



The 2005
CANADIAN UFO SURVEY:
an analysis of UFO reports
in Canada



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The 2005 Canadian UFO Survey

Overview

Since 1989, UFOROM has been soliciting UFO case data from all known and active investigators and researchers in Canada. Our goal has been to provide data for use by researchers as they try to understand this controversial phenomenon. No comparable studies are currently produced by any other research group in North America. 2005 marks our 17th year of collecting and analysing Canadian UFO report data. UFOROM presently has UFO data from 1993 to the present available online, and is working to add earlier national case data to the database.

The 2005 Canadian UFO Survey: Summary of Results

- There were 769 UFO sightings reported in Canada in 2005, nearly two each day.
- For the first time since 1998, the number of UFO reports was down from the year before. There were about 15 per cent fewer UFO reports in 2005 than 2004, although the number of reports in 2005 is still the second-highest level on record.
- More than 6,000 UFO sightings in Canada have been officially recorded since 1989.
- Quebec and Newfoundland both had all-time record high numbers of UFOs reported in 2005.
- In 2005, about 15 per cent of all UFO reports were unexplained. This percentage of unknowns falls to about seven per cent when only high-quality cases are considered.
- Most UFO sightings have more than one witness.
- The typical UFO sighting lasted slightly more than 15 minutes in 2005.

The most important findings of this ongoing study include the fact that the number of UFO sightings in Canada increased for 16 years, then decreased slightly in 2005. Even so, the 2005 level is the second-highest number of UFO sightings in a single year. People continue to report observing unusual objects in the sky, and some of these objects do not have obvious explanations. Many witnesses are pilots, police and other individuals with reasonably good observing capabilities and good judgement. Although most reported UFOs are simply lights in the night sky, a significant number are objects with definite shapes observed within the witnesses' frame of reference.

Popular opinion to the contrary, there is yet to be any incontrovertible evidence that some UFO cases involve extraterrestrial contact. The continued reporting of UFOs by the public and the yearly increase in numbers of UFO reports suggests a need for further examination of the phenomenon by social, medical and/or physical scientists.

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Raison D'être

Why bother to collect UFO reports? In one sense, the answer may be as simple as “because they're there.” Polls by both professional and lay organizations have shown that approximately ten per cent of all North Americans believe they have seen UFOs. Given the population data available, this implies a very large number of UFO reports. If UFOs are trivial and non-existent, as some claim, then one might ask why such a large percentage of the population is labouring under the delusion of seeing things that are “not there.” If, on the other hand, UFOs represent a “real” phenomenon, the data should be examined for insight into its nature. In either situation, it can be argued that UFO reports deserve and merit serious scientific attention.

In general, the public equates UFOs with alien visitation. However, there is no incontrovertible proof that this is a real connection. In order to determine if there might be signs of extraterrestrial contact, research on the actual characteristics of UFO reports is needed. Do the reports really bear out such a linkage? What, exactly, are people seeing and reporting as UFOs? Are they seeing “classic” Hollywood-style flying saucers, like those portrayed in movies and television shows? Are there really well-documented and well-witnessed UFO reports, with no explanation as to their nature? Given the general public perception that aliens exist and are present in our Solar System, and that the answers to these questions may already exist in the beliefs and desires of popular culture, a thorough examination of actual UFO reports would go far to provide necessary insight into the phenomenon.

What is generally overlooked by most writers and readers on this subject is that UFO reports are the foundation of ufology (the study of the UFO phenomenon). While this may seem an obvious fact, many books on UFOs and related subjects proceed on the basis of assumptions, theories and individual anecdotal accounts. Many books about UFO abductions on bookstore shelves give the impression that this aspect of the UFO phenomenon constitutes most of ufology. This is certainly not the case; UFO research begins with the investigation of UFO reports. It is through later collection and study that researchers can theorise about the phenomenon and eventually write papers and books speculating about UFO origins (including the possible evidence of alien contact.) Abduction cases actually comprise a very tiny fraction of the bulk of UFO data. The “bread and butter” of UFO research lies not in fanciful discourses about aliens' genetic manipulation of humans but in what UFO witnesses are actually seeing and reporting.

This last point cannot be overemphasized. The UFO reports collected and analysed in our annual Surveys are the only data upon which studies of Canadian UFOs can be reasonably based. As UFOs are a worldwide phenomenon, the results of analyses of Canadian UFO reports can easily be applied to cases in other countries. In effect, this is the empirical data for research in this field. If one wants to know what people really are seeing in the skies, the answer lies within these reports.

The General Collection of UFO Data

Many individuals, associations, clubs and groups claim to investigate UFO reports.

