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The 2008 CANADIAN UFO SURVEY: an analysis of UFO reports in Canada

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Compiled by

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and

Chris A. Rutkowski
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Data Sources:

OVNI-Alerte

Yukon UFO

UFO Updates

Saskatchewan Provincial Paranormal Research Centre, Inc.

Para-Researchers of Ontario

National UFO Reporting Center

Filer's Files

UFOINFO

UFO*BC

UFOS North West

Alberta UFO Study Group

Mutual UFO Network

Latest UFO Sightings

Houston, BC, Centre for UFO Research

UFO Watch

Yukon UFO

Ufology Research

Transport Canada

National Defence and the Canadian Forces

YouTube

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The 2008 Canadian UFO Survey

Overview

Since 1989, Ufology Research (formerly Ufology Research of Manitoba) has been soliciting UFO case data from all known and active investigators and researchers in Canada. Our goal has been to provide data for use by researchers as they try to understand this controversial phenomenon. No comparable studies are currently produced by any other research group in North America. Similar programs exist in several other countries such as Sweden, where UFO report data is analysed by the Archives for UFO Research, and in Italy by Centro Italiano Studi Ufologici.

2008 marks the 20th year of collecting and analysing Canadian UFO report data. Ufology Research has UFO data from 1989 to the present available online at:
http://survey.canadianuforeport.com

The 2008 Canadian UFO Survey: Summary of Results

- **There were 1004 UFO sightings reported in Canada in 2008, nearly three each day. This is an all-time record high number of reports in one year.**

- **Alberta, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Ontario each had provincial all-time record high numbers of UFOs reported in 2008.**

- **In 2008, about 10 per cent of all UFO reports were judged unexplained. This percentage of "unknowns" falls to less than one per cent when only higher-quality cases are considered.**

- **The average number of witnesses per sighting is about two.**

- **The typical UFO sighting lasted approximately 18 minutes in 2008.**

Besides the record high number of reports in 2008, the study found that almost half of all UFO sightings were of simple lights in the sky and, in addition to disc-shaped objects, witnesses also reported triangles, spheres and boomerangs.

Results of this study show that many people continue to report 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.

There is no explanation for the record high level of sightings reported in 2008. A number of theories can be suggested: more UFOs are present and physically observable by witnesses; more secret or classified military exercises and overflights are occurring over populated areas; more people are unaware of the nature of conventional or natural objects in the sky; more people are taking the time to observe their surroundings; more people are able to report their sightings with easier access to the Internet and portable technology; or even that the downturn in the economy is leading to an increased desire by some people to look skyward for assistance.

Although the largest percentage of reported UFOs is simply lights in the night sky, a significant number are objects with definite shapes observed within the witnesses' frame of

reference. A dozen or so cases each year are ‘‘close encounters’’—close-range encounters with strange craft popularized in movies.

Popular opinion to the contrary, there is no incontrovertible evidence that some UFO cases involve extraterrestrial contact. The continued reporting of UFOs by the public and the yearly increase in numbers of UFO reports suggests a need for further examination of the phenomenon by social, medical and/or physical scientists.

For further information, contact:

Ufology Research,
e-mail: canadianuforeport@hotmail.com

Raison D'etre

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

In general, the public equates UFOs with alien visitation. However, there is no incontrovertible proof that this is a real connection.

The UFO reports collected and analysed in this annual survey are the only data upon which Canadian studies of UFOs can be reasonably based. As UFOs are a worldwide phenomenon, the results of analyses of Canadian UFO reports can easily be applied to cases in other countries. In effect, this is the empirical data for research in this field. If one wants to know what people really are seeing in the skies, the answer lies within these reports.

The Collection of UFO Data

Many individuals, associations, clubs and groups claim to investigate UFO reports. Many solicit reports from the general public. Comparatively few actually participate in any kind of information sharing or data gathering for scientific programs. Some are primarily interest groups based in museums, planetariums, church basements or individuals' homes, and do essentially *nothing* with the sighting reports they receive. Some groups, such as the Mutual UFO Network (MUFON) solicit reports and dispatch regional investigators to interview witnesses about their experiences.

