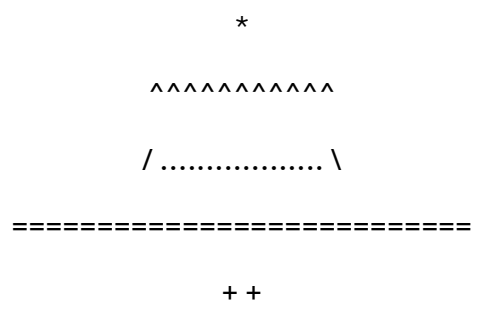

The 1994-95 CANADIAN UFO SURVEY:

an analysis of UFO reports in Canada

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The 1994-95 Canadian UFO Survey

Overview

Since 1989, UFO case data has been solicited from all known and active investigators and researchers in Canada for analyses and comparison with other compilations. Before that time, individual researchers normally would maintain their own files with little or no communication with others. Even today, representatives of major UFO organizations often do not regularly submit case data, and the parent organizations themselves tend not to do much analyses with the data they do receive, although this is changing. Recently, MUFON finally has been publishing results from analyses of UFO data it has collected, and this has been useful in comparisons with other data sets (Spencer, 1993).

After favourable responses from the publication of previous *Canadian UFO Surveys*, UFOROM decided to continue the systematic collection of raw UFO report data in Canada and prepare yearly reports for general circulation. It always has been felt that the dissemination of such data would be of great advantage to researchers, so it is presented here once again as data with some analysis.

This is not to suggest that statistical studies of UFO data are without their limitations and problems. Allan Hendry, in his landmark book *The UFO Handbook*, pointed out flaws in such studies and asked:

... do UFO statistics represent a valid pursuit for more knowledge about this elusive phenomenon, or do they merely reflect frustration that none of the individual reports are capable of standing on their own two feet? (1979, p. 269)

Hendry offered six questions to ask of statistical ufology:

1) Does the report collection reflect truly random sampling?

2) Have the individual cases been adequately validated?

3) Are apples and oranges being compared? Are NLs necessarily the same kind of UFO as DDs?

4) Are differing details among cases obscured through simplification for the purpose of comparisons?

5) Does the study imply the question: "Surely this mass of data proves UFOs exist?" 6) Do the correlations really show causality?

The Canadian UFO Survey was undertaken with these and other critical comments in mind. Readers are left to judge for themselves the value of these statistical analyses.

Solicitation of 1994 case data from known UFO investigators and researchers yielded disappointing results. Surprisingly few UFO groups and individual researchers expressed interest in participation in a scientific analysis of UFO case data. Despite numerous requests for the data, the response was eventually considered too meagre for the production of any meaningful report.

Another attempt was made in 1996 for 1995 UFO case data. Again, the number of contributing groups was surprisingly low. However, UFOROM was encouraged by serious researchers to prepare an analysis of UFO data, despite the lack of response from individuals and groups who are known to publicly claim interest in receiving UFO reports.

This presented an interesting problem. Whereas it would appear that there are several very active ufologists and ufology groups in Canada, some exist, it seems, only to garner media attention and massage delicate egos, without actually doing any research or in-depth investigation of cases. This is certainly a product of the non-professional nature of the UFO field, where post office clerks and truck drivers can claim expertise as well as astronomers and psychologists. This may be frustrating to serious researchers, but must be accepted as an artefact of the subject area.

Some researchers do not maintain useable case files and do not retain quantitative criteria in their investigations (for example, contactee groups). Further, it is now known that only a small fraction of Aactive@ ufologists and self-proclaimed Aresearchers@ actually investigate cases *and* maintain useable records.

Many individuals, associations, clubs and groups that claim to investigate UFO reports or otherwise solicit reports from the general public. However, very few of them actually participate in any kind of information sharing or data gathering for scientific programs. Many are only interest groups, perhaps based in museums, planetariums, church basements or members= homes, and do virtually *nothing* with the case reports they receive. Indeed, because there is no way to enforce standards in UFO report investigations, the quality of case investigations varies considerably.

