

## Major Change In Piercing Tools

HammerHead has introduced a new line of pneumatic piercing tool heads being promoted as a breakthrough in pneumatic piercing tool technology.

The HammerHead Mole Catamount easy-start Active Head tool was unveiled at ConExpo-Con/Agg last month in Las Vegas.

The new tool design brings to the industry a reciprocating head that is easy to start, regardless of air pressure level, and is the first pneumatic piercing tool head that is effective in both hard conditions and soft soils and sand, says Will LeBlanc, HammerHead senior regional sales manager for piercing tools.

"The new Catamount 'smart head' design," LeBlanc explains, "takes reciprocating head technology a step forward by providing a tool that is productive in both difficult and softer soils, while dramatically reducing tool 'swim' at any operating pressure, a problem often encountered with conventional reciprocating head tools."

Swimming in this context means rather than moving steadily forward during a bore, a tool working in soft soils can move backward because the ground is too soft to hold the recoil.

Catamount tools come in 2.5-, 3- and 4.375-inch diameters. They are available now in North America through the Vermeer dealer organization and internationally at authorized HammerHead distributors.

What sets the Catamount tool head apart from other piercing tools is the incorporation of proven technology successfully used by the downhole hammer industry, says Mark Randa, engineering program manager.

"Currently, many reciprocating heads use a mechanical spring," Randa continues. "Due to its chemistry and processing, spring steel generally is not fatigue resistant which makes its durability variable with use. The Catamount head is driven by air pressure, rather than a mechanical spring; air pressure resets the head, rather than a spring, and that's a key difference. The design allows the tool to start quickly in all soil conditions, greatly reducing swimming and allows the tool to be productive in all types of soil formations."

"The head assembly is made of abrasion-resistant tool steel, and wear parts are replaceable in the field," says Randa. "Therefore, it is possible to refresh the tool without replacing the body. The body is manufactured in one piece of heat-treated alloy steel, rather than a welded or tubular construction. These features add up to improved durability and longer tool life."

The new tools also have the patented HammerHead Power Port quarter-turn reverse feature which pneumatically locks into forward and reverse to prevent accidental direction change during the bore. They also come with the company's patented tail bolt system for fast and easy field maintenance and have wear rings to eliminate metal to metal contact.

Randa says the first Catamount prototype was developed in 2006 and was extensively tested and modified until the company was confident it was market ready.

"One of the most frequent comments of HammerHead customers who tested the new tool was how easily and smoothly it started," says Randa. "That was important, because that was one of our primary goals."

Many testers also were surprised that a reciprocating head worked so well in soft soils.

"Their experience was that reciprocating heads were not effective in softer soils, so they never used them," says Randa. "The message they got from the new tool's performance was that they are something that should be considered."

HammerHead products are manufactured by the Earth Tool Company LLC, Oconomowoc, WI, which markets a full line of pipe-bursting, pipe ramming and pneumatic boring systems. The HammerHead piercing tool line contains 27 models ranging in size from 2 to 24 inches, including rammers.



### What's A Catamount?

Catamount, says Earth Tool's Will LeBlanc, is derived from the term, "cat of the mountain."

"These cats are known for their tremendous power and amazing agility," says LeBlanc. "Our new tools mix the power and smooth, quick-starting characteristics of these animals, so Catamount is a perfect description of this new product."

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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