In recent years, websites have been developed for the public to report UFO sightings, some claiming to be major UFO research groups but in reality do little more than publish witnesses' accounts without thorough investigation or even referring witnesses to investigators or researchers in their area. While witnesses may be applauded for their courage in giving details of their UFO sighting to a webmaster, without proper investigation their report may be of relatively little use to serious UFO researchers.

Because there is no way to enforce standards in UFO report investigations, the quality of case investigations varies considerably between groups and across provinces. Quantitative studies are difficult because subjective evaluations and differences in investigative techniques do not allow precise comparisons. UFOROM's requests for data from Canadian UFO researchers and investigators, and our transcribing of information from others' websites, unfortunately allow input of only basic information for analyses.

Most Internet postings of UFO report information are incomplete and do not show any actual case investigation results, often forcing an evaluation of ''Insufficient Information.'' Case data which can be obtained from such sites usually includes things such as date of the sighting, the time, duration, number of witnesses and their location—facts which are not subjective and can be used in scientific studies before interpretation.

For the purposes of this and other scientific studies of UFO data, UFO sightings that have been made to groups, associations, organizations, websites or individuals are considered as data in this study. This may be at odds with some definitions of the term UFO, which is often considered a synonym for ''flying saucer'' or ''alien spacecraft.'' The dictionary definition of UFO is simply an aerial object that is not identified by the observer. Some scientific definitions add the additional qualifier that a UFO also is unexplained even after rigorous investigation by trained researchers. This is not how the term is used in common discourse, nor is it so on any website devoted to the collection of UFO reports. Therefore, it should be stated at the outset that the analyses given here are regarding UFO reports, not necessarily UFOs themselves.

The collection of Canadian UFO data is challenging. However, the data obtained for analysis yields results that can be compared with other studies. This is useful in

understanding the nature of UFO reports not only in Canada, but can shed light on the nature of UFO reports elsewhere in the world.

UFO Reports in Canada

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

Year	Number	Average
1989	141	141.0
1990	194	167.5
1991	165	166.7
1992	223	180.8
1993	489	242.4
1994	189	233.5
1995	183	226.3
1996	258	230.3
1997	284	236.2
1998	194	232.0
1999	259	234.5
2000	263	236.8
2001	374	247.4
2002	483	264.2
2003	673	291.5
2004	882	328.4
2005	769	354.3
2006	738	375.8
2007	794	399.8
2008	1004	430.0
Total	8601	

The number of UFO reports per year has varied annually, depending on a number

of factors. However, there has been a general trend towards an increase in yearly UFO report numbers throughout the past 20 years, peaking in 2008. The average number of UFO reports in Canada per year has been increasing since 1998. This clearly contradicts comments by those who would assert that UFOs are a 'passing fad' or that UFO sightings are decreasing.

UFOs and IFOs

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

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

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

Method

Data for each case was received by Ufology Research from participating researchers across Canada. In addition, existing databases, web pages and other online sources of UFO sighting information were searched for Canadian reports that occurred in 2008. The information then was coded by members of Ufology Research and entered into a Microsoft Excel database and statistically analysed.

An example of the coding key is as follows:

Example: 2008 01 09 1530 Vernon BC DD 900 silver 2 ps 6 5 UFOBC p four objs. seen

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

Field 1 is a default YEAR for the report.
Field 2 is the MONTH of the incident.
Field 3 is the DATE of the sighting.
Field 4 is the local TIME, on the 24-hour clock.
Field 5 is the geographical LOCATION of the incident.
Field 6 is the PROVINCE where the sighting occurred.
Field 7 is the TYPE of report, using the Modified Hynek Classification System.
Field 8 is the DURATION of the sighting, in seconds (a value of 600 thus represents 10 minutes).
Field 9 is the primary COLOUR of the object(s) seen
Field 10 is the number of WITNESSES
Field 11 is the SHAPE of the object(s) seen

Field 12 is the STRANGENESS of the report.

