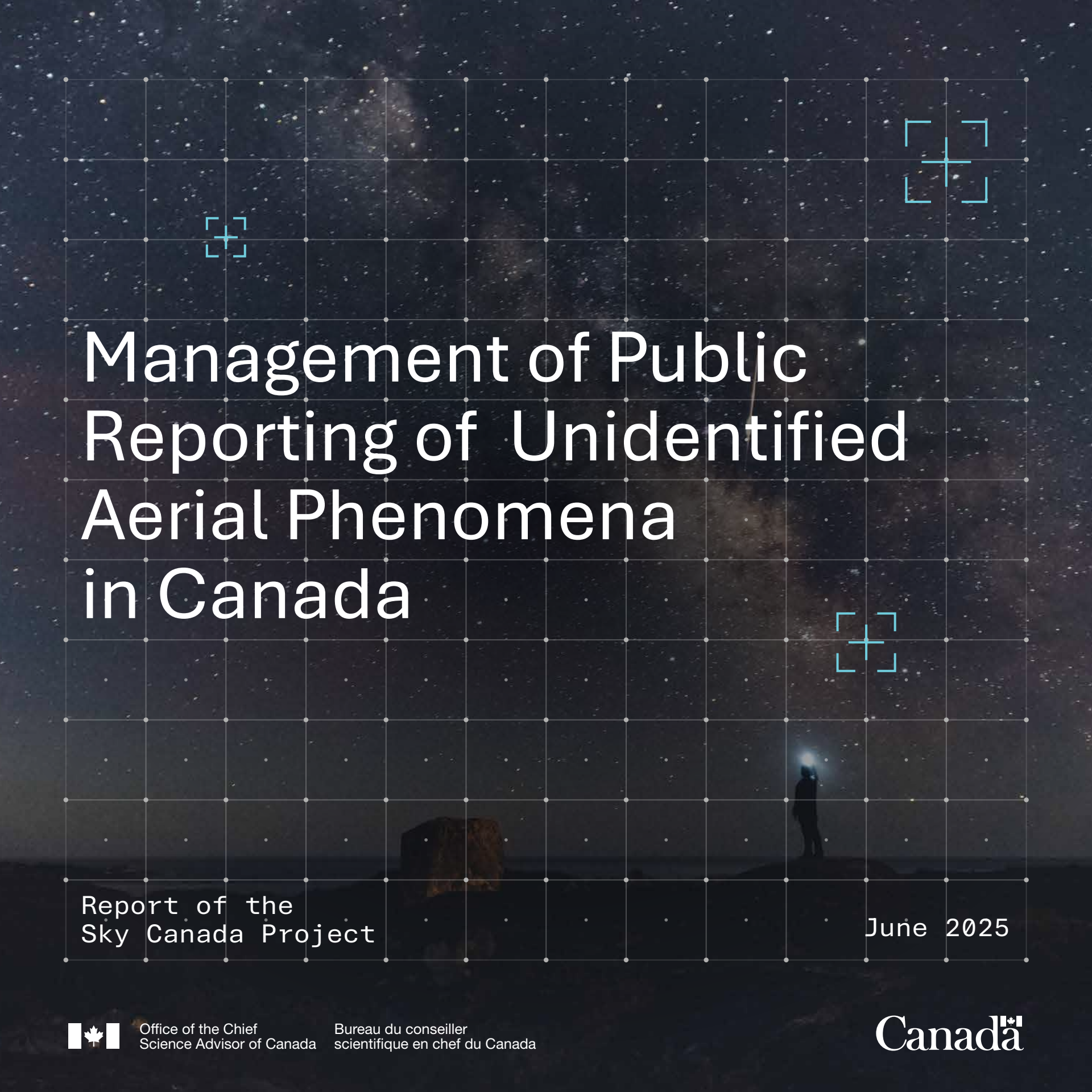

Management of Public Reporting of Unidentified Aerial Phenomena in Canada

Report of the
Sky Canada Project

June 2025

Office of the Chief Science Advisor of Canada
Bureau du conseiller scientifique en chef du Canada
Canada

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Executive Summary

Introduction

The Sky Canada Project, led by the Office of the Chief Science Advisor of Canada (OCSA), was initiated to review current practices surrounding public reporting of unidentified aerial phenomena (UAPs) in Canada. The project was spurred by increased public interest and recent developments in other countries, particularly the United States, where formal procedures for addressing UAP sightings are in development. The study explores the current reporting landscape, identifies gaps and provides recommendations to enhance transparency and scientific inquiry on UAP issues in Canada.

Methodology

The Office of the Chief Science Advisor gathered information from federal departments and agencies, stakeholders, experts and other organizations on how UAP observations reported by the public are handled in Canada. The main organizations and individuals consulted are listed in Appendix A. We also examined publicly available records such as historical UAP data, as well as reports and investigations related to UAPs. This included examining historical practices and archives, as well as current procedures and challenges associated with collecting and analyzing reliable data. We reviewed the approaches taken by some other countries, mostly G7 nations and a few members of the Commonwealth. In addition, in 2024, we commissioned the private firm Earnscliffe Strategies[1] to conduct an online survey of Canadians to gauge public views on the topic of UAPs. The results of the survey are presented in Appendix B.

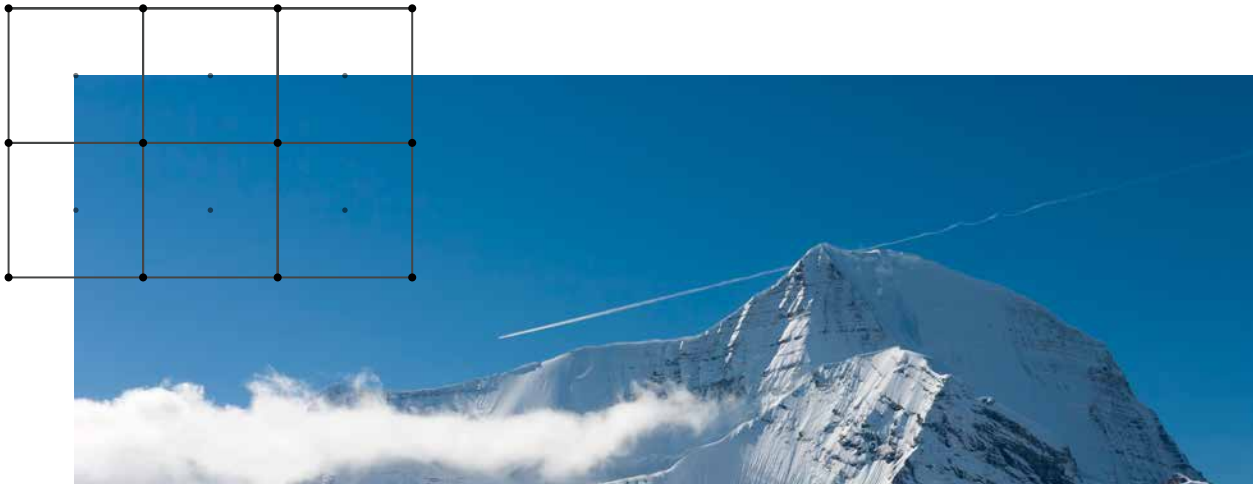
Key findings

The landscape of UAP reporting in Canada

Some public sources estimate that Canadians report somewhere between 600 and 1,000 UAP sightings annually. According to the survey commissioned for the Sky Canada Project, one in four respondents say they have personally witnessed a UAP in their lifetime. However, only 10% reported their sightings and 40% of respondents would not know whom to contact for reporting. Interestingly, a majority of respondents support the idea of establishing a federal government service to gather UAP reports and make findings publicly available.

Consultations with many federal departments and agencies revealed that they occasionally receive UAP sighting information and reports from their stakeholders and the public. However, few of these organizations investigate these sightings unless they pertain to specific aspects of their respective mandates, such as national security, transportation safety or public safety. Most departments do not compile the reports they receive, making it difficult to provide information on the number of reports or the type of responses given to witnesses. Currently, UAP reports are scattered across multiple government and nongovernment organizations.

Canada, like many other countries, has several citizen-driven organizations dedicated to receiving, investigating and discussing reports of UAPs. Nonetheless, their presence does not address the fragmented way that UAP sightings are handled by both the authorities and the scientific community.



An airplane often leaves behind a “condensation trail” or “contrail”: a linear cloud of frozen water vapour from engine exhaust. While a normal atmospheric phenomenon, contrails are frequently linked with conspiracy theories of secret programs of geoengineering or even UAPs.

Gaps identified in Canada

The Sky Canada Project has highlighted several gaps and areas for potential improvements with respect to UAP reporting in Canada. They include:

- Lack of a cohesive and standardized system for reporting and follow-up: UAP reports are received by various federal organizations in different forms with little coordination or oversight, leading to inconsistent data collection that hinders scientific investigations.
- Absence of public engagement: There is no official, accessible platform for Canadians to report UAP sightings, obtain potential explanations or review reliable information about UAPs. This situation contributes to the proliferation of misinformation and disinformation.
- Limited analysis of UAP reports: Reports of UAP sightings are not further analyzed unless they are deemed to pose safety or security risks. Individuals reporting sightings rarely receive follow-ups.
- Insufficient scientific involvement: Efforts to study UAPs with scientific rigour and engage the Canadian scientific community have been limited.
- Insufficient efforts to enhance science literacy, including around planetary sciences, combined with the lack of a transparent and cohesive system for UAP reporting and analysis, exacerbates the impact of misinformation and disinformation.

International comparisons

The management of UAP reporting in several countries was also examined. While there is no single model or universally established operating standard, the processes in place in a few countries, notably the United States, France and Chile, provide interesting examples of coordinated, transparent, and scientifically driven approaches to UAP reporting.

In the United States, the Department of Defense’s All-domain Anomaly Resolution Office (AARO) established in 2022 has structured approaches for collecting and investigating data on UAP sightings, and for communicating findings. In addition, NASA released an independent study in September 2023 focused on how best to collect future UAP data to advance scientific study. Following the release of this report, NASA announced the creation of a new position: Director of Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena Research, to further the study of UAPs and coordinate research efforts.

Similarly, France’s GEIPAN (Groupe d’Études et d’Informations sur les Phénomènes Aérospatiaux Non identifiés / UAP Study and Information Group) operates under the French space agency CNES (Centre national d’études spatiales / National Space Study Centre) since 1977. Its mission is to collect, investigate and archive UAP reports, and make its findings available to the public.

In Chile, the SEFAA (Sección de Estudios de Fenómenos Aéreos Anómalos / Section for the Study of Anomalous Aerial Phenomena), serves as the official body responsible for collecting, analyzing and scientifically studying UAPs. It operates within the General Directorate of Civil Aeronautics.

Recommendations

The following actions are proposed for consideration by the Government of Canada in order to: 1) improve coordination and analysis of UAP reports in Canada, 2) promote public trust and mitigate disinformation, and 3) enhance scientific rigour and science literature surrounding UAPs.

Reporting and data oversight:

1. **Identify a lead:** A federal department or agency responsible for managing public UAP data should be identified.
2. **Establish a dedicated service:** This service would collect testimonies, investigate cases and post its analyses publicly. It would proactively inform Canadians about UAPs.
3. **Enhance reporting capacity in civil aviation:** Transport Canada should encourage pilots, cabin crews, and air traffic controllers to report UAP sightings without fear of stigmatization. In collaboration with NAV CANADA, they should analyze UAP reports to track trends and provide pilots with explanations, helping to reduce distractions during flights.

Communications:

4. **Support public dialogue:** A proactive strategy to increase transparency and communication with the public regarding UAPs should be developed.
5. **Promote intra-governmental collaborations:** An internal directive to ensure collaboration among all federal agencies with relevant expertise or data would aid the lead organization in providing explanations to witnesses and correlating recent observations with previous reports.
6. **Improve media relations:** The lead organization should play a significant role in mitigating misinformation and disinformation by responding to public and media inquiries related to UAPs, and by documenting and communicating common misinterpretations of observations.
7. **Promote application of up-to-date evidence to effectively address misinformation and disinformation:** Among other things, a multidisciplinary expert panel should be set up to advise the lead organization on effective approaches to countering misinformation and disinformation.

Research:

8. **Facilitate open access and open data:** Data related to UAPs should be made available to the public for transparency and to support research.
9. **Conduct surveys:** Periodic surveys of Canadians should be carried out to gauge their perceptions of UAPs and assess the impact of the dedicated services.
10. **Support citizen science:** Participatory science initiatives and programs should be developed to enable volunteer participation in the study of UAPs.
11. **Provide tools for data collection:** The development and deployment of publicly accessible digital and portable tools should be supported to facilitate the reporting of UAP sightings and help collect standardized data.
12. **Build on Canada's strength in astronomy and aerospace research:** Canada has a superb talent pool and physical research infrastructure dedicated to that sector. The members of that community should be given opportunities to be part of the public dialogue on UAPs.

International collaboration:

13. **Information sharing:** The lead organization should establish partnerships with international entities dedicated to UAPs, such as AARO and NASA (U.S.A.), GEIPAN (France), and SEFAA (Chile).
14. **Cooperation in research and communication:** Canada should actively engage with international partners for research collaborations and public awareness efforts.

Conclusion

A more structured approach to the management of UAP reporting in Canada would be beneficial on many grounds. It would enhance transparency and combat disinformation; it would also demonstrate Canada's commitment to scientific rigour and inquiry. This will not only improve public trust but also position Canada alongside some of its allies as leaders in the global effort to elucidate the nature of UAPs.

Adopting a science-based, collaborative approach will help address public concerns, demystify UAPs, and potentially reveal valuable insights into aerial phenomena that are currently unexplained.

Message from the Chief Science Advisor of Canada

Whether satellites, drones, planes or atmospheric events, no one would deny that there is more and more activity in the skies above us. Our ability to understand what we observe depends on a multitude of factors, such as time of day, cloud cover, distance and colour contrast.

Rarely does anyone mistake a flock of geese flying in V formation for a fighter squadron flying at high altitudes. But sometimes what is being observed in the sky is not immediately clear, and a person may wonder if what they are seeing is a natural phenomenon, a new type of aircraft or something else altogether.

The world of aviation continues to grow and diversify, serving business, national defence, tourism and recreational needs. More than 100,000 commercial flights take place every day around the world. Engineers seek to improve the shape of aircraft and find lighter, stronger materials to make them faster and more efficient. To save energy and reduce the environmental impact of air travel, there are even plans to use airships and balloons of various types for passenger transportation and cargo.

Meanwhile, drone technology is becoming increasingly affordable and ever more impressive, allowing virtually anyone to pilot devices as small as a bird or as large as a vehicle. Can we identify these devices at night as well as during the day? Can we accurately assess their distance and speed based solely on their navigation lights?

A light moving slowly across the night sky could be a drone 100 metres above the ground or a satellite at an altitude of 600 kilometres reflecting the sun. To the naked eye, a train of Starlink communication satellites appears as faint points of light moving in a straight line and in complete silence. If the observer fails to recognize the signs of that new technology, will there be someone nearby to offer the correct information? Or will the observer rely on social media to share what was seen and find some explanations?

Social media and the Internet have it all—from the good and the very good to the bad and the ugly. Which Canadian website can people visit to report sightings of unidentified aerial phenomena (UAPs)? To which official organization can they send photos, videos or detailed descriptions for help in understanding what they cannot explain on their own? It was with these questions in mind that we launched the Sky Canada Project.

Our goal was to find the current resources and processes in place for handling and following up on UAP reports, to compare them with the best practices in other countries, and to make recommendations for potential improvements. Accordingly, this report focuses on the services available to the Canadian public for reporting UAPs, and not on the UAPs themselves; understanding this distinction is critical to reading the report. The Sky Canada Project is not about investigating what UAPs are. It is about science informing and serving everyone.

The preparation of this report has garnered more public anticipation than any project in the history of this office. Numerous individuals and organizations have stepped forward to offer their assistance, and we are grateful for their interest.

On behalf of the Sky Canada Project Team,[a] I would like to thank the many contributors who agreed to answer our questions in support of our work: federal public servants, journalists, Canadian and foreign academics, subject matter experts and members of the public. Our study could not have been completed without their input.

Mona Nemer, C.M., C.Q., FRSC, FCIC

Chief Science Advisor of Canada

a Sky Canada Project Team: Luc Gauthier, Marc Legault, Jean-François Lepage, Serge Nadon, Gary Slater, Valérie Verrier.

A. Introduction

Since the dawn of humanity, the sky has been a profound source of fascination, wonder and inspiration. Often regarded as a mysterious and unattainable realm, it has also been envisioned as the dwelling place of divine beings and mythical animals, a canvas for legends and a foundation for countless belief systems. Across civilizations, humans have sought meaning in celestial phenomena—whether eclipses, comets, clouds or enigmatic lights in the night sky—interpreting these events through the lens of religion, culture and imagination.

Night sky over mountains showing features such as the Milky Way (right), a shooting star (top center) and a bright planet (lower left). This rich panorama presents phenomena that can be challenging to accurately interpret without careful observation.

As humanity evolved, so too did its understanding of its environment. The emergence of scientific disciplines such as astronomy, geology, biology, physics and chemistry marked a transformative shift from mythological interpretations to empirical inquiry. From the groundbreaking heliocentric model proposed by Copernicus, to Galileo's telescopic revelations, and onward to the ages of genomics, aeronautics and artificial intelligence, each advance has brought clarity to phenomena once deemed supernatural. The motions of planets, the lifespans of stars, the evolution of living organisms and the mechanics of weather systems have become comprehensible, enriching our grasp of nature. Yet, despite these monumental strides, the sky retains some of its mystique. As much a symbol of what we have learned as what we have yet to discover, the sky continues to inspire a desire of exploration, reflection, and wonder.

