

Key Points

- Research suggests USOs (Unidentified Submerged Objects) are underwater objects seen but not identified, with historical sightings dating back centuries.
- It seems likely that notable cases include the 1967 Shag Harbor incident in Canada and the 1972 Sognfjord incident in Norway, both involving multiple witnesses and military responses.
- The evidence leans toward eyewitness accounts and official reports being credible, but lacks scientific studies and concrete evidence, fueling controversy.
- Skeptics argue many sightings are misidentified natural phenomena, while believers see potential extraterrestrial activity, highlighting a debated topic.

Historical Context

USOs have been reported for centuries, often linked to mysterious underwater lights or objects. Key events include the Shag Harbor incident on October 4, 1967, where multiple witnesses saw a lit object descend into the water near Nova Scotia, prompting a Canadian military search with no findings^[1]. Another significant case is the Sognfjord incident from November 12-22, 1972, in Norway, where the Navy and NATO pursued an unknown submerged object for nearly two weeks, with limited details available.

Credibility and Evidence

Eyewitness accounts, especially from the Shag Harbor incident, are numerous and consistent, supported by RCMP and military reports. However, there are no rigorous scientific studies specifically on USOs, and no physical evidence like wreckage has been recovered. The US Navy has shown interest, but specific disclosures are scarce, adding to the complexity of assessing credibility.

Impact and Perception

USOs contribute to public fascination with extraterrestrial life, influencing media and culture. Government responses, like the Canadian search in Shag Harbor, indicate national security concerns, while the broader UFO discourse integrates USOs, fueling ongoing debates about unexplained phenomena.

Survey Note: Detailed Evaluation of USO Evidence

This report provides a comprehensive analysis of Unidentified Submerged Objects (USOs), focusing on their historical context, credibility, skepticism, influence, and avenues for further research, specifically in relation to claims about Unidentified Flying Objects

(UFOs) and related phenomena. The analysis aims to be evidence-based, citing sources and representing both believers' and skeptics' perspectives fairly, while highlighting key gaps in evidence.

Historical and Factual Background

USOs are defined as unidentified objects observed underwater, akin to UFOs but in aquatic environments. Historical records suggest sightings date back centuries, with sailors and explorers reporting strange lights and movements beneath the waves. Two modern cases stand out for their documentation and credibility:

- **Shag Harbor Incident (1967):** On October 4, 1967, near Shag Harbor, Nova Scotia, Canada, at least eleven witnesses, including Laurie Wickens and his friends, reported a low-flying lit object descending into the water around 11:20 pm Atlantic Daylight Time. They heard a whistling sound "like a bomb," followed by a "whoosh" and a loud bang, with the object floating 250 to 300 meters offshore. Initial reports to the RCMP suggested a plane crash, but no survivors, bodies, or debris were found despite searches by local fishing boats, the Canadian Coast Guard, and the Canadian Forces navy and air force. The incident was officially labeled a "UFO Report" by Canadian government documents, with navy divers from Fleet Diving Unit Atlantic searching the seafloor for three days without finding traces^[1]. Pre-incident sightings included reports from Air Canada Flight 305 and others, adding to the incident's complexity.
- **Sognfjord Incident (1972):** From November 12 to November 22, 1972, in Sognfjord, Norway, the Norwegian Navy and NATO forces engaged in a nearly two-week pursuit of an unknown submerged object. Reports suggest the object was first spotted off the coast, possibly tracked and fired upon, retreating into the fjord. Military efforts aimed to force it to the surface or destroy it, but specific details are scarce, relying on ufologist accounts and online forums like abovetopsecret.com, which mention an unprecedented military response but lack official documentation.

These cases illustrate the historical interest in USOs, with official responses indicating their perceived significance, yet the lack of conclusive findings leaves many questions unanswered.

