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Green flash lights sky across Florida

From News-Press Staff
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Residents from Southwest Florida to the east coast of the state Thursday reported seeing a green flash in the sky that lasted about 15 minutes, officials said.

Calhern reported the sighting between 10 and 10:20 p.m. to the Collier County Sheriff's office, an official there said.

The sighting was also reported in Charlotte County, a Lee Sheriff's Department spokesman said.

A short time after the west coast sightings, residents of the east coast of Florida saw a flare and then heard an explosion, according to a spokesman for the U.S. Coast Guard office in Fort Pierce. Some people even reported a loud sound similar to thunder that shook houses, the Coast Guard office reported.

Unconfirmed reports from across the state said the green streak across the sky was a meteorite which may have landed in the Atlantic Ocean. Officials from Patrick Air Force Base in Cape Canaveral could not confirm that the sighting was a meteorite, but said the matter would

be investigated today.

It was the second time in a week that residents along Florida's Atlantic Coast reported seeing a flash of brightly colored light streak across the late night sky.

Last Friday, a streak of light seen in the night sky from Tampa to Jacksonville produced a similar effect and was apparently produced by debris from a Soviet rocket passing through the Earth's atmosphere.

A resident in the West Palm Beach area described the Thursday night light as bright yellow, white and red in that area said the light

started out red, turned to blue, then pink and yellow.

Mike Palmertti, an astronomer in Malabar, saw the light between 9:30 and 10 p.m. He believed it was a "very strong flash of lightning."

But Harold Povermire, a professor at Brevard Community College and director of the Florida Fire Ball Patrol, said he is certain the flash of light was caused by a meteorite entering the atmosphere at 10:03 p.m.

He also said the light was preceded by a sonic boom that "rattled things around quite a bit."