

Stessl Seahawk 5.6m Half Cabin



The new Stessl Seahawk is very impressive. It's high, wide, and mighty handsome and combines plenty of on-board fishing features with enough sea keeping ability to see them put to good use.



Scooting out of a turn to starboard the Seahawk shows off high sides.

The Seahawk's construction is sturdy, with the Stessl Platerix under floor framework linked to 4mm plate sheets for the

bottom areas and 3mm plate sheets for the metre high sides.

LAYOUT

With a careful blend of cabin space and fishing room comfort, practicality plus fish-ability are combined within the Seahawk in a seamless package.

The cabin is large enough to allow up to four people to sit out of the weather, thanks to plenty of head and

leg room and there are full length bunks handy for a snooze. Valuable rods could also be stored in the cabin while the boat is underway.

A marine toilet is standard fare although a door is not fitted. Cabin entry into the toilet is via the space between pedestal seats for skipper and mate.

A padded area up front of the bunks made it easy to stand while braced, with the upper body comfortable within the large rear opening forward hatch while removing or placing the anchor within its large well at the bow. A bowsprit, roller and bow rails are standard.

At the rear of the cabin the wide full width dash area is tucked behind the three-piece windscreen with a bimini on folding framework overhead. The front and side clears were optional on the test craft but the full width shelving comes standard.

On the Seahawk's dash there is ample room for navigational aids. No matter how large the sounder or GPS unit is, it will easily tuck in behind the windscreen and be in full view of the skipper sitting high and clear of obstruction. This was exactly the case with the test craft's Northstar 657 Sounder GPS mounted starboard of the instruments.



That big Seahawk is an impressive sight under way.

A neat instrument binnacle is set up in the starboard quarter of the wide upper shelf with instruments linked to the outboard astern set neatly upright.

On a lower section the compass and marine radio leaves plenty of room for personal items.

A full width grab handle stretching across the cabin entry is also standard, which

is large enough for a tackle box or two or maybe a spare anchor and rope if required.

A footrest is provided for the skipper and the first mate can rest their feet on the rear of the bunk. A locking glove box is also set to port.

AN ANGLER'S COCKPIT

With an interior height of around 80cm the Seahawk's cockpit is quite capable of fishing four or five anglers

Wide sit-on decks with two rod holders in the aft sections are fully integrated into the gunwales. A pair of 1.5m long side pockets (suitable for a gaff or storage for other smaller items) give anglers a place to dig their toes in under when bracing against a stubborn fish. A plumbed under-floor fish kill tank is situated towards the rear of the cockpit, large finger tabs allow for easy access.

Seating aft consisted of a 2-3 person folding bench complete with a backrest to starboard. A grab rail is provided for the starboard passenger and a neatly constructed armrest come grab handle set up for the port passenger.

The full width off floor shelf across the transom houses the engine battery to starboard and provides an entry area for the inward opening, lockable transom door to port, which is well sealed.

Further transom features consist of a pair of cleats, grab rails extending down to the full width boarding platform aft, and a boarding ladder to port. No other rod holders were fitted.

RIDE AND HANDLING

The Stessl Seahawk 560's hull has 15° of deadrise at the transom and features a

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A marine toilet is a cabin feature of the rig.

is very handy in a craft venturing offshore. I think there can never be too many grab handles around when seas turn nasty.

All of the floor areas within the craft are carpeted and a handy under floor storage area is set up in the floor between the skipper and mate's sliding pedestal seats. This floor well

within estuary, bay or offshore waters, depending on the day. The craft is rated for seven persons.

The Seahawk's high sides offer plenty of protection from the sea but would not, in my opinion, affect fish-ability. A really big fish could be brought in via the transom door if necessary.



The 140 Suzuki was a top power plant for the Seahawk.

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variable deadrise throughout its 5.8m length.

The bow entry area is bold yet quite streamlined and provides a ride that is both soft, controlled and quiet courtesy of the foam fill under floor.

A large amount of above water flare keeps occupants dry while heading into seas. I had no difficulty driving the craft within pressure waves of the Gold Coast Seaway; on the day of the test run 30 knot southerly winds prevented us heading offshore.

The big Stessl handled sloppy water very well with no inclination to bang or bash whether heading into chop or quartering away from it. Low speed driving was easy with seas astern as the hull responded to driver input very readily.



The Seahawk's wide transom area features a removable three person seat.

The hydraulic steering offered fingertip control and the hull was also quite responsive to trim. The Seahawk planed easily, held the plane without continuous engine throttle adjustment and stopped rapidly once power was turned off.

I found the driving position ideal, visibility at the helm is quite unrestricted, the forward controls easily accessible on the side of the craft beside the right arm.

The boat is rated for engines between 115hp and 140hp, so the top-power Suzuki 140hp four-stroke with its 19" prop had plenty of punch and kicked the craft onto the plane at 3000rpm at 22km/h easily. At 4000rpm the boat cruised at 41km/h and 5000rpm saw 56.6km/h.

The engine was very new so further speeds were not tested but I would confidently expect a maximum speed around 65km/h from a fully broken-in motor.

Noise levels from the Suzuki were very acceptable and at no time did we have to shout to hear each other.

STABILITY AND FISHABILITY

The sheer mass of the 600kg Stessl Seahawk hull ensured that it sat very steady at rest.

The hull features several large V-shaped strakes on the 4mm bottom plate. Together with the small reversed outer chine lip these features ensure the hull resisted any tendency to roll or lean at rest.

The big Stessl is the sort of versatile craft that could be used in the bay, estuaries and offshore and it would also suit the family angler for an overnight stay. An inflatable mattress in the big cockpit could certainly sleep a family with kids in the cabin. While the metre high sides might make it hard for a child to haul a fish aboard, it would also provide plenty of peace of mind for parents.

The only feature lacking in the craft as reviewed was a bait board aft and a live well, which are both popular options.

The finish was of a high standard as is the case with the new Stessl boats. Welds were visible but were neat and continuous and the paint work and over all presentation was very good. One would be proud to own this craft.

The reviewed Seahawk is photographed on the owner's special request dual axle

Dunbier trailer, but for around \$47,000 (including optional clears, motor upgrade and Northstar sounder GPS upgrade) the craft will come home on a single axle multi-

roller Dunbier trailer, which would be entirely adequate.

To find your nearest dealer to arrange a test run, jump on the web at www.stessl.com.au.



A very practical dash layout is a feature of all these late model Stessls.



The Seahawk's cabin will sleep two in standard form, more with a bunk infill.

Specifications

Length.....	5.8m
Beam.....	2.5m
Fuel.....	150L
Deadrise.....	15°
Depth hull.....	1.45m
Engines.....	115-140hp
Engine fitted.....	140hp
Height on trailer.....	2.64m
Length on trailer.....	6.8m
Persons.....	7
Towing.....	Large 4WD/family six cylinder wagon

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