Credibility Assessment

Evaluating the reliability of sources is crucial for understanding USO claims:

- **Primary Sources:** For the Shag Harbor incident, eyewitness accounts are numerous and consistent, supported by RCMP reports and telexes between military officials in Ottawa and Halifax, with no attempts to explain away the sightings^[2]. Official Canadian military documents, available at Library and Archives Canada, confirm the search operation, lending credibility. For Sognfjord, primary sources are limited, with reliance on secondary reports from ufologists, reducing reliability.

- **Whistleblower Testimony:** No notable whistleblower testimony specifically related to USOs has been widely reported, unlike some UFO cases, which limits insider insights.
- **Scientific Studies:** There are no rigorous scientific studies focused specifically on USOs. Research on UFOs, such as Pentagon reports, may tangentially relate, but USOs are less studied due to the challenges of underwater investigation, including the vast and inaccessible nature of ocean depths^[3]. Claims by retired Rear Admiral Tim Gallaudet about USOs being a national security concern, supported by a 2019 USS Omaha video verified by the Pentagon, are anecdotal rather than scientific^[4].
- **Government/Military Disclosures:** The Canadian government's response to Shag Harbor, including underwater searches, is documented, showing official interest. The US Navy has acknowledged UFOs and expressed concern about USOs, but specific disclosures are scarce, with no declassified reports directly addressing USO incidents found in searches of databases like the National Archives^[5].

The credibility leans toward eyewitness and official reports for specific incidents, but the lack of scientific validation and limited documentation for others, like Sognfjord, highlights significant gaps.

Counterarguments and Skepticism

Skeptics offer alternative explanations for USO sightings, challenging their extraterrestrial or anomalous nature:

- **Misidentification:** Many sightings could be misidentified natural phenomena, such as bioluminescent marine life (e.g., jellyfish, squid) or underwater geological activity. The Pentagon's 2024 report on UAPs suggests most sightings are ordinary objects, a perspective applicable to USOs^[6]. Underwater conditions, like optical illusions or reflections, can lead to misinterpretations.
- **Lack of Concrete Evidence:** No physical evidence, such as wreckage or debris, has been recovered from USO incidents, with searches like Shag Harbor yielding nothing. This absence fuels skepticism, suggesting sightings may be transient phenomena without substance.
- **Hoaxes and Fabrications:** Some reports might be hoaxes, especially given the lack of verifiable data and the sensationalism surrounding UFO-related topics, as noted in discussions on platforms like Reddit^[7].

These counterarguments highlight the need for rigorous investigation, with skeptics emphasizing prosaic explanations over extraterrestrial hypotheses.

Influence and Impact

USOs have significantly shaped public perception, government policy, and the broader UFO discourse:

- **Public Perception:** USO sightings contribute to public fascination with extraterrestrial life, often featured in media, books, and documentaries. The Shag Harbor incident, for instance, is a staple in UFO literature, reinforcing beliefs in underwater alien bases^[8]. This fuels speculation and cultural narratives, influencing public interest in unexplained phenomena.
- **Government Policy:** The Canadian government's response to Shag Harbor, including military searches, indicates that USO reports can prompt official action, reflecting national security concerns. In the US, the Navy's acknowledgment of UFOs and interest in USOs, as seen in recent reports, suggests a shift toward taking these phenomena seriously, potentially influencing policy on maritime security^[9].
- **Broader UFO Discourse:** USOs are a subset of the UFO phenomenon, often linked to transmedium objects that operate in air and water. This integration influences discussions on anomalous phenomena, with cases like Shag Harbor cited as evidence of extraterrestrial activity, contributing to ongoing debates and research efforts.

The impact is evident in both public imagination and governmental responses, highlighting the intersection of science, security, and speculation.

Footnotes

1. [Shag Harbor UFO incident](#)
2. [National Post: Shag Harbour UFO sighting](#)
3. [Academic Block: Unidentified Submerged Objects](#)
4. [Jalopnik: Unidentified Submerged Objects](#)
5. [National Archives: Declassified Records](#)
6. [BusinessToday: UFO sightings debunked](#)
7. [Reddit: USO Sightings](#)
8. [Astonishing Legends: Shag Harbour](#)
9. [SOFREP: Navy and USOs](#)