Field 13 is the RELIABILITY of the report.

Field 14 is the SOURCE of the report.

Field 15 is the EVALUATION of the case.

Field 16 includes any COMMENTS noted about the case.

Analyses of the Data

Distribution of UFO Reports Across Canada

In 2008, Ontario had more than 33 per cent of the total number of UFO sightings reported in Canada, down from 39 per cent in 2007, but still the most reports of any province. British Columbia was second, with 27 per cent of the total. In 2008, the numbers of UFO reports in Alberta, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Ontario were the highest on record.

TABLE 1

Distribution of UFO Reports by Province

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

2006	2	8	1	209	55	98	54	188	76	12	25	1	5
2007	6	0	7	192	66	36	44	329	93	24	31	2	6
2008	0	1	6	272	157	41	52	334	62	28	34	2	10
	NT	NU	YT	BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	PQ	NB	NS	PI	NF
Total	90	18	157	2508	857	529	700	2294	779	152	257	23	94

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

Canadian Cities With Most UFO Reports in 2007

Rank	City		Province	Number of Reports
1	Calgary		AB	69
2	Vernon		BC	39
3	Toronto		ON	30
4	Vancouver		BC	28
5	Edmonton		AB	27
Metropolitan Areas				
Vancouver	(Incl.New Westminister, W. Van., N. Van., Burnaby, Surrey, Abbottsford, Port Coquitlam, Langley, N.Surrey, N.Langley, Richmond, Delta, N. Delta, Coquitlam, Port Moody)			72
Toronto	(Incl. Mississauga, Brampton, Scarborough, Oshawa, Whitby, Ajax, Pickering, Etobicoke, Newmarket, Richmond Hill, Markham, Oakville)			79

Monthly Trends in UFO Reports

Monthly breakdowns of reports during each year tend to show slightly different patterns.. UFO reports are generally thought to peak in summer and trough in winter, presumably due to the more pleasant observing conditions during the summer months, when more witnesses are outside. In Canada in 2008, the summer peak continued into the fall, but did not begin until July.

	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	0
1991	13	7	17	12	7	12	16	25	16	12	11	17
1992	15	16	27	16	22	16	23	19	11	16	21	21
1993	59	15	20	22	14	38	27	49	41	152	24	21
1994	16	12	15	21	15	37	19	8	15	10	7	13
1995	14	12	13	9	9	10	28	33	28	11	11	5
1996	37	18	20	16	8	20	30	32	10	22	30	11
1997	19	11	31	29	17	13	29	29	22	16	26	37
1998	3	4	8	5	9	13	16	40	45	35	7	4
1999	8	20	22	7	31	10	27	36	30	29	30	7
2000	21	17	15	21	12	11	19	46	20	44	15	19
2001	36	19	33	25	17	26	51	81	25	17	27	16
2002	31	54	41	28	36	44	73	74	42	26	19	14
2003	41	46	46	46	31	30	131	102	46	64	43	47
2004	59	53	72	68	82	97	96	113	83	46	56	53
2005	36	59	81	59	45	50	96	123	70	56	47	45
2006	33	43	41	66	65	108	113	113	61	36	20	29
2007	45	35	95	76	56	90	80	105	94	64	50	41
2008	64	65	66	58	81	71	148	128	114	82	94	33
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Totals	580	522	675	640	572	715	1036	1208	800	786	575	442

UFO Report Types

An analysis by report type shows a similar breakdown to that found in previous years. The percentage of cases of a particular type remains roughly constant from year to year, with some variations. As an example of yearly variation in UFO report data, nocturnal Lights (NLs) comprised more than 68 per cent of all cases in 2006 but only about 44 per cent in 2008. In 2008, there was a large increase in the number of UFO reports in which an object was seen at night that that a shape or structure, a Nocturnal Disc (ND).

