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# Area 207

Why are Mainers reporting more **space invaders** than anywhere but Arizona?

BY COLIN S. SARGENT

**E**ven if we were to discount the famous Alagash Abduction of 1976, in which four men on a wilderness canoeing trip were beamed up to the mother ship (the quartet passed polygraph tests following a hypnotic retrieval of their suppressed memories in 1989), Maine's reported 700 UFO sightings in the last 50 years put us right up there with Arizona as the most saucer-spotting state. Nowadays, though, you don't have to make it onto *Unsolved Mysteries* to get the word out. All you have to do is post online on a site like the National UFO Reporting Center ([nuforc.org](http://nuforc.org)), and you can post an entry like the most recent

one we saw, dateline June 3, 2014, in Phillips. "Red then green flashing object, saw it for about 60 seconds; then it disappeared." NUFORC has curated a glowing report of past UFO sightings as well, allowing you to see a history of Maine's glimpses into the Unknown. Over 75 percent of the reported sightings are from 2000 or more recently, as Internet access has become widespread.

Our brains are evolved and trained to recognize patterns—so well that we often see them when they aren't

there. Why? Our survival was likely better enhanced by false positives than false

“**Bridgton, Maine November 26, 2013—**  
I was walking my dog when I looked at the sky and saw a bright fireball with a tail falling to earth...It was pink, yellow, and orange. My dog and I ran all the way home. I told my husband, I called a friend, and I even emailed a sort of expert. It was falling towards New Hampshire... —MUFONcms.com”



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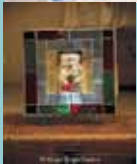
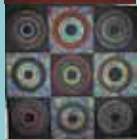
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## WILD SIDE



negatives when spotting food or a predator was a life-or-death issue. It doesn't matter if you occasionally spot something odd in the stars, so long as you manage to get all the blueberries. But missing the berries might mean you go hungry later, even if you're secure in your cold, hard appraisal of the night sky. Fast-forward to today, we've been reinforced to see UFOs in arrangements of light. If we *didn't* see patterns that weren't there, Rorschach tests would just look like inkblots to everyone.

**W**hat UFO spotters resolve these false positives into, however, might feed into a world view that would allow for something as world-changing as alien contact to be kept secret by some com-

bination of government or secret interest. People have always seen UFOs—perhaps we called them auguries or gods in an earlier age, but now that Jules Verne, Sputnik, and Apollo have flown within our orbit, now we see the aliens in the sky instead of the signals of Roman numina.

But why are we seeing so many of these patterns in Maine per capita? Maine suffers less from light pollution than many other states—there are more patterns to see. In addition to that, Mainers share a healthy skepticism that leads to the suspicion that we're not getting the full story from those who claim to lead us from far away (that is, the Military Industrial Complex). That was reinforced by American government propaganda efforts to explicitly not debunk UFO

“

**Old Orchard August 24, 2013**—Me and my friend were sitting on the beach looking at the stars. We saw two shooting stars (5 minutes in-between). A few minutes after the second shooting star, we saw a very fast, oval like object that had an orange glow. We first noticed the object when we were looking at a blinking star to the northeast. When we first noticed the object we thought it was a commercial plane. We then realized that planes do not glow orange or move as fast as the object we saw. The object was moving in a straight path moving outward to sea. The object was also gaining elevation as it was moving forward...The object then disappeared as if it was never there.—MUFONcms.com

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**Biddeford January 11, 2014**—  
 Woke up at 0345 to get a glass of water. Looked out the window and just above the telephone pole was this round, white, lighted object. I watched it for twenty to thirty minutes, went back to my chair, and then got up again to see if it was still there. This time it was at the same location, but lights were glittering in this circular object like diamonds glittering. I continued to watch until 0500...There were no stars in the sky, and it was overcast. At 0500 I went back to my chair to sleep, and when I did, the object still there, hovering and glittering like a diamonds in bright white sparkler-type lights.—MUFONcms.com



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theories—finding it useful for those who might have actually seen a Department of Defense device to simply be called crackpots by the rest of the population. In a clear night sky, an almost invisible cloud can refract and literally change the perceived direction of the navigation lights of a P-3 or other large aircraft (Brunswick Naval Air Station was one of the busiest sites for maritime patrol aircraft during the Cold War and had a population over 10,000 in 1994, making it one of Maine's cities). More patrol aircraft per capita than any other state means more spotting, and former spotters and skywatchers form the nucleus of a sighting and posting subculture that that continues to confirm and affirm the sightings online, even now that the base is closed down.

There are still more theories that relate specifically to Mainers, one of them involving Allen's Coffee Brandy. Maine is one sweet place, after all. ■

➤ To see a map quantifying UFO sightings in the U.S., visit [portlandmonthly.com/portmag/2014/06/ufomap](http://portlandmonthly.com/portmag/2014/06/ufomap).



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