

The 1990 Canadian UFO Survey

After a very positive response from the 1989 Canadian UFO Survey, it was decided to continue the systematic collection of raw UFO report data in Canada and prepare yearly reports for general circulation. It has always 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.

As in 1989, a letter requesting data for analysis was sent to all Canadian ufologists thought to be actively investigating reports. Names and addresses were obtained from UFOROM files, the mailing list of the Swamp Gas Journal and from ufologists in contact with UFOROM. In 1989, twenty-five such letters were sent out. In 1990, with additional names and addresses added to the list, over fifty letters were mailed. As in 1989, the response was poor; it is now suspected that only a small fraction of "active" ufologists actually investigate cases and maintain useable records.

In 1989, 141 UFO reports were obtained for analysis. In 1990, 194 reports were recorded. These reports came from contributing investigators' files, press clippings and the files of the National Research Council of Canada. The NRC routinely receives UFO reports from private citizens and from RCMP, civic police and military personnel. The number of cases in 1990 represents a 37.5% increase from the previous year. This rather surprising increase may be due partly to an increased contribution of cases from ufologists in British Columbia.

That this might be the case is evident in Table 1, which shows the Provincial distribution of UFO reports for both 1989 and 1990. As can be seen, the fivefold increase in BC reports skews the comparison. There were apparent significant increases in the number of reports in Quebec and New Brunswick, while there was an apparent decrease in reports in Ontario. We can further note that in 1990, all Provinces and Territories recorded at least one UFO sighting during the year.

TABLE 1

	BC	AL	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

The monthly breakdown of reports shows a distinctly different pattern from that of the previous year. 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. But 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. The large peaks in April and August are not explained at this time, though the August increase may be due partly to the Perseid meteor shower which occurs that month. Since many UFO reports turn out to be misidentified meteors, this is a plausible explanation for some of the increase.

TABLE 2

	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	-

The absence of reports from December may seem a bit odd, but is not particularly anomalous. It is also known that the NRC records obtained for study are incomplete for that month; these reports may be available in the future.

An analysis by report type shows a similar breakdown to that found in 1989, with one major difference. The numbers of cases of a particular type remained roughly constant except for the category of Nocturnal Lights, which exhibited nearly a twofold increase.

TABLE 3

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

For those unfamiliar with the categories, 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

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 to treat these as separate from UFO reports in this survey. [For the record, there were 27 "crop circles" and related traces discovered in Canada in 1990. Many of these were investigated by UFO researchers, and a few were reported to the NRC. UFOROM is associated with the North American Institute for Crop Circle Research, which investigated such cases and published a report on its findings.]

The breakdown by evaluative conclusions for 1990 cases can be shown to be similar to the 1989 results. There were three operative categories: **Insufficient Information**, **Possible or Probable Explanation**, and **Unknown**. Readers are warned 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, the evaluations are made subjectively by both the contributing investigators and the compiler of this report. The category of **Unknown** is adopted only if the contributed data or case report contains enough information 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.

TABLE 4

	1989		1990	
	#	%	#	%
Insufficient Information	74	52.5	90	46.4

Possible/Probable Explanation	47	33.3	78	40.2
Unknown	20	14.2	26	13.4

The hourly distribution of cases tends to follow the same pattern for 1990 as in the previous year. There appears to be a continuous curve, with a peak near 2100 hours local and a trough around 1000 hours local. The function is plotted on the following page.

The average number of witnesses per case went down from a value of 2.12/case in 1989 to 1.4/case in 1990. It is not known what this may indicate. It is possible that there might have been a tendency for only one of a pair or group of witnesses to report an incident, and hence this value would have declined. This may have been true in the NRC files, which may not reflect the total number of witnesses sharing a UFO experience.

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. 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. In the 1990 study, the average duration of a sighting can be calculated as a summation of all given durations then divided by the number of cases with a stated duration. The resulting value is around 19 minutes, which is of course a high value because of the large number of sightings lasting only a few seconds contrasted with a few that lasted several hours.

In cases where a colour of an object was reported, the most common colour was red (35 cases), closely followed by white (34 cases). Then, in descending order, there were also orange (19 cases), green (14 cases), blue (13 cases) and yellow (7 cases). Finally, there was one case of violet, two silver, one black, and two object that were multicoloured. As most UFOs are nocturnal starlike objects, this is not surprising.

Summary of Results

As with the **1989 Survey of Canadian UFO Reports**, the 1990 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 observing a moving, distant white or red light for a period of over 15 minutes. In most cases, the UFO is likely to be eventually identified as a conventional object such as an 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"? An additional classification is useful to try and better understand this kind of report. In the gathering of data for the study, contributors were asked to give a value for the **reliability** of the report. Particularly, this value gives the likelihood that the UFO experience "really" occurred as described by the witness. Granted, it is impossible for any investigator to judge this absolute value; often, a subjective value for two categories of "strangeness" and "probability" is assigned. The **reliability** value is another 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.

In the 1990 study, only 9 cases (4.6%) were high-reliability unknowns. This agrees well with the 1989 results (4.9%). These were the following:

ND Case 900205 Richmond, British Columbia

NL Case 900418 North Vancouver, British Columbia

ND Case 900711 St. Ligouri, Quebec

ND Case 900728 Edmonton, Alberta

NL Case 900810 Winnipeg, Manitoba

NL Case 900821 Ebenezer, Prince Edward Island

NL Case 900823 Portage la Prairie, Manitoba

C2 Case 900901 Williams Lake, British Columbia

NL Case 901107 Montreal, Quebec

The interpretation of this list is that these cases were among the most challenging of all the reports received in 1990. It should be noted that many 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.

We have also learned that UFOs are constantly being reported at a rate of about ten per month across all of Canada, and one or two per month in most provinces. Witnesses range

from farmhands to airline pilots and from teachers to police. 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 only continued and rational research can answer, and only if researchers have the support and encouragement of both scientists and the public.