Less than two per cent of all reported UFO cases in 2008 were Close Encounters, emphasizing the reality that very, very few UFO cases involve anything other than distant objects seen in the sky. This is an important statistic, because the current popular interest in abductions and sensational UFO encounters is based not on the vast majority of UFO cases but on the very tiny fraction of cases which fall into the category of close encounters. The endless speculation of what aliens may or may not be doing in our airspace seems almost completely unconnected to what are actually being reported as UFOs.

TABLE 3

Report Types (Modified Hynek Classifications)

	NL	ND	DD	C1	C2	C3	C4	EV	RD	PH
1989	84	20	16	10	7	0	2	2	0	0
1990	141	24	15	2	1	0	4	3	0	0
1991	110	26	13	7	4	1	2	0	1	1
1992	136	44	20	15	5	2	3	0	0	1
1993	372	77	26	8	2	1	1	1	0	0
1994/95	234	78	28	21	1	1	5	1	0	0
1996	170	40	27	8	3	4	1	2	0	0
1997	145	62	52	4	2	5	8	4	0	1
1998	115	23	25	6	1	0	0	19	0	3
1999	163	44	37	3	7	1	0	0	0	0
2000	179	31	26	4	2	2	0	0	0	3
2001	218	80	55	8	1	3	3	0	0	0
2002	293	94	76	8	5	0	1	0	0	2
2003	431	152	74	5	5	3	2	0	0	0
2004	520	203	136	7	6	2	3	0	0	3
2005	424	169	149	9	5	3	2	0	0	1
2006	508	65	85	12	1	4	1	0	0	21
2007	413	244	153	12	7	4	1	0	0	*
2008	442	353	175	10	7	2	0	0	0	8
	NL	ND	DD	C1	C2	C3	C4	EV	RD	PH
Totals	6098	1829	1188	159	65	34	38	32	1	44

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

Note: The category of **Nocturnal Disc** was created in the 1980s by UFOROM originally for differentiation of cases within its own report files, and has been adopted by many other groups worldwide.

The category of PH indicates the sighting was entirely photographic, without any actual object seen visually. Many reports listed as NL or ND or DD may also have associated photos or video, so this should not be considered exclusive.

Hourly Distribution

The hourly distribution of cases has usually followed a similar pattern every year, with a peak at 2200 or 2300 hours local and a trough around 0900 hours local. Since most UFOs are nocturnal lights, most sightings will occur during the evening hours. Since the number of possible observers drops off sharply near midnight, we would expect the hourly rate of UFO reports would vary with two factors: potential observers and darkness.

Time	Number
12:00-12:59	5
13:00-13:59	10
14:00-14:59	15
15:00-15:59	16
16:00-16:59	23
17:00-17:59	21
18:00-18:59	29
19:00-19:59	44
20:00-20:59	58
21:00-21:59	102
22:00-22:59	119
23:00-23:59	92
00:00-00:59	37
01:00-01:59	40
02:00-02:59	29
03:00-03:59	27
04:00-04:59	21
05:00-05:59	16
06:00-06:59	10
07:00-07:59	5
08:00-08:59	3
09:00-09:59	1
10:00-10:59	6
11:00-11:59	10

Duration

The category of **Duration** is interesting in that it represents the *subjective* length of time the UFO experience lasted. In other words, this is the length of time the sighting lasted *as*

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

The average duration of UFO sightings in Canada in 2008 was found to be about 18 minutes. This is a significant length of time, and suggests some simple explanations. Previous analyses have shown that long-duration sightings tend to occur in the early morning hours, from about midnight until 6:00 a.m.

The duration of a sighting is one of the biggest clues to its explanation. Experience in studying UFO reports has shown us that short duration events are usually fireballs or bolides, and long duration events of an hour or more are very probably astronomical objects moving slowly with Earth's rotation.

