

be stared at the light long enough, he may become almost hypnotized by it, so that it takes up practically all his attention. Star-distance illusion results from starting at a point of light which approaches and recedes from the observer. In the absence of additional distance cues, accurate depth perception is extremely difficult. Instead of seeing the light approaching and receding, the observer has the illusion that it is expanding and contracting at a fixed distance. The cause for such an illusion phenomenon is not fully understood. It can be prevented or dispelled by continually shifting fixation from point to point. Ground observers seeing a point of light in the night sky can also experience this phenomenon.

For several months now space airplanes, conventional and jet, have been using an experimental anti-collision beacon which, when tested at short range and under varying atmospheric conditions, has produced UFO reports. This light is a white strobe type light usually involving two or more lights operating alternately. The beacon is intense and flashes the only a fraction of a second. It has been used as much as 30 miles away and at that distance only the light could be seen, thereby producing a rather startling sight.

Many modern aircraft, particularly swept and delta wing types, are reported as UFO's under adverse weather and sighting conditions. When observed at high altitudes and usually at some distance, aircraft can have appearances ranging from a disc to robot body shapes due to reflection of sunlight off the bright surfaces or when only jet exhausts are visible. Vapor or condensation trails will sometimes appear to glow fiery red or orange when reflecting sunlight. After burners (instead of jet exhaust gases) are often reported as UFO's and can be seen for long distances.

Astronomical sightings include bright stars, planets, comets, fireballs and satellite meteors and other celestial bodies. When observed through haze, light fog, moving clouds or other obstructions or unusual conditions, the planets, Venus, Jupiter, Mars and Saturn have been reported as unidentified flying objects. Stellar airglows are sometimes a source for an unidentified flying object report.

There are several meteor showers occurring each year. These meteor showers produce rather spectacular displays and are watched when evaluating reports during these periods. Recently, unidentified reports were attributed to flashing objects in the sky. Investigation revealed that these objects were associated with the earth's passage through the meteor trails known as the Lyrids and the Quadrants. Everyone can look for the following displays during the dates indicated:

SHOWER

Quadrants
Perseids
Orionids
Geminids

PERIOD

1-4 January
29 July - 27 August
20-25 December
7-15 December

NINE