

## Hatch 9 Plus reel



In this day and age, where it seems that reel manufacturers are making reels lighter and lighter, it is refreshing to find at least one reel company that understands the importance of reel weight. There are a few out there that have such solid reels and one of these, I pleasantly discovered is “Hatch”.

With the extra length of a two handed rod, a light-weight reel puts the centre of gravity too far away from where a caster wants to hold the rod – off the cork handle, in most cases. The further from the centre of gravity you hold a rod, the more effort and work you do when casting, thus balancing a rod is important to effortless, relaxed casting and fishing.

Hatch is a relatively new reel company out of Vista, California. They produce a range of reels for all aspects of fly fishing, but the one that impresses me is the 9 Plus.

The 9 Plus is a large arbor reel that weighs about 11 ounces, unloaded. I got a little confused when I saw that the spool was marked “9 Plus” and the back of the reel read “Pulse”. I wasn’t sure if I had a Pulse or a Plus, but that is the only complaint I have.

The reel is a polished silver color with green accents, which is really a cool color combination (I believe you can also get it with blue or red accents, too). The frame and spool are beautifully tooled and the machine work obviously done to the highest of tolerances, as there are no gaps for the line or leader to slip through and get wrapped inside the works of the reel – something that is surprisingly common in many of my other reels.

The drag system is the best feature. The folks at Hatch have **not** got a free wheeling reel that winds in a foot of line with each cast, which again is most welcome. There is a very pleasant sounding clicker that has enough tension to prevent this, but it is still free enough to be able to spin the spool a couple of times with a flick of the finger. The drag adjusts from an ultra light pull, requiring no more than a couple of ounces to a very, very solid drag, something I dared not to test for fearing of breaking my leader and something way more than any anadromous angler is ever going to need.

I have had the reel probably two years now and it is my “go to” reel. It has been fished everywhere and for a variety of species; from atlantic salmon to steelhead to redfish in the surf and it has stood up well to my carelessness.

I have this reel loaded with 200 yards of 50lb gsp backing, a 0.030” floating Powerflex core shooting line and fish a selection of AFS and Skagit shooting heads from it. Fully loaded (with a 7/8 AFS head) it weighs fractionally over 13 ounces and this weight is perfect for those mid length spey rods that are so popular. It is perfectly balanced on rods between 12ft and 13ft in length. I haven’t yet tried the larger 12 Plus reel from Hatch, which is supposed to weigh around 15 ounces, unloaded, but I think that would be a better bet for rods of 14 ft or so. The 9 Plus balances these longer rods just off the cork handle.

All in all I am very happy with this wonderful reel and it sits on my favorite rods, Sage’s Z-axis 8129 and Thomas & Thomas’s 1307, constantly.



### **Rating**

Drag: 6 out of 6

Weight: 6 out of 6

Cosmetics: 6 out of 6

Best rod length (for balance): 12 ft to 13 ft.