Average = 1106 sec.	
Duration (in seconds)	Number
1 to 5	88
6 to 10	48
11 to 20	31
21 to 60	65
61 to 120	36
121 to 180	31
181 to 300	39
301 to 600	39
601 to 1800	58
1801 to 3600	34
> 3600	40

Colour

In cases where colours of an object were reported by witnesses, the most common colour in 2008 was ‘‘white.’’ The next most common ‘‘colour’’ was ‘‘multicoloured.’’ Next in order were orange, yellow and red. Since most UFOs are nocturnal starlike objects, the abundance of white objects is not surprising. Colours such as red, orange, blue and green often are associated with bolides (fireballs). The ‘multicoloured’ designation is problematic in that it literally covers a wide range of possibilities. This label has been used, for example, when witnesses described their UFOs as having white, red and green lights. Many of these are certainly stars or planets, which flash a variety of colours when seen low on the horizon. Aircraft also frequently are described as having more than one colour of light, such as flashing coloured wing lights. However, seen from a distance, aircraft will often be visible only as a moving white light.

Colour	Number
White	216
Multicoloured	119
Orange	104
Yellow	49
Red	45
Green	42
Silver	36
Black	21
Blue	19
Gray	15
Brown	4

Pink	2
Purple	2

Witnesses

The average number of witnesses per case between 1989 and 2008 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 2008, the average number of witnesses per case was 1.79.

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

Number of Witnesses

# Witnesses	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	>10
Number	574	280	73	27	12	7	6	6	2	6	3

Average: 1.79
Total # of witnesses in cases where exact # of witnesses known: 1,782

Shape

Witnesses' descriptions of the shapes of UFOs vary greatly. In 2008, about 47 per cent were of "point sources"—that is, "starlike" objects. The next most common shapes were ''irregular,'' with 10 per cent and ''sphere'' at about nine per cent. The classic ''flying saucer'' or disc-shaped object comprised only slightly more than five per cent of all UFO reports, contrary to popular opinion.

The shape of a perceived object depends on many factors such as the witness= own visual acuity, the angle of viewing, the distance of viewing and the witness= own

biases and descriptive abilities. Nevertheless, in combination with other case data such as duration, shape can be a good clue towards a UFO's possible explanation.

Shape	Number
Ball/Globe/Round/Orb/Sphere	93
Fireball	83
Boomerang/Crescent/Chevron/V/U	16
Cigar/Cylinder	35
Disk/Saucer	56
Round	42
Irregular	100
Oval/Egg/Elliptical	43
Point Source	473
Triangle	34
Diamond	3
Rectangle	6

Strangeness

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

The numbers of UFO reports according to strangeness rating show an inverse

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

The average strangeness rating for UFO reports during 2008 was only 3.34, down slightly from last year's average of 3.65, where 1 is considered not strange at all and 9 is considered exceptionally unusual. Most UFOs reported are of objects which do not greatly stretch the imagination. Hollywood-style flying saucers are, in reality, relatively uncommon in UFO reports.

Reliability

The average **Reliability** rating of Canadian UFO reports in 2008 was 4.9, down slightly from an average of 5.1 in 2007. This was similar to other years, indicating that there was approximately the same number of higher quality cases as those of low quality. Low reliability was assigned to reports with minimal information on the witness, little or no investigation and incomplete data or description of the object(s) observed. Higher reliability cases might include actual interviews with witnesses, a detailed case investigation, multiple witnesses, supporting documentation and other evidence. Since data for many cases are taken from websites and second-hand postings, or in fact self-postings, there is usually no significant investigation of UFO sightings. Well-investigated cases likely comprise only a small fraction of all UFO data, a fact that makes posted UFO case data have limited value.

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

tend to be well-reported and probably have explanations.

Sources

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

In 2008, the Houston, BC, Centre for UFOs (HBCCUFO) had the lion's share of reports, with about 41 per cent; it is a very popular website found through Google searches, and many people rely on it for UFO information and submit their reports there via a web form.