Further complicating this problem is the cessation of the collection of UFO reports by the National Research Council of Canada (NRC). The NRC routinely received UFO reports from private citizens and from RCMP, civic police and military personnel. Included among the NRC reports are many observations of meteors and fireballs, and these have been added into the UFO report database since 1989. However, in 1995, due to budget restraint and the lack of continuing research in meteoritics at the NRC as a result of retirements, deaths and other staff changes, the NRC announced it would no longer be accepting UFO reports as a

matter of course. In addition, RCMP reports of UFOs and fireballs to the NRC summarily ceased.

As an unfortunate consequence of all these factors, what has been adopted for this present study is a requirement for an Aofficial@ status regarding UFO reports. If UFO sightings are reported to groups or individuals who do not share their case data with serious researchers, those sightings are effectively *lost* to scientific analyses. The reports may accumulate in impressive numbers claimed by some organizations, but without the data being available for study, they are of no value whatsoever.

Therefore, for the purposes of this and other scientific studies of UFO data, only those UFO sightings which have been made to contributing and participating groups, associations, organizations or individuals can be given any kind of official status. Cases reported to any other group, association, club or individual cannot be considered *officially* reported.

These factors made collection of Canadian UFO data rather challenging. Certainly, because of the changes in the way in which reports have been received, the results of the 1994-95 survey cannot be compared easily with earlier annual analyses. However, it will be shown that the data obtained for the present analysis yields similar results to previous studies and is still useful in understanding the nature of UFO reports in Canada, and can shed light on the nature of UFO reports elsewhere in the world.

UFO Reports in Canada

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

In 1989, 141 UFO reports were obtained for analysis. In 1990, 194 reports were recorded. In 1991, 165 reports were received and in 1992, 223 cases were examined. In 1993, 489 reports were obtained. There were 189 reports received in 1994 and 183 in 1995.

For the years of 1994-95, UFO reports were obtained from contributing investigators' files, press clippings and the files of the National Research Council of Canada (NRC). The NRC routinely receives UFO reports from private citizens and from RCMP, civic police and military personnel. Included among the NRC reports are many observations of meteors and fireballs, and these have been added into the UFO report database since 1989. Many of the reports in the 1994-95 survey were obtained via electronic mail and Internet newsgroups. Finally, some declassified documents of the Department of National Defence contain reports of unusual objects in Canadian airspace, and these also have been included in the database.

There are several reasons for including IFOs such as fireballs and bolides in the UFO report database. First, previous studies of UFO data have included meteor and fireball reports. In many instances, observers fail to recognize stars, aircraft and bolides, and therefore report them as UFOs. That is why some UFO investigators often spend many hours sorting IFOs from UFOs. Historically, analyses of UFO data such as American projects Grudge, Sign and Blue Book all included raw UFO data which later resolved into categories of UFOs and IFOs. Another reason is that observed objects are sometimes quickly assigned a particular IFO explanation even though later investigation suggests such an explanation was unwarranted.

Until 1993, the number of Canadian UFO reports appeared to remain constant at an

average of 180 cases per year. However, the number of reports received in 1993 represented a significant increase over previous years. The largest contributor to this increase was a single fireball event on October 30, 1993. That evening, a spectacular object and a sonic boom was reported by literally hundreds of people throughout Canada. More than 120 individual reports were filed with astronomers, RCMP, police, the NRC and other agencies. The implication of this case is that statistical tabulations of UFO characteristics in 1993 were skewed by a significant amount. Report numbers for 1994 and 1995 once again reflected the previously-determined Canadian average.

The most interesting implication of this event was that the UFO reports from that date actually reflected a *real* event that had occurred. This lends some credence to the belief that when a UFO is reported, a real object has been seen and was not just a fantasy of a witness= imagination. Therefore, it can be said that UFO reports usually imply actual observations of something out of the ordinary.

Notes on the data:

Five Close Encounters of the Fourth Kind (CE4) were included in the data for 1994-95. CE4s are the sensational Aalien abduction@ cases which currently receive wide attention in the media. Some researchers have speculated that thousands of such abductions occur each year, based on various surveys and the number of witnesses (Aabductees@) coming forward. Since abductions are often reported long after the fact, exact times and dates are meaningless as UFO data. Similarly, since witnesses' memories often are clouded or obscured, other data such as colour, duration and even location may be impossible to ascertain. However, some skeptics suggest that abductions may be a psychological rather than a Areal@ phenomenon. For these reasons, CE4s do not seem appropriate for inclusion in UFO databases. And, if they really are true close encounters, their complexity decrees that their inclusion in a raw data listing might be inappropriate as well. The few that

were included were accepted only because they were reported to an official reporting body. It is likely that future annual surveys will not include CE4s as data.

