

DAYLIGHT OBSERVATION FROM A TOPPENISH PARKING LOT

An employee at the Yakama Nation administration offices in Toppenish, Washington observed an object in the sky above him, from the parking lot at approximately noon on August 8, 2002. The weather was hot and dry, with a completely clear sky. He observed the object for approximately forty five minutes, before deciding to photograph it with his digital camera.

The object was described as "flipping around" in the sky. One still photograph was taken and a short video clip - 5.37 second long - was made using the camera's video recording mode. The audio track from the video appears to contain only background noise. No specific camera settings were reported.

The camera used was a Sony Mavica (FD-95) with still and video modes. The Mavica is typical of consumer digital cameras manufactured around early 2000. It has a 40 mm zoom lens, with an aperture of f2.8 (auto) or 3.0 (manual), a 1600x1200 pixel sensing array, and uses either a floppy disk or stick memory for still photo storage in the JPEG (compressed) format. Video storage is done in the MPEG (compressed) format to the floppy disk.

A full frame still photo of the object is shown in Figure 1. An enhanced (contrast and sharpening) enlargement is shown in Figure 2. The video clip can be run by clicking [here](#). The still photograph contains a large number of artifacts from the JPEG compression and the fact that the object was very small, compared to frame size.



Figure 1. Full frame image.



Figure 2. Enlarged and enhanced image.

The video clip is even less distinct as a result of MPEG compression artifacts and the camera being hand-held. The observer reported that the lens was zoomed an indeterminate number of times to keep the object in the viewfinder.

The general shape of the object and behavior is similar to other objects seen and photographed in previous years and in other locations. Beyond the latter fact, little additional information can be gleaned from the data. Any further conclusions drawn from the camera data should be done with caution, since they are severely "mangled" by digital camera artifacts.

Daylight observations of the type reported here are relatively rare. It is to the credit of the witness that he managed to get the results he did obtain, given the circumstances of the observation and available photographic equipment.