About 12 per cent of the total cases were obtained through the private and non-profit National UFO Reporting Center in the USA, which has a toll-free telephone number for reporting UFOs and a large sightings list created through voluntary submission of online report forms by witnesses. Similarly, about 11 per cent of cases were reported to the Mutual UFO Network (MUFON), which has an efficient reporting system. One can speculate that if there were a well-advertised toll-free number and accompanying website for reporting UFOs in each Canadian province, perhaps yearly report numbers would increase dramatically.

Just over two per cent of the cases in 2008 came as a result of information obtained through Transport Canada and the Department of National Defence.

It should be noted that the preparation of this Survey is becoming quite challenging. Few UFO investigators or researchers actually submit case data to UFOROM anymore, requiring considerable searching of online sources. And, although many sites post information about UFO sightings, very little actual UFO investigation is being conducted. In fact, it could be said that the science of UFO investigation has nearly become extinct. This does not bode well for an area of study that is under constant criticism by debunkers

wishing to prove the unscientific nature of the subject.

Evaluation (Explanations)

The breakdown by **Evaluation** for 2008 cases was similar to results from previous years. There were four operative categories: **Explained, Insufficient Information**, **Possible or Probable Explanation**, and **Unknown (or Unexplained)**. It is important to note that a classification of **Unknown** does *not* imply that an alien spacecraft or mysterious natural phenomenon was observed; no such interpretation can be made with certainty, based solely on the given data.

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

The level and quality of UFO report investigation varies because there are no explicit and rigourous standards for UFO investigation. Investigators who are ‘‘believers’’ might be inclined to consider most UFO sightings as mysterious, whereas those with more of a skeptical predisposition might tend to subconsciously (or consciously) reduce the **Unknowns** in their files.

TABLE 4

Evaluation of Canadian UFO Data

%				
	Explained	Insufficient Evidence	Probable	Unexplained
1989	0.00%	52.50%	33.30%	14.20%
1990	0.00%	46.40%	40.20%	13.40%
1991	1.20%	48.50%	41.80%	8.50%
1992	8.00%	37.00%	33.00%	22.00%
1993	31.50%	34.80%	23.50%	10.20%
1994/95	19.10%	33.30%	35.20%	12.40%
1996	9.30%	40.70%	33.70%	16.30%
1997	6.00%	37.30%	43.00%	13.70%
1998	5.10%	38.70%	44.80%	11.30%
1999	3.80%	31.50%	51.90%	12.70%
2000	8.75%	35.74%	42.59%	12.93%
2001	5.88%	34.76%	44.12%	15.24%
2002	2.48%	39.75%	39.75%	18.01%
2003	16.34%	24.67%	42.50%	16.49%
2004	8.62%	22.68%	53.17%	15.53%
2005	12.09%	25.36%	47.85%	14.69%
2006	7.07%	44.84%	36.28%	11.82%
2007	2.03%	32.06%	50.12%	15.78%
2008	2.69%	27.99%	59.46%	9.86%

	Explained	Insufficient Evidence	Probable	Unexplained
1989	0	74	47	20
1990	0	90	78	26
1991	2	80	69	14
1992	17	83	74	49
1993	154	170	115	50
1994/95	71	124	131	46
1996	24	105	87	42
1997	17	106	122	39
1998	10	75	87	22
1999	10	82	135	32
2000	23	94	112	34
2001	22	130	165	57
2002	12	192	192	87
2003	110	166	286	111
2004	76	200	469	137
2005	93	195	368	113
2006	52	330	267	87
2007	17	268	419	132
2008	27	281	597	99
	737	2845	3820	1197

In 2008, the percentage of **Unknowns** was just under ten per cent, down from 16 per cent lat year. There are several factors that affect this value.

There were 99 **Unknowns** out of 1004 total cases in 2008. If we look only at the **Unknowns** with a **Strangeness** of 6 or greater and a **Reliability** rating of *7* or greater, we are left with *7* high-quality **Unknowns** in 2008 (less than one per cent of the total). This is much lower than previous studies, where values closer to three or four per cent were noted. As a comparison, USAF Blue Book studies found three to four per cent of their

cases were "excellent" **Unknowns**.

