

Fast & Flat

Pete Moore checks out the new Norma 75-grain V-MAX ammo in 243 Winchester and finds a superb performer

Norma's 75-grain 243 Win, V-MAX load – accurate, flat shooting and hard hitting; certainly for this calibre

Having just recently acquired a 243 Win rifle after many years of not having one, I was casting around for some ammo when a call from RUAG asked me if I would like to test Norma's new 75-grain V-MAX load. What could I say but yes.

Having tested Norma's Varmint range of ammo the other year I was not expecting to be disappointed and I am glad to say I was not. Hornady's V-MAX bullet speaks for itself and is one of the most popular of their ballistic tipped offerings in the UK. At 75-grains it should be able to do double duty on fox and small deer species; given you put it in the right place with the latter animals. I say this as its aggressive expansion characteristics can write off a lot of good meat. So if you want to eat it then neck shots are the order of the day...

Consistent components

Bullet weight came out at an average of 74.9-grains so near enough on the money. Powder was a short, dark, grey, extruded stick type propellant, which looked not unlike VihtaVuori, but was probably one of the Bofor's grades. The average weight was 43.8-grains with a deviation of 0.3-grains. Typically well presented in a brass, boxer-primed case the fired brass is ideal fodder for the reloader too.

Clocking the chrono at 3361 fps/1880 ft/lbs this mid-weight load offers the 243 shooter a good round for both fox and small/medium deer



My 243 rifle has a 24" barrel so I was expecting near maximum quoted velocity from the 75-grain load. Norma gives a speed of 1035 mps, which translates into 3395 fps. Average speed went to 3361 fps with an extreme spread (ES) of 17 fps so not too shabby at all. Sierra's Infinity 6 ballistics programme translated that into a muzzle energy figure of 1880 ft/lbs so very much what we have come to expect from this calibre.

Accuracy too was excellent with the load printing a tidy ½", supported at 100-yards; so if you can do your bit it can certainly do its thing...

Flat shooting

In terms of zero point, certainly for foxing work 200-yards means the load is shooting around an inch high out to 200 then only dropping .94" at 225 yards. So pretty much a cock-on point of aim at what are realistic night shooting distances for Charlie. Given how far you feel confident engaging at; at 300-yards the maximum drop is six inches with an energy figure of 1064 ft/lbs. Which is still very reasonable.

Given how 100-grain 243 bullets do seem to struggle to make 1700 ft/lbs in a shorter barrel, the flat shooting, 75-grain Norma load seems to strike a happy medium on velocity, trajectory and energy on target, at what I consider average and acceptable shooting distances.

Overall a nice and versatile load for the 243 Winchester shooter that uses quality components throughout and offers top performance; providing you can do your bit...



Norma 243 Win 75-grain V-MAX Hornady
 ■ Price per £23.50 (box of 20)
 ■ Contact: RUAG Ammotec (UK) Ltd, enquiries@ruag.co.uk
 ■ www.norma.cc