

He says the closest thing to alien abductions in the NT happened about two years ago in Alice Springs when a man heading out to the prison lost 20 minutes, awoke with a nose bleed and strange markings over his body.

Wycliffe Well Roadhouse — perhaps the closest thing the Territory has to Roswell — has become famous the world over for the extraordinary number of sightings in its vicinity.

Lou Parkas, who runs the roadhouse — 374km north of Alice Springs — believes the apparent inter-galactic popularity of Wycliffe Well can be attributed to the Pine Gap military facility, near Alice Springs.

Mr Parkas, who claims to see spacecraft regu-

larly, said it was possible aliens were spying on the US military base to gather information. He believes the Devil's Marbles are connected with the UFO sightings and unexplained light formations occur about once a week over the region.

Answers

Two Darwin UFO researchers are looking into the sightings with the hope of finding some answers.

Australian UFO Research Network director Diane Harrison said the lights spotted over Darwin last month were similar to formations spotted over New South Wales, Victoria and, in the past month, Queensland.

She said: "There are Aboriginal stories around Australia

about these lights, they've existed before the white man came to Australia so whether they are natural phenomena we don't know.

"In World War II aircraft around the world were accompanied by these lights, they were called two-fighters."

But those who cling to the hope we are not alone may find the odds of researchers finding an extraterrestrial explanation disheartening.

Ms Harrison says of the approximately 650 calls received in a year, only 3 per cent of sightings cannot be identified.

The network receives reports of sightings from the public on its 1800 number and embarks on the painstaking process of eliminating such things as planes, weather bal-

loons, even, on one occasion, a ferris wheel.

UFO sightings are no longer the realm of bespectacled, nocturnal, conspiracy theorists.

Ms Harrison said: "They have become quite fashionable."

"Ten years ago you might have kept quiet about seeing something but UFOs have been indoctrinated into our society through television programs and advertising."

Detective

Across Australia, 28 researchers investigate UFO sightings, including two in Darwin, two in Alice Springs and one in Tennant Creek.

She said: "It's sort of like a detective-type thing, you have to search for everything, our first thing is to find

out what it isn't and then we try our damndest to see what it is."

While the sightings in Darwin may have caught everyone's attention, they hardly compare to the weird stories of alien abduction and cattle mutilation that have been doing the rounds elsewhere in Australia and around the world.

These include the discovery of a sheep sucked dry of blood in WA two years ago and strangely marked cattle found dead on the east coast.

But who can forget the media glare for the unfortunate Knowles family from Victoria, who said they were lifted up in their car by a UFO across the Nullabor in the early '80s, their speaking in tongues and subsequent psychiatric rehabilitation programs.

Maybe the truth is here, after all.

TOP: research officer for Australian International UFO Flying Saucer Research, Keith Douglas.
BACKGROUND: Even Dana Scully and Fox Mulder look surprised.

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