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Many solicit reports from the general public. Comparatively few actually participate in any kind of information sharing or data gathering for scientific programs. Some are primarily interest groups based in museums, planetariums, church basements or individuals' homes, and do essentially *nothing* with the sighting reports they receive. Because there is no way to enforce standards in UFO report investigations, the quality of case investigations varies considerably between groups and across provinces. Quantitative studies are difficult because subjective evaluations and differences in investigative techniques do not allow precise comparisons. UFOROM's requests for data from Canadian UFO researchers and investigators include only basic information that can be used in rigorous analyses. This includes things such as date of the sighting, the time, duration, number of witnesses and their location — facts which are not subjective and can be used in scientific studies before interpretation.

The Official Collection of UFO Data

Until 1995, the National Research Council of Canada (NRC) routinely collected UFO reports from private citizens, RCMP, civic police and military personnel. This collection of data was in support of the NRC's interest in the retrieval of meteorites, with the idea that witnesses' reports of bright lights in the sky were mostly fireballs and meteors which could then be triangulated to locate fallen meteorites. (In fact, the Innisfree meteorite was found in Alberta through this system.)

This practice ceased as a result of budgetary restrictions, lowered prioritization of meteoric research and the perceived reduction in importance of UFO data. However, included among the NRC reports were many observations of meteors and fireballs, and these have been added into the UFOROM database since 1989. For several years, the collection of such reports was in an effective hiatus, but in 2000, an arrangement facilitated that UFO sightings reported to Transport Canada could then be referred to UFOROM for research into the phenomenon. This does not mean that UFOROM receives all official government or military UFO reports. UFO sightings reported to the RCMP, for example, will normally get sent only to RCMP Divisional Headquarters.

Another reason why UFO data should be collected and studied is found in official directives of the Department of National Defence regarding the actions of all pilots in Canadian airspace. In documents relating to CIRVIS (Communications Instructions for Reporting Vital Intelligence Sightings), both civilians and military personnel are instructed that:

CIRVIS reports should be made immediately upon a vital intelligence sighting of any airborne, waterborne and ground objects or activities which appear to be hostile, suspicious, unidentified or engaged in illegal smuggling activity.

Examples of events requiring CIRVIS reports are:

- unidentified flying objects;*
- submarines or warships which are not Canadian or American;*

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- *violent explosions; and*
- *unexplained or unusual activity in Polar regions, abandoned airstrips or other remote, sparsely populated areas.*

[DND Flight Information Publication - GPH 204. Flight Planning and Procedures, Canada and North Atlantic, Issue No. 57, Effective 0901Z 20 May 1999]

In other words, it is considered in the best interests of everyone to report UFO sightings, and certainly of interest to the Department of National Defence. The annual Canadian UFO Survey looks critically at UFO sightings and assesses their nature.

For the purposes of this and other scientific studies of UFO data, UFO sightings which have been made to recognized contributing and participating groups, associations, organizations or individuals (for a list of contributors see page 2 of this report) are considered *officially* reported and valid as data in this study. The collection of Canadian UFO data is challenging. However, the data obtained for analysis yields results that can be compared with other studies. This is useful in understanding the nature of UFO reports not only in Canada, but can shed light on the nature of UFO reports elsewhere in the world.

UFO Reports in Canada

The following table shows the numbers of reported UFOs per year since 1989.

Year	Number of cases	Cumulative total
1989	141	141
1990	194	335
1991	165	500
1992	223	723
1993	489	1212
1994	189	1401
1995	183	1584
1996	258	1842
1997	284	2126
1998	194	2320
1999	259	2579
2000	263	2842
2001	374	3216
2002	483	3699
2003	673	4372
2004	882	5254
2005	769	6023

The number of UFO reports per year has varied annually, depending on a number of factors. Yearly totals slowly but steadily increased between 1989 and 2004. In 2005, however, there was a slight drop of about 14 per cent in UFO report numbers. Nevertheless, the 2005 level is still the second-highest number of UFO sighting reports on record, and UFOs have not “gone away.”

UFOs and IFOs

For this study, the working definition of a UFO is *an object seen in the sky which its observer cannot identify*.

Studies of UFO data routinely include reports of meteors, fireballs and other conventional objects. In many instances, observers fail to recognize stars, aircraft and bolides, and therefore report them as UFOs. Witnesses often report watching stationary flashing lights low on the horizon for hours and never conclude they are observing a star

or planet.

Some UFO investigators spend many hours sorting IFOs from UFOs. Historically, analyses of UFO data such as the American projects Grudge, Sign and Blue Book all included raw UFO data which later were resolved into categories of UFOs and IFOs. Sometimes, observed objects are quickly assigned a particular IFO explanation even though later investigation suggests such an explanation was unwarranted. The reverse is also true.