As for missing data, six cases were contributed after analyses had begun and could not be included for this study.

Special thanks go to Geoff Dittman for his work on the database.

Method

Data for each case was received by UFOROM from participating researchers across Canada. The information then was coded and entered into a MicroSoft Works database, converted into a dBASE IV file and converted into a MicroSoft Excel file format where it was statistically analysed.

An example of the coding key is as follows:

Example: 994 01 09 1530 Vernon BC dd 2 1 silver 900 7 NRC N94/3 6 i Asilver orb@

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

Field 1 is a default YEAR for the report (UFOROM is now coding to allow for the next millennium).

Field 2 is the MONTH of the incident.

Field 3 is the DATE of the sighting.

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

Field 5 is the geographical LOCATION of the incident.

Field 6 is the PROVINCE where the sighting occurred.

Field 7 is TYPE of report.

Field 8 is the number of WITNESSES.

Field 9 is the number of OBJECTS observed.

Field 10 is the primary COLOUR of the object(s) seen.

Field 11 is the DURATION of the sighting, in seconds (a value of 600 thus represents 10 minutes).

Field 12 is the STRANGENESS of the report.

Field 13 is the SOURCE of the report.

Field 14 is the RELIABILITY of the report.

Field 15 is the CONCLUSION of the case.

Field 16 includes any COMMENTS noted about the case.

Analyses of the Data

Distribution of UFO Reports Across Canada

In previous analyses, British Columbia garnered between 30% and 40% of the total number of cases per year. In 1994-95, the percentage dropped to 24%. Ontario and Quebec constitute more than 60% of Canada=s population, but had only 38% of the total number of UFO reports. Alberta, British Columbia and Manitoba are grossly over-represented, with 44% of the UFO reports, but with less than 25% of the population. Some of these distribution effects are certainly due to the active solicitation of UFO reports from the public by regional investigators and groups.

TABLE 1

Distribution of UFO Reports by Province

	BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	PQ	NB	PEI	NS	NF	YK	NWT
1989	15	16	18	22	34	28	1	-	3	3	-	1
1990	76	9	10	20	21	36	7	3	5	4	1	2
1991	59	22	7	6	30	16	9	1	7	4	1	-
1992	90	8	9	23	56	10	9	-	3	4	3	1
1993	157	56	93	74	51	32	3	1	3	7	-	5
1994	14	39	8	10	51	34	6	-	9	6	3	3
1995	45	10	11	48	41	20	-	-	1	1	-	4

Monthly Trends in UFO Reports

The monthly breakdowns of reports during each year show slightly different patterns from those of previous years. In 1989, there was a significant increase in UFO reports in the late fall, with other months maintaining what appeared to be a fairly constant "normal" level of reports. 1990 saw two major increases in report numbers in two months: April and August. The "normal" level of monthly report numbers appeared to be constant in other months, with minor fluctuations. In 1991, reports peaked in August, but there was no single obvious trough.

The 1992 breakdown again showed no clear peaks in monthly report numbers. This is most curious, because UFO reports often are thought to peak in summer and trough in winter, presumably due to the more pleasant observing conditions during the summer months, when more witnesses are outside. In 1993, the opposite of what is usually imagined was true: there were peaks in winter, and troughs in summer. The October 1993 peak is easily explained as due to the fireball. Even taking this into account, there were more cases in fall that year than in summer, and more in winter than spring and early fall. In 1994, there was a noticeable increase in UFO reports in the late spring and early summer, whereas in 1995, the peak months were in the late summer and early fall.

We can observe that there appears to be no definite monthly trend in UFO reports across Canada. However, there does appear to be some regional fluctuation in report numbers. When selected provinces are examined, it can be seen that the general monthly distribution contains many localized fluctuations. These fluctuations, called flaps, reflect local increases in UFO sightings as opposed to national or global increases, called waves. The distribution of UFO reports in BC showed a very significant peak in September 1995, whereas UFOs were generally more common in Alberta in 1994 and almost nonexistent in 1995. Ontario and Quebec, on the other hand, shared two clear peaks in June 1994 and July/August 1995.

