

Unidentified reports are those for which sufficient specific information has been accumulated and evaluated to permit a positive identification or explanation of the object.

Reports categorized as Unidentified Data are those in which one or more elements of information essential for evaluation are missing. Some examples are the omission of the duration of the sighting, date, time, location, position in the sky, weather conditions, and the manner of appearance or disappearance. If no element is missing and there is an indication that the sighting may be of a security, scientific, technical, or public interest value, the Project Blue Book Office conducts an additional investigation and every attempt is made to obtain the information necessary for identification. However, in some instances, essential information cannot be obtained, and no further action can be taken.

The third and by far the smallest group of evaluations is categorized as Unidentified. A sighting is considered unidentified when a report apparently contains all pertinent data necessary to support a valid hypothesis concerning the cause or explanation of the report but the description of the object or its motion cannot be correlated with any known object or phenomenon.

TYPES OF UFO IDENTIFICATIONS AND EVALUATIONS

There are various types of UFO sightings. Most common are reports of aeronomical sightings, which include bright stars, planets, comets, fireballs, meteors, auroral arcs, and other celestial bodies. When observed through haze, light fog, moving clouds, or other obstructions or unusual conditions, the planets, including Venus, Jupiter, and Mars have been reported as unidentified flying objects. Weather balloons are also a source of reports.

Satellites are another major source of UFO reports. An increase in satellites reported as UFOs has come about because of two factors. The first is the increase of interest on the part of the public; the second is the increasing number of satellites in the skies. Positive knowledge of the location of all satellites at all times enables rapid identification of satellite sightings. Keeping track of man-made objects in orbit above the earth is the responsibility of the North American Air Defense Command Space Detection and Tracking System. This sophisticated electronic system gathers complex space traffic data monthly from tracking stations all over the world.

Other space significant activities include the use of electronic tracking and large telescope cameras. SACRO schedules are prepared by the RAND/Corbett/Spence Flight Center at Greenbelt, Maryland, and schedules of the South-North equator crossings are prepared by the Smithsonian Institution at Cambridge, Massachusetts. From the data produced by these agencies, satellites mistakenly reported as UFOs can be quickly identified. Some of these are visible to the naked eye.

Aircraft account for another major source of UFO reports, particularly during adverse weather conditions. When observed at high altitudes under some distance, aircraft can have appearances differing from one to another shapes due to the reflection of the sun, their bright surfaces, vapor or condensation trails from jet aircraft, and sometimes appear to glow fiery red or orange when reflecting sunlight. Advancements from jet aircraft are often reported as UFOs since they can be seen from great distances when the aircraft cannot be seen.

The Project Blue Book Office has direct contact with all elements of the Air Force and the Federal Aviation Agency civil air control centers. All aerial reporting operations and specifications are checked with the nearest control center, causing an immediate evaluation of aircraft sightings reported as UFOs. However, since special law flights are not covered, these flights are probable causes of some reports.