The issue of including IFOs in studies of UFO data is an important one. One could argue that once a sighting is explained, it has no reason to be considered as a UFO report. However, this overlooks the fact that the IFO was originally reported as a UFO and is indeed valid data. It may not be evidence of extraterrestrial visitation, but as UFO data, it is quite useful. It must be remembered that all major previous studies of UFOs examined UFO reports with the intent to explain a certain percentage of cases. These cases were the IFOs — definitely part of the UFO report legacy.

IFOs are problematic in that they are not interesting to most ufologists. In fact, some UFO investigators readily admit they do not record details about UFO reports that seem easily explained as ordinary objects. This may be a serious error. The UFO witness may be conscientiously reporting an object that is mysterious to him or her — the exact definition of a UFO. Therefore, even late-night, anonymous telephone calls that are obviously reports of airplanes or planets should be rightly logged as UFO reports. It seems reasonable that all UFO reports be included in statistical databases and in later studies on the phenomenon, regardless of the cases' later reclassification as IFOs.

The IFO question has become more significant in recent years as many more fireball and meteor reports than usual were added as data from astronomical sources. Brilliant fireballs have always been included within UFO data, especially the American military studies, and have been included in the UFOROM annual studies as a matter of course and to allow better comparisons with historical studies. As fireball reporting networks become more efficient, however, the number of IFOs in the UFO database increases dramatically. Many fireballs are reported as UFOs and are thus justifiably included in the UFO database. Others that are reported as fireballs and bolides might not be considered appropriate for inclusion, and this problem should be addressed in later analyses.

Since most UFO reports can be explained and reclassified as IFOs, this fact attests to the reality of the objects seen. UFO reports actually reflect *real* events which occur. When a UFO is reported, a *real object* has been seen that was not just a fantasy of a witness' imagination.

Method

Data for each case was received by UFOROM from participating researchers across Canada. The information then was coded by members of UFOROM and entered into a Microsoft Excel database and statistically analysed.

An example of the coding key is as follows:

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Example: 2005 01 09 1530 Vernon BC DD 900 silver 2 ps 6 5 UFOBC p four objs.
seen

Field: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16

Field 1 is a default YEAR for the report.

Field 2 is the MONTH of the incident.

Field 3 is the DATE of the sighting.

Field 4 is the local TIME, on the 24-hour clock.

Field 5 is the geographical LOCATION of the incident.

Field 6 is the PROVINCE where the sighting occurred.

Field 7 is the TYPE of report, using the Modified Hynek Classification System.

Field 8 is the DURATION of the sighting, in seconds (a value of 600 thus represents 10 minutes).

Field 9 is the primary COLOUR of the object(s) seen

Field 10 is the number of WITNESSES

Field 11 is the SHAPE of the object(s) seen

Field 12 is the STRANGENESS of the report.

Field 13 is the RELIABILITY of the report.

Field 14 is the SOURCE of the report.

Field 15 is the EVALUATION of the case.

Field 16 includes any COMMENTS noted about the case.

Analyses of the Data

Distribution of UFO Reports Across Canada

In 2003, British Columbia had more than 45 per cent of the total number of UFO sightings reported in Canada, a substantial over-representation based on population alone. In fact, British Columbia has had the largest number of UFO sightings reported annually in Canada since 1998. This changed in 2004, when Ontario edged out a handful more cases overall, and this was again the case in 2005. In 2004, BC had 27 per cent of all Canadian UFO cases, while Ontario had 28 per cent. Quebec and Newfoundland both had all-time record high numbers of UFOs reported in 2005.

TABLE 1
Distribution of UFO Reports by Province

	BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	PQ	NB	PEI	NS	NF	YK	NT	NU
1989	15	16	18	22	34	28	1	-	3	3	-	1	
1990	76	9	10	20	21	36	7	3	5	4	1	2	
1991	59	22	7	6	30	16	9	1	7	4	1	-	
1992	90	8	9	23	56	10	9	-	3	4	3	1	
1993	157	56	93	74	51	32	3	1	3	7	-	5	
1994	14	39	8	10	51	34	6	-	9	6	3	3	
1995	45	10	11	48	41	20	-	-	1	1	-	4	
1996	43	10	11	39	63	45	1	-	9	1	-	35	
1997	99	11	5	32	72	24	1	1	6	3	8	22	
1998	58	6	14	15	59	15	1	1	-	-	22	2	
1999	118	19	1	6	79	8	1	1	0	6	20	0	
2000	102	17	8	19	53	22	0	0	15	0	26	0	
2001	123	40	12	20	87	34	5	2	21	6	18	1	5
2002	176	51	6	36	128	34	4	0	23	3	20	0	2
2003	304	76	19	25	150	49	4	2	21	4	16	2	1
2004	247	99	45	112	254	64	21	2	23	9	2	3	1
2005	209	90	77	43	214	77	15	4	16	12	3	1	

In addition, the geographical names of UFO sighting locations were examined for trends. Many cities were found to have multiple reports, and these are noted in the following table. Large metropolitan areas include their suburbs.