In a historical analysis of 480 Manitoba UFO cases in UFOROM's MANUFOCAT, a distinct June peak and December trough was found. Analyses of 13,000 cases in Project Blue Book found a similar June peak and December trough, though Hendry suggested that this was a statistical artefact. Further studies are needed to understand the monthly distribution of UFO data.

TABLE 2

Monthly Report Numbers

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D

1989	13	9	6	9	5	9	5	5	12	32	27	9
1990	17	7	6	47	10	10	9	47	15	16	10	-
1991	13	7	17	12	7	12	16	25	16	12	11	17
1992	15	16	27	16	22	16	23	19	11	16	21	21
1993	59	15	20	22	14	38	27	49	41	152	24	21
1994	16	12	15	21	15	37	19	8	15	10	7	13
1995	14	12	13	9	9	10	28	33	28	11	11	5

UFO Report Types

An analysis by report type shows a similar breakdown to that found in previous years. The percentage of cases of a particular type remains roughly constant from year to year, with minor variations. Nocturnal lights (NLs), for example, comprised 60% of all reports in 1989, 73% in 1990, 67% in 1991, 61% in 1992, a high of 76% in 1993 and 63% in 1994-95. The average of these is 69%, which agrees well with the meta-analysis conducted by Hendry (1979), which found that NLs comprised 70% of the cases studied. But, because he was using the original standard Hynek classification system, he did not have the present category of Nocturnal Discs (NDs). These were probably distributed between NLs and DDs in his study.

TABLE 3

Report Types (Modified Hynek Classifications)

	NL	ND	DD	CE1	CE2	CE3	CE4	EV	RD	PH
1989	84	20	16	10	7	-	2	2	-	-
1990	141	24	15	2	1	-	4	3	-	-

1991	110	26	13	7	4	1	2	-	1	1
1992	136	44	20	15	5	2	3	-	-	1
1993	372	77	26	8	2	1	1	1	-	-
1994-95	234	78	28	21	1	1	5	1	-	-

For those unfamiliar with the classifications, a summary follows:

NL (Nocturnal Light) - light source in night sky

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

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

CE1 (Close Encounter of the First Kind) - ND or DD occurring within 200 metres of a witness

CE2 (Close Encounter of the Second Kind) - CE1 where physical effects left or noted

CE3 (Close Encounter of the Third Kind) - CE1 where figures/entities are encountered

CE4 (Close Encounter of the Fourth Kind) - an alleged "abduction" or "contact" experience

EV (Evidence) - a case where physical traces left by an event are the primary claim

RD (Radar) - UFOs observed on radar

PH (Photograph) - photographs of a UFO, but no actual sighting

The category of **Nocturnal Disc** was created by UFOROM for differentiation within its own report files. Similarly, **Evidence** is also an *ad hoc* creation, and may not be applicable by other researchers. Normally, **Evidence** would include such physical traces as "crop circles", "landing rings" and "saucer nests." However, in 1990, there was a great increase in the numbers of such traces discovered in North America, and it was decided by UFOROM to treat these as separate from UFO reports in these annual surveys, except where reported to an official investigating body such as the NRC.

Conclusions/Evaluations

The breakdown by Evaluation for 1993 cases was similar to results from previous years. There were four operative categories: **Explained, Insufficient Information**, **Possible or Probable Explanation**, and **Unknown (or Unexplained)**. Readers are cautioned that a classification of **Unknown** does *not* imply that an alien spacecraft was observed; no such

interpretation can be made with certainty, based on the given data (though the probability of this scenario is admittedly never zero).

In most cases, Evaluations are made subjectively by both the contributing investigators and the compiler of this report. The category of **Unknown** is adopted if the contributed data or case report contains enough information such that a conventional explanation cannot be satisfactorily proposed. This does *not* mean that the case will never be explained, but only that a viable explanation is not immediately obvious.

The average proportion of Unknowns since 1989 has been about 13%, a high figure, considering that this would imply that more than one in ten UFOs cannot be explained. However, there are several factors which affect this value. The level and quality of UFO report investigation varies because there are no explicit standards for ufologists. Some "believers" might be biased to consider most UFO sightings as mysterious, whereas those with more of a sceptical predisposition might tend to subconsciously (or consciously) reduce the Unknowns in their files.