In Canada, as elsewhere in the world, people marvel at the skies and, on occasion, are intrigued by what are now referred to as "Unidentified Aerial Phenomena" (UAPs), which sometimes arouse considerable curiosity and debate. Reports from pilots, military personnel and civilians alike describe at times the sightings of strange lights, unusually moving objects, or phenomena in the sky for which no immediate explanation can be provided.

While many of these reports can be attributed to optical illusions, atmospheric phenomena or human activity, a minority remain unexplained for a myriad of reasons, including a lack of reliable data that prevents rigorous scientific analysis. Yet, these unexplained sightings generate interest and can be the source of misinformation or disinformation. One of the primary issues with misinformation and disinformation is their impact on public trust. When people are repeatedly exposed to false narratives, they may become skeptical of credible sources, including scientists, journalists and government institutions.

In early 2023, several high-profile incidents in Canada caught the public's attention. Over a two-week period, four unidentified objects flew over North American airspace. The first, and most widely reported in the media, was a high-altitude balloon which flew across Alaska, western Canada, and easterly across the United States from January 28 to February 4. The U.S. Air Force eventually shot it down over U.S. territorial waters off the coast of South Carolina. From the recovered debris, it was identified as originating from a foreign country and carried sophisticated equipment.

One week later, on February 11, 2023, the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) ordered the downing of a smaller balloon over Yukon Territory. Two other small high-altitude balloons were shot down over U.S. airspace—one in northern Alaska on February 10, and the second over Lake Huron on February 12. According to a brief statement by an RCMP spokesperson to CTVNews.ca[2] the recovered debris from the shores of Lake Huron were deemed not to be of national security concern.

These recent incidents highlighted the importance of government investigation of what appears in the sky and how complex it is to distinguish between natural occurrences, common technological devices and potential security concerns. This report aims to set a milestone in Canada's pursuit of a better approach to the management and study of UAPs.

3D render of a high-altitude instrumented balloon in the sky, seen from below. Similar objects in the North American sky were the source of the 2023 incidents.

B. Objectives

In early 2023, the OCSA announced the creation of the Sky Canada Project. At the outset, its main objectives were:

- to review current UAP reporting methods in Canada and propose improvements as needed,
- to enable Canada's federal government to optimize the collection and analysis of UAP observations in a transparent manner,
- to provide insight for better tools to combat misinformation and disinformation,
- to encourage participatory science and public understanding of aerial phenomena,
- to support monitoring of Canada's airspace.

Furthermore, in order to assess Canada's readiness to collaborate with its allies with respect to UAP reporting, an important secondary objective was to compare Canada's practices with those in other countries, in particular G7 nations.

The OCSA established clear boundaries on what the Sky Canada Project did not intend to address. The project was not meant to prove or disprove the existence of extraterrestrial life or extraterrestrial visitors. The collection or analysis of first-hand data such as photos, videos or individual UAP sighting reports was not part of the project. Lastly, the project should not be seen as an endeavour to make the Office of the Chief Scientific Advisor the primary point of contact for reporting UAP sightings in Canada. Additionally, it is not meant to position the OCSA as the lead organization for initiating or managing international collaborations related to UAP research or investigations.

This report presents the Sky Canada Project's findings, including:

- the challenges associated with collecting and analyzing reliable data on UAP sightings,
- a review of Canada's historical federal government practices for UAP reporting,
- a description of how Canadian government departments and agencies currently receive and manage UAP-related information from their partners and the public, as well as a brief overview of non-government groups that also receive UAP sighting reports from the public,
- a summary of the approaches taken by a few other countries.

The report offers fourteen recommendations for improving reporting and data collection on UAP sightings in Canada.

C. Background: UAPs and Science

The mystery of unidentified phenomena in the sky has long fascinated humanity, capturing the public imagination and arousing both skepticism and curiosity. The terminology which describes unidentified events taking place in the sky has evolved over time, reflecting a shift in both scientific approach and societal perception. The transition from the once-ubiquitous term "UFO" (Unidentified Flying Object) to the more recent and nuanced "UAP" (Unidentified Aerial or Anomalous Phenomenon) signals a broadening of scope and a move toward greater credibility and openness.

Historically, UFOs have been linked with extraterrestrial speculation and often met with ridicule. This section explores the evolution of terminology, the implications of this shift for research and public perception, and the role of science and technology in analyzing these enigmatic occurrences. This section also delves into the broader search for extraterrestrial life, the potential of new discoveries in astrobiology, and the challenges faced by researchers working in this often-stigmatized field.

3D rendering of the International Space Station orbiting the Earth (*credit NASA*). It often appears as a bright, steadily moving point in the sky at dawn or dusk, illuminated by sunlight reflecting off the station, though observers may not always recognize it.

From UFOs to UAPs: Evolving Terminology and Broadened Scope

Until recently, the term "UFO" was used to describe aerial phenomena that could not be conclusively identified. UFOs are by their very definition unidentified but this does not imply that they are of extraterrestrial origin, that they defy natural or scientific explanation, or that they would not be identifiable with access to additional or better data and tools.

The abbreviation "UAP" (Unidentified Aerial or Anomalous Phenomenon) is a newer and increasingly more prevalent term. UAP includes a broader set of movements (such as being stationary in the air, falling, or floating and submerging in water) as well as phenomena that are not material objects (such as gases and lights).

This shift in terminology has the potential to reduce the historical stigma associated with UFO sightings. Reporting witnesses were often met with skepticism and ridicule, leading to negative perceptions and arbitrary judgments being cast upon them. Stigmatization can have significant consequences, such as discouraging witnesses from coming forward and hindering scientific inquiry. The new, more encompassing UAP terminology can help promote greater transparency, credibility and acceptance of research in professional and scientific circles and in the wider public.

While the term UFO continues to be used, governments and other organizations are gradually adopting the more comprehensive term UAP. This report will use the abbreviation UAP when describing more recent activities, and UFO when dealing with more historical ones, although they will be largely interchangeable.

Citizens observe the night sky from their campsites. The skies in remote locations reveal more stars and natural atmospheric phenomena.

Science and the Search for Extraterrestrial Life: Promising Scientific Approaches

No extraterrestrial life has been detected to date, but most scientists involved in that quest consider it only a matter of time until its discovery. They reason that with billions of sun-like stars just in our own Milky Way galaxy, there is a high probability that some may have Earth-like planets orbiting them. Based on this argument, it is plausible that extraterrestrial life existed in the past, or today, or may eventually appear on other planets outside our solar system; maybe even intelligent life capable of technological progress. Most Canadians share this view, as shown by an Ipsos poll of over 1,001 Canadians conducted in May 2021, which indicates that a solid majority of (65%) of those surveyed believe in the existence of intelligent life elsewhere in the universe.[3]

Science is based on rigorous and systematic investigations, and substantial evidence must be gathered and verified before conclusions are drawn. This is especially true when scientists deal with extraordinary claims, such as the presence of extraterrestrial vehicles in the sky. This is what renowned astronomer and author Carl Sagan meant when he famously said, “Extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence.”[b]

How the Scientific Method Might Apply to UAPs

The scientific method is a systematic and iterative process used to investigate the universe around us, acquire new knowledge and refine or correct existing understandings of the world. Applying it to UAPs could involve several key steps, including:

Observation: Gather reports and data on UAP sightings, including, but not limited to, eyewitness accounts, photographs and videos, radar data and physical evidence, ensuring that the information collected is objective and unbiased. This may include developing new instruments specifically designed to enhance the accuracy and reliability of the data.

Hypothesis: For each case under investigation, explore possible explanations for the sighting. This could range from natural phenomena to advanced human-made technology and may include fraud and instrument malfunction.

Experimentation: Test the hypothesis. While traditional experiments might be challenging due to the elusive nature of UAPs (the sighting cannot be repeated like an experiment in controlled laboratory conditions), researchers may conduct simulations, analyze existing or past data, or use observational tools (like radar or satellites) to gather additional information.

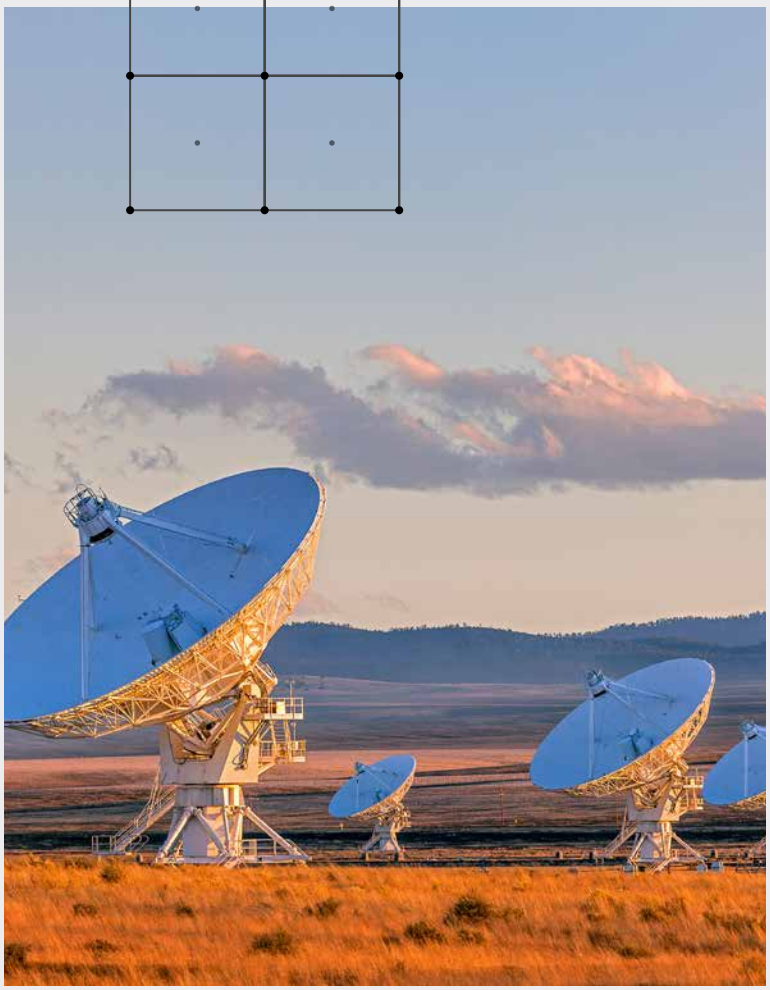
Analysis: Review and analyze the data to look for patterns, anomalies or correlations. This might include comparing UAP reports with known atmospheric phenomena or the behaviour and flight path of aircraft.

Conclusion: Draw conclusions based on the analysis. This could involve categorizing a given UAP into known phenomena, unexplained sightings due to lack of data, or areas needing further investigation.

Communication: Share findings with the scientific community, government agencies and the public, through research papers, or reports and through a publicly accessible online portal.

Applying the scientific method to UAPs makes it possible to ensure a rigorous and objective approach to understanding these phenomena while promoting critical thinking and advancing scientific knowledge.

b Sagan, Carl. Broca’s Brain: Reflections on the Romance of Science. New York: Ballantine Books, 1980.

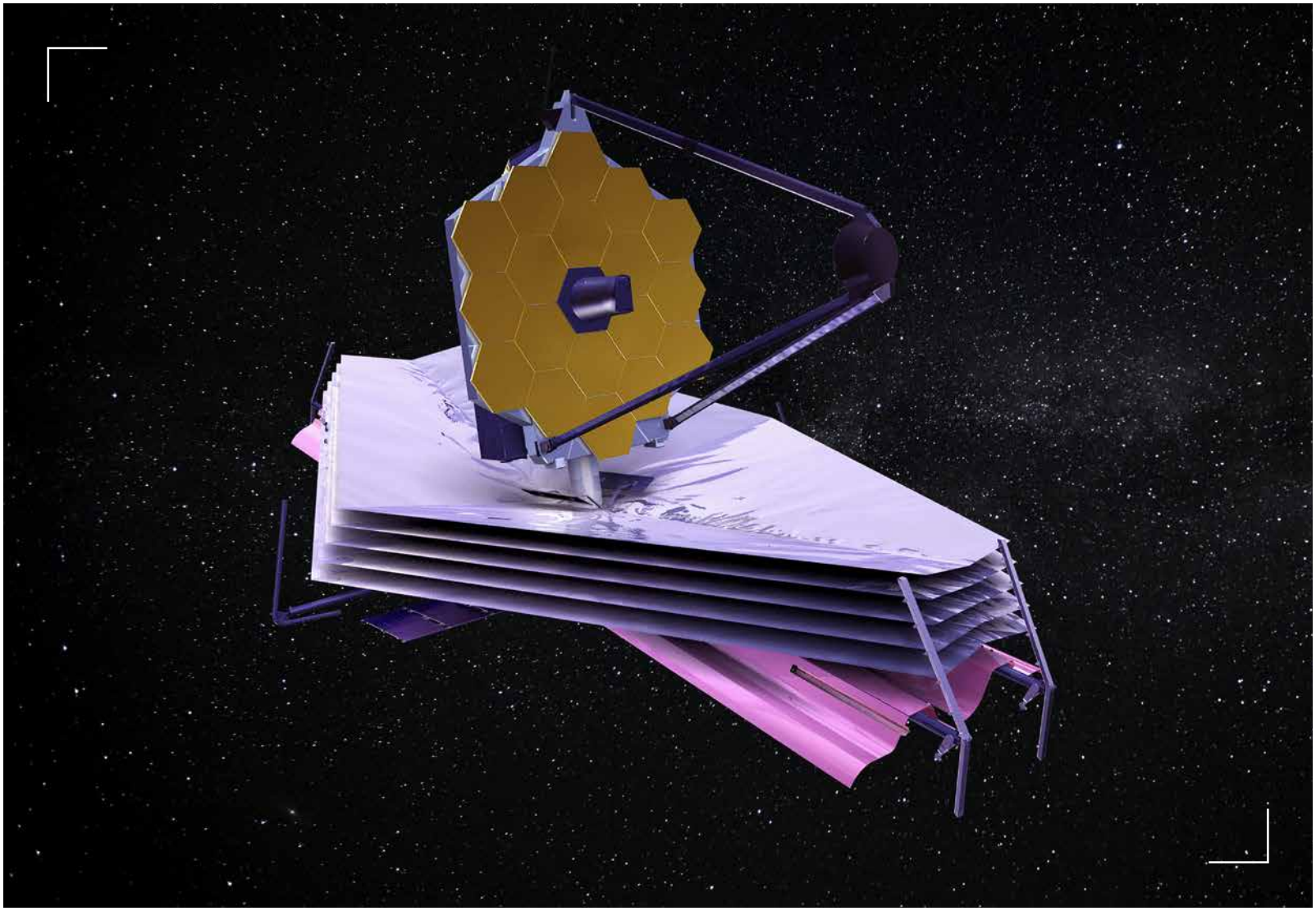


Radio telescopes similar to those used by the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence (SETI) program, a privately funded initiative looking for signals that may have been emitted by advanced civilizations outside the solar system.

The search for extraterrestrial life involves several fields, including astronomy, biology and planetary science, and relies on both theoretical models and empirical evidence. Although there is as yet no evidence that life beyond Earth exists, there are reasons to be optimistic about this possibility, including:

- **Exoplanet Discovery:** Instruments like the James Webb Space Telescope (JWST) allow scientists to analyze the atmospheres of thousands of exoplanets (planets outside our solar system). Many of them are in the “habitable zone” of their sun.
- **Astrobiology and Extremophiles:** The discovery of extremophiles—organisms that thrive in extreme conditions—has broadened our understanding of where life might exist and what extraterrestrial life might look like, especially in harsh environments.
- **Solar System Planets:** Mars is attracting particular attention due to evidence of past liquid water. NASA’s Perseverance rover is exploring Mars for signs of ancient microbial life. Moons like Jupiter’s Europa and Saturn’s Enceladus, which have subsurface oceans beneath icy surfaces, are also considered potential habitats for microbial life.
- **SETI:** The Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence (SETI) uses radio telescopes to look for signals from technology-based civilizations. No signal has yet been confirmed despite several decades of research. Projects like Breakthrough Listen aim to scan millions of star systems for signs of such civilizations.
- **Bio- and Techno-Signature Research:** Scientists are looking for observable indicators which could suggest the presence of life (bio signatures) or technology (techno signatures). These indicators can take the form of chemical markers, such as particular gases or organic molecules, that are produced by living organisms or by technological means. New models are being developed to predict what these markers might be on different types of exoplanets.

Remote communication with extraterrestrial civilizations, if it ever occurs, will be more of a marathon than a sprint due to the vast distances between solar systems. Even signals travelling at the speed of light can take thousands of years to travel either way. The unlikelihood of another technologically advanced civilization nearby, the absence of SETI signals so far, and the immense challenges of interstellar travel are the main reasons why there is a strong consensus among scientists that UAPs are not extraterrestrial vehicles. But, as always in science, new evidence (such as SETI signals or other data) could change the prevailing scientific assessment.



3D rendering of the James Webb Space Telescope *(credit NASA)*, the most powerful space telescope ever built, operational since July 2022.