In 2005, Calgary and Vancouver were tied as locations cited most often in UFO reports, where UFOs were most frequently observed. Toronto and Winnipeg appeared on the list as third and fourth.

Canadian Cities With the Most UFO Reports in 2005

Rank in 2005	City	Province	Number of Reports
1(tie)	Calgary	AB	29
1 (tie)	Vancouver	BC	29
3	Toronto	ON	26
4	Winnipeg	MB	23
5(tie)	Edmonton	AB	20
5(tie)	Montreal	PQ	20
7	Scarborough	ON	19
8	Surrey	BC	13
9	Victoria	BC	12
10	Saskatoon	SK	11

Monthly Trends in UFO Reports

Monthly breakdowns of reports during each year tend to show slightly different patterns. Some years show no clear peaks in monthly report numbers, but other years have significant peaks and troughs. UFO reports are generally thought to peak in summer and trough in winter, presumably due to the more pleasant observing conditions during the summer months, when more witnesses are outside. Some years have anomalous peaks outside of the summer; 2005 had such a peak, in March.

These wildly varying monthly report levels from year to year suggests that the number of UFO sighting reports is not completely related to climate. Whatever stimulus causes UFOs to be reported, it is not imperatively linked to warmer weather and the increase in potential witnesses in the outdoors.

TABLE 2
Monthly Report Numbers

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
1989	13	9	6	9	5	9	5	5	12	32	27	9
1990	17	7	6	47	10	10	9	47	15	16	10	-
1991	13	7	17	12	7	12	16	25	16	12	11	17
1992	15	16	27	16	22	16	23	19	11	16	21	21
1993	59	15	20	22	14	38	27	49	41	152	24	21
1994	16	12	15	21	15	37	19	8	15	10	7	13
1995	14	12	13	9	9	10	28	33	28	11	11	5
1996	37	18	20	16	8	20	30	32	10	22	30	11
1997	19	11	31	29	17	13	29	29	22	16	26	37
1998	3	4	8	5	9	13	16	40	45	35	7	4
1999	8	20	22	7	31	10	27	36	30	29	30	7
2000	21	17	15	21	12	11	19	46	20	44	15	19
2001	36	19	33	25	17	26	51	81	25	17	27	16
2002	31	54	41	28	36	44	73	74	42	26	19	14
2003	41	46	46	46	31	30	131	102	46	64	43	47
2004	59	53	72	68	82	97	96	113	83	46	56	53
2005	36	59	81	59	45	50	96	123	70	56	47	45

UFO Report Types

An analysis by report type shows a similar breakdown to that found in previous years. The percentage of cases of a particular type remains roughly constant from year to year, with some variations. Nocturnal Lights (NLs), comprised 56 per cent of all cases in 2005. In general, most UFOs in are simply lights seen in the night sky, since about 78 per cent of all UFO sightings in 2005, including both NL and Nocturnal Disc (ND) cases, occurred at night, down slightly from 82 per cent in 2004. Daylight Disc reports increased from 11 per cent in 2003 to 15.4 per cent in 2004 and up to more than 19 per cent in 2005. It is not clear why this shift in the type of UFO reported is occurring.

As in previous years, only a little over two per cent of all reported UFO cases in 2005 were Close Encounters. Very, very few UFO cases involve anything other than distant objects seen in the sky. This is an important statistic, because the current popular interest in abductions

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and sensational UFO encounters is based not on the vast majority of UFO cases but on the very tiny fraction of cases which fall into the category of close encounters. The endless speculation of what aliens may or may not be doing in our airspace seems almost completely unconnected to what are actually being reported as UFOs.

TABLE 3

Report Types (Modified Hynek Classifications)

	NL	ND	DD	C1	C2	C3	C4
1989	84	20	16	10	7	-	2
1990	141	24	15	2	1	-	4
1991	110	26	13	7	4	1	2
1992	136	44	20	15	5	2	3
1993	372	77	26	8	2	1	1
1994-95	234	78	28	21	1	1	5
1996	170	40	27	8	3	4	1
1997	145	62	52	4	2	5	8
1998	115	23	25	6	1	-	-
1999	163	44	37	3	7	1	-
2000	179	31	26	4	2	2	-
2001	218	80	55	8	1	3	3
2002	293	94	76	8	5	0	1
2003	431	152	74	5	5	3	2
2004	520	203	136	7	6	2	3
2005	424	169	149	9	5	3	2

For those unfamiliar with the classifications, a summary follows:

NL (Nocturnal Light) - light source in night sky

ND (Nocturnal Disc) - light source in night sky that appears to have a definite shape

DD (Daylight Disc) - unknown object observed during daytime hours

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C1 (Close Encounter of the First Kind) - ND or DD occurring within 200 metres of a witness

C2 (Close Encounter of the Second Kind) - C1 where physical effects left or noted

C3 (Close Encounter of the Third Kind) - C1 where figures/entities are encountered

C4 (Close Encounter of the Fourth Kind) - an alleged "abduction" or "contact" experience

Note: The category of **Nocturnal Disc** was created in the 1980s by UFOROM originally for differentiation of cases within its own report files.