As can be seen, during the first few years of these studies, an evaluation of Aexplained@ was almost nonexistent. This likely is because contributors at first tended to ignore UFO sightings that had a simple explanation and deleted them as actual *UFO* data. However, because many IFO cases such as fireballs and meteors are initially reported as UFOs, the Explained category is necessary for a full review of UFO data. Early American studies of UFO data included such cases, so present-day comparative studies should include such data as well. Furthermore, since there are no absolutes, the subjective nature of assigning Evaluations is actually an interpretation of the facts by individual researchers.

TABLE 4

Evaluation of Canadian UFO Data

	Explained		Insuf. Info.		Poss. Explan.		Unexplained	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
1989	0	0	74	52.5	47	33.3	20	14.2
1990	0	0	90	46.4	78	40.2	26	13.4

1991	2	1.2	80	48.5	69	41.8	14	8.5
1992	17	8	83	37	74	33	49	22
1993	154	31.5	170	34.8	115	23.5	50	10.2
1994-95	71	19.1	124	33.3	131	35.2	46	12.4
Total	244	15.4	621	39.2	514	32.4	205	12.9

If we look only at those Unknowns with a quality or reliability rating of eight or greater, we then are left with only eight very-high-quality Unknowns in 1994-95 (2.1%). This value is slightly lower but comparable with other years: 4.9% in 1989, 4.6% in 1990, 7.3% in 1991 and 7.6% in 1992. As a comparison, USAF Blue Book studies found only three to four percent of their cases were "excellent" Unknowns.

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

Reliability

The average **Reliability** rating of reports was 5.44, indicating that there were slightly more of higher than lower quality, although the typical report is of medium reliability. Low reliability was assigned to reports with minimal information on the witness, little or no investigation and incomplete description of the object(s) observed. Higher reliability cases might include actual interviews with witnesses, a detailed case investigation, multiple witnesses and other supporting evidence. The single case identified as having a reliability rating of 10, for example, was a multiple-witness observation of a fireball that was well-documented and well-investigated.

Reliability of cases is related to the case type. The reliability of Nocturnal Lights varies considerably, while NDs, DDs and CEs tend to have higher than average ratings.

Hourly Distribution

The hourly distribution of cases has always followed a similar pattern each year. This appears to be one characteristic of UFO data that is very consistent. The data follows what

appears to be a continuous curve, with a peak at 2200 hours local and a trough around 1000 hours local. Most sightings occur between 9:00 p.m. and midnight. Since most UFOs are nocturnal lights, this is not unexpected. The number of possible observers drops off sharply near midnight, and we would expect that the hourly rate of UFO reports would vary with two factors: potential observers and darkness.

Nevertheless, we can make some observations based on this trend. It has been suggested by some vocal skeptics that the number of UFOs peaks near midnight because this coincides with when most people leave bars and cocktail lounges. It should be noted, though, that there is no evidence to suggest that nighttime UFOs are reported primarily by inebriated persons. Since a significant proportion of UFO reports in this study come by way of the RCMP, the police would no doubt note this factor in their commentary on the cases. (In fact, comments on the *lack* of evidence of witnesses= inebriation are common in RCMP reports.)

Furthermore, we should note that while the majority of UFO sightings are nocturnal, many are daylight observations. Many, too, are detailed and well-recorded observations of objects at night that do not automatically seem to be dismissable purely on the grounds they were observed at night.

Witnesses

The average number of witnesses per case went down from a value of 2.12/case in 1989 to 1.40/case in 1990, then up again to 1.91/case in 1991. In 1992, this value was up slightly to 2.36/case. The average number of witnesses in 1993 was 2.07/case and for 1994-95 the value was 1.98/case. (However, the 1994-95 value does not take into account several cases which had a value of >many= for their witness data. In a few of these cases, the number of witnesses was noted as being several *hundred*, and would have increased this value enormously.)

The seven-year average is 1.97 witnesses per case. This indicates that a typical UFO experience has **more than one witness**, and supports the contention that UFO sightings represent observations of physical phenomena.

Duration

The category of **Duration** is interesting in that it represents the *subjective* length of time the UFO experience lasted. Naturally, these times are greatly suspect because it is known that people tend to misjudge the flow of time. However, some people *can* be good at estimating time, so this value has some meaning. Although an estimate of "one hour" may be in error by several minutes, it is unlikely that the correct value would be, for example, one *minute* (disregarding the claims of "missing time" during the abduction category of

experiences). Furthermore, there have been cases when a UFO was observed and clocked accurately, so that we can be reasonably certain that UFO events can last considerable periods of time.