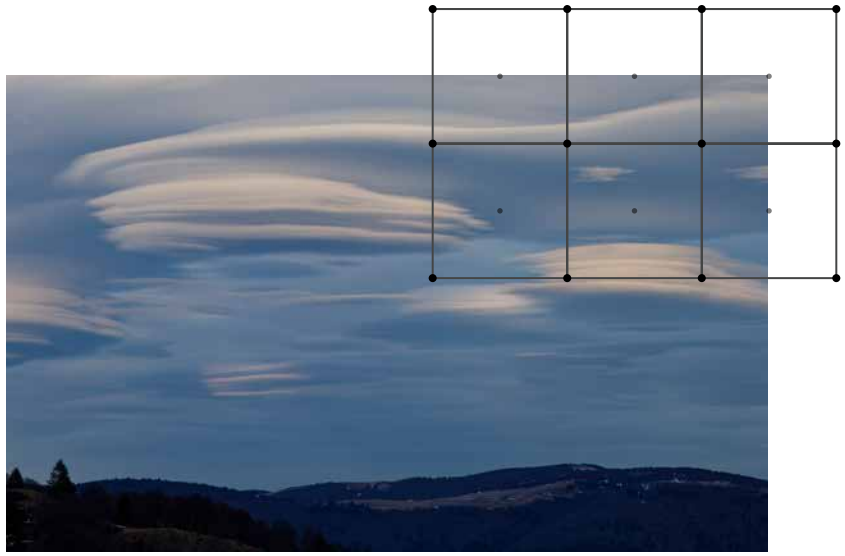
Common Explanations for UAPs

Most UAP sightings can be explained through careful investigation and analysis, given sufficient reliable data. For example, France's GEIPAN (Groupe d'Études et d'Informations sur les Phénomènes Aérospatiaux Non-identifiés, or Unidentified Aerospace Phenomenon Research and Information Group), which investigates UAP sightings in France, reports that of the 3,188 cases collected by 2025, only 3.2% of cases remained unidentified after investigation. Furthermore, 31.4% of cases could not be explained due to insufficient data.[4] Similarly, Mutual UFO Network (MUFON) Canada reports that, of the 321 sightings it investigated in 2023, 31% could not be conclusively explained due to information being too vague.

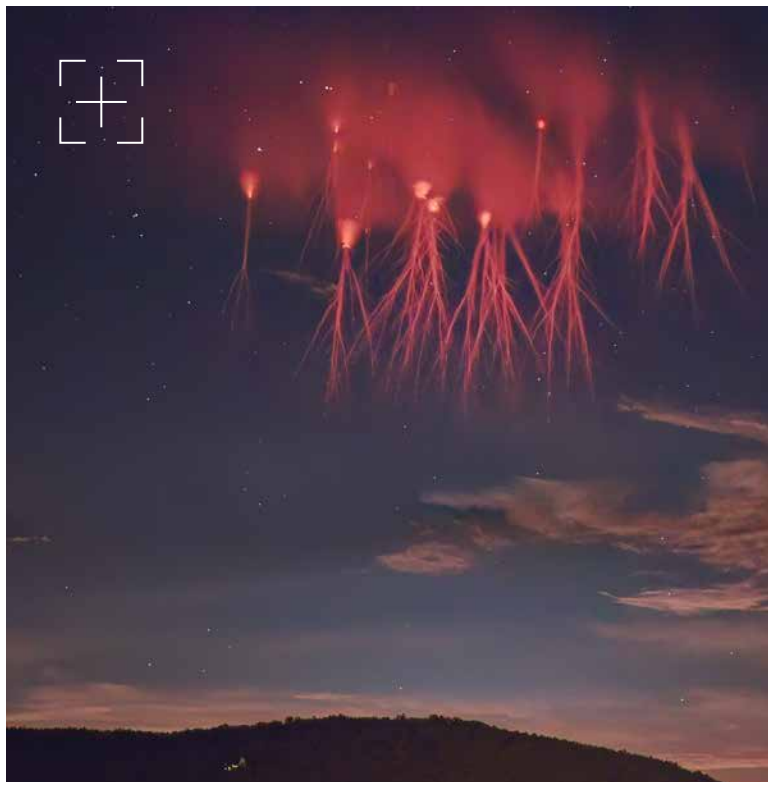
In most instances, UAP observations can be accounted for by relatively simple explanations, including:

- **Conventional Aircraft:** UAPs can be conventional aircraft that are not immediately recognized, especially if they are seen from a distance or in poor visibility conditions.
- **Weather Phenomena:** Atmospheric conditions can create unusual visual effects. For example, ice crystals, storms, clouds, or temperature inversions can sometimes make lights or objects appear in unusual and hard-to-identify ways.
- **Astronomical Objects:** Planets, stars or meteors can sometimes be misidentified because their appearance can change based on atmospheric conditions or their position in the sky.
- **Man-Made Objects:** Weather balloons, drones, telecommunication balloons and satellites, sky lanterns or experimental aircraft can also be classified as UAPs by observers. These objects may have unusual flight patterns or lighting that can cause confusion.
- **Optical Illusions:** Reflections, lens flares or other optical effects can create the appearance of something unusual in the sky.
- **Human Error:** Misinterpretation of everyday objects or phenomena, such as aircraft lights seen from a different angle, can lead to UAP reports.

Nonetheless, some UAP sightings—for which data exist—remain unexplained even after investigation.



Lenticular clouds can have shapes similar to that of a saucer.



Sprites are a natural phenomena that occur high above thunderstorm clouds and produce luminous red-orange flashes that last only a few milliseconds. *Photo credit: Nicolas Escurat*

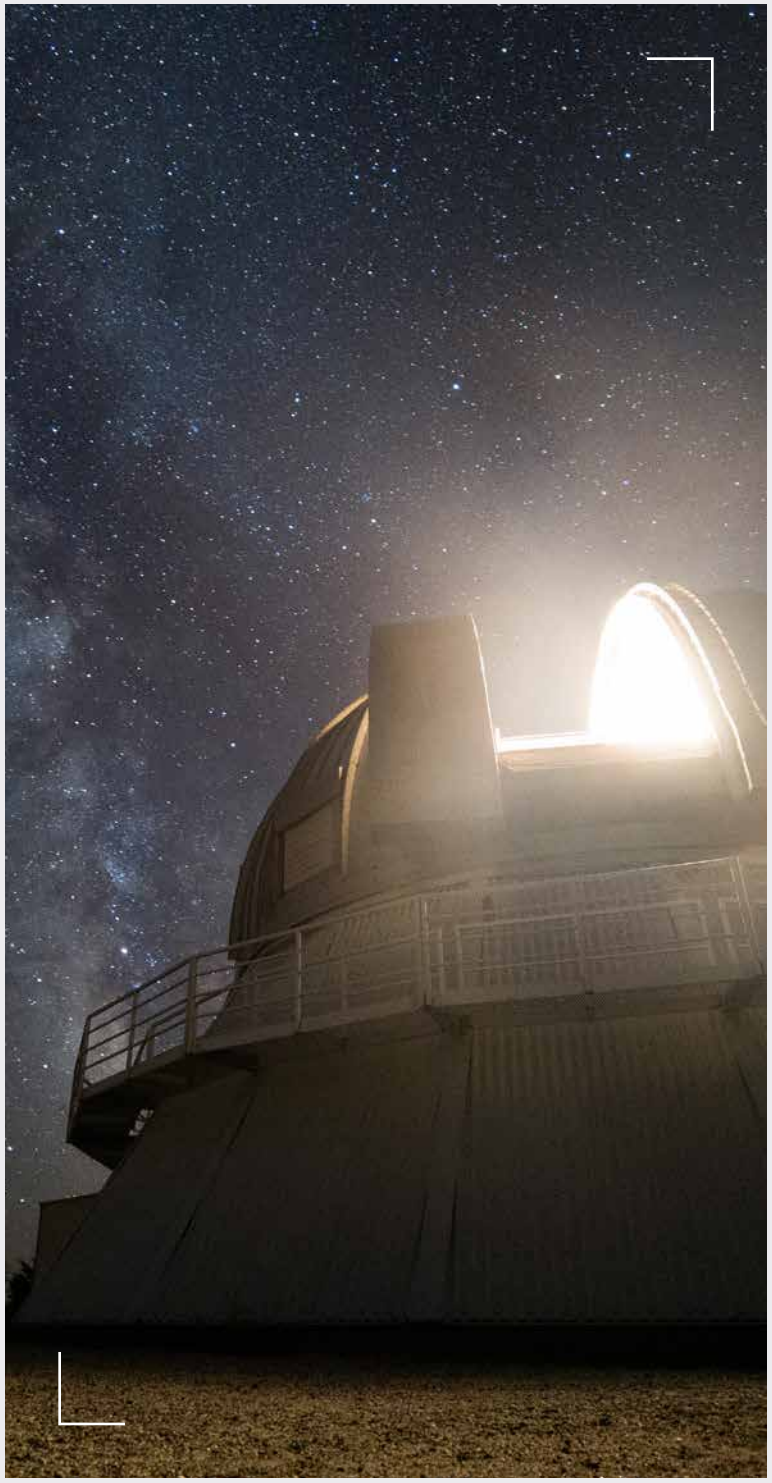
Tackling the Puzzle: Using Technology to Study UAP Sightings

New technologies can contribute to UAP reporting and analysis. For example, the tech startup Enigma Labs launched a real-time iOS application[5] for smartphones in 2023. This application captures sightings and compiles them into a standardized, easily searchable database that can be analyzed by the public and researchers alike. It also allows users to share information about their observations. The Enigma app includes over 14,000 UAP sighting reports from Canada, some of which cover historical sighting reports downloaded from other sources. Interestingly, the survey by Earnscliffe Strategies for the Sky Canada Project found that two in five respondents are interested in using a mobile phone application to document UAPs (see Appendix B).

The use of artificial intelligence (AI) in this context is particularly promising. With the growing volume of data enabled by smart-phone technologies such as Enigma Labs' application, AI could significantly streamline and standardize the process of examining and assessing UAP sightings. AI can assist in sifting through vast amounts of data from various sources, such as databases tracking airplane locations, satellites, stars, planets and weather conditions. This capability could aid in interpreting visual data from UAP sightings more accurately, and in identifying trends.

Another example is Harvard University's Galileo Project[6] which is developing instruments specifically designed to monitor the sky in an empirical, systematic way. The Galileo Project uses technology, including AI tools, to analyze collected data and detect anomalies that might otherwise go unnoticed. By applying a data-driven approach, the Galileo Project aims to bring more scientific rigour to UAP studies.

Such initiatives could be crucial in transitioning from anecdotal evidence to more scientifically rigorous analysis and may contribute to enhancing the quality of UAP research.



Observatories, like the one on Mont-Mégantic in Québec, use telescopes to look at objects in the night sky, helping us better understand the cosmos.

Breaking the Stigma: The Challenges of Academic Research on UAPs

Despite the fact that there can be a valid scientific rationale for studying UAPs, many academic research communities seem to fear stigma associated with pursuing research on this topic. A recent survey[7] of 1,460 tenured and tenure-track faculty members in 144 research-intensive universities in the United States revealed that 53% believed that UAP-related research would jeopardize their tenure or promotion, even though only 7% had a negative opinion of this type of research.

A review by the OCSA of two of Canada's main federal research funding agencies found very few funded projects related to UAPs. For example, over the past 25 years, there have been no grant or funding applications directly related to UAPs at the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC), and only 7 applications and 2 grants or scholarships from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC). Consistent with this, the OCSA only found a dozen graduate level dissertations related to UAPs in Canada over the same 25-year period. Among these was Matthew Hayes' research at Trent University that gave rise to a comprehensive book titled Search for the Unknown: Canada's UFO Files and the Rise of Conspiracy Theory (McGill-Queen's University Press, Montréal, 2022). The book explores the history of UAP sightings in Canada, the response from the government and the resulting perception from the public.

The application of the scientific method, advancements in data-gathering technology and initiatives like participatory science represent important steps toward addressing UAP sightings with objectivity and precision.

Empowering Discovery: The Role of Participatory Science in Engaging Communities

Participatory science, historically called citizen science, involves engaging public volunteers as research assistants in scientific projects. It allows researchers to collect vast amounts of data over larger geographical areas and longer periods than would be feasible with a small team of scientists and a limited number of instruments. This approach not only accelerates scientific discovery, but just as importantly, strengthens public confidence in science. Additionally, participatory science fosters scientific literacy by providing new opportunities for individuals to actively participate in research initiatives, collaborating with professional scientists in data collection, analysis and interpretation, while learning about the scientific method. As noted in the House of Commons Standing Committee on Science and Research Report on Citizen Science (2023),[8] these initiatives are particularly valuable for addressing data gaps and informing public policy, especially in the health (e.g., influenza tracking) and environmental fields (e.g., species monitoring). Such contributions demonstrate the vital role citizen scientists can play in advancing knowledge and supporting evidence-based decision-making.

The aurora borealis, with its spectacular, shimmering lights, has long inspired curiosity and reflection, raising profound questions about the natural world.

D. UAPs and the Public

The way reports of UAP sightings are framed and disseminated significantly influences public perception. Some sightings gain widespread attention, fuelled by compelling eyewitness accounts, documented evidence, or extraordinary circumstances. Media coverage and pop culture have further shaped these narratives, embedding certain cases into the collective memory. In particular, well-documented Canadian sightings, such as the Falcon Lake encounter or the Shag Harbour incident, have become cultural touchstones, commemorated not only in local lore but also through initiatives like the Royal Canadian Mint's UAP-themed coins—as highlighted later.

Despite the intrigue, the discourse around UAPs is often fragmented, with inconsistent reporting mechanisms and varying levels of credibility among sources. The rise of conspiracy theories, disinformation and sensationalism can further muddy the waters, making it harder for the public to discern fact from fiction.

This section explores the intricate relationship between UAP sightings, media coverage, and public perceptions. It examines how certain sightings gain prominence, the role of media in shaping perceptions, and the broader cultural and scientific implications of these phenomena. It also provides an overview of the history of UAP reports in Canada.

The township of Moonbeam,in northern Ontario, known for its roadside flying saucer landmark. Credit: *By P199 - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0,* https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=1857305

Misinformation and Disinformation in the Public Dialogue on UAPs

With growing fascination, complexity and uncertainty, the UAP field has also experienced a rise in misinformation and disinformation. These challenges significantly impact today's digital landscape, influencing public opinion and decision-making. False information spreads through a complex interplay of social media, online news sites, traditional media and public events. In fact, the interactions along these channels can amplify misinformation, making it difficult for the public to distinguish reliable information from speculation, falsehoods or sensationalism. The involvement of credible sources including government agencies and the scientific community is crucial in addressing this informational vacuum. To achieve this, a clear and transparent framework for data reporting and analysis must be established.

The Sky Canada Project examined current government reporting practices on UAPs to determine the extent to which these practices could address two types of information-related problems: misinformation and disinformation. Misinformation refers to inaccurate or false information that circulates unintentionally in the public sphere, often long after the information has been proven wrong, while disinformation involves false information deliberately intended to mislead people.

In recent years, disinformation, misinformation and conspiracy theories have increasingly caught the attention of researchers from various fields (such as communication, economics, journalism, marketing, philosophy, psychology, political science, sociology, and more). One key insight from this research is the importance of rapidly offering clear explanations to counter, or at least reduce, the spread of misleading ideas.

In today's world of information overload, gaps in information are often quickly filled by disinformation or misinformation.[9] When people experience uncertainty or fear, they are more likely to seek explanations to regain control over their situation.[10] Disinformation provides false but sometimes comforting explanations, which can be appealing, even if they are not based on fact. People may seek explanations that confirm their existing beliefs, potentially leading them to accept biased conclusions or conspiracy theories.[11]

Research has shown that conspiracy theories are contagious:[12] once they take hold, they are difficult to debunk. There is a cognitive bias that people tend to believe the first piece of information they hear, even if it is later proven false.[13] Reactive strategies like debunking (trying to disprove the misinformation) or striking back tend to be less effective than preventive strategies.[14] Such prevention—also called "prebunking"—appears to be the most successful approach.[15] This involves providing correct information ahead of time to prevent the spread of falsehoods.

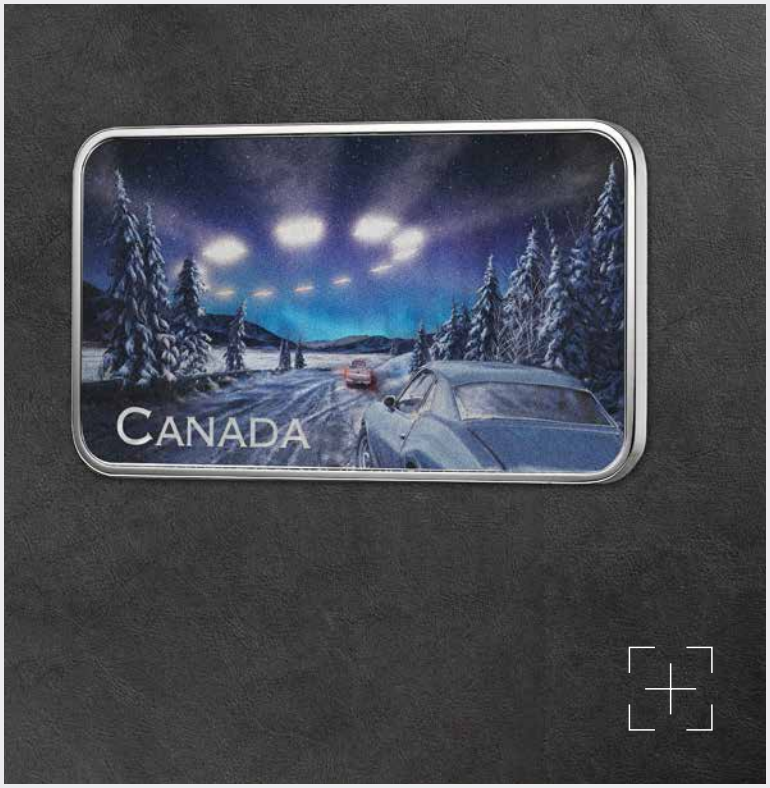
False stories often spread faster than factual corrections, as they tend to be more emotionally compelling. Therefore, inaction is never the best option.[16] An open and transparent dialogue with the public, especially from trusted figures such as scientists, is essential in reducing information gaps and building trust in institutions. When people trust the sources of information, they are less likely to embrace conspiracy theories.[17] This highlights the need for a reliable, credible source of information on UAPs, one that can quickly and accurately provide explanations to the witnesses, the media and the broader public.