Hourly Distribution

The hourly distribution of cases has usually followed a similar pattern every year, with a peak at 2200 or 2300 hours local. A slight difference is that instead of a trough around 1000 hours local, this has shifted to 800 hours local, reflecting the increase in Daylight Disc cases in 2005, which add a small peak during the noonhour. Since most UFOs are nocturnal lights, most sightings will occur during the evening hours. And, since the number of possible observers drops off sharply near midnight, we would expect the hourly rate of UFO reports would vary with two factors: potential observers and darkness.

Duration

The category of **Duration** is interesting in that it represents the *subjective* length of time the UFO experience lasted. In other words, this is the length of time the sighting lasted *as estimated by the witness*. Naturally, these times are greatly suspect because it is known that people tend to badly misjudge the flow of time. However, *some* people can be good at estimating time, so this value has some importance. Although an estimate of "one hour" may be in error by several minutes, it is unlikely that the true duration would be, for example, one *minute*. Furthermore, there have been cases when a UFO was observed and clocked very accurately, so that we can be reasonably certain that UFO events can last considerable periods of time.

The average duration of a sighting can be calculated as the sum of all given durations divided by the number of cases with a stated duration. This value has varied somewhat, from seven minutes in 1994 to 25 minutes in 1996. In 2005, the average duration of all cases was 929 seconds, or slightly more than 15 minutes.

An analyses of case data suggests that any UFO sighting which lasts an hour or more, especially that of a Nocturnal Light, is very likely a misidentified star or planet. Short duration events are usually fireballs or bolides, although in between, there can be

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no way to distinguish conventional objects from UFOs solely with **Duration** data. One study by an Ontario UFO group which timed aircraft observations found that the duration of such sightings varied between 15 seconds to more than eight minutes. Therefore, sightings with durations in this range could very well be aircraft, providing other observational data do not contradict such an explanation.

Colour

In cases where a colour of an object was reported by witnesses, the most common colour in 2005 was white, with almost 39 per cent of all cases citing this colour. This is a significant change from 2004, when only about half as many cases, 22 per cent, cited white as a colour. The next most common colour was “multicoloured,” with 14 per cent of the total. Next in order were orange, red and blue, precisely as in 2004. Since most UFOs are nocturnal starlike objects, the abundance of white objects is not surprising. Colours such as red, orange, blue and green often also are associated with bolides (fireballs).

The “multicoloured” designation is problematic in that it literally covers a wide range of possibilities. Some studies of UFO data have partitioned the category of **Colour** to include both “primary” and “secondary” colours in cases where the observed UFO had more than one colour. The multicoloured label has been used, for example, when witnesses described their UFOs as having white, red and green lights. (Many of these are certainly stars or planets, which flash a variety of colours when seen low on the horizon. Aircraft also frequently are described as having more than one colour of light.) For our study, the **Colour** classification refers only to the primary colour in the witness’ description.

Witnesses

The average number of witnesses per case between 1989 and 2005 is approximately 2.00. This value has fluctuated between a high of 2.4 in 1996 to as low as 1.4 in 1990. In 2004, the average number of witnesses per case was 1.67, but in 2005, this value rose slightly to 1.71.

This indicates that the typical UFO experience has **more than one witness**, and supports the contention that UFO sightings represent observations of real, physical phenomena, since there is usually a corroborator present to support the sighting.

Shape

Witnesses’ descriptions of the shapes of UFOs vary greatly. In 2005, 41 per cent were of “point sources” — that is, “starlike” objects. The next most common shapes were “fireball,” with 21 per cent, “irregular” with 11 per cent and “sphere” and “triangle” with six per cent each. The classic “flying saucer” or disc-shaped object comprised only about five per cent of all UFO reports, contrary to popular opinion.

The shape of a perceived object depends on many factors such as the witness' own visual acuity, the angle of viewing, the distance of viewing and the witness' own biases and descriptive abilities. Nevertheless, in combination with other case data such as duration, shape can be a good clue towards a UFO's possible explanation.

Strangeness

The assigning of a **Strangeness** rating to a UFO report is based on a classification adopted by researchers who noted that the inclusion of a subjective evaluation of the degree to which a particular case is in itself unusual might yield some insight into the data. For example, the observation of a single, stationary, starlike light in the sky, seen for several hours, is not particularly unusual and might likely have a prosaic explanation such as that of a star or planet. On the other hand, a detailed observation of a saucer-shaped object which glides slowly away from a witness after an encounter with grey-skinned aliens would be considered highly strange.

