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UFO UpDates Mailing List

Re: IFOs

From: John Rimmer <jrimmer@magonia.demon.co.uk>
Date: Thu, 29 Jul 1999 21:15:15 +0100
Fwd Date: Fri, 30 Jul 1999 22:12:26 -0400
Subject: Re: IFOs

>Subject: Re: IFOs
>From: Mark Cashman <mcashman@ix.netcom.com>
>Date: Thu, 29 Jul 1999 01:21:36 -0400
>To: UFO UpDates - Toronto <updates@globalseve.net>

>>Date: Tue, 27 Jul 1999 22:20:13 +0100
>>To: UFO UpDates - Toronto <updates@globalseve.net>
>>From: John Rimmer <jrimmer@magonia.demon.co.uk>
>>Subject: Re: IFOs

>>Unfortunately this introduces a very subjective element into the
>>gathering of statistical data. Any individual investigator's
>>view of "paydirt data" will vary. It is clear that many
>>researcher's view of paydirt is anything which will support the
>>idea that at least some UFO reports represent structured craft,
>>hence vague lights-in-the-sky type reports are of little
>>interest to them, and can be ignored when compiling statistics,
>>inflating the "unexplained" cases at the expense of the
>>"insufficient data" column.

>Actually, there can be little doubt as to what represents
>"paydirt" in any science. It is that observation which contains
>the greatest amount of information.

>In the UFO field, that means high angular size observations with
>the longest available durations (at least for those of us who
>accept the OEH (Objective Existence Hypothesis)).

Precisely, for those of you who accept the OEH, or at least your
interpretation of it.

>>But researchers with a different agenda, promoting the
>>earth-lights hypothesis for instance, will find the distant
>>star-like objects extremely interesting, and would want to
>>include them in any definition of a UFO worth studying.

>Inclusion of such reports would seriously degrade to S/N ratio
>in the data under study. If this is the sort of thing EL
>proponents consider acceptable data, no wonder their conclusions
>fail to be supportable.

>History tells us that such reports are more likely than high
>angular size reports to represent a "known". If they are instead
>accepted as unknowns, they corrupt all of the results to which
>they are applied.

I don't want to speak on behalf of earth-light researchers, but
they are looking for something rather different to OEH seekers.
Their research has a large statistical element. A concentration
of reports in a particular area which had previously been
identified as a possible locale for earthlight phenomena (i.e.

an area with major geological faults) would help provide evidence as to whether or not such a prediction had scientific value. Likewise, if an area was identified as having a concentration of UFO reports, from LIT to "structured" objects, and was later found to have major geological faulting, that would also be evidence of value to the EL researcher.

>>Ultimately we have to accept that the figure on which we must
>>base our percentage of "unknowns" is the totality of events
>>which are reported by the percipients as UFO events, and not
>>just the ones we personally happen to find interesting.

>That's a position which would hardly be acceptable in any
>science. Can you imagine an ornithology which performed its
>study of birds by including observations of insects, on the
>rationality that specks too small to resolve could be birds?

What a spurious comparison. We know what a bird is. We can clearly identify objects which are birds and study them. If we come across an object which isn't a bird, or has no bird-like features we can safely ignore it. However we don't know what a UFO might be (well, some of the contributors to this list do, obviously, because they're always telling us) so those irritating little LITs which subsequently turn out to have boring explanations are part of our raw data. >

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John Rimmer
Magonia Magazine
www.magonis.demon.co.uk

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