Geophysical Research Abstracts
Vol. 13, EGU2011-13487-6, 2011
EGU General Assembly 2011

Observed a mysterious aerial event that you can't explain? The UAP Observations Reporting Scheme as a tool for demystifying UFOs and stimulating interest in science

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Launched during the International Year of Astronomy 2009, the Unidentified Aerospace Phenomena (UAP) Observations Reporting Scheme (**) aims at approaching the UAP topic from a professional, rational and scientific perspective. Its objectives are to: 1) serve as a forum for educating the public about atmospheric, astrophysical and human phenomena and 2) collect reports from astronomers of apparently inexplicable events for further study.

For a number of reasons the general public and many young people are fascinated by the idea of UFOs and extraterrestrial life. Astronomers, scientists and teachers should acknowledge this keen interest and use it as starting block for presenting and teaching related subjects such as astronomy, physics, technology, biology and chemistry, allowing at the same time cross fertilisation among various disciplines. Mysteries motivate to enquire, leading to gain insight and knowledge. The mystery creates astonishment that enables the human process of wondering, and this again generates motivation for learning and exploring beyond the boundaries of what is known or believed today.

The UAP Observations Reporting Scheme's provides an extensive resource for inquiry-based learning and for UAP witnesses to critically evaluate the potential cause of their sightings. We present the website's extensive and well-illustrated list of misidentifications and describe how people can further check details and develop their knowledge (e.g. satellite paths, stars/planets charts, characteristics of meteors, pictures of sprites, clouds classification). A short illustrated list of cases will be featured, both explained and inexplicable.

We will underline that the project definitely fulfills a need in relation to demystifying UFO events, providing education on pseudo-scientific information, while encouraging an attitude of scientific open-mindedness. After all, whenever there are unexplained observations, there is the possibility for science to learn something new by studying those observations.

(*): Disclaimer: Work undertaken as personal work; not endorsed as research activity by ESA.

(**) http://www.uapreporting.org/