The numbers of UFO reports according to strangeness rating show an inverse relationship such that the higher the strangeness rating, the fewer reports. The one exception to this relationship occurs in the case of *very* low strangeness cases, which are relatively few in number compared to those of moderate strangeness. It is suggested this is the case because in order for an observation to be considered a UFO, it must usually rise above an *ad hoc* level of strangeness, otherwise it would not be considered strange at all.

The average strangeness rating for UFO reports during 2005 was 3.6, close to the 2004 value. The rating system adopts one as a case that is considered not really strange at all and nine is considered exceptionally unusual. Therefore, most UFOs reported are of objects which do not greatly stretch the imagination, and Hollywood-style flying saucers are, in reality, relatively uncommon in UFO reports.

Reliability

The average **Reliability** rating of Canadian UFO reports in 2005 was 5.33, identical to that of 2004, indicating that there were approximately the same number of higher quality cases as those of low quality. Low reliability was assigned to reports with minimal information on the witness, little or no investigation and incomplete data or description of the object(s) observed. Higher reliability cases might include actual interviews with witnesses, a detailed case investigation, multiple witnesses, supporting documentation and other evidence.

Reliability and **Strangeness** ratings tend to vary in classic bell-shaped curves. In other words, there are very few cases which were both highly unusual and well-reported. Most cases are of medium strangeness and medium reliability. These are the "high-quality unknowns" which will be discussed in a later section of this study. However, there are also very few low-strangeness cases with low reliability. Low-strangeness cases, therefore, tend to be well-reported and probably have explanations.

Sources

UFO data used in this study were supplied by many different groups, organizations, official agencies and private individuals. Since this annual survey began in the late 1980s, more and more cases have been obtained and received via the Internet.

In 2005, about 19.5 per cent of the total cases were obtained through the private and non-profit National UFO Reporting Center (NUFORC) in the USA, which has an international toll-free telephone number for reporting UFOs and a large sightings list created through voluntary submission of online report forms by witnesses. This civilian, public UFO data reporting system allows witnesses to easily and anonymously report their sightings on the Internet or by phone. Since most Internet search engines will quickly find NUFORC as a place to report a UFO sighting, it is not surprising that such a large percentage of Canadian cases come from the NUFORC database.

The Houston BC Centre for UFOs (HBCCUFO) had the lion's share of contributions, with more than 25 per cent. It, too, has a toll-free number for reporting UFOs across Canada. The Meteor and Impacts Advisory Committee to the Canadian Space Agency (MIAC) was the source for more than ten per cent of all fireball reports. Ufology Research of Manitoba (UFOROM) contributed about five per cent of all case data, much higher than in previous years, despite not having a toll-free number or prominent public visibility. About four per cent of cases in 2005 came as a result of information obtained through Transport Canada and the Department of National Defence.

Evaluation (Explanations)

The breakdown by **Evaluation or Conclusion** for 2005 cases was similar to results from previous years. There were four operative categories: **Explained, Insufficient Information, Possible or Probable Explanation**, and **Unknown (or Unexplained)**. It is important to note that a classification of **Unknown** does *not* imply that an alien spacecraft or mysterious natural phenomenon was observed; no such interpretation can be made with certainty, based solely on the given data (though the probability of this scenario is technically never zero).

In most cases, an Evaluation is made subjectively by both the contributing investigators and the compilers of this study. The category of **Unknown** is adopted if the contributed data or case report contains enough information such that a conventional explanation cannot be satisfactorily proposed. This does *not* mean that the case will never be explained, but only that a viable explanation is not immediately obvious. Cases are also re-evaluated periodically as additional data or information is brought to attention or obtained through further investigation.

Since 1989, the average proportion of **Unknowns** has been about 13 per cent per year. In 2005, this was about 15 per cent. This is still a relatively high figure, implying that almost one in seven UFOs cannot be explained. However, there are several factors which affect this value.

The level and quality of UFO report investigation varies because there are no

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explicit and rigorous standards for UFO investigation. Investigators who are “believers” might be inclined to consider most UFO sightings as mysterious, whereas those with more of a skeptical predisposition might tend to subconsciously (or consciously) reduce the **Unknowns** in their files.

During the first few years of these studies, an evaluation of **Explained** was almost nonexistent. At first, contributors tended to ignore UFO sightings that had a simple explanation and deleted them as actual UFO data. Hence, the only UFO reports submitted by contributors tended to be high-strangeness cases. Contributors were then encouraged to submit data on all UFO reports they received, so that a more uniform assessment and evaluation process could be realized. Because many IFO cases such as fireballs and meteors are initially reported as UFOs, the **Explained** category was considered necessary for a full review of UFO data. As noted previously, early American studies of UFO data included such cases, so present-day comparative studies should include such data as well. Furthermore, since there are no absolutes, the subjective nature of assigning **Evaluations** is actually an interpretation of the facts by individual researchers.

