spring-set toggle enables you, with the touch of a finger, to check



*Setting up the X-5 while on the hunt line was a breeze. I set the discrimination a little higher than I normally would and used the factory preset suggested sensitivity. The frequency shifter was the only control I had to change during either of the hunts.*

and see if your current target signal is below the conductivity of either a nickel or zinc penny. With just a little experience under your belt, you'll find this feature affords a type of "reverse discrimination," enabling you to make a better decision on whether to dig, or not.

**SENSITIVITY CONTROL:** This is probably one of the most important controls as it determines, to a great extent, the depth, sensitivity to small objects, and stability of the detector. The X-5 has a preset setting of 8, which is a good place to begin. If you find yourself in a search situation where the ground is not mineralized and there is no outside electrical interference, you might want to run up the sensitivity a bit. However, if the mentioned conditions do exist, then it is in your best interest to "back off" the sensitivity control to a point where the detector runs smoothly and is free of any erratic signals.

### **Interesting Features**

**Battery Test:** The battery check works in conjunction with the Discrimination control. When the control is set to Battery Test, the speaker

will produce a high-pitched tone when the battery is fully charged, a medium tone when half charged, and a low tone when the battery is weak.

**Pinpoint Button:** The VCO non-motion pinpoint is a very useful feature, and one that most detectorists will frequently use. It is positioned in the center of the panel and quickly brought into play with the thumb to isolate your target. Locating the exact spot under which your target lies is a breeze.

**Frequency Shifter:** This three-position toggle switch changes the frequency from the Norm, 19.0 kHz, to either a Hi (19.2 kHz) or Lo (18.8 kHz) setting. This feature is especially useful in competition hunts where interference and "cross chatter" are commonly experienced. Additionally, if you happen to be hunting with someone who is also using an X-5, shifting the frequency on one of the detectors will allow both of you to hunt in close proximity without interference. Recently, at the FMDAC National Convention Hunt, I found this switch to be almost a necessity. As soon as I heard someone "knocking

at my door," I was able to send them packing with the flip of a finger on the frequency toggle!

**Coils:** The X-5 comes equipped with a 9" waterproof, open-center, concentric "Spider" coil which provides outstanding depth and provides good ground coverage. An optional 7" open-center coil is an available option that I like for competition hunting and searching trashy areas around old cellar holes. In the near future, a 9" elliptical widescan "Double D," an 11" concentric "Spider" coil, and a 5" solid concentric coil will be available to fill the niche for any possible treasure hunting adventure that might come your way!

### **In the Field**

One of the main reasons I wanted to field test the X-5 was to bring it to some very heavily searched areas and see how it would do. With the number of sites available to relic hunters steadily decreasing in number, it is essential to have a detector that goes deep and picks up small targets, and I thought the X-5 might fit the bill. It did!

I returned to three sites that I knew had been hammered... I know, because I have searched them for years. Using the factory preset positions in both discriminate and sensitivity, I began my search pattern up the rows of newly harvested corn. Within ten minutes I had the first dropped ball in my hand. It was small, probably about .40 caliber—early squirrel gun, I imagined—but it was deep, as were most of my targets that day. From the footprints in the field and the signs of someone having previously dug there during earlier weeks, I knew I would have my job cut out for me.

I have no idea what type of detector was being used by that other



*While I don't consider myself to be much of a competition hunter, the X-5 sure made my searches a lot easier at the recent Federation hunt! The X-5 is shown here with the optional 7" open-center coil.*

relic hunter, and I certainly don't know what he was able to recover, but I left that first field with over a dozen musket and rifle balls, shoe buckle fragments, and a number of Colonial one-piece buttons, all found on soil that was covered with footprints and dig marks. One of the balls was pulled directly from beneath a heel print!

At the second and third relic sites, the results were pretty much the same. Even small bits of melted lead were being recovered at depths I wouldn't have expected. I am still trying to figure out how I could have missed several of those large coins that showed themselves from the bottom of a few deep holes. Following these field test finds, I knew



*Returning to several hammered relic hunting sites produced a wealth of items not previously detected. Using the X-5 will compel you to return to a lot of the old sites you thought had been hunted out!*

that I would be returning to a number of sites I had given up on years earlier!

I have never claimed to be much of a competition hunter... still don't. Any expertise I have in that area of detecting would probably fit into a thimble. All I know is that you have to be fast. You also need a detector that is easy to pinpoint, and has a fast recovery speed.

I had the opportunity to test the X-5 as a competition hunter at the recent FMDAC National Convention Hunt in Ohio. It was a sand hunt, and as such, I knew the fields would be quickly searched. If you don't get out of the "gate" fast and really pump during that first 15 minutes, you probably won't fare too well at the end of the hunt.

I found the Shadow X-5 to be an excellent competition hunting machine. Its light weight and ease of pinpointing were outstanding. The frequency shifter came in very handy for the frustrating "cross chatter" that you can normally expect to find on the hunt field when searching in close proximity to other hunters. With just a flip of the switch the chatter was gone, with no time loss during those precious initial moments of the hunt. With three frequency positions it was easy to search the field and "thread the needle" around the other detector frequencies.

I left the field with a lot more silver than I usually do, and while none of my tokens got me into the Top 40, I left the field a very happy man. The top prize of a treasure chest filled with silver went to another Shadow user, nicknamed "Slick." It figures...

Overall, the Shadow X-5 is a superbly engineered detector and extremely user-friendly. The X-5 offers the detectorist remarkable

depth, the ability to hunt without tiring, a weatherproof control housing, and a wide variety of options to

dovetail the detector to your current hunting requirements. The X-5 would more than fill my needs in a

detector— but I just might have to pack along a larger digging tool for all those really deep targets!

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