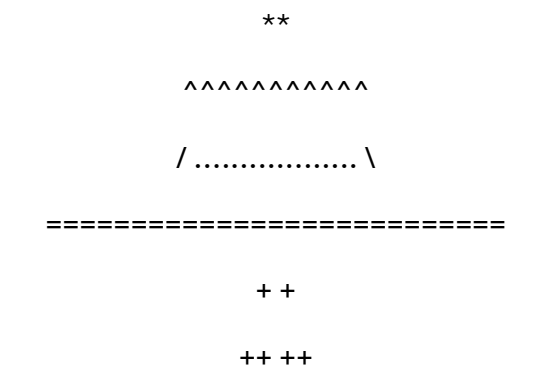

The 1999 CANADIAN UFO SURVEY: an analysis of UFO reports in Canada

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The 1999 Canadian UFO Survey

Overview

Since 1989, UFOROM has solicited UFO case data from all known and active investigators and researchers in Canada for analyses and comparison with other compilations. Individual researchers normally maintain their own files with little or no communication with others. In fact, 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 slowly changing.

Although the collection and organization of the data is not yet standardized, some researchers are now collecting and storing UFO data in a consistent manner.

The Collection of Canadian UFO Data

Many individuals, associations, clubs and groups 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 was 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 were many observations of meteors and fireballs, and these had 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.

This has resulted in an increase in Access to Information (AI) requests filed by ufologists with various government and military agencies in Canada. These have yielded some UFO cases, but the process is very time-consuming, costly and may not uncover all the cases needed for study.

As a consequence of these factors, what has been adopted for this present study is a requirement for an "official" 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 make collection of Canadian UFO data rather challenging. However, the data obtained for the present analysis yields similar results to previous studies and is 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.*

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

Year	Number of cases	Cumulative total
1989	141	141
1990	194	335
1991	165	500
1992	223	723
1993	489	1212
1994	189	1401
1995	183	1584
1996	258	1842

1997	284	2126
1998	194	2320
1999	259	2579

Report numbers have risen and decreased from year to year, with a decrease in 1998. In 1999, however, report numbers again were back above the yearly average, which is 234.5. Yearly figures are greatly dependent on many factors, especially the cooperation of contributors to the survey. The all-time high count in 1993 was almost entirely due to a single major fireball event which was reported by hundreds of independent observers across the country.

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.

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

IFOs, however, are problematic in that they are not interesting to most ufologists. In fact, many UFO investigators do not record any details about UFOs reported to them which seem easily explained as ordinary objects. This may be a serious error. The UFO witness is conscientiously reporting an object which is mysterious to him or her - the exact definition of a UFO. Therefore, even the late-night anonymous telephone calls which are obviously reports of airplanes or planets should be logged as UFO reports. It is the opinion of the authors of this study that all UFO reports be included in statistical databases and in later studies on the phenomenon, regardless of the cases' later downgrading to IFOs.

The number of UFO cases reported in 1998 was down an amazing 46 per cent less than the year before, but there was an increase of 33 per cent in 1999 over 1998, an amount well above the Canadian average.

[Note: Additional reports not included in this survey were obtained from nightly skywatch groups, nearly all of which were Nocturnal Lights seen on or above the ground or the surface of lakes. Unlike the main body of UFO reports, which are homogeneous in nature and origin, skywatch cases are received regrettably only as information. They may form a new class of UFO which might be better studied as a whole because of the inherent skewing of data by their inclusion in this survey. This is not to say that skywatch cases are of lower quality than those received from non-dedicated observers. (In fact, in many reports, it is obvious that this is not the case.) It is hoped this problem will be addressed in later analyses.]

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

Close Encounters of the Fourth Kind

Each year, a few Close Encounters of the Fourth Kind (CE4) are included in the UFO data. CE4s are the sensational "alien 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 ("abductees") 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.

Some skeptics suggest that abductions may be a psychological rather than a "real" 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 annual surveys eventually will not include CE4s as data.

Method

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

An example of the coding key is as follows:

Example: 1999 01 09 1530 Vernon BC DD 900 silver 2 ps 6 5 UFOBC p four obj. seen

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

Field 1 is a default YEAR for the report (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 the TYPE of report, using the Modified Hynek Classification System.