The process of evaluating UFO sightings is often complex, involving a series of steps that take into account errors of observation and unpredictable but natural phenomena. Checks with star charts, police, air traffic control operators and meteorologists are often performed. Where possible, witnesses are interviewed in person, and sketches or photographs of the area may be examined. The intent is to eliminate as many conventional explanations as possible before allowing an evaluation or conclusion.

TABLE 4
Evaluation of Canadian UFO Data

	Explained		Insuf. Info.		Poss. Explan.		Unexplained	
	#	per	#	per	#	per	#	per
1989	0	0	74	52.5	47	33.3	20	14.2
1990	0	0	90	46.4	78	40.2	26	13.4
1991	2	1.2	80	48.5	69	41.8	14	8.5
1992	17	8	83	37	74	33	49	22
1993	154	31.5	170	34.8	115	23.5	50	10.2
1994-95	71	19.1	124	33.3	131	35.2	46	12.4
1996	24	9.3	105	40.7	87	33.7	42	16.3
1997	17	6.0	106	37.3	122	43	39	13.7
1998	10	5.1	75	38.7	87	44.8	22	11.3
1999	10	3.9	82	31.5	135	51.9	32	12.3
2000	22	8.5	94	36.4	108	41.9	34	13.2
2001	22	5.9	130	34.7	165	44.1	57	15.2
2002	12	2.5	192	39.7	192	39.7	87	18
2003	110	16.3	166	24.7	286	42.5	111	16.5
2004	76	8.6	200	22.7	469	53.2	137	15.5
2005	93	12.1	195	25.4	368	47.8	113	14.7
Total	640	10.6	1966	32.7	2533	42.1	879	14.6

There were 113 **Unknowns** out of 769 total cases in 2005. If we look only at the **Unknowns** with a **Reliability** rating of 7 or greater, we are left with 33 high-quality **Unknowns** in 2005 (about four per cent of the total). This is in agreement with previous studies. As a comparison, USAF Blue Book studies found three to four per cent of their cases were "excellent" **Unknowns**.

It should be emphasized again that even high-quality **Unknowns** do not imply alien visitation. Each case may still have an explanation following further investigation. And of those that remain unexplained, they may remain unexplained, but still are not incontrovertible proof of extraterrestrial intervention or some mysterious natural phenomenon.

Summary of Results

As with previous studies, the **2005 Canadian UFO Survey** does not offer any positive proof that UFOs are either alien spacecraft or a specific natural phenomenon. However, it does show that some phenomenon which often is called a UFO *is* continually being observed by witnesses.

The typical UFO sighting is that of two people together observing a moving, distant white or red light for several minutes. In most cases, the UFO is likely to be eventually identified as a conventional object such as an aircraft or astronomical object. However, in a small percentage of cases, some UFOs do not appear to have an easy explanation and may be given the label of "unknown."

What are these "unknowns?" From a completely scientific standpoint, we have no way of extrapolating a definitive explanation based on this data. Biases for or against the view that UFOs are extraterrestrial spacecraft often hinder the scientific process and cloud the issue. A 'debunker' who has a strong belief that UFO reports are all fabrications or misinterpretations may tend to dismiss a truly unusual case out of hand, whereas a 'believer' who believes aliens are indeed visiting Earth may read something mysterious into a case with a conventional explanation.

All that a study of this kind can do is present the data and some rudimentary analyses. The recognition that there really are only a handful of higher-quality unknowns among the mass of UFO cases might lead a debunker to believe they, too, might find an explanation if enough effort were to be expended, but to a believer this might be the required proof that some UFOs have no explanations.

The **Evaluation** value is a subjective value imposed by the investigator or compiler (or both) with a scale such that the low values represent cases with little information content and observers of limited observing abilities and the higher values represent those cases with excellent witnesses (pilots, police, etc.) and also are well-investigated. Naturally, cases with higher values are preferred.

The interpretation of the 113 Unknowns is that these cases were among the most challenging of all the reports received in 2005. It should be noted that most UFO cases go unreported, and that there may be ten times as many UFO sightings that go unreported as those which get reported to public, private or military agencies. Furthermore, it should be noted that some cases with lower reliability ratings suffer only from incomplete investigations, and that they may well be more mysterious than those on the list of Unknowns. And, above all, these cases are *not* proof of extraterrestrial visitation.

Other comments

UFO witnesses range from farmhands to airline pilots and from teachers to police officers. Witnesses represent all age groups and racial origin. What is being observed? In most cases, only ordinary objects. However, this begs a question. If people are reporting things that can be explained, then the objects they observed were "really"

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there. Were the objects we can't identify "really" there as well? If so, what were they?