Another major concern is the role of technology in accelerating the spread of false information. Social media platforms, recommendation algorithms and deepfake technology make it increasingly difficult to distinguish between fact and fiction. Ultimately, combating misinformation and disinformation requires a combination of media literacy, responsible technology use and proactive fact-checking efforts from both individuals and institutions. The involvement of credible sources including government agencies and the scientific community can help fill the informational vacuum in the public sphere. For this to happen, a clear and transparent framework for data reporting and analysis needs to be in place.

UAP Sightings in the Media and the Public

Public sightings of Unidentified Aerial Phenomena can be perplexing to individuals who experience them, prompting a search for information and answers. While this search can open people up to scientific reasoning, it can also make the public vulnerable to misinformation, disinformation and conspiracy theories, especially if they do not know which trusted organizations can help them.

Although most reports of UAP sightings attract little attention, some become famous. Sightings that are documented by video or photography, made by front-line witnesses such as police or military officers, or shared by multiple independent witnesses, tend to be considered more credible. Flight characteristics which appear to defy known laws of physics increase public interest. Sightings that occur over long periods of time, large geographic areas, or in broad daylight are more noticeable. When reported sightings fuel media coverage, prompt government action or scientific research, or permeate pop culture through movies or books, they can embed themselves in collective memory.



The following five sightings are among the best known UAP cases reported in Canada over the past decades, and have been commemorated by the Royal Canadian Mint on coins:

- **May 20, 1967, near Falcon Lake, Manitoba:** Stefan Michalak, who claimed to have encountered a landed UFO while prospecting for minerals, was allegedly burned by a blast of hot gas or air.
- **October 4, 1967, Shag Harbour, Nova Scotia:** Witnesses reported seeing a row of lights descending and entering the water. Emergency crews, including the RCMP and the Coast Guard, responded under the assumption of a plane crash, but no wreckage was found.
- **October 26, 1978, near Clarenville, Newfoundland and Labrador:** Several witnesses, including a constable of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), reported seeing an oval-shaped object over the harbour. No material evidence was found.
- **November 7, 1990, Montréal, Quebec:** A large oval-shaped luminous phenomenon was observed in the evening over the rooftop pool of the Bonaventure Hotel by about forty witnesses including journalists and police officers. Air traffic controllers confirmed there was no radar activity in the area.
- **December 11, 1996, Yukon:** At least 31 people in four different areas of Yukon reported seeing a row of lights in the sky, which many described as resembling a spacecraft. The phenomenon was later observed by several others in different locations.

The silver coin produced by the Royal Canadian Mint in 2022 to commemorate the December 11, 1996 UAP incident in Yukon.

Geminids meteor shower in Canadian wilderness. *Image composite created from 47 individual photos.*

UAP Sightings in Canada: Incidence and Reporting

Given the ephemeral nature of UAP sightings, reporting and analyzing them can bring together very different people and institutions, often in a haphazard way. UAP sightings can come from a variety of sources, including ordinary citizens, airline pilots and military personnel, and can be reported to different authorities depending on the circumstances.

The incidence of UAP sightings has been analyzed over the years by various survey organizations and researchers. In 1974, Gallup conducted what may have been the first survey of the Canadian public regarding UFOs. The results showed that 67% of respondents had heard of UFOs, while 8% believed they had seen one.[18] By 1978, 81% of Canadians had heard of UFOs while 10% thought they had seen one.

The 2024 Earnscliffe survey for the Sky Canada Project found that 27% of the 1,008 respondents reported having observed an object or phenomenon in the sky that they could not identify, with 11% claiming to have made such an observation in the past year (see Appendix B).

Based on data published by a number of organizations, it can be estimated that between 600 and 1,000 cases of UAP sightings are reported each year in Canada.[19] [20] In the absence of a single data collection organization, the number and nature of these observations cannot be established conclusively for many reasons, including the possibility that the same sighting is reported separately by more than one organization. This makes it difficult to get a precise idea of the scale of the phenomenon.

In Canada, the longest and most recognized collection of UAP sightings is “The Canadian UFO Survey” produced by a group of Manitoba-based volunteers called Ufology Research, directed by Mr. Chris Rutkowski. In 2023, they tallied 570 UFO reports; since 1989, over 24,000 Canadian UFO reports have been catalogued. The major sources for this collection include other UFO organizations such as the U.S.-based National UFO Reporting Center (NUFORC), cases reported directly to Ufology Research and Canadian government agencies. Of note, data from another organization, MUFON Canada, was not available to Ufology Research in 2023 (MUFON separately reported 321 cases in 2023) suggesting that the list may be incomplete. The survey conducted by Earnscliffe in 2024 also suggests that the number of sightings may be higher.

While advancements in technology and scientific inquiry have improved our ability to investigate UAPs, the lack of standardized reporting mechanisms, fragmented data collection, and the spread of misinformation complicate efforts to correctly evaluate the number of UAP cases in Canada every year.

E. Methodology and Findings

The Office of the Chief Science Advisor (OCSA) gathered information from federal departments and agencies, stakeholders, experts and other organizations, on how UAP observations reported by the public are handled in Canada. The main organizations and individuals consulted are listed in Appendix A. We also examined publicly available records such as historical UAP data, as well as reports and investigations related to UAPs. This included examining historical practices and archives, as well as current procedures and challenges associated with collecting and analyzing reliable data. Finally, we reviewed the approaches taken by a few other countries to compare with Canada and seek best practices.

Some members of the Sky Canada project team researching documents from the archives of the National Research Council in Ottawa.

The History of UAP Reporting in Canada

In Canada, UAPs can be reported through multiple channels involving federal, provincial and civil society organizations. At the federal level, Transport Canada maintains the Civil Aviation Daily Occurrence Reporting System (CADORS) for incidents affecting aviation safety, including UAP sightings. The Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) and the Department of National Defence also monitor aerospace activity and may receive reports through their operational networks.

Historically, the National Research Council of Canada (NRC) collected and studied UAP reports from 1967 until the 1990s. Also, law enforcement agencies such as the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP), and the Sûreté du Québec (SQ) may also serve as points of contact for UAP sightings, particularly in cases involving public safety. Civil society organizations, such as the Ufology Research of Manitoba and MUFON Canada compile and analyze UAP data from citizens. Additionally, local observatories, academic institutions, and amateur astronomy groups sometimes act as informal channels for reporting and analyzing unfamiliar aerial observations.

These diverse pathways illustrate the lack of a cohesive and standardized system for reporting and follow-up to UAP phenomena in Canada. The following section outlines the key information gathered during the Project.

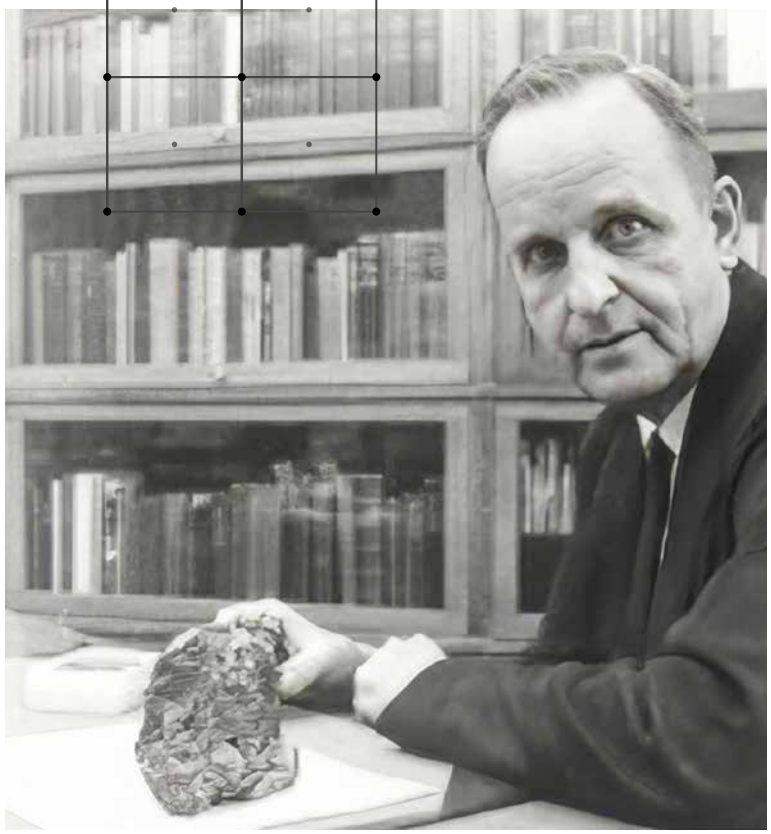
Federal Government

The history of UAP reporting within the federal government spans several decades but includes extended periods with minimal or no activity. Additionally, different federal departments were transiently involved, often transferring the responsibility to other federal organizations.

In 1950, the Department of Transport granted one of their engineers, Wilbert Smith, permission to do part-time research to investigate whether some UFOs could use the power of Earth's magnetic field as a source of propulsion. This was called Project Magnet,[21] and Smith gradually expanded its scope to include investigations into the validity of UFO observations. At one point, Smith launched a balloon over Ottawa to monitor UFO-related public and media reports of the event. He also established a UFO observatory on the outskirts of Ottawa. Although his efforts in detecting UFOs were unsuccessful, they did attract media interest, as well as unwelcome attention for the department. Unable to convince his colleagues of the merits of his research, Smith had to continue his work privately after the Department of Transport terminated Project Magnet in 1954.

In 1952, the Defence Research Board (DRB), Canada's then military science agency within the Department of National Defence (DND), established a committee called Project Second Storey to examine the occurrences of "flying saucers" passing over Canadian territory as reported by different branches of the armed services. The Committee was chaired by the National Research Council of Canada (NRC) astronomer Dr. Peter Millman; it included members from various arms of the Canadian military intelligence and other government agencies.

The committee did not investigate UFO sightings, but it developed a standardized form[22] to facilitate the reporting of UFOs across various government departments. This form was never broadly adopted or used. The committee held six meetings from 1952 to 1954 and concluded that "UFOs neither posed a security threat, nor were of scientific interest."[c] It recommended ending all investigations by the Canadian military.



NRC's Astronomer and Researcher Emeritus Peter Millman, here at the Herzberg Institute of Astrophysics circa 1960's. Millman chaired Project Second Storey in the 1950's and was responsible for the non-meteoritic file at NRC until he retired.

Between 1954 and 1967, public reports continued to be submitted to various federal departments and agencies including the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Transport Canada, and the Department of National Defence, as well as to local police departments and non-federal entities. These organizations occasionally conducted inquiries or logged sightings for record-keeping purposes.

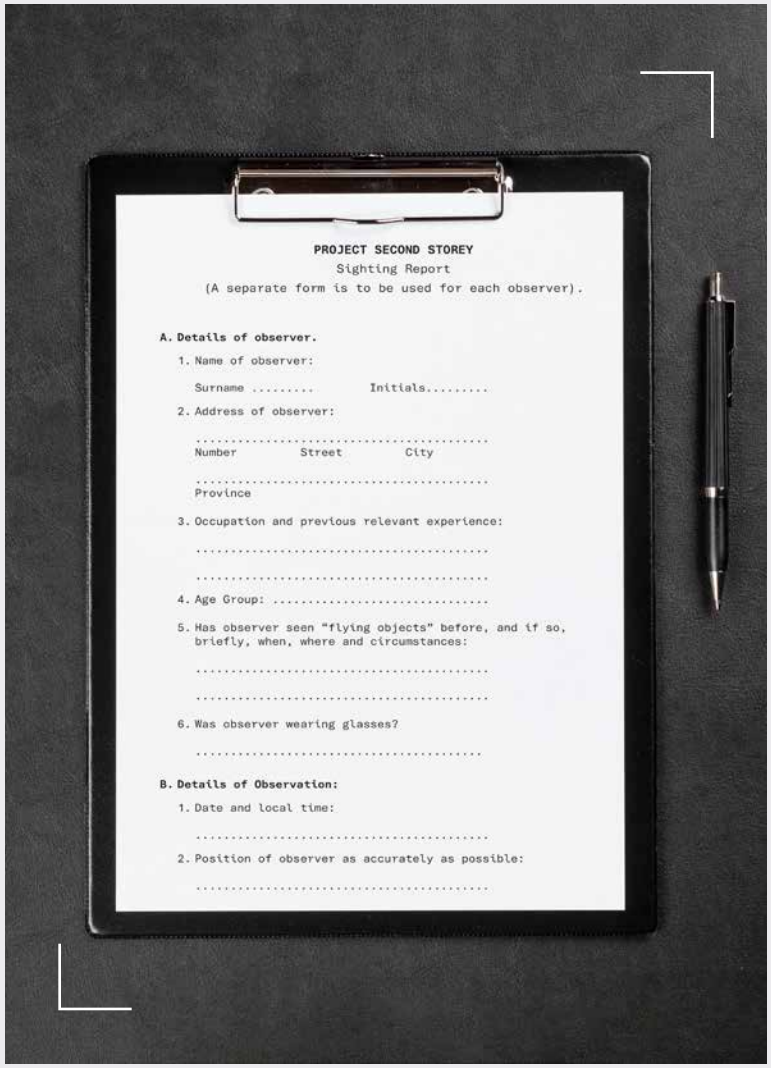
c Hayes, Matthew, Search for the Unknown: Canada's UFO Files and the Rise of Conspiracy Theory, McGill-Queen's University Press, 2022, Montreal.

In 1967, on the recommendation of the Minister of National Defence, the responsibility for overseeing UFO reports was transferred to the NRC, which then became the main service for receiving UFO reports from the public. This transfer of responsibility included the declassification of DND's Project Second Storey and the Department of Transport's Project Magnet, as well as taking over the management of previous UFO reports. According to the NRC, until 1995, they were officially tasked with collecting information on UFOs from the public, municipalities, and other federal departments such as the RCMP and DND. Dr. Peter Millman, in charge of investigating and answering queries on behalf of the NRC, would often offer explanations (such as stars, planets, meteors, optical phenomena) for the sightings submitted by the public. Most, but not all, UFO reports received by the NRC were compiled into what became known as the "Non-Meteoritic Sightings" file.

In 1995, the NRC stopped collecting UFO reports altogether. All related material was transferred to what is now known as Library and Archives Canada (LAC), which presently holds these records. LAC's collection of UFO documents, estimated at 15,000 pages, of which some 9,500 have been digitized, is open to the public and provides valuable information on the history of UFO sightings and the Canadian government response to them. As for Dr. Millman's personal archives, which are available to the public through the NRC archiving service, they contain only few documents related to the UFO topic.

The history of UAP reporting within the Canadian federal government reflects a fluctuating level of interest and responsibility over time, with various departments and agencies intermittently engaging in investigations. From early initiatives such as Project Magnet and Project Second Storey to the eventual transfer of UFO reporting to the National Research Council of Canada, the government's approach evolved but often lacked continuity and consistent focus. These efforts were shaped by a combination of scientific curiosity, public interest and institutional caution. While projects like those led by Wilbert Smith and Dr. Peter Millman sought to provide scientific frameworks for understanding UAP sightings, they faced skepticism within government circles and often struggled to gain traction. The limited adoption of standardized reporting mechanisms and the eventual cessation of formal investigations in 1995 marked a decline in federal involvement.

Today, the legacy of these efforts is preserved through archives such as those at Library and Archives Canada, which serve as a valuable resource for understanding the historical context of the UAP issue in Canada. The records highlight the challenges of balancing public interest, scientific inquiry and government priorities in addressing a complex and often ill-defined subject. While interest in UAPs is undiminished, these historical lessons underscore the importance of transparency, collaboration and a rigorous approach to future investigations.



PROJECT SECOND STOREY
Sighting Report
(A separate form is to be used for each observer).

A. Details of observer.
1. Name of observer:
Surname ..... Initials.....
2. Address of observer:
.....
Number Street City
.....
Province
3. Occupation and previous relevant experience:
.....
.....
4. Age Group: .....
5. Has observer seen "flying objects" before, and if so, briefly, when, where and circumstances:
.....
.....
6. Was observer wearing glasses?
.....
B. Details of Observation:
1. Date and local time:
.....
2. Position of observer as accurately as possible:
.....

The first page of a version of the UAP reporting form developed as part of Canada's Project Second Storey in the 1950's.

Consultations with Federal Departments and Agencies

The Sky Canada Project sought to gain insight on the domestic front by identifying organizations in Canada that typically receive witness reports of UAP sightings and examined whether and how they collect, investigate and follow up on these reports. The OCSA consulted with, and gathered this information from federal government departments and agencies, as well as from several non-governmental organizations and individuals interested in UAPs. It should be noted that participation in these consultations was entirely voluntary in nature. The type of response and the level of engagement varied from one organization to another, but in general the team was able to meet and exchange with senior representatives of all organizations contacted. A list of organizations and individuals consulted is included in Appendix A.