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

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

Field 10 is the number of WITNESSES

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

Field 12 is the STRANGENESS of the report.

Field 13 is the RELIABILITY of the report.

Field 14 is the SOURCE of the report.

Field 15 is the EVALUATION of the case.

Field 16 includes any COMMENTS noted about the case.

Analyses of the Data

Distribution of UFO Reports Across Canada

In previous analyses, British Columbia has had between 30% and 40% of the total number of reported UFO cases per year. In 1999, the percentage was more than 45%. Since UFO report distribution has normally been associated with population distribution, this over-representation of cases in BC is unusual. However, one obviously significant factor is the

aggressive and successful marketing of ufology in BC by UFOBC. Also, public advertisement of a "UFO Hotline" in BC allows many more people to report their sightings.

A confirmation that this is the case is the distribution of UFO reports made to the National UFO Reporting Center (NUFORC) in the United States. NUFORC also has a UFO reporting hotline and is widely recognized in the USA as a recording centre for UFO reports, although with few staff, its ability to investigate cases is obviously minimal. Though an American organization, NUFORC receives UFO reports from literally all around the world, and in fact had 64 Canadian cases reported to it in 1999. When we look at the provincial distribution of Canadian cases reported to NUFORC, we see a distribution much more closely related to population, with an over-representation in Ontario. This is much more in line with what we would expect from a national distribution. Clearly, UFOBC's telephone hotline and marketing efforts are paying off. The only other well-advertised UFO hotline is in Alberta, where the St. Paul Chamber of Commerce UFO Museum receives calls throughout much of western Canada.

Ontario and Quebec together constitute more than 60% of Canada's population, but had only about 30% of the total number of UFO reports in 1999, and this does not vary much from year to year. (Considering only the NUFORC cases, Ontario and Quebec are about 67%, as predicted.)

For the fourth year in a row, there was a larger than normal number of UFO sightings reported in the Northern Canada. About 7% of all Canadian UFO reports came from the Yukon and the Northwest Territories in 1999, much more than might be expected if sightings were somehow tied to population. Alberta, on the other hand, continues to receive a paucity of reports, and Manitoba seems to have slightly more than expected.

TABLE 1

Distribution of UFO Reports by Province

Year	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
1996	43	10	11	39	63	45	1	-	9	1	-	35
1997	99	11	5	32	72	24	1	1	6	3	8	22
1998	58	6	14	15	59	15	1	1	-	-	22	2
1999	118	19	1	6	79	8	1	1	0	6	20	0

Monthly Trends in UFO Reports

The monthly breakdowns of reports during each year show slightly different patterns from those of previous years. Curiously, the 1999 cases had no clear peaks in monthly report numbers. This is most curious, because UFO reports often are said 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 fact, during the last 11 years of this data compilation, the opposite of what is usually imagined was true: there were peaks in winter, and troughs in summer.

1999 had more UFO cases reported in the second half of the year. If we look at the 11-year trend, the monthly numbers of UFO reports do not seem to vary in a regular cycle. It can even be considered that the number of UFO cases per month is a constant, at about 20 cases/month. This means that there is no obvious seasonal variation in Canadian UFO sightings. This is remarkable, since Canada's cold winters should imply fewer witnesses observing UFOs outdoors. However, this is not the situation.

TABLE 2

Monthly Report Numbers

YEAR	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	
1989	13	9	6	9	5	9	5	5	12	32	27	9	
1990	17	7	6	47	10	10	9	47	15	16	10	-	
1991	13	7	17	12	7	12	16	25	16	12	11	17	
1992	15	16	27	16	22	16	23	19	11	16	21	21	
1993	59	15	20	22	14	38	27	49	41	152	24	21	
1994	16	12	15	21	15	37	19	8	15	10	7	13	
1995	14	12	13	9	9	10	28	33	28	11	11	5	
1996	37	18	20	16	8	20	30	32	10	22	30	11	
1997	19	11	31	29	17	13	29	29	22	16	26	37	
1998	3	4	8	5	9	13	16	40	45	35	7	4	
1999	8	20	22	7	31	10	27	36	30	29	30	7	

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, had a high of 76% in 1993 and a low of 51% in 1997. In 1999, NLs were 63% of the total.