These are questions that only continued and rational research can answer, and only if researchers have the support and encouragement of both scientists and the public.

Contributing Organizations or Data Sources

American Meteor Society

<http://www.amsmeteor.org>

AUFOSG (Alberta UFO Study Group)

<http://www.aufosg.com>

e-mail: aufosg2003@yahoo.ca (Jim Moroney)

National UFO Reporting Center

<http://www.ufocenter.com>

e-mail: director@ufocenter.com (Peter Davenport)

UFO Nova Scotia

<http://www.donledger.com>

e-mail: dledger@ns.sympatico.ca (Don Ledger)

MUFON Ontario

<http://www.virtuallystrange.net/ufo/mufonontario/mufonindex.html>

e-mail: mufonont@virtuallystrange.net (Errol Bruce-Knapp)

MUFON

<http://www.mufon.com>

HBCC UFO Research

<http://www.hbccufo.com>

e-mail: hbccufo@telus.net (Brian Vike)

UFO*BC

<http://www.ufobc.ca>

e-mail: dave@ufobc.ca (Dave Pengilly)

et al.

UFO Evidence

<http://www.ufoevidence.org>

UFOROM (Ufology Research of Manitoba)

<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Delphi/7998>

e-mail: rutkows@cc.umanitoba.ca (Chris Rutkowski)

<http://survey.canadianuforeport.com>

e-mail: loct1789@hotmail.com (Geoff Dittman)

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CHUCARA

Box 61

La Prairie, Quebec J5R 3Y1

<http://www.chucara.com>

e-mail: jpoulet@chucara.com (Jacques Poulet)

UFO Updates

<http://www.virtuallystrange.net/ufo/updates>

e-mail: ufoupdates@virtuallystrange.net (Errol Bruce-Knapp)

UFO Roundup

<http://ufoinfo.com/roundup>

e-mail: masinaigan@aol.com (Joseph Trainor)

Filer's Files

<http://www.filersfiles.com>

e-mail: majorstar@aol.com (George Filer)

NWSURC (Northwest Saskatchewan UFO Research Centre)

<http://www.ufo-connection.com>

e-mail: xfiles@ufo-connection.com (Barb Campbell)

OVNI-Alerte

<http://www.ovni-alerte.com>

e-mail: francoisbourbeau@videotron.ca (Francois Bourbeau)

Para-Researchers of Ontario

<http://pararesearchers.org>

e-mail: sue@pararesearchers.org (Sue Darroch)

Quebec UFO Network

<http://www.quebec-ufo-abductions.com>

e-mail: director@quebec-ufo-abductions.com (Ken McCracken)

"UFO Joe" Daniels

<http://ufo-joe.tripod.com>

Haunted Hamilton

<http://www.hauntedhamilton.com>

e-mail: info@hauntedhamilton.com (Stephanie Lechniak)

Hauntings Research Group (Ontario)

<http://www.hauntingsresearchgroup.homestead.com/>

e-mail: agoodrich_hrg@yahoo.com (Anita Goodrich)

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Paranormal Phenomena Research & Investigation (PPRI) (Nova Scotia)

<http://www.ppri.cjb.net>

e-mail: foxmulder@accesscable.net

UFO Yukon Research Society

<http://www.ufobc.ca/yukon/index.html>

e-mail: mjjasek@shaw.ca (Martin Jasek)

Transport Canada

Department of National Defence

Royal Canadian Mounted Police

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Most Interesting Canadian 'Unknowns' in 2005

The following are those Canadian UFO reports in 2005 which had a Reliability Rating of 7 or greater, a Strangeness Rating of 6 or greater and which were also assigned an Evaluation of Unknown.

July 1, 2005 10:40 pm Trois Rivieres, Quebec

A triangular object with multicoloured lights was seen for five seconds as it passed over a lone witness.

July 1, 2005 11:54 pm St. Zacharias, Quebec

Two teenage girls were frightened by several spherical white objects which floated around their home over a period of an hour.

August 1, 2005 6:00 pm Edmonton, Alberta

A very unusual object described as a black, undulating "tapeworm" flew leisurely through the sky.

August 7, 2005 2:08 pm Vita, Manitoba

A silver, cigar-shaped object like a "wingless missile" flew over three witnesses. A fast-flying conventional aircraft followed the object on the same trajectory after a few seconds.

August 25, 2005 9:00 pm St. Alphonse, Quebec

An orange, disc-shaped object was seen by at least seven witnesses.

August 27, 2005 10:39 pm Maidstone, Saskatchewan

A triangular object flew noiselessly through the night sky.

August 28, 2005 5:00 pm Cochrane, Alberta

A gray, irregular-shaped object described as a "blob," which "morphed" as it flew, was observed by five startled witnesses.

September 25, 2005 12:15 pm Comox, British Columbia

A white, disc-shaped object flew over the town.