Federal departments and agencies were asked specific questions aimed at understanding the role they played, if any, in UAP report management. Specifically, they were asked whether the Canadian public is contacting their organization to report UAP sightings. If so, how frequently, what follow-up is done, and how is the information safeguarded.

These consultations revealed that federal departments and agencies do receive UAP sighting information and reports from their stakeholders and the public. However, few of these organizations are currently investigating these sightings unless they pertain to specific aspects of their respective mandates, such as national security, transportation safety or public safety, and those instances are fairly rare. Additionally, most departments do not compile the reports they receive, making it difficult to provide information on the number of reports or the type of responses given to witnesses.

Responses from federal departments and agencies that have received UAP-related information are summarized below, along with insights from media and online sources.

View of a cloudy sky from the cockpit of an airplane in flight. Pilots often report visual phenomena that they are unable to immediately identify. These reports are registered in Transport Canada's CADORS system.

Transport Canada (TC) and NAV CANADA

Transport Canada is the federal department responsible for road, rail, marine and air transportation. Its Civil Aviation Directorate collects reports on various incidents (including UAP sightings) from pilots, air traffic controllers and the public. These reports are shared publicly through the *Civil Aviation Daily Occurrence Reporting System* (CADORS), which is accessible on Transport Canada's CADORS website.[23] Specifically, CADORS collects and distributes basic information on incidents involving Canadian-registered aircraft at Canadian airports, in Canadian sovereign airspace, and international airspace for which Canada has accepted responsibility.

NAV CANADA is a private, not-for-profit corporation; it has been Canada's air navigation service provider since 1996. It oversees air traffic activity through a sophisticated network of area control centres, air traffic control (ATC) towers, flight service stations, maintenance centres, flight information centres and navigation aids across the country.

In the case of UAP sightings, pilots typically report their sightings to the nearest ATC tower, flight service station or other air traffic unit. These units file an Aviation Occurrence Report (AOR) with NAV CANADA, which subsequently gets sent to Transport Canada's CADORS team for assessment and processing.

UAP sighting reports from the public can also be reported to Transport Canada through the online aviation incident reporting application. Reports filed in this way may also be published through CADORS, provided they meet the criteria for inclusion.

Analysts at Transport Canada use these UAP reports to create a CADORS record based on the details of the occurrence. These are then assigned as "events" in CADORS, under three categories depending on the information provided: "Weather Balloon, Meteor, Rocket, UFO and Intelligence Sighting"; "Laser Interference"; or "Other Operational Incidences."

Examination of CADORS reports allows for follow-up on high-risk events while looking for trends and emerging risks through aggregate analysis by Transport Canada. Further follow-up may be undertaken by various organizations including Transport Canada, NAV CANADA, the Transportation Safety Board of Canada, and the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD).

NAV CANADA provides about 80% of the aviation occurrence information in each CADORS record.[24] Other sources of information used to create or supplement a CADORS record include the information received from the Transportation Safety Board (TSB), the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), aircraft operators and other agencies. NAV CANADA is also responsible for the collection, evaluation and dissemination of special messages called NOTAMs.[d] NOTAMs are short-term notices filed by NAV CANADA to alert aircraft pilots of potential hazards along a flight route or at locations that could affect a flight, such as presence of wildlife, volcanic ash warning, satellites, rocket launch, solar storm, etc.

In January 2024, CTVNews.ca[25] reported on Transport Canada's CADORS online database. They identified only 17 events reported by pilots in 2023 that could be considered UAPs,[26] spanning all types of occurrences and sightings. As such, UAP sightings make up a very small portion (about 0.08%) of all incidences reported by pilots. They are so rare in CADORS that Transport Canada is not incentivized to dedicate time and effort to explaining them. In fact, when such incidents do not raise serious safety concerns, Canadian authorities do not investigate further.

Canadian Coast Guard (CCG)

The Canadian Coast Guard (CCG) is a special operating agency within Fisheries and Oceans Canada (but soon to be transferred to the Department of National Defence). Its mission is to ensure the safety of mariners in Canadian waters, protect Canada's marine environment, and support the safe and efficient movement of maritime trade. The CCG rarely receives reports on UAPs, although it has procedures on how to treat such reports. As part of its annual *Notice to Mariners*,[27] procedures on what are termed *Vital Intelligence Sightings*, any waterborne object which appears to be hostile, suspicious or unidentified should be reported and handled as a "MERINT[e] Report". MERINT messages are transmitted to the nearest or most convenient Canadian or U.S. coast guard station. From 2010 to 2022, only two MERINT reports were filed, both to the CCG's Western region.

Atlantic Coastline in Canada. The Canadian Coast Guard has procedures on how to report UAPs through the MERINT system.

d Notam refers to Notice to Airmen.

e MERINT refers to Communication Instructions for Reporting by Merchant Vessels of Vital Intelligence Sightings.

Department of National Defence (DND)

The Sky Canada Project focuses primarily on the civilian aspects of UAP sightings in Canada, excluding military sightings and processes. Nonetheless, meetings were held with representatives of the Department of National Defence, North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD), the Canadian Armed Forces, and Defence Research and Development Canada (DRDC) to discuss the goals of the Sky Canada Project and receive any information they wanted to share.

DRDC, the scientific research arm of DND, has informed the OCSA that it has no formal program on UAPs and no capacity or mandate to collect, receive or analyze citizens' reports on UAPs.

The Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) does not typically investigate sightings of unexplained phenomena outside the context of investigating potential threats or distress. The RCAF collaborates with U.S. Federal Aviation Administration and Transport Canada to enforce safety and security regulations.

Media reported that the RCAF represented the Canadian Armed Forces at a May 2023 Five Eyes briefing on UAPs. The informal meeting was hosted by the United States at the Pentagon, where a presentation on UAPs was made by the U.S. All-domain Anomaly Resolution Office (AARO). While the details of the meeting remain classified, it was characterized as boosting cooperation on reporting and analyzing unexplained sightings. The OCSA was not able to access first-hand information about this meeting.

National Research Council of Canada (NRC)

As mentioned earlier, from 1967 to 1995, the NRC was the main federal government organization responsible for receiving UAP sighting reports in Canada. Within NRC, they were collated by the Herzberg Institute of Astrophysics and kept under the responsibility of Dr. Peter Millman, in his "non-meteoritic sightings" case reports—a term referring to cases unrelated to meteors. The files gathered by the NRC were transferred to Library and Archives Canada (LAC) in 1995, where they are accessible to the public.

The NRC continues to receive occasional requests for information on archived UAP-related documents. According to their records, they processed about 40 inquiries (e.g., sightings, questions, media requests) related to UAPs over the last decade. These inquiries were referred to other government departments, such as Transport Canada and LAC, as well as local astronomy clubs such as centres of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada.

Library and Archives Canada (LAC)

The LAC's collection of government records on UAPs includes files from 1947 to 1995 primarily received from four federal organizations:

- the Department of National Defence;
- the Department of Transport;
- the National Research Council of Canada; and
- the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

LAC's records include correspondence, reports, memos and procedural forms. Some focus on specific UFO sightings, while others address general reporting processes or policies for documenting phenomena. The files served multiple purposes, such as explaining unusual aerial observations, investigating some sightings or responding to public inquiries.

The entire LAC collection (over 15,000 pages) is publicly accessible. Users can locate these documents through LAC's online search tools by using keywords like "UFO" or "non-meteoritic" and filing a request to LAC. A subset of the digitized records (around 9,500 pages) are directly available online through LAC's digital archives on the Canadian Heritage website. To highlight this collection, in 2005, LAC organized an online exhibition entitled "Canada's UFOs: The Search for the Unknown".[28]

Many researchers and authors have mined LAC's UFO document collection to write books on various related subjects, including, most recently, Matthew Hayes for Search for the Unknown: Canada's UFO Files and the Rise of Conspiracy Theory (2022), and Chris Rutkowski for Canada's UFOs: Declassified (2022). These works highlight the rich resources available in LAC's UAP-related records and their value for understanding the governmental and societal responses that these phenomena inspired.

Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and Provincial and Local Police Forces

Most municipalities and provinces in Canada do not have their own police services, they rely on the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). The RCMP serves approximately 73% of Canada's landmass and holds a federal investigative mandate across the entire country. Consequently, the RCMP receives reports of UAPs from the public throughout Canada. However, the RCMP generally does not investigate UAP sightings, as its operational focus is on public safety and criminal investigations.

Currently, the RCMP does not have a formal policy for the collection or dissemination of UAP reports. As a result, there is no classification system specific to UAPs. Such reports are typically categorized as non-offence (non-criminal) incidents under the Aeronautics Act—Other Activities. This classification also encompasses a variety of other vessel sightings within Canadian airspace, such as drones.

When members of the public contact the RCMP, the nature of the call is assessed and classified before any investigation is undertaken. However, there is no specific guidance for RCMP call takers or members regarding UAP reports. The calls can be categorized as "suspicious vehicle," for example, and lost in a large number of non-UAP reports. It was therefore impossible for the RCMP to provide statistics about UAP reports.

Historically, the RCMP has conducted some investigations into "unidentified flying objects," and many of these records have been declassified and are publicly available through Library and Archives Canada.

During consultations with the OCSA, the RCMP acknowledged the growing public interest in UAPs and the proliferation of misinformation and disinformation on the subject. They noted the potential value of a dedicated office responsible for providing factual information and serving as a centralized body to which UAP reports could be referred. This would allow the RCMP to stay focused on criminal investigations and threats to public safety.

Additionally, the RCMP coordinates with provincial and municipal police departments as needed. The primary mission of these local and provincial police services is to ensure public safety, and they typically approach UAP-related calls from this perspective. RCMP consultations with these organizations revealed that they lack standardized systems for collecting and organizing UAP reports, as well as formal policies regarding such incidents. Like the RCMP, these local and provincial police departments recognized the potential benefits of a centralized body to which local UAP sightings could be directed.

Drones appear more frequently in the sky. At dusk, their small bodies blend into the fading light, making them surprisingly difficult to identify.

Canadian Space Agency President Lisa Campbell and Chief Science Advisor Mona Nemer, and members of their teams, during a visit in 2024.

Canadian Space Agency (CSA)

The mission of the Canadian Space Agency (CSA) is to promote the peaceful use and development of space, to advance the knowledge of space through science, and to ensure that space science and technology provide social and economic benefits for Canadians. The CSA is not currently involved in any UAP issues, nor does it collect UAP sighting reports. If members of the public contact the CSA about UAPs, either to obtain information or to report a sighting, they would be informed that this type of service is not available. The CSA's purview pertains to matters concerning space, not activities within the Earth's atmosphere (where most UAP cases take place).

Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC)

The Meteorological Service of Canada (MSC), which is part of Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC), provides weather and environmental forecasting services and information to Canadians. The MSC gets many inquiries related to meteorological features, weather, water quantity, ice, air quality and climate as well as the instruments and data it manages. Some of these inquiries concern lines of clouds that frequently form behind aircraft during flight, commonly referred to as condensation trails or contrails. These contrails are composed primarily of water vapour that condenses and freezes in the cold upper atmosphere, creating visible streaks in the sky. This topic frequently becomes the subject of speculation as it is often associated with conspiracy theories that typically involve allegations of secret government programs, such as geoengineering or chemical dispersal, and occasionally link the trails to UAPs.

While MSC responds to all queries, they do not catalogue, collect, analyze or curate the numerous requests they receive. Standard responses may be used for common questions. ECCC also operates a weather application that provides the public with scientific explanations of weather phenomena. MSC stated that their resources are fully committed to the weather forecasting enterprise with no capacity to take on additional responsibilities like analyzing UAP reports.

The OCSA's consultations with federal departments and agencies provide a valuable snapshot of the current state of UAP reporting and management in Canada. While some departments, such as Transport Canada, have established mechanisms for collecting and analyzing UAP-related data, most organizations do not investigate sightings unless they intersect with their specific mandates, such as national security or transportation safety. The lack of centralized data compilation and standardized reporting processes makes it challenging to identify trends or conduct comprehensive analyses of UAP reports.

Citizen-Led UAP Groups and Organizations

While governmental efforts to study and catalogue UAP sightings have fluctuated over time, citizen-led initiatives have remained steady. By bridging gaps left by federal agencies and leveraging publicly available sources, citizen-led efforts continue to play an indispensable role in the study of UAPs, maintaining a consistent commitment to transparency and investigation, with different degrees of rigour.

Among the most prominent contributors to this field is Chris Rutkowski, whose dedication to investigating UFO sightings began in 1975 while he was a student of physics and mathematics. Over the decades, Rutkowski transitioned into science communications at the University of Manitoba and the experience gained during his long career further solidified his role as a key figure in UFO research. Mr. Rutkowski is a co-founder of Ufology Research, and in 1989 he and his colleagues began publishing the yearly Canadian UFO Survey, which tracks and analyzes UFO sightings in Canada. The Canadian UFO Survey continues to be published to this day.

In 1988, Rutkowski met with NRC Astronomer and Researcher Emeritus Peter Millman at the Herzberg Institute in Ottawa. After Dr. Millman's passing, he met with other staff from the Institute in 1995, where he offered to assist with collecting UFO reports if needed. This led to Rutkowski eventually receiving reports directly from federal agencies such as DND and Transport Canada starting in 2000. However, by 2020, the direct submission of UFO reports from federal departments decreased significantly. At present, Ufology Research still includes information from federal sources in its annual Survey, but relies primarily on publicly available sources (e.g., civil aviation reports) and information obtained through formal access to information requests.

Today, Canada, like many other countries, has several citizen-driven organizations dedicated to receiving, investigating and discussing reports of UAPs. MUFON Canada is a non-profit organization that relies on civilian volunteers to study reported UAP sightings.

There are numerous groups at the provincial level as well. For example, within the province of Quebec, there is the *Association québécoise d'ufologie* (AQU), the *Réseau OVNI-ALERTE* (UFO-Alert Network), the *Groupe d'Assistance et de Recherche sur les Phénomènes Aérospatiaux Non-identifiés* (GARPAN), while UFO*BC investigates BC and Yukon sightings.

Amateur astronomers install their telescopes prior to an event. Citizens engaging in science by observing the sky.

Such organizations and initiatives provide platforms for reporting sightings, conducting some investigations and sharing information. Some have links with similar organizations in other countries. Their existence is indicative of a gap in the way UAP sightings are treated by both the authorities and the scientific community. But their lack of financial resources limits their actions and prevents them from offering a full suite of services.

At the individual level, several journalists and commentators currently cover UAP issues. For example, Daniel Otis is a Canadian journalist recognized for his reporting over the last few years on UAPs and related topics. He has explored various aspects of UAPs, including government and military investigations, as well as public perceptions. His articles often examine the implications of UAP sightings and the growing interest from both the public and authorities in understanding these phenomena.

Christian Page is another respected journalist in this field, known for his research and writing on UAPs and the paranormal. He has contributed to discussions regarding the implications of UAP sightings, including their potential impact on science, government policy and public perception. Page frequently investigates the intersection of technology, defence and the unexplained phenomena observed in the skies. He has also advocated for transparency and further research into UAPs, emphasizing the need for a systematic approach to understanding these occurrences.

Together, Otis, Page and others serve as key figures in the public conversation on UAPs, each using their platforms to push for greater transparency, accountability and understanding in this evolving field.

Global Perspectives on UAP Reporting: An Overview of National Approaches

The study of unidentified aerial phenomena has become an area of increased interest globally, with various countries adopting different approaches to the collection, analysis and management of UAP data. Historically, many nations, including Canada, housed UAP offices within their defence departments. However, over time, these offices were closed, and responsibility for UAP oversight was transferred to other organizations.

A comparative analysis was carried out to examine the UAP practices in several peer countries. As summarized to follow, the strategies employed by different nations vary and can involve either or both government and non-government entities.

Management of UAP reports in the Americas

United States

Over the past several years, the U.S. government has ramped up its efforts to gather and analyze data related to UAPs. In April 2020, the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) released three UAP videos in order to "clear up any misconceptions by the public on whether or not the footage that has been circulating was real, or whether or not there is more to the videos."[29] In its statement, the Navy also noted that the "aerial phenomena observed in the videos remain characterized as 'unidentified.'" That same year the Pentagon established the Unidentified Aerial Phenomena Task Force.

On June 25, 2021, the U.S. Office of the Director of National Intelligence released a report to the U.S. Congress entitled "Preliminary Assessment: Unidentified Aerial Phenomena" examining 144 military UAP reports from recent decades.

Image from one of the UAP videos released by the Pentagon in 2020. (credit Pentagon). *Note: The appearance of U.S. Department of Defense (DoW) visual information does not imply or constitute DoW endorsement.*

Increased government interest and commitment to the scientific study of UAPs culminated in the creation, in 2022, of All-domain Anomaly Resolution Office (AARO)[30] in the Pentagon. The objective of AARO is to investigate government reports of UAPs, improve data collection, standardize reporting requirements and mitigate the potential threats to safety and security posed by UAPs. Its mission is to "Minimize technical and intelligence surprise by synchronizing scientific, intelligence, and operational detection identification, attribution, and mitigation of unidentified anomalous phenomena in the vicinity of national security areas." In February 2024, AARO released Volume 1 (of 2) of a study that reviews all U.S. government investigative efforts and programs on UAPs from 1945 to the present.[31]

On June 1, 2024, AARO released its second report[32] on 757 UAP reports from May 1, 2023, to June 1, 2024. As of the publishing date, 174 cases were resolved and found to be objects such as balloons, birds, unmanned aerial systems, satellites and aircraft. Of the remaining unresolved cases, AARO continues to collect and analyze the information by working with military and technical partners. AARO underscores that, to date, they have discovered no evidence of extraterrestrial beings, activity or technology.