The percentage of DDs has also varied over the years. In 1991, there were only 7.9%, but in 1997 there were 18.4%. There were 14% in 1999.

NL and ND cases together comprised almost 80% of all 1999 UFO reports; four out of five UFO sightings occur at night.

Only about 4% of all reported UFO cases in 1999 were close encounters. This is an important statistic, because the current popular interest in abductions and sensational UFO encounters is based not on the vast majority of UFO cases but on the very tiny fraction of cases which fall into the category of close encounters. The endless speculation of what aliens may or may not be doing in our airspace is almost completely unrelated to what is actually being reported as a UFO.

TABLE 3

Report Types (Modified Hynek Classifications)

YEAR	NL	ND	DD	C1	C2	C3	C4	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	-	-	
1996	170	40	27	8	3	4	1	2	-	-	
1997	145	62	52	4	2	5	8	4	-	1	

1998	115	23	25	6	1	-	-	19*	-	3
1999	163	44	37	3	7	1	-	-	-	-

* - In 1998, there was an unexpected resurgence of crop circle cases in Canada, and these were added as data, although not UFO sightings as such.

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

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

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

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

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

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. **Evidence** includes such physical traces as "crop circles", "landing rings" and "saucer nests." While included in previous years' surveys, crop circle reports were not added as data in 1999. Organizations such as Circles Phenomenon Research - Canada (CPR) maintain their own statistics and data on Canadian crop circles.

There also were four 1999 cases which did not fall into the above categories, and were considered Unexplained Events (UX), such as an anomalous sound which was heard, but nothing was actually observed.

Hourly Distribution

The hourly distribution of cases has usually followed a similar pattern each year, 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. In 1999, this smooth, bell-shaped curve was again evident.

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. This value has varied somewhat. In 1994-95, the value was approximately seven minutes. But in 1996, the average length of time witnesses observed a UFO was more than 25 minutes (1,536 seconds)! (This is very long time for a witness to be observing an unusual object in the sky.) In 1998, the average duration of all cases was about 15 minutes and 39% of all sightings were briefer than 30 seconds, whereas in 1999, the duration of a typical sighting dropped to between five and eight minutes, much like the 1994-95 data.

Previous analyses have shown 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.

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. A Canadian study by an Ontario UFO group which timed aircraft observations found that the duration of such sightings varied between 15 seconds to more than 8 minutes. There does not seem to be a clear relationship between the number of reports and the **Duration** of UFO sightings.

Colour

In cases where a colour of an object was reported, the most common colour is white (36%). The next most common colour in 1999 was "multicoloured" (13%), followed by red

(11%) and then orange (9%). 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).

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

Witnesses

The mean number of witnesses per case between 1989 and 1999 is approximately 2.00. This value has fluctuated between a high of 2.4 in 1996 to as low as 1.4 in 1990. In 1999, the average number of witnesses per case was 1.6.

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

Shape

Although witnesses’ descriptions of the shapes of UFOs varied greatly, in 1999, exactly half of all cases (50%) were of ‘point sources’ - that is, starlike objects. The next most common shape was round/disc (13%) followed by triangular, ‘boomerang’ and ‘delta-shaped’ (9%). Triangles have been more common than discs in recent years, suggesting that "flying saucers" may have become out of style. However, circular discs appear to have made a comeback in 1999.

Strangeness

The assigning of a **Strangeness** rating to a UFO report is based on a classification adopted by 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 UFO reports during 1999 was 3.6, where 1 is considered not strange at all and 9 is considered exceptionally unusual. This would seem to suggest that most UFOs reported are of objects which do not greatly stretch the imagination. Hollywood-inspired flying saucers are, in reality, relatively uncommon in UFO reports.

Reliability

The average **Reliability** rating of reports in 1999 was slightly greater than 5, indicating that there were about the same number of higher quality cases as those of low quality. Low reliability was assigned to reports with minimal information on the witness, little or no investigation and incomplete 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. In 1998, the Reliability rating was 4, one point lower.