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

The interpretation of the 99 Unknowns is that these cases were among the most challenging of all the reports received in 2008. 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.

The increase in the numbers of UFO reports with time likely does not have a simple explanation. It could be related to a growing awareness within the general population that there are agencies which collect UFO reports. It could be that there really are more UFOs physically present in the sky. It could be that the collection of UFO data is becoming more efficient. It could be that there are more private websites allowing or inviting people to report their UFO sightings. While media have been noted as playing a definite role in UFO waves (a national increase in UFO sightings), media coverage of UFO reports has significantly declined over the past decade while the number of reports has risen. Perhaps a cultural factor is at work as well, where ‘‘aliens’’ and UFOs are now well-entrenched within the societal mindset and are accepted as more probable than fiction. This question by itself is deserving of scientific study.

UFO Report Data Sources

AUFOSG (Alberta UFO Study Group)

http://www.aufosg.com

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

e-mail: kburgess@telusplanet.net (Ken Burgess)

National UFO Reporting Center

http://www.ufocenter.com

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

HBCC UFO Research

http://www.hbccufo.com

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

OVNI-Alerte

http://www.ovni-alerte.com

Para-Researchers of Ontario

http://www.pararesearchers.org

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

UFO*BC

http://www.ufobc.ca

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

e-mail: ufoyukon@ufobc.ca (Martin Jasek)

UFOs Northwest

http://www.ufosnw.com

e-mail: wpuckett@ufosnw.com (Bill Puckett)

Ufology Research

http://survey.canadianuforeport.com

blog: durndurn.com/ufos

blog: uforum.clogspot.com

e-mail: canadianuforeport@hotmail.com (Chris Rutkowski)

e-mail: loctl789@hotmail.com (Geoff Dittman)

UFO Updates

http://www.ufoupdateslist.com

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

Yukon UFO

e-mail: paranormalart@northwestel.net (Lorraine Bretlyn)

UFO Info

http://www.ufoinfo.com

e-mail: webmaster@ufoinfo.com (John Hayes)

Filer's Files

http://www.ufoinfo.com/filer/index.shtml

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

Latest UFO Sightings

http://www.ufosightingreport.com

Mutual UFO Network

http://www.mufon.com

Saskatchewan Paranormal Phenomena Research Centre

http://www.spprc.com

Youtube

http://www.youtube.com

Transport Canada

National Defence and the Canadian Forces

Royal Canadian Mounted Police

Most Interesting Canadian "Unknowns" in 2008

The following are those Canadian UFO reports in 2008 which had a Reliability Rating of 7 or greater, a Strangeness Rating of 6 or greater and which were also assigned an Evaluation of Unknown.

2008 1 31 1910 Ste-Catharine PQ
nd 600 white 2 sphere 6 7 OVNI u
obj. chased by military helicopter?

2008 3 11 1940 Wadena SK
c1 3 gray 3 cigar 7 8 SPPRC u
obj. flew across highway in front of car, no cross road at that point

2008 5 17 30 Chilliwack BC
nd 10 white 2 boomerang 6 8 UFOBC u
V-shaped obj. flew low over city

2008 7 20 2345 Corner Brook NF
nd 190 multi 3 irregular 6 7 HBCCUFO u
obj. w/4 wings, many lights, flew NE, banked, went NW

2008 8 10 2100 AB
nd white 2 round 6 7 HBCCUFO u
obj. flew overhead, "exploded into many dots"; photos

2008 8 31 130 Savona BC
c1 multi 1 triangle 7 7 HBCCUFO u
obj. w/lights moved near truck, "hopped"?

2008 9 6 1930 London ON
dd 240 gray 3 cigar 7 7 MUFON u
3 bullet-shaped objs. Flew near witnesses