

BFD Big Game Lures 'VIXEN'

With an enticing, flashy head insert that often includes rare-earth minerals, as well as a unique design innovation that increases performance, the 'Vixen', hand-made by BFD Big Game Lures in the USA, is a skirted lure with a look and action that demands attention. REVIEWED BY MATT GROSS

"If you haven't yet heard of the US-made BFD Big Game Lures brand, listen up."

One of the things I love most about gamefishing is the innovation that emerges in our quest to catch more and bigger fish. Even subtle changes can often make the difference between success and failure. The BFD 'Vixen' is one such lure that for all intents and purposes looks like a small- to medium-sized plunger – that is until you look under the skirts. But we'll get to that shortly.

If you haven't yet heard of the US-made BFD Big Game Lures brand, listen up. Dan Magers, the man and brains behind the company, has a lot to say that will make you think about how you run lures and the way you fish. His strategies are largely based on science, rather than the hype you might have read from others in the industry.

The lures made by Dan and his partner, Jana, are hand-crafted, which makes their high standards of quality control a very personal thing.

The BFD Vixen is advertised as a 9-inch plunger, although the lure I tested measured out at 10 inches (25cm). They are a beautifully proportioned lure that does not require any skirt trimming to achieve its optimum action. The heads are belly-weighted to maintain a top-up attitude as it attacks the surface. Because of this weighting, I suggest trolling this lure on at least 10kg tackle. After seeing these lures, striped marlin immediately sprang to mind as a perfect target species. They'd also work well for larger yellowfin and bluefin tuna, as well as mid-sized blacks and serious dolphinfish.

A unique feature of the BFD skirted lure range is oval skirt saddles, which according to Dan creates a significantly more life-like profile. It's fair to say that when you look at his lures from the top or bottom, they do appear much more fish-like. The lures taper in on the sides towards the rear of the head, just as every baitfish does. This shape also makes a significant difference when trolling because, together with the belly weight, it creates a stabilising keel for the inherently unstable shape of a sliced-face skirted lure. This helps prevent the lure from spinning – which is something that frequently makes other sliced-face lures lose credibility with the fish. This is one of those small things that can make the difference between success and going home empty-handed.

Dan says the stability provided by the oval shape also enables his lures to be run faster than many other plunger-style lures – as I can verify after testing them. I was surprised by how well these lures gripped the water and hung in there. Above 6.5 knots the lure was really active, with a long and solid smoke trail that could be seen from a long way underwater. You can also expect big sprays of water when the lure surfaces. Before diving deeply, the lure's large angled face rips a large tear in the surface, producing a nice rooster-tail for a lure of its size. You will also notice a very large, silvery bubble that wraps around the head as it plunges beneath the surface.

Dan recommends rigging the lure on 100kg leader to achieve the best action and I have no argument with this. The Vixen seems to perform best with a low towing angle, and therefore runs well in the long positions. However, if you want to run this lure in the short-corner position, simply reduce the towing angle by temporarily securing the line to the reel handle with a break-away rubber band. This is particularly important if the Vixen is going to be your near-transom 'big' lure when trolling with light-tackle.

The BFD lure heads have a holographic insert with a custom texture that really does refract light from the sun. Some models even sport rare-earth minerals on the insert and the Vixen head actually looks like a mini mirror teaser, which creates a flash that attracts predatory fish.

There is a lot to like about the BFD Vixen. It is a size that almost every angler regularly uses, whether chasing blue, black or striped marlin, or tuna, dolphinfish and wahoo. They will all eat these beautifully-crafted lures. With a set of good 9/0 or 10/0 hooks in the Vixen, it shouldn't take long before your arms are aching.

To find out more, see the colour range available or to order your lures, visit: www.bfdbiggameLures.com