The **Reliability** and **Strangeness** ratings varied together in classic bell-shaped curves. In other words, there very few cases which were both highly unusual and well-reported. Most cases were of medium strangeness and medium reliability. However, there were also very few low-strangeness cases with low reliability. Low-strangeness cases, therefore, tended to be well-reported and probably had explanations.

Conclusions/Evaluations

The breakdown by **Evaluation** for 1999 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 or mysterious natural phenomenon 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%, and 1999 was perfectly in line, with a value of 12.7%. This is a relatively 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 skeptical predisposition might tend to subconsciously (or consciously) reduce the **Unknowns** in their files.

During the first few years of these studies, an evaluation of **Explained** was almost nonexistent. 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

YEAR	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
1996	24	9.3	105	40.7	87	33.7	42	16.3
1997	17	6.0	106	37.3	122	43	39	13.7
1998	10	5.1	75	38.7	87	44.8	22	11.3
1999	10	3.9	82	31.5	135	51.9	32	12.3
Total	305	11.8	989	38.3	545	21.1	340	13.2

There were 32 **Unknowns** out of 259 cases in 1999. If we look only at the **Unknowns** with a quality or **Reliability** rating of 7 or greater, we then are left with 8 high-quality **Unknowns** in 1999 (3.1% of the total). Of these, only two had a **Strangeness** rating of 6 or greater. (As a comparison, USAF Blue Book studies found only three to four percent of their cases were "excellent" **Unknowns**.)

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

Summary of Results

As with previous studies, the *1999 Canadian UFO Survey* does not offer any positive proof that UFOs are either alien spacecraft or a specific natural phenomenon. However, it does show that some phenomenon which often is called a UFO *is* continually being observed by witnesses.

The typical UFO sighting is that of two people together observing a moving, distant white or red light for several minutes. In most cases, the UFO is likely to be eventually identified as a conventional object such as an aircraft or astronomical object. However, in a small percentage of cases, some UFOs do not appear to have an easy explanation and 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 interpretation of the 33 Unknowns is that these cases were among the most challenging of all the reports received in 1999. It should be noted that most UFO cases go unreported, and that there may be ten times as many UFO sightings that go unreported as those which get reported to public, private or military agencies. Furthermore, it should be noted that some cases with lower reliability ratings suffer only from incomplete investigations, and that they may well be more mysterious than those on the list of Unknowns. And, above all, these cases are *not* proof of extraterrestrial visitation.

Other comments

Throughout the past ten years, the rate of UFO reporting in Canada has been approximately 20 per month. Up until 1998, it appeared that the number of UFO reports had been increasing; there were about 10% more UFOs reported in 1997 than 1996 and 1996 over 1995, but there were 16% fewer in 1998 than 1997. However, in 1999, there were more than 30% more cases than 1998, which represents a significant increase. Since there had been a prediction that UFO report numbers would increase as we approached the millennium, the increase in 1999 may support that scenario. However, the long-term trend appears to show a fluctuation around a constant rate of reportage, so this is likely not the case at all. More data is clearly needed.

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.

1999 Canadian UFO Survey: Summary of Results

- The number of UFO reports made in Canada appear to hover around an average of about 230 cases per year. There were 259 UFO sightings reported in Canada in 1999 - about 30% more than 1998.
- The distribution of UFO reports in Canada was somewhat related to the distribution of population. UFO's are reported from coast to coast and from the prairies to the Arctic.
- During the past ten years, there was no definite monthly trend found in Canadian UFO reports, although there are some regional monthly fluctuations. UFOs are as likely to be reported in summer as in winter.
- Approximately 80% of UFO sightings are merely observations of lights in the night sky.
- In 1999, about 22% of all UFO reports were unexplained. This percentage of unknowns falls to about 3.2% 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 fact, most sightings have two witnesses.
- In 1999, the typical UFO sighting lasted between five and eight minutes, down from last year's average of 15 minutes.
- Most reported UFOs are white in colour.

The most important findings of this study include the fact that UFO sightings have continued to be reported at a more-or-less 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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National UFO Reporting Center

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UFO Roundup

http://ufoinfo.com/roundup

Filer's Files

http://www.ufoinfo.com/filer

Center for UFO Studies

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CNI News

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Newfoundland UFO Research

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Higher-Reliability Canadian 'Unknowns' in 1999

Note: an asterisk (*) indicates cases with the highest reliability.