In parallel, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) undertook an Independent Study to evaluate how it can contribute to ongoing government efforts. The report, released in September 2023 focused on how best to collect future UAP data to advance their scientific study.[33] It also defines a multifaceted approach to the scientific study of UAPs, acknowledging the need for collaboration across different sectors and disciplines. Similar to the AARO report, the Independent Study Team's review of unclassified government documents found no evidence of extraterrestrial activity. Following the release of the report, NASA announced the creation of the position of Director of Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena Research to further study and coordinate research efforts pertaining to UAPs.

The incursion of four high-altitude balloons into North American airspace in early 2023 prompted President Biden to ask the U.S. intelligence community to take a closer look at the UAP issue. He directed an interagency team to study the broader policy implications for detection, analysis and disposition of unidentified aerial objects that pose either safety or security risks. The President also announced his staff would engage with their relevant foreign counterparts in order to share information and try to gain their perspectives as well.[34]

The cover page of AARO's February 2024 "Report on the Historical Record of U.S. Government Involvement with Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena (UAP) Volume I".

Lastly, the Safe Airspace for Americans Act[35] was introduced in the House of Representatives in January 2024. The bill proposes that the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) develop procedures for reporting, collecting, storing, inve stigating and analyzing UAP incidents. The legislation also seeks to protect witnesses—who report sightings of UAPs—from adverse consequences such as medical disqualification, or reprisals from employers or the government based solely on their reporting of UAPs.

Mexico

Most reports of UAP sightings in Mexico come through media outlets, independent researchers and social media platforms, which play a significant role in documenting and spreading information about such events. While there is no dedicated, official government agency in Mexico for UAP reporting, there have been instances of government engagement. In September 2023, the Mexican Congress held hearings on UAPs, including a presentation by Jaime Maussan on mummified bodies of extraterrestrials. This evidence was later debunked by Mexican scientists.[36] The legislative assembly was holding hearings to discuss the U.S. government's actions and policies regarding UAPs.[37]

Chile

The SEFAA (Sección de Estudios de Fenómenos Aéreos Anómalos, or Section for the Study of Anomalous Aerial Phenomena),[38] serves as the official body in Chile responsible for collecting, analyzing and scientifically studying UAPs. It operates within the General Directorate of Civil Aeronautics (DGAC) of the Chilean Air Force. The primary mission of the SEFAA is to gather information on UAP sightings reported by airline crews or the general public. This information is analyzed to assess any potential risks to the safety of air operations and national security.

One notable aspect of SEFAA's operations is its commitment to transparency and accessibility. The organization makes its findings and information regarding UAPs available to the public, aiming to foster openness and understanding of these phenomena. SEFAA publishes monthly reports detailing the cases it has received, investigated, and closed, allowing interested individuals to stay informed about its activities.[39]

Management of UAP reports in Europe

France

France's government-funded organization charged with managing UAP reports is housed within its space agency, the CNES (*Centre national d'études spatiales, or National Centre for Space Studies*). The CNES office called GEIPAN (*Groupe d'Études et d'Informations sur les Phénomènes Aérospatiaux Non identifiés*, or Unidentified Aerospace Phenomenon Research and Information Group), has been studying UAPs since 1977. Its mission is to collect, investigate and archive UAP reports and make its findings available to the public. By anonymizing sightings, GEIPAN allows further study of observed phenomena by external scientific teams. The principles guiding GEIPAN include low operational costs, public service, respect for witnesses and a commitment to transparency, neutrality and objective investigation.

GEIPAN has a team of three full-time employees to manage the reporting process. Members of the public can file a UAP sighting report through a form that is available online. Reports are investigated through the efforts of over 20 trained volunteers throughout France. GEIPAN has a large number of government partners (including the military, civil aviation, meteorological offices, Alternative Energies and Atomic Energy Commission, and the French national police, among others) and external contacts from complementary fields (including astronomy, aeronautics, meteorology, psychology, imaging, drone technology, electromagnetism, etc.). GEIPAN's steering committee is chaired by an established aerospace expert and includes representatives of the country's civil and military authorities. The steering committee's mission is to analyze the performance of GEIPAN and make recommendations to CNES.

The French organization *Méprises du Ciel* (Misunderstandings of the sky) also receives UAP sightings from GEIPAN and the public. This organization helps educate the public about the mischaracterization of UAPs. While it is difficult to establish a direct causal relationship between these investigative efforts and changes in public perspective, there are indications that in France, UAP-related conspiracies are decreasing and are less prevalent compared with other countries.[40]

Solar eclipse (left) and Venus (right) in Embrun, France. Venus frequently sparks UAP reports from the public, due to its bright and striking appearance.

Northern lights in German countryside. All over the world, people are captivated, their eyes fixed on the sky, marveling at such natural spectacles.

Germany

For over 50 years, Germany's contact point for UAP reporting has been the GEP (*Gesellschaft zur Erforschung des UFO-Phänomens*, or The Society for Research into the UFO Phenomena),[41] a Ludenscheid-based non-profit citizen science organization. The GEP receives public reports of UAP sightings, conducts investigations on a case-by-case basis, and makes its findings public. Since 1980, it has published its findings in its bimonthly *Journal für UFO-Forschung* (Journal of UFO Research). According to GEP's annual report,[42] they have received an average of 342 reports per year from 2022 to 2024. Over 90% of reports received have been explained as conventional causes with the remainder being unexplained due to insufficient data.

Italy

Italy has two well-known private non-profit UAP-related organizations: the CUN (*Centro ufologico nazionale*, or National Ufological Center),[43] and the CISU (*Centro Italiano Studi Ufologici*, or Italian Center for Ufological Studies).[44] They were established in 1965 and 1985 respectively. Both are involved in collecting and cataloguing testimonies of UAP sightings and public reporting. The two organizations are also provided access to the Italian Ministry of Defence's unclassified UAP investigations which are carried out by the Italian Air Force.

United Kingdom

The United Kingdom's Ministry of Defence (MoD) was in charge of investigating UFO reports from 1950 to 2009. From the outset, the MoD set up a working group under its Chief Science Advisor to study the UFO phenomenon. In June 1951, the working group concluded that UFO sightings could be explained by "astronomical or meteorological phenomena; misidentification of aircraft, balloons, birds, optical illusions and psychological delusions, and deliberate hoaxes."[f] It recommended that "no further investigation of reported mysterious aerial phenomena be undertaken, unless and until some material evidence becomes available."[g] Nonetheless, the MoD kept a UFO hotline and email address to receive sighting reports, as well as a small team of investigators. It published annual reports from 1997 to 2009, listing the dates, times, location and brief descriptions of all UFO sightings. The MoD closed this program in 2009. Since then, UAP sightings in the UK can be reported to local authorities or associations like the British UFO Research Association (BUFORA).

European Union

The European Union (EU), as an entity, has not developed specific laws or regulations regarding UAPs. However, the European Commission has put in place an "aviation reporting portal"[45] that provides common reporting forms for individuals to report UAP occurrences. In spite of this development, the European Commission considers that the area of UAPs is under the jurisdiction of the Member States,[46] which allows them to address these phenomena according to their national security needs.

f Flying Saucer Working Party—Wikipedia

g UK Government Flying Saucer Working Party (ianridpath.com)

Management of UAP reports in Oceania

Australia

From 1950 to 1996, the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) was responsible for investigating UAP sightings in Australia.[47] However, the RAAF ceased its involvement in public UAP investigations in 1996, citing a perceived lack of scientific value and compelling reasons to continue dedicating resources to these activities.

Today, public sightings of UAPs in Australia can be reported to the local police or other third-party organizations such as the Mutual UFO Network (MUFON) for Australia and New Zealand and the Australian Centre for UFO Studies (ACUFOS). Defence flight safety incidents (including those potentially caused by UAPs) are handled by the Defence Aviation Safety Authority (DASA), while the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) handles civilian aviation safety.

New Zealand

New Zealand also had a period, spanning from 1954 to 2009, during which the military collected public UFO sightings, apparently without investigating them.[48] New Zealand's military released hundreds of documents detailing claims of UFO sightings to the national archives.[49] Today, members of the public can still report UAP sightings to both the New Zealand Civil Aviation Authority (CAA)[50] and the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF). Additionally, there are civilian groups, such as Ufocus NZ,[51] that gather reports from the public and pilots.

Management of UAP reports in Asia

Japan

According to media sources, Japan's Defense Minister instructed the Japanese Defense Forces in 2020 to record and photograph any object they encounter or that enters Japanese airspace, and to take steps for the "necessary analysis" of the sightings.[52] This directive underscores the importance placed on monitoring and documenting UAPs by the Japanese government, as well as the recognition of the need for thorough analysis and investigation including information provided by the public. The Japanese military announced in February 2023 a new policy to consider unidentified drones and balloons as legitimate targets to be shot down.[53]

On May 28, 2024, ruling and opposition lawmakers in Japan held a meeting to address UAP issues, and, on June 6, 2024, they created a nonpartisan group to ramp up abilities to detect and analyze UAPs.[54]

China

The rise of UAP research in China coincided with the country's reform period in the late 1970s. As part of the first wave of reforms, public interest in UAPs began to emerge.[55] In September 1979, students at Wuhan University established the China UFO Enthusiasts' Liaison Office, which later evolved into the China UFO Research Association. The association expanded, opening branches in other cities.

The Journal of UFO Research, founded in 1981 in Lanzhou by the Gansu People's Publishing House, became the most widely read UAP research magazine in Asia by the 1990s.[56] Following the success of the China UFO Research Association, several localized societies were established, including the Beijing UFO Society, which was founded in 1984. The Beijing UFO Society claimed to have collected a significant number of photographs and first-hand accounts of UAPs through its fieldwork.

During the 1990s, interest in UAPs and extraterrestrial life surged as state media began covering the topic and publishing restrictions were relaxed.[57] However, the China UFO Research Association disbanded in 1997.

Recently, China has a dedicated task force within the People's Liberation Army (PLA) to investigate Unidentified Aerial Phenomena (UAP). This task force employs a multi-tiered reporting system to manage UAP sightings, collecting data from military radar stations, air force pilots, police stations, weather stations and observatories affiliated with the Chinese Academy of Sciences. Reports undergo preliminary analysis at regional military commands before being centralized in a national database. To handle the vast amount of data and identify patterns, the PLA utilizes artificial intelligence (AI) to assess the nature and potential threat level of these phenomena. This approach enables the PLA to rapidly determine whether observed objects are foreign aircraft, natural occurrences or potentially otherworldly in origin.[58]

The recent global developments in the study and investigation of UAPs demonstrate an increasing commitment to scientific inquiry and national security. Countries such as the United States, France and Chile have established formal governmental bodies to investigate UAP sightings, while others have relied on non-governmental organizations or citizen science groups to collect and analyze reports. The growing recognition of the need for robust data collection and international cooperation reflects a shared interest in understanding these phenomena and a global shift toward a more systematic and open approach to the study of UAPs.

Comet C/2023 A3 (Tsuchinshan ATLAS), Chicheng Iceberg Ridge, Hebei Province, China (2024). A massive object entering Earth's atmosphere disintegrates, leaving behind a bright trail.

F. Recommendations to Enhance UAP Reporting and Research in Canada

The Sky Canada Project highlights a significant gap in Canada's approach to UAP phenomena, as most federal entities lack the capacity, mandate or resources to address this issue systematically. Public interest in greater transparency and improved reporting mechanisms underscores the need for coordinated action. Insights from non-governmental organizations, citizen-driven groups, and independent journalists reveal the enduring public fascination with UAPs and the potential value of establishing more robust frameworks for data collection and investigation.

The survey by Earnscliffe (see Appendix B) found that interest in UAPs is generally moderate. However, half the respondents felt that the Canadian government should do something about UAP sightings and devote funds to the effort, including for investigation. The majority of respondents felt that the government should set up a service to enable Canadians to report their sightings and attached importance to transparency of information on the subject.

Moving forward, the Sky Canada Project serves as a crucial foundation for discussions on enhancing federal oversight and public engagement regarding UAPs. By fostering collaboration across departments and with civilian organizations, Canada can develop a more cohesive and transparent approach to understanding and addressing these phenomena.

To enable thorough scientific studies of UAP sightings, a range of data collection and investigative activities would be required. For instance, standardized protocols should be established to ensure data are comparable in their content and format. The fragmented nature of UAP reporting across various departments and agencies in Canada complicates the application of scientific principles. This lack of coordination results in inconsistent information collection across the government, making it onerous—if not impossible—for researchers to access and compile data for rigorous, science-based analysis. Additionally, the fact that investigations of reporting are not easily available, contributes to distrust and disinformation.

During the Sky Canada Project, the Office of the Chief Science Advisor received about 250 inquiries from Canadians regarding various aspects of the project, including inquiries about where to report UAP sightings and requests for government assistance to interpret photos and videos, despite the Sky Canada website clearly stating that the Office was not offering that service nor collecting such information.

Together, the analysis presented in this report suggests that Canada would benefit from an improved process for reporting, collecting, and studying UAP sightings. The approach should be more rigorous, transparent and coordinated than is currently the case.

The following actions are proposed for consideration by the Government of Canada in order to: 1) improve coordination and analysis of UAP reports in Canada, 2) promote public trust and mitigate disinformation, 3) enhance scientific rigour and science literacy surrounding UAPs, and 4) position Canada for greater collaboration with other countries on a topic that has no geographic borders:

Reporting and Data oversight:

1. **Identify a lead:** A federal department or agency responsible for managing public UAP data should be identified. The lead should be a trusted and recognized scientific organization, have the capacity to communicate with the public and an already established international scientific network. For example, the Canadian Space Agency could be considered for such a role.

2. **Establish a dedicated service:** This service would collect testimonies, investigate cases and post its analyses publicly. It would proactively inform Canadians about UAPs. To achieve these goals, it could convene a network of government and academic partners and experts to conduct scientific analyses and follow up with witnesses. The example of GEIPAN in France is worth considering.

3. **Enhance reporting capacity in civil aviation:** Transport Canada should encourage pilots, cabin crews and air traffic controllers to report UAP sightings without fear of stigmatization. In collaboration with NAV CANADA, they should analyze UAP reports to track trends and provide pilots with explanations, helping to reduce distractions during flights. These reports could be correlated and merged with those submitted by the public on similar sightings.

Communications:

4. **Support public dialogue:** A proactive strategy to increase transparency and communication with the public regarding UAPs should be developed. Such a strategy could bring together trusted publicly facing organizations, including science centres and museums, as well as public libraries.

5. **Promote intra-governmental collaborations:** An internal directive to ensure collaboration among all federal agencies with relevant expertise or data would aid the lead organization in providing explanations to witnesses and correlating recent observations with previous reports. Additionally, since some departments would continue to receive reports under their mandates (for example, Transport Canada or the RCMP), they should be encouraged to forward their data as appropriate to the lead organization.

6. **Improve media relations:** The lead organization should play a significant role in mitigating misinformation and disinformation by responding to public and media inquiries related to UAPs, and by documenting and communicating common misinterpretations of observations. Examples of such approaches, including interactive digital tools, are found in other countries.

7. **Promote application of up-to-date evidence to effectively address misinformation and disinformation:** Among others, a multidisciplinary expert panel should be set up to advise the lead organization on effective approaches to countering misinformation and disinformation.

Commercial aircraft at Vancouver Airport. More than 100,000 flights take place every day around the world.

Research:

8. **Facilitate open access and open data:** Data related to UAPs should be made available to the public for transparency and to support research.
9. **Conduct surveys:** Periodic surveys of Canadians should be carried out to gauge their perceptions of UAPs and assess the impact of the dedicated services.
10. **Support citizen science:** Participatory science initiatives and programs should be developed to enable volunteer participation in the study of UAPs. Among other benefits, such activities tend to increase the likelihood of informed citizenry and enhance interest of youth in science and technology careers.
11. **Provide tools for data collection:** The development and deployment of publicly accessible digital and portable tools should be supported, such as bilingual applications for smart phones and interactive platforms, to provide information, including for data collection and ongoing research programs.
12. **Build on Canada's strength in astronomy and aerospace research:** Canada has a superb talent pool and physical research infrastructure, and is part of major international initiatives aimed at understanding our planet and the universe, and developing tools for space travel and exploration. The sector should be further supported and given opportunities to be part of the public dialogue.

