

# The 2018 Canadian UFO Survey

## Overview

Since 1989, Ufology Research (formerly Ufology Research of Manitoba) has solicited UFO case data from known and active investigators and researchers in Canada. The goal has been to provide data for use by researchers trying to understand this controversial phenomenon. Similar efforts 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.

2018 marked the 30th year of collecting and analysing Canadian UFO report data by Ufology Research. A 30-year compilation and analyses of Canadian UFO data is in preparation.

With some gaps in data, tables of most Canadian UFO reports included in the annual surveys from 1989 to the present are available online at: <http://survey.canadianuforeport.com>

## The 2018 Canadian UFO Survey: Summary of Results

- There were 937 UFO sightings reported in Canada in 2018.
- The number of UFO sightings reported in 2018 is the lowest on record since 2004, when 882 cases were filed. In fact, for the past several years, the number of UFO reports each year was well over 1,000. Despite this, the 2018 number of cases is only about a 15 percent decline from last year, and the number may well recover in 2019.
- In 2018, Quebec led all Canadian provinces with 41 per cent of all Canadian UFO reports, followed by Ontario (24 per cent) and BC (13 per cent).
- In 2018, about five per cent of all UFO reports were classified as unexplained.
- The typical UFO sighting lasted approximately 16 minutes in 2018.

The study found that about 40 per cent of all UFO sightings were of simple lights in the sky. Witnesses also reported point sources of light, 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.

Numbers of reported UFO sightings remain high. Several theories for this 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 small number are objects with definite shapes observed within the witnesses' frame of reference.

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 via e-mail: [canadianuforeport@hotmail.com](mailto:canadianuforeport@hotmail.com)

Twitter: @ufologyresearch

## UFO Reports in Canada

The following table shows the number of reported UFOs per year since 1989, collected by Ufology Research.

Year	Number
1989	154
1990	254
1991	169
1992	223
1993	482
1994	189
1995	183
1996	258
1997	284
1998	195
1999	259
2000	263
2001	375
2002	483
2003	673
2004	882
2005	769
2006	738
2007	836
2008	1004
2009	831
2010	968
2011	986
2012	1982
2013	1180
2014	1021
2015	1268
2016	1131
2017	1101
2018	937

The number of UFO reports per year has varied, although there has been a general trend towards a gradual increase in yearly UFO report numbers over the past 30 years, with spikes in some years such as 1993, 2008 and 2012, when there were almost 2,000 reports in one year. In fact, between 2012 and 2017, it appeared that the number of UFO reports had plateaued. The

15 percent drop in 2018 is interesting, but it could in fact be an anomaly. One can only speculate as to the cause, and whether the number will rebound in 2019.

Although there may be a perceived notion that UFOs are not being reported with as much frequency as in the past, this is not true. UFOs have not “gone away.” This data clearly contradicts comments by those who would assert that UFOs are a ‘passing fad’ or that UFO sightings are decreasing. A total of 937 UFO reports in one country in a single year is still quite remarkable.

For this study, the working definition of a UFO is: “an object seen in the sky which its observer cannot identify.”

Polls have shown that about ten per cent of the Canadian population believe they have seen UFOs. This means that about 3.7 million Canadians have seen UFOs. However, studies have also shown that only about ten per cent of all witnesses of UFOs report their experiences (although this percentage is thought to be much lower).

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?

