Detector Field Test

Fisher CZ-3D

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The first thing you notice about this detector is the distinctive Fisher corporate look; the black and gold styling is quite smart. Even the control box housing looks virtually identical to other detectors in the range, especially this detector's predecessor the CZ-5.

The detector arrives in three parts that fit together with ease, and the whole package is locked firmly into place with sturdy handgrips. The handbook is informative, but I would like to see the graphics improved.

The CZ-3D is light, weighing in at 3.7lbs, and so should enable many hours of fatigue-free detecting. With the hip mount facility this would improve even more.

One of the first questions I asked myself is: "If the CZ-3D looks similar to the CZ-5, are they likely to be identical in performance?" Those of you who are familiar with the latter will be able to decide this, once you have read my report.

Features

Visual target ID

Four tones, audio target ID, plus a bell tone alert for large shallow targets

Built-in weatherproof speaker

Push button ground adjustment

Multi frequency transmit and dual VLF receive

Deeper target ID in mineralised soil

Turn-on-and-go preset red colour markings

Separate wet sand and inland mode

Push button pinpoint and depth targeting

Three piece handle to enable hip mount operation

Faint target audio boost

8in open centre spider coil (concentric co-planar)

Two drop in 9 volt batteries

Silent search VLF slow motion discrimination

Super wide scan, all metal auto tune mode.

Control Box

The CZ-3D control fascia has six controls and a headphone jackplug socket, plus the target ID meter that displays varying degrees of target information alongside approximate depth readings.

Controls

On-Off Volume/Boost

This allows the volume to be increased in gradual increments with "5" being the "turn-on-and-go" position. Increasing the volume from "5" to "10" brings into play an audio boost that increases the response from faint targets while keeping the shallow loud targets at a constant volume. In normal detecting conditions it is not necessary to use boost as it's likely to create confusion as deep and shallow targets start sounding the same, making it especially difficult to diagnose beyond ID depth reading range.

I'm sure that most users, like myself, will find that volume position "4" to "5" is more than adequate, and be able to discern faint signals when targeted. I don't use headphones with separate volume controls, so on many occasions I had to turn the volume on the detector down to a lower level for comfort. This had no detrimental effect on audio discrimination or deeper targets.

Mode

A two position switch providing "Salt" for beach operation and "Enhance" for inland. The Salt position provides a balanced working environment as the detector compensates for the positive mineral effect encountered in varying degrees on wet beach sites. Switching over to the left activates the Enhance mode, used mostly for searching where negative or very low mineral conditions may exist. (My own experience was good. After setting ground balance the detector worked well on the beach and the pretty hard clay field conditions encountered at this time of the year).

The ground balance will need slight adjustment after changing from wet sea beaches to dry sand, and especially if changing to the fields after beach detecting.

Sensitivity/Battery Test

A rotary control with 1-10 levels of increasing sensitivity. (When using the auto tune function the sensitivity controls the threshold hum. Lower the control until you can barely hear the tone).

Turning the control fully clockwise provides the battery test position. A strong sound indicates a healthy battery; conversely, a low tone will denote a drained battery.

Pinpoint/Depth Reading

This spring loaded push button has three functions. When pushed in and held it facilitates ground balance in conjunction with the "Ground" control. Once a signal has been located it also provides non-motion, all-metal pinpointing; the tone will increase in volume as you zero in on the target. Approximate depth indication of coin-sized targets is also provided on the meter reading scale.

Disc

The CZ-3D provides 0-6 positions in the target response ID mode. Being a silent, no threshold, motion discrimination operation, it has the ability to identify each metal target and reject or accept many small objects on a combination of either tone or meter ID information. The seventh position is "Auto Tune" enabling all metal, motion operation by adopting a wide scan deep seeking search pattern; but it does not provide discrimination nor target information.

Auto Tune, although not expected to be the normal search mode, does have some advantages. On sites with little or no iron you are less likely to miss a good target when using wide scan detection. By pinpointing the target, and then switching the discrimination control to "0" you are able to identify it, because at this position both tone and discrimination come into play,

Auto tune is particularly suitable for relic hunters who are searching for deeply buried items of either iron or non-ferrous, and are less likely to worry about discrimination on these types of site.

Ground

Arguably, this is the most important function on this detector, allowing full control of any mineralization effects encountered on beach or land. Take your time, get it right, and you'll enjoy the results of your detecting. The setting indications, 1-10, have a preset position marked in red for other controls for "switch-on-and-go" detecting. (One small word of caution, don't always rely on this set position, as your own site conditions may vary slightly). In combination with the pinpoint button, which you should press and hold in during the whole balancing process, carry out the following.

Find an area of ground that is clear of any signal. With the ground control position set at "10" and the coil held about 6-12in off the ground, press in the pinpoint button and hold while

lowering the coil to the ground. Rotate the ground control from the 10 position until you hear an audio tone; back it off until the tone disappears, release the pinpoint button and you are ready to search.

When detecting, re-check your ground balance occasionally, just in case the conditions alter or you move the control accidentally.

On The Beach

I know that many detector users either love or hate beaches. However, as we are surrounded by beaches where we live on the Isle of Wight, I have to say that I am lucky in that our beaches cover a rich history with many unique items being found, even over the last few years.

Over the last three months, when weather has permitted, I have tested the CZ-3D on various beaches and field sites and have had little to complain about. Once the ground control is set up it requires virtually no further attention and there is surprisingly little chatter or ground effect especially on beaches.

The detector is sensitive to coin-sized items and is quick to cut out small ferrous rubbish.

Finds on the beach came quickly, so that I am sure that in the future this detector will produce good results. One important point is not to use too much discrimination or raise the sensitivity too high. High sensitivity creates more problems and cutting out ring pulls will loose you some gold rings.

Good targets were easy to recognise as they were always clear and the ID meter indicated this. The "Bell Tone" was different from other tones and helped a lot when large pieces of iron were present. If you have been detecting for some time you will have gained a recognition of the broad signal response of iron, compared to the very narrow responses of non-ferrous targets close to the surface. This becomes more apparent when using the pinpoint control.

Land Sites

In hot weather the ground can get hard, making any deep digging hard and tiring. These are the occasions when signal ID information needs to be reliable. I found the CZ-3D to perform well, picking up all the signals in its path, Although the CZ-3D proved it packed a good punch in the depth arena, I'm positive that in very dry conditions the signal spread is reduced, making it harder to pump up sensitivity.

I have a preference for using detectors with a threshold tone, so running in silent discrimination mode took some getting used to. That aside, I think that a little detecting experience and a few other models under your belt would pay dividends if you decided on a CZ-3D.

The new Fisher CZ-3D is now available from Fisher's UK Distributor Joan Allen Electronics Ltd and other Fisher retailers. TH