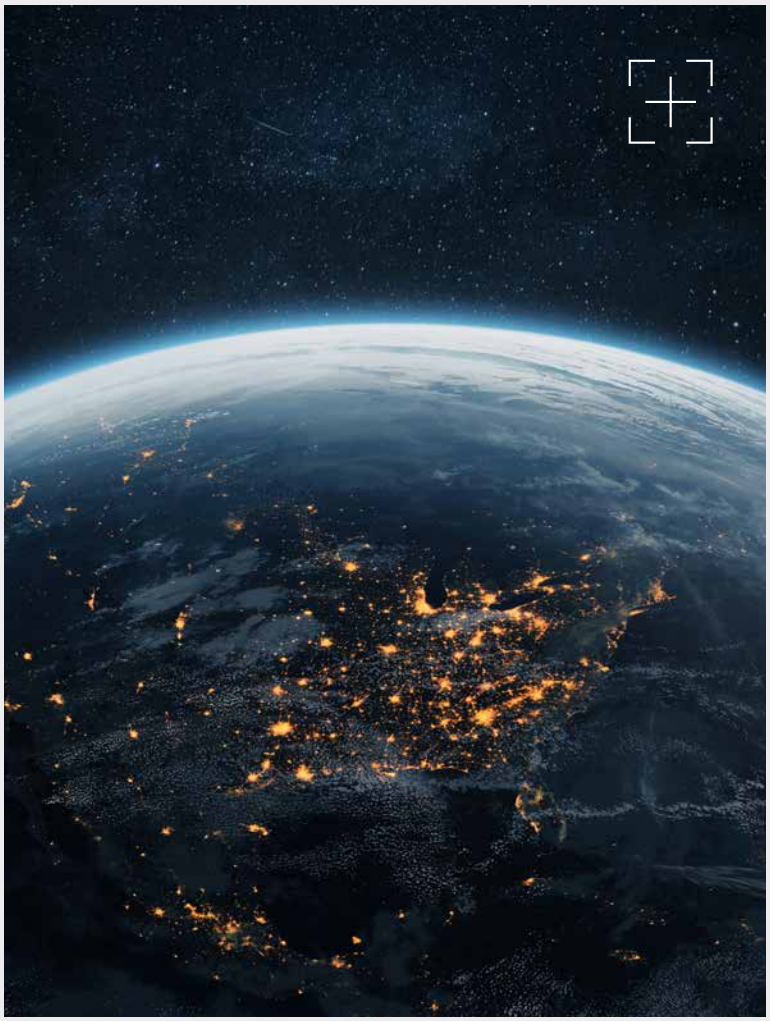
International Collaboration:

13. **Information sharing:** The lead organization should establish partnerships with international entities dedicated to UAPs, such as AARO and NASA (U.S.A.), GEIPAN (France), and SEFAA (Chile), to share data, methodologies and best practices in UAP research and investigation.
14. **Cooperation in research and communication:** Canada should actively engage with international partners for research collaborations and public awareness efforts.

Modern technologies make it possible to track the movement of aircrafts and other objects in the sky, providing better visibility and accurate real-time tracking.

G. Conclusion

Reports of unusual objects or phenomena in the sky have long captivated the public, often generating mystery, amazement and considerable debate. UAP sightings invariably prompt questions that bridge science, media, and culture, presenting opportunities for exploration but also potential for misinterpretation.



North America lights-up in the night sky, as seen from space.

Most UAP cases can be explained by a thorough investigation, but some remain unsolved, suggesting the need for further analysis using advanced analytical tools. Investigating these phenomena may yield technological progress and a better understanding of our universe. Ultimately, investigating UAPs calls for interdisciplinary and international collaboration.

If enacted, the recommendations given in this report can drive progress in several key areas. Their first goal is to increase government transparency on UAPs, potentially reducing related conspiracy theories and misinformation. Second, setting up clear and efficient reporting systems for UAP observations will greatly simplify the process, encourage more public participation and support citizen-driven science. Improved data from public reports will enable more comprehensive and accurate research analyses.

Investigating UAP reports may also enhance airspace security by identifying threats, thus strengthening national security through the proactive mitigation of risks from UAPs. Finally, these measures will enable Canada to eventually join international efforts concerning UAP sightings, fostering a comprehensive global approach to understand and address the UAP issue. Canada can ensure that the UAP mysteries inspire future generations by fostering curiosity, critical thinking, and open-minded investigation.

The investigation and study of Unidentified Aerial Phenomena does belong to humanity's quest for knowledge and understanding. Adopting more transparent communications and robust scientific methods will be a significant step forward in promoting public understanding and combating misinformation. It is in this spirit that the recommendations in this report have been formulated.

Appendix A: Main Organizations and Individuals Consulted

(in alphabetical order)

Organizations

- Canadian Coast Guard
- Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission
- Canadian Space Agency
- Department of National Defence (DND)
- Defence Research and Development Canada (DRDC)
- GEIPAN (France)
- Library and Archives Canada (LAC)
- Meteorological Service of Canada (MSC) at ECCC
- MUFON Canada
- National Research Council of Canada (NRC)
- NAV CANADA
- Ontario Provincial Police (OPP)
- Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP)
- Sûreté du Québec (SQ)
- Transport Canada

Individuals and Experts

- Ballester Olmos, Vicente-Juan
- Belley, Michel
- Casault, Jean
- Dubé, Louis
- Hayes, Matthew
- Kirkpatrick, Sean
- Lafleur, Claude
- Lamontagne, Robert
- Leduc, Marc
- Masson, Eric
- Mysyk, W. Kim
- Otis, Daniel
- Page, Christian
- Rutkowski, Chris
- Schwarcz, Joe
- Temos, Nicholas
- Vadnais, Yann
- Whiteley, Iya

Appendix B: Canadian Survey of Public Views of UAPs

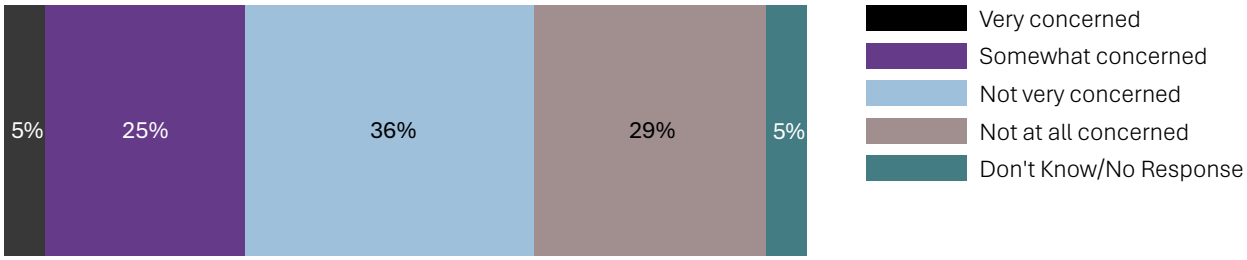
The Office of the Chief Science Advisor hired Earnscliffe Strategies to conduct an online survey of Canadians to gauge public views of UAPs. The survey, which was completed by 1,008 members of Leger's online panel between August 15 and 27, 2024, took approximately 8 minutes to complete.

Respondents to the survey were selected among individuals who volunteered or registered to participate in online surveys. To enhance methodological rigour and ensure the sample resembled the broader population, the data were weighted by age, gender and region to align with the Canadian population (18+), based on current Statistics Canada figures. The handling of this non-probability sample aligns with the Standards for the Conduct of Government of Canada Public Opinion Research – Online Surveys. Note that the results of such self-selected participant surveys cannot be described as statistically projectable to the entire Canadian population.

The main survey results are presented in the charts below, grouped in four categories.

1. Perceptions of UAPs

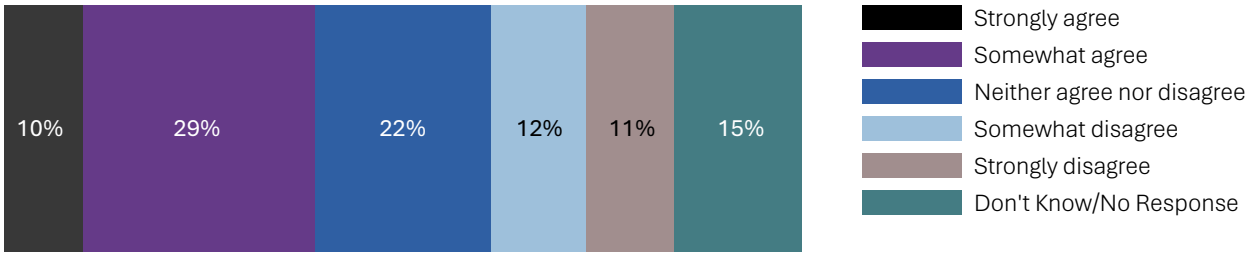
Chart 1: Overall, how concerned, if at all, would you say you are with UAPs observed over Canadian territory?



A minority (30%) of respondents are concerned with UAPs in Canada.

Source: Earnscliffe, 2024

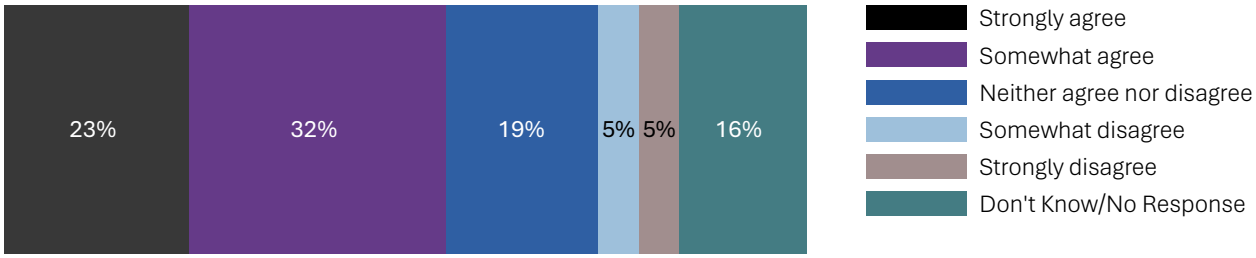
Chart 2: How strongly do you agree or disagree with the statement: "UAPs represent an issue for flight safety in Canada"?



Nearly 40% of respondents consider that UAPs represent a flight safety issue.

Source: Earnscliffe, 2024

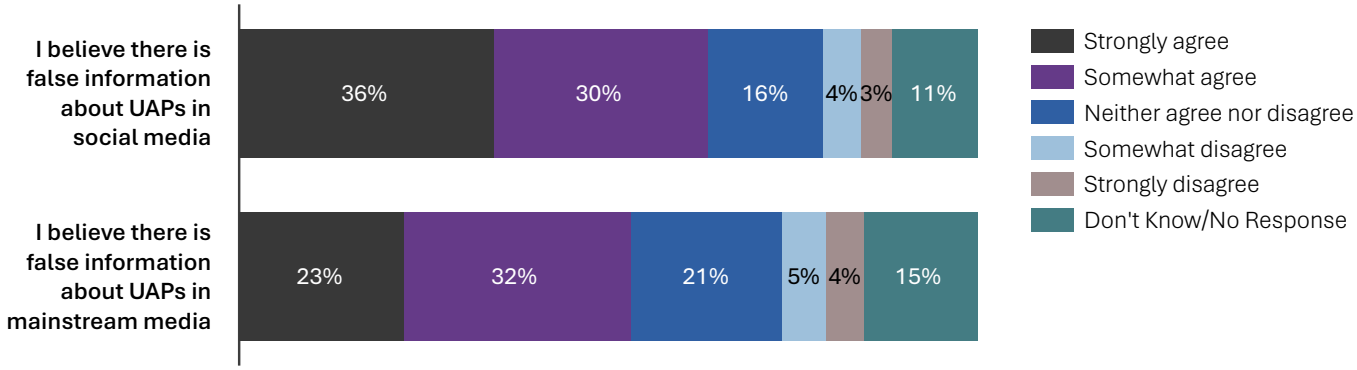
Chart 3: How strongly do you agree or disagree with the statement: "The nature of some UAPs has not been confirmed"?



Over half (55%) of Canadian respondents agree that the nature of some UAPs has not been confirmed.

Source: Earnscliffe, 2024

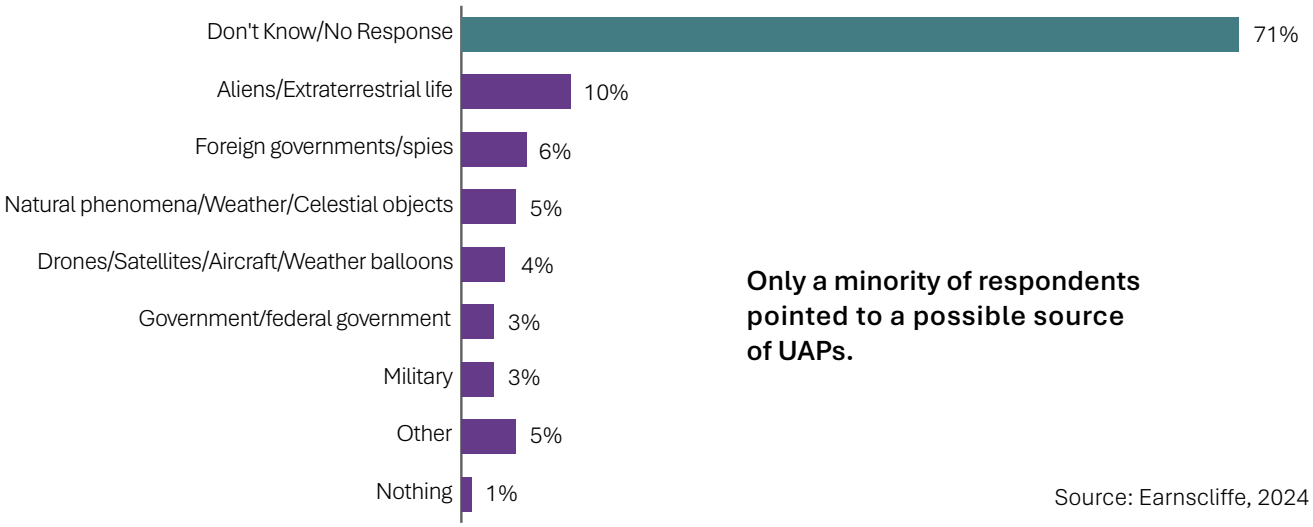
Chart 4: How strongly do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?



The majority of respondents believe that there is false information about UAPs in social media and mainstream media.

Source: Earnscliffe, 2024

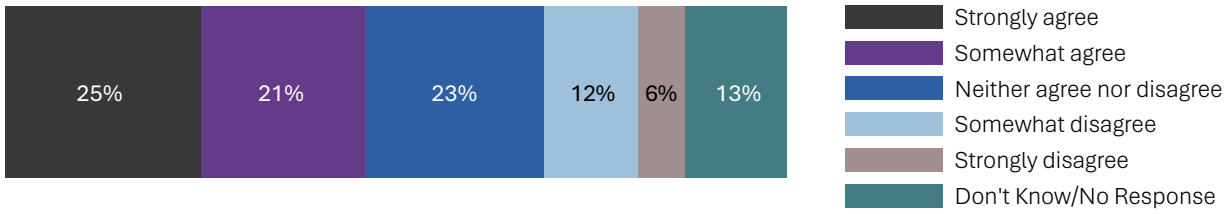
Chart 5: What do you think is behind, or the source, of UAPs?



Only a minority of respondents pointed to a possible source of UAPs.

Source: Earnscliffe, 2024

Chart 6: How strongly do you agree or disagree with the statement: "At present, there is no proof of the existence of extraterrestrial civilizations"?

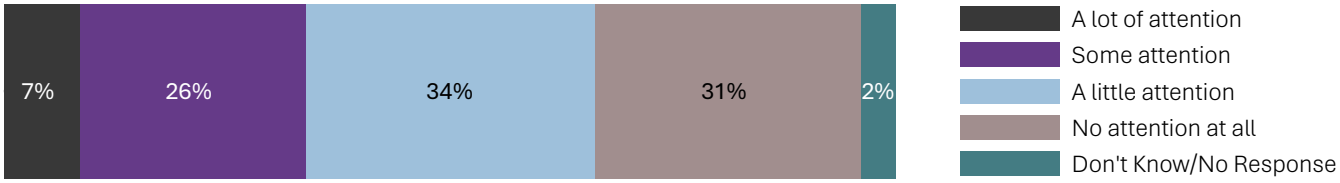


Only half of respondents agree that there is no proof of the existence of extraterrestrial civilizations.

Source: Earnscliffe, 2024

2. Interest in UAPs

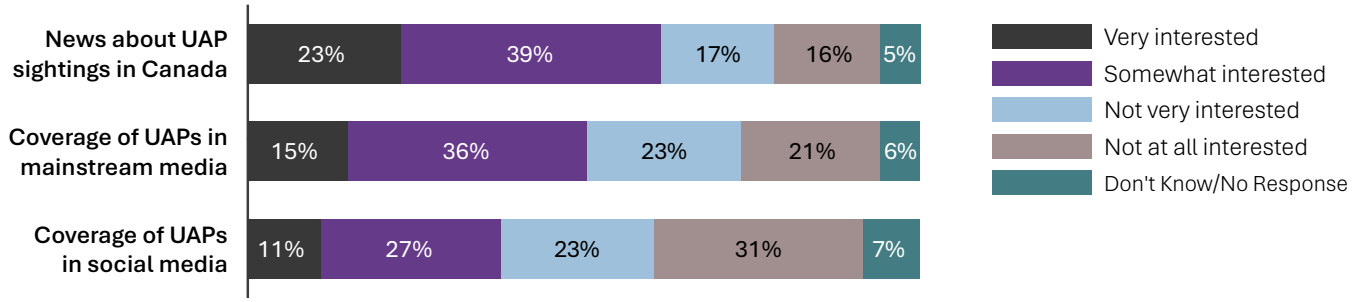
Chart 7: How much attention, if any, have you paid to stories about UAPs over the past two or three years?



Two-thirds of respondents have paid at least some attention to stories about UAPs.