The average duration of a sighting can be calculated as the summation of all given durations divided by the number of cases with a stated duration. The resulting value for 1991 was about 12 minutes, down from 19 minutes in 1990. In 1992 and 1993, the average duration was again about 12 minutes. In 1994-95, however. The value is down considerably to approximately seven minutes. This is still a considerably long time for a witness to be observing an unusual object in the sky.

An interesting result of previous analyses is that long-duration sightings tend to occur in the early morning hours, from about midnight until 6:00 a.m. It is probable that the majority of observations at this time are those of astronomical objects, moving slowly with the rotation of the Earth.

Duration data by itself is not wholly useful in analysing UFO behaviour. Hendry describes Duration data this way:

Duration is a powerful feature of identity when it refers to extremely short and long events, but is otherwise mostly a reflection of the witness's behaviour during the event, coupled with the fluctuating behaviour of the objects watched. (1979, p. 249)

Extremely short duration events are usually fireballs or bolides, while very long duration events of an hour or more are very probably astronomical objects. In between, there can be no way to distinguish conventional objects from UFOs solely with Duration data. (Hendry also cites a Canadian study by an Ontario UFO group which timed aircraft observations and found that the duration of such sightings varied between 15 seconds to more than 8 minutes.)

In previous studies, the Duration of sightings decreased with the number of reports. The majority of sightings had Durations of only a few seconds, while those with longer Duration were less in number. However, this was not the case with the 1994-95 data. There seemed not to be a clear relationship between the number of reports and the Duration of the sightings.

Colour

In cases where a colour of an object was reported in 1994-95, the most common colour was white (32.8%), followed distantly by red (15.4%). Since most UFOs are nocturnal starlike objects, the abundance of white objects is not surprising. Other colours such as

red, blue and green often are associated with bolides (fireballs). It should not be surprising that daylight discs are most commonly described as black or silver.

Some studies of UFO data have adjusted this category to include both Aprimary@ and Asecondary@ colours in cases where the observed UFO had more than one colour. Another allowable entry in this category is sometimes noted as Amulticoloured@ in cases where the UFO displayed many different hues or lights. For the present study, the **Colour** classification refers only to the most prominent colour in the witness= description.

Strangeness

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

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

The average strangeness rating for UFOs during 1994-95 was 4.3, where 1 is considered not strange at all and 10 is considered exceptionally unusual. This would seem to suggest that most UFOs reported are of object which do not greatly stretch the imagination. It would seem that Hollywood-inspired flying saucers are relatively uncommon in UFO reports.

Number of Objects

The overwhelming majority of UFO reports concerned observations of a single object (76.8%), although 15.8% were of two to four objects at one time.

Summary of Results

As with previous annual surveys, the 1994-95 Survey does not offer any positive proof of the physical reality of UFOs. However, it does show that some phenomenon which is called a UFO is continually being observed by witnesses.

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

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

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

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

The 1994-95 higher-quality, unexplained cases were the following:

(an asterisk indicates the case had a reliability rating of eight or greater)

February 26, 1994* 1905 Pickle Lake, Ontario

A commercial pilot report that a disc-shaped object flew to within 300 yards of his plane, and watched as it performed aerial maneuvers nearby.

April 15, 1994* 2245 Red Deer, Alberta

Two witnesses observed a black, triangular object with no running lights flying overhead. The object made no noise and was estimated to be three times the size of a typical aircraft.

April 23, 1994 2230 Edmonton, Alberta

Two witnesses observed a black triangular object silently fly low over their house. It was observed for 60 seconds.

May 14, 1994 2230 Drummondville, Quebec

Two witnesses, one of whom was an astronomer, observed a triangular object with Alights on its points.@

June, 1994* 2050 Leduc, Alberta

Three witnesses watched a large, black triangular object moving slowly low over a highway. It then Ashot up into the clouds.@

June 5, 1994* 1826 Toronto, Ontario

For approximately 30 minutes, a witness used binoculars to observe the erratic movement of six objects in the night sky.

June 26, 1994 2005 Ottawa, Ontario

Four people of the same family observed a Agiant Christmas tree covered with green and red lights@ flying near them. The sighting lasted more than 10 minutes. It was reported and discussed in depth on the Internet.

