

[Skip to main content](#)

France posts UFO files for world to see

Staff Writer | The Columbus Dispatch

PARIS -- The saucer-shaped object is said to have touched down in the south of France and then zoomed off. It left behind scorch marks and that haunting, age-old question: Are we alone?

This is just one of the cases from France's secret "X-Files" -- about 100,000 documents on supposed UFOs and sightings of other unexplained phenomena that the French space agency is publishing on the Internet.

France is the first country to put its entire weird-sightings archive online, said Jacques Patenet, who leads the space agency's UFO cell -- the Group for Study and Information on Unidentified Aerospace Phenomena.

Their oldest recorded sighting dates from 1937, Patenet said yesterday. The first batch of archives went up on the agency's Web site this week, drawing a server-busting wave of traffic.

The archive includes police and expert reports, witness sketches (some are childlike doodlings), maps, photos and video and audio recordings. The archive has about 1,650 cases and 6,000 witness accounts.

The space agency, known by its French initials CNES, said it is making the files public to draw the scientific community's attention to unexplained cases and because their secrecy generated suspicions that officials were hiding something.

"There's always this impression of plots, of secrets, of wanting to hide things," Patenet said. "The great danger would be to leave the field open to sects and charlatans."

He said many cases were unexplained lights in the sky. "Only 20 to 30" could be classified as "Objet Volant Non Identifie" -- UFOs that appeared to be physical objects, leaving "marks on the ground, radar images," he said.

Even Charles de Gaulle, France's wartime hero who became president, got the bug.

"In 1954, there was a wave of sightings of phenomena in France, and it went up to the highest levels of state. Gen. de Gaulle himself assigned ... an aide and told him, 'Look into this for me, study it to see if something needs to be done,' " Patenet said.

That year, hundreds of sightings occurred in several months, but generally 50 to 100 are reported each year.

Only 9 percent of France's strange phenomena have been fully explained, the agency said. Experts found likely reasons for 33 percent, and 30 percent could not be identified for lack of information.

Other cases were impossible to crack. The most baffling were labeled "Class D aerospace phenomena." About 28 percent of sightings fall into this category.

Patenet singled out the January 1981 case of the saucer-shaped object that a witness said he saw land in Trans-en-Provence, a village inland from the French Riviera.

About 8 feet across, the zinc-colored object made a whistling noise as it landed. The witness later drew a picture: It resembled a wok with a lid and legs.

"The machine stayed a few seconds on the ground and then left very quickly, but it left marks that were analyzed and allowed us to determine that the ground had been heated up, that the object must have weighed several hundred kilos, and that surrounding plants underwent biological changes," said Patenet. (One kilogram is equal to about 2.2 pounds.)

"So something really happened. It really defies analysis," he said.

The agency said everything in the archive would be published, except for psychological reports about witnesses and their names.

[SMS](#)

[Facebook](#)

[Twitter](#)

[Email](#)

[Top Dermatologist Begg Women 50+: 'Stop Using Moisturiser, Do This Instead' New Skin Discovery](#)

File: 2007 03 24_The Columbus Dispatch_France posts UFO files for world to see.pdf

URL: <https://www.dispatch.com/story/news/2007/03/24/france-posts-ufo-files-for/24126521007/>

Undo

[Wolverhampton: This Winter Boot is Suddenly Creating a Buzz](#)[Health Trends](#)

Learn More

Undo

[Unsold 2025 All Inclusive Holiday Packages Are Now At Reduced Prices](#)[Favorite Searches](#) | [Search Ads](#)

Learn More

Undo

[Can £599 Device Boost Memory by 80%? Daily Mail Reveals.](#)[NUROSYM](#)

Shop Now

Undo

- [Help](#)
- [Terms of Service](#)
- [Subscription Terms & Conditions](#)
- [Privacy Policy](#)
- [Site Map](#)
- [Accessibility](#)
- [Our Ethical Principles](#)
- [Responsible Disclosure](#)
- [🔒 Your Privacy Choices](#)

© Copyright Gannett 2024

Keep on reading

[Here's the bonus total for Ryan Day, assistants after Rose Bowl win](#)
[Ohio State coach Ryan Day and assistants added six-figures to their combined bonus total following the Buckeyes' win over Oregon in the Rose Bowl.](#)Dispatch

Undo

[Top Dermatologist Begg Women 50+: "Stop Using Moisturiser, Do This Instead"](#)
[New Skin Discovery](#)
 SponsoredSponsored

Undo

[Wolverhampton: This Winter Boot is Suddenly Creating a Buzz](#)
[Health Trends](#)
 SponsoredSponsored

Learn More

Undo

[Why this Delaware representative faces DUI, vehicular assault charges](#)
[Delaware state House Rep. Kevin Hensley is accused of driving drunk and causing an accident that injured another driver.](#)Dispatch

Undo

[Photos from the Columbus Blue Jackets vs. St. Louis Blues game on Saturday night](#)
[The Columbus Blue Jackets battle the St. Louis Blues at Nationwide Arena on Jan. 4.](#)Dispatch

Undo

[Joel Klatt says SEC being considered best conference 'needs to die'](#)
[Fox Sports analyst Joel Klatt said the narrative that the SEC is the clear best conference in college football 'needs to die'.](#)Dispatch

Undo

[New Year's Eve parties at Mar-a-Lago. A look at celebs who've shown up](#)
[Donald and Melania Trump have hosted politicians, socialites, newsmakers and Hollywood superstars like Stallone at their lavish Mar-a-Lago parties.](#)Dispatch

Undo

[Columbus has 2 of the best new restaurants in the nation](#)
[Columbus' booming dining scene has led to several new restaurant openings. Here are two of the nation's best.](#)Dispatch

Undo

[Unsold 2025 All Inclusive Holiday Packages Are Now At Reduced Prices](#)
[Discover Bargains & Deals On All-Inclusive Holidays With These Top Searches.](#)[Favorite Searches | Search Ads](#)

SponsoredSponsored

Learn More

Undo

[1 Vitamin You Need After 50 For "Crepey" Skin](#)
[New Skin Discovery](#)
 SponsoredSponsored

Undo

[7 Easton Town Center free parking lots to become paid starting Sunday](#)
[Easton Town Center will change seven parking lots from free to paid starting Jan. 5, allowing for "more frequent car turnover and availability."](#)Dispatch

Undo

[Fiery crash on Interstate 270 southbound on east side of Columbus](#)
[Interstate 270 southbound on east side of Columbus closed after fiery crash.](#)Dispatch

Undo