Source: Earnscliffe, 2024

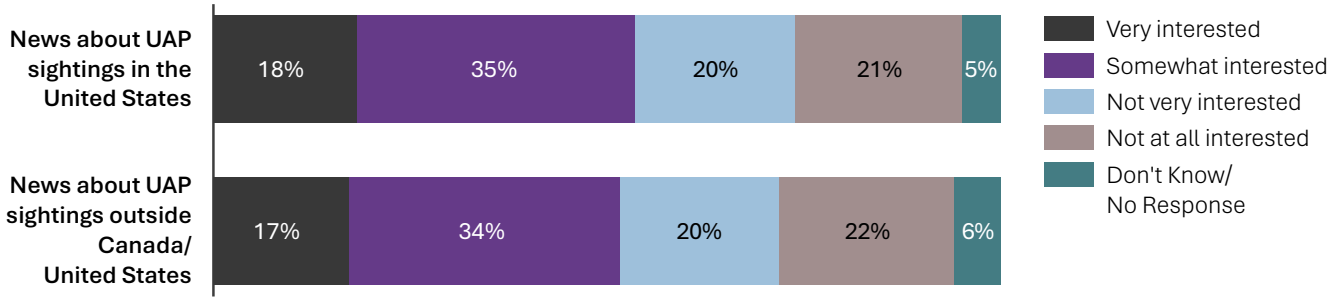
Chart 8: In general, how interested are you, if at all, in each of the following?



The majority of respondents are interested in news about UAP sightings in Canada and coverage of UAPs in mainstream media.

Source: Earnscliffe, 2024

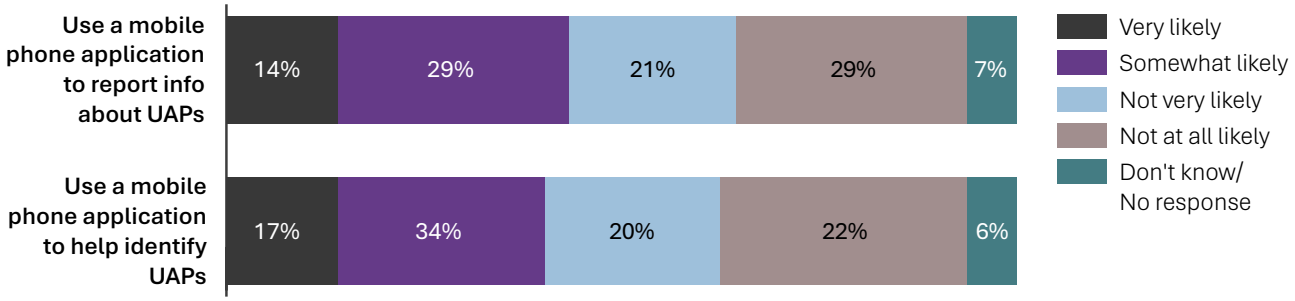
Chart 9: In general, how interested are you, if at all, in each of the following?



More than half of respondents are at least somewhat interested in news about UAPs outside Canada.

Source: Earnscliffe, 2024

Chart 10: How likely would you be to use a mobile phone application to report information about or help identify UAPs?

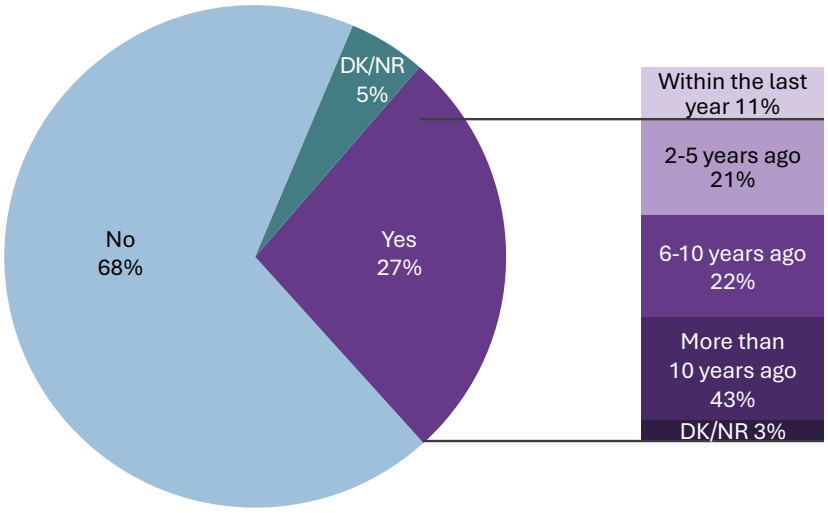


40% of respondents are likely to use a mobile phone application to document UAPs.

Source: Earnscliffe, 2024

3. UAP Sightings and Reporting

Chart 11: Over the course of your life, have you ever seen an object or phenomenon in the sky that you could not identify? If so, when did this occur?

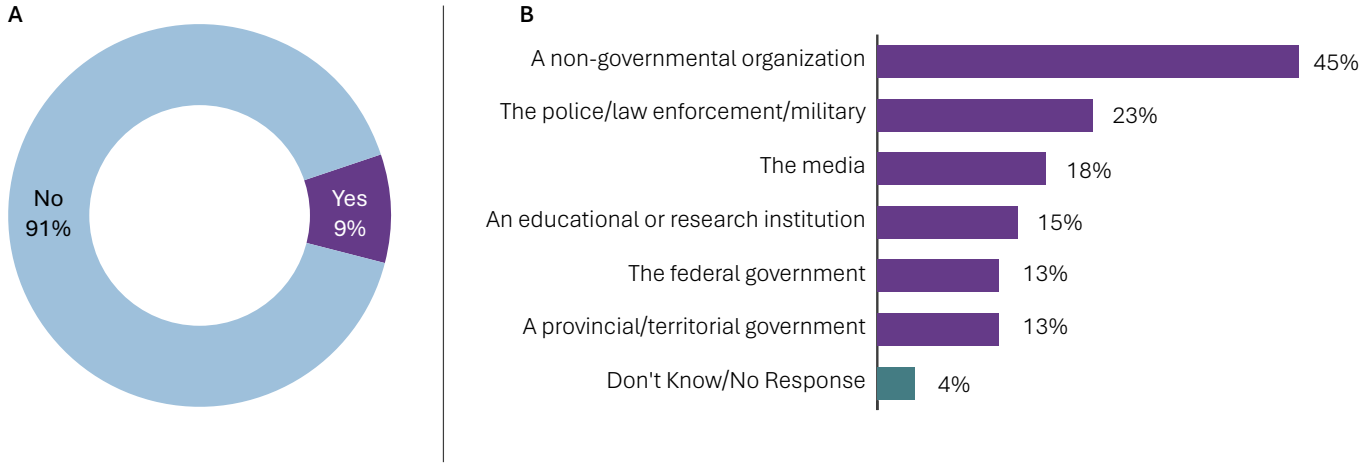


Over 1 in 4 respondents (27%) claim to have had a personal experience with a UAP over the course of their life.

DK/NR = Don't know/No response

Source: Earnscliffe, 2024

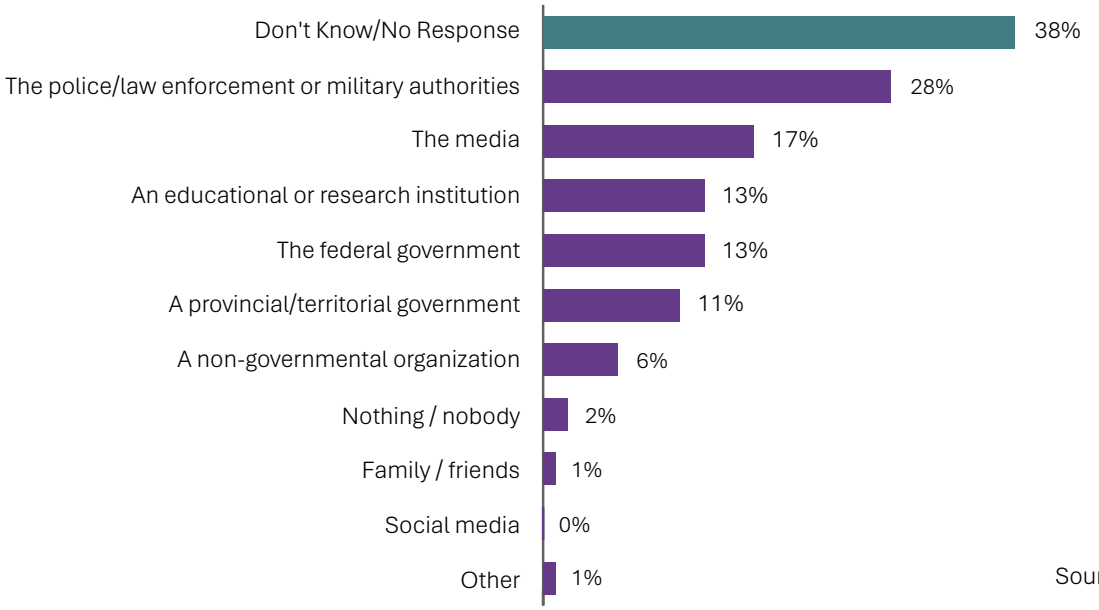
Chart 12: A) Did you report or attempt to report your observations? B) To whom did you formally report your observations?



Among the respondents who have seen a UAP, only 1 in 10 reported or tried to report their experience.

Source: Earnscliffe, 2024

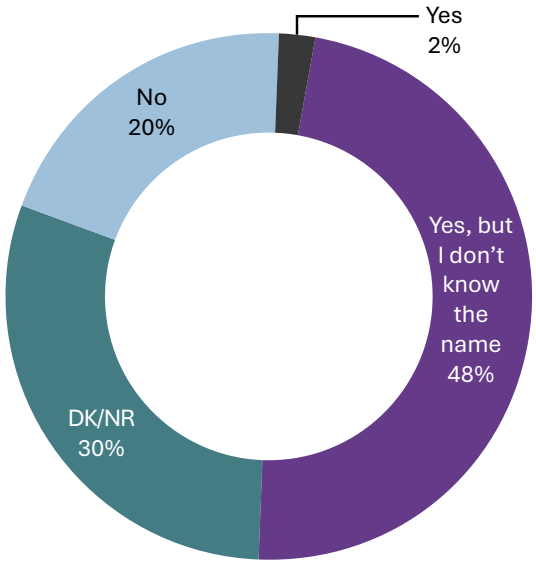
Chart 13: Who would you contact today if you wanted to report a UAP sighting?



Source: Earnscliffe, 2024

Nearly 40% of respondents would not know who to contact to report a UAP sighting.

Chart 14: To the best of your knowledge, are there any organizations or groups specifically investigating UAPs (or UFOs) in Canada?



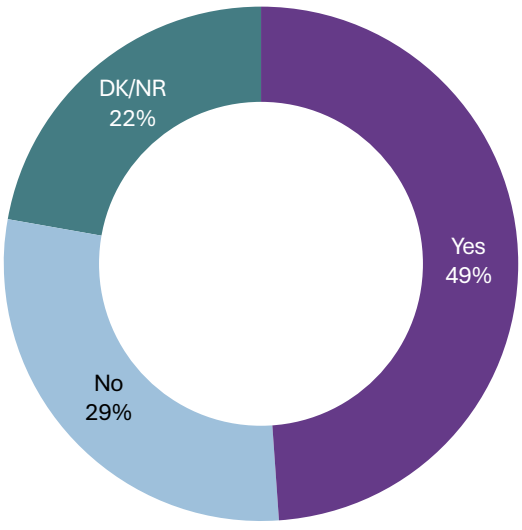
Half (50%) of respondents say there is an organization or group specifically investigating UAPs in Canada, but most can't name that organization.

DK/NR = Don't know/No response

Source: Earnscliffe, 2024

4. Role of the Federal Government

Chart 15: Do you think reports of UAP (UFO) sightings are something that the Government of Canada needs to do anything about?

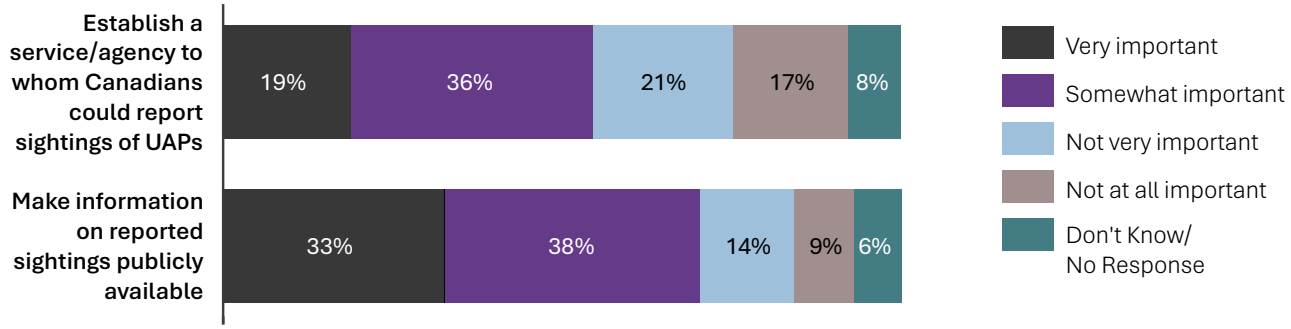


Half of respondents feel that the Government of Canada should do something about UAP sightings.

DK/NR = Don't know/No response

Source: Earnscliffe, 2024

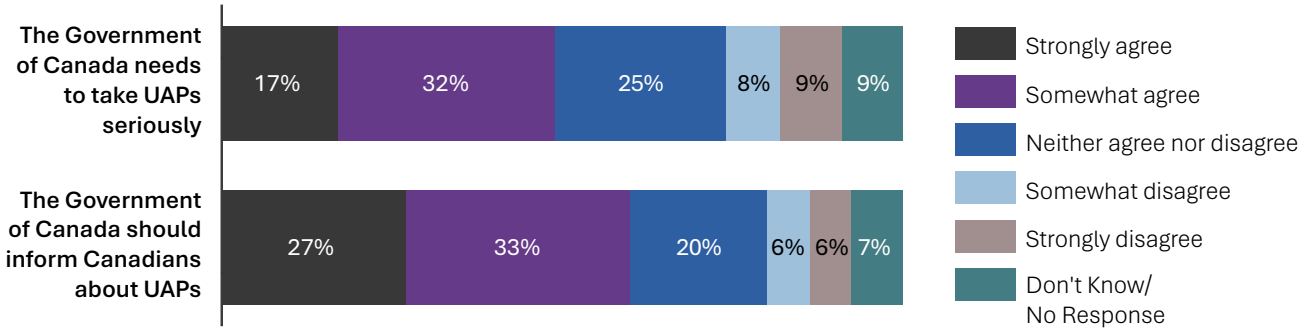
Chart 16: How important is it, if at all, that the Government of Canada do each of the following?



The majority (55%) of respondents feel it is important that a service/agency be established to whom Canadians could report UAP sightings, and 71% would like the Government to make information about sightings publicly available.

Source: Earnscliffe, 2024

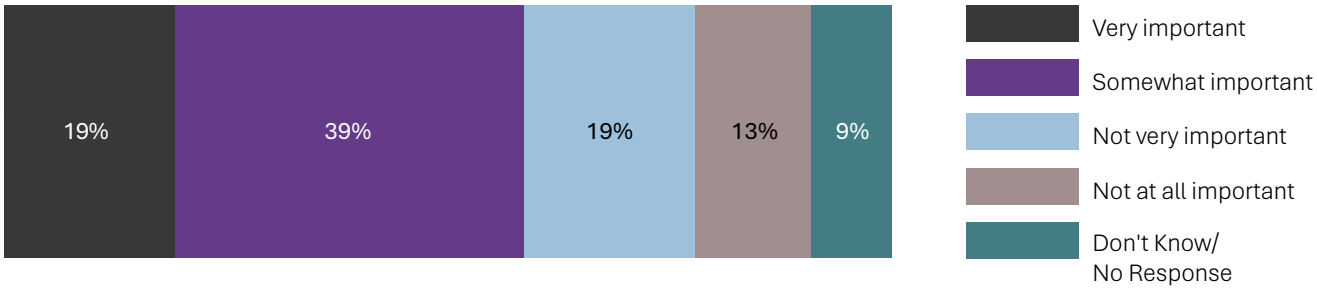
Chart 17: How strongly do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?



About half (49%) of respondents agree that the Government of Canada needs to take UAPs seriously and 60% agree that the Government should keep Canadians informed.

Source: Earnscliffe, 2024

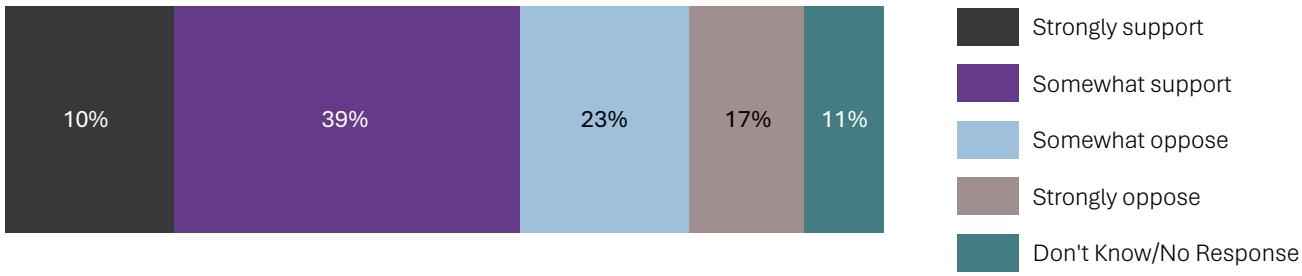
Chart 18: How important is it, if at all, that the Government of Canada support citizen science initiatives on UAPs?



Nearly 60% of respondents say that it is important for the Government of Canada to support citizen science initiatives on UAPs.

Source: Earnscliffe, 2024

Chart 19: How strongly would you support or oppose the Government of Canada dedicating public funds to transparently investigate sightings reported by Canadians?



About half of respondents (49%) would support the Government of Canada dedicating public funds to investigate UAP sightings.

Source: Earnscliffe, 2024

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