

Good 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 possible are those for which one or more elements of information material for evaluation are missing. Some examples are the omission of the description of the sighting, date, time, location, position in the sky, weather conditions, and the manner of appearance or disappearance. If an element is missing and there is no 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 is obscured or deliberately withheld from the Project Blue Book Office, or common sense may be used.

The third and by far the smallest group of evaluations is categorized as unidentified. A sighting is classified unidentified when a report apparently contains all pertinent data necessary to suggest 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 jet-powered sightings, which include bright stars, planets, comets, fireballs, meteors, aerial streams, and other reflected bodies. When observed through haze, light fog, moving clouds, or other obscuration or unusual conditions, the phrase, "fading trail," "diples," and "flares" have been reported as unidentified flying objects. Weather balloons are also a source of reports.

Artificial are another major source of UFO reports. As increases in satellites reported in 1978 and 1979 show great increase of this category. The first is the increase in interest on the part of the public; the second is the increased 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 about the earth is the responsibility of the North American Air Defense Command Space Detection and Tracking System. This sophisticated electronic system gathers complex space object data instantly from tracking systems all over the world.

Other space surveillance activities include the use of ballistic tracking and large telescopic cameras. SCRP satellites are prepared by the NASA Goddard Space Flight Center at Greenbelt, Maryland, and satellites of the South-South equatorial (SSS) are prepared by the Smithsonian Institution at Cambridge, Massachusetts. From the data provided by these agencies, satellites mistakenly reported as UFOs can be quickly identified. Some of these are visible to the naked eye.

Artificial aircraft for shorter range source of UFO reports, particularly during adverse weather conditions. When observed at high altitudes and/or in darkness, aircraft can have appearances resembling from due to their shapes due to the reflection of the sun on their bright surfaces. Vapor or condensation trails from jet aircraft will sometimes appear to glow fiery red or orange when reflecting sunlight. Astronomers (from jet aircraft) are also reported as UFOs since this 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 refueling operations and aerial training flights can be checked immediately. Air traffic of commercial airlines and flights of military aircraft are checked with the nearest control center, resulting in an immediate refutation of aircraft mistakenly reported as UFOs. However, since most local ballistics are not covered, these flights are probable causes of some reports.