July 7, 1994 2330 Ottawa. Ontario

A pilot with knowledge of astronomy observed a orange, disc-shaped object with a blue strobe light as it made 90-degree turns and other rapid maneuvers. It was observed for two minutes.

July 15, 1994 0200 Red Deer, Alberta

Two witnesses watched a Aplane@ with no lights travelling slowly from the northeast to the southwest. The case was reported to the RCMP.

August 11, 1994 1150 Fernie, BC

One witness observed a triangular object as it passed overhead.

August 27, 1994 St-Sophie-de-Levrard, Quebec

Two witnesses observed the passage of a large green globe as it flew over a road and then disappeared. It was seen during the day. It made no sound as it moved.

October 6, 1994* 2200 Timmins, Ontario

Two witnesses observed a saucer-shaped object with pulsating lights. The object made a number of erratic movements. A videotape was taken of part of the observation.

November 14, 1994 1710 Kenora, Ontario

A family observed a bright oval light hovering near some transmission lines. One witness reported feeling Aexposed@ and was very scared.

December 21, 1994 1930 Wabamum, Alberta

Two fishermen watched as a light appeared to land on the water in front of them, then move away. They believed the object was within 1,000 feet of their boat.

January 3, 1995 0800 Sheshatshiu, Labrador

Two workmen observed a spinning, top-shaped object hovering silently near them. When it appeared to come towards them, they panicked and left the area.

January 9, 1995* 0105 Cold Lake, Alberta

A witness observed a bright ball of light hovering outside her house. The case was extensively investigated by the RCMP.

May 28, 1995* 1430 Surrey, BC

Thirteen witnesses watched a triangular object with amber lights on its corners. It moved silently in the sky. The event was recorded on videotape. Binoculars were used throughout the observation.

August 13, 1995 0215 Twin Lakes Beach, Manitoba

A group of vacationers observed two dark objects with Afloodlights@ moving low over the treeline in an irregular course, stopping and moving back again.

September 25, 1995* 0630 Selkirk, Manitoba

A witness observed five lights stationary in a field near his house. They suddenly disappeared. No markings or tracks were found the ground where they had been.

The interpretation of this list is that these cases were among the most challenging of all the reports received in 1994-95. It should be noted that most UFO cases go unreported, and that there may be ten times as many UFO sightings that go unreported as those which get reported to public, private or military agencies. Furthermore, it should be noted that some cases with lower reliability ratings suffer only from incomplete investigations, and that they may well be more mysterious than those on the above list.

UFOs were reported at a rate of about 15 per month across all of Canada in 1994-95. Throughout the past seven years, the rate is approximately 19 per month.

UFO witnesses range from farmhands to airline pilots and from teachers to police officers. Witnesses represent all age groups and racial origin. What is being observed? In most

cases, only ordinary objects. However, this begs a question. If people are reporting things that can be explained, then the objects they observed were "really" there. Were the objects we can't identify "really" there as well? If so, what were they?

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

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1994-95 Canadian UFO Survey

Summary of Results

- The number of UFO reports made in Canada has remained constant for the past seven years. There are approximately 180 cases of unidentified flying objects reported each year.
- The distribution of UFO reports in Canada is not related to the distribution of population. Western Canada is over-represented in terms of UFO report numbers.
- During the past seven years, there was no definite monthly trend found in Canadian UFO reports. Each year, there appear to be regional monthly fluctuations.
- Approximately 70% of all UFO sightings are merely observations of lights in the night sky.
- About 13% of all UFO reports are unexplained. This percentage of unknowns falls to about 2% when only high-quality cases are considered.
- Most UFO sightings occur between 9:00 pm and midnight.
- UFO incidents usually have more than one witness.
- In 1994-95, the typical UFO sighting lasted seven minutes.
- Most reported UFOs are white or red in colour.

The most important findings of this study include the fact that UFO sightings have continued to be reported at a constant level over the past several years. People still report observing unusual objects in the sky, and some of these objects do not have obvious explanations. Many witnesses are pilots, police and other individuals with reasonably good observing capabilities and good judgement. Although most reported UFOs are simply lights in the night sky, a significant number are objects with definite shapes observed within the witnesses= frame of reference.

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

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