January 16, 1999 9:00 pm Whitehorse, Yukon

A large orange ball of light flew in a zig-zagging motion across the sky and then out of sight.

February 16, 1999 10:30 pm Whitehorse, Yukon

For 20 minutes, a witness watched a starlike object moving slowly along the treeline. It was joined by a second object and the two lights reversed direction and flew away.

February 26, 1999 11:59 pm Blind River, Ontario *

A red light was seen hovering over some railroad tracks by three witnesses in two vehicles who stopped to view it. As they watched, it began to move, rose into the clouds and disappeared.

March 14, 1999 3:00 pm Dunlop Lake, Ontario

Two ice-fishermen watched "a silver bullet-type thing a lot bigger than a plane" moving over the lake.

March 5, 1999 10:00 pm Kimberley, BC *

Six people observed a diamond-shaped object surrounded by brilliant lights. Beams of light wee seen coming from a pyramid-shaped protrusion on the bottom of the object.

April 27, 1999 4:30 am White Rock, BC

A cluster of rectangular lights appeared on the ground in front of a residential house, making a humming sound. After 10 seconds, the lights vanished.

May 1, 1999 10:00 pm Richmond, BC *

Three witnesses saw a bizarre square, flat object floating about 1,000 feet above the ground. It had floodlights on the front and the witnesses could see its silvery underside as it passed overhead without any noise.

May 31, 1999 10:00 pm Surrey, BC

Two witnesses observed a group of 10 small red lights moving high in the sky. As they watched, the lights rearranged to form geometric patterns, then flew away.

June 16, 1999 11:40 pm Courtenay, BC *

An officer in the Canadian Air Force and two other witnesses observed an object first thought to be a satellite. It stopped its forward motion, "dipsy doodled" in the sky, interacted with another object and then flew away.

July 28, 1999 10:00 pm Langley, BC

A light "as large as a garbage can lid" appeared across the street from a witness' house. It moved slowly towards him and hovered over a hydro pole, then vanished.

August 1, 1999 5:35 pm Calgary, Alberta *

Two witnesses observed a formation of eight silver objects high in the sky. They were originally motionless, but then began moving west except for one which headed north.

August 21, 1999 12:00 noon Surrey, BC *

A metallic object appeared in the sky near a passing aircraft. It moved slowly after the passing of the airliner and was eventually lost to sight.

August 26, 1999 3:00 am Medicine Hat, Alberta *

A triangular object with white lights at its corners flew over CFB Suffield, performing several right angle turns, then flew out of sight.

September 3, 1999 9:45 pm Notre Dame Ile Perrot, Quebec

Three people saw a green triangular object hovering near a forest fire. It made no sound and disappeared suddenly as they watched it.

September 13, 1999 Brewster Lake, BC

In the mid-afternoon, a conical silver object with "a long floating tail" flew slowly over a lake from horizon to horizon.

September 20, 1999 10:50 pm Edmonton, Alberta *

A witness in West Edmonton observed a triangular object fly over his house. It moved at high speed, had red lights on each corner and made no noise.

October 2, 1999 3:00 pm Bird's Hill Park, Manitoba

Two hikers saw "a white tube with black ends spinning and falling toward the ground." It suddenly stopped falling, then flew away out of sight.

November 5, 1999 8:30 pm Salmon Cove, Newfoundland

A glowing red ball of light was seen to move from the ocean inland across a bay, illuminating the beach and rock face.

November 30, 1999 6:30 am Markham, Ontario

A bright triangular object was observed hanging in the sky for 15 minutes.

December 31, 1999 12:30 am Sudbury, Ontario

Two bright orange balls of light followed one another across the sky, then stopped suddenly, changed colour and "shot up into the sky and disappeared."

NOTE: Although UFO sightings were reported from almost all provinces in 1999, the most interesting cases were almost all in Western Canada. In previous years, Eastern Canada has had this privilege. It is not known why the shift to the west occurred this past year. Perhaps this is only a statistical trend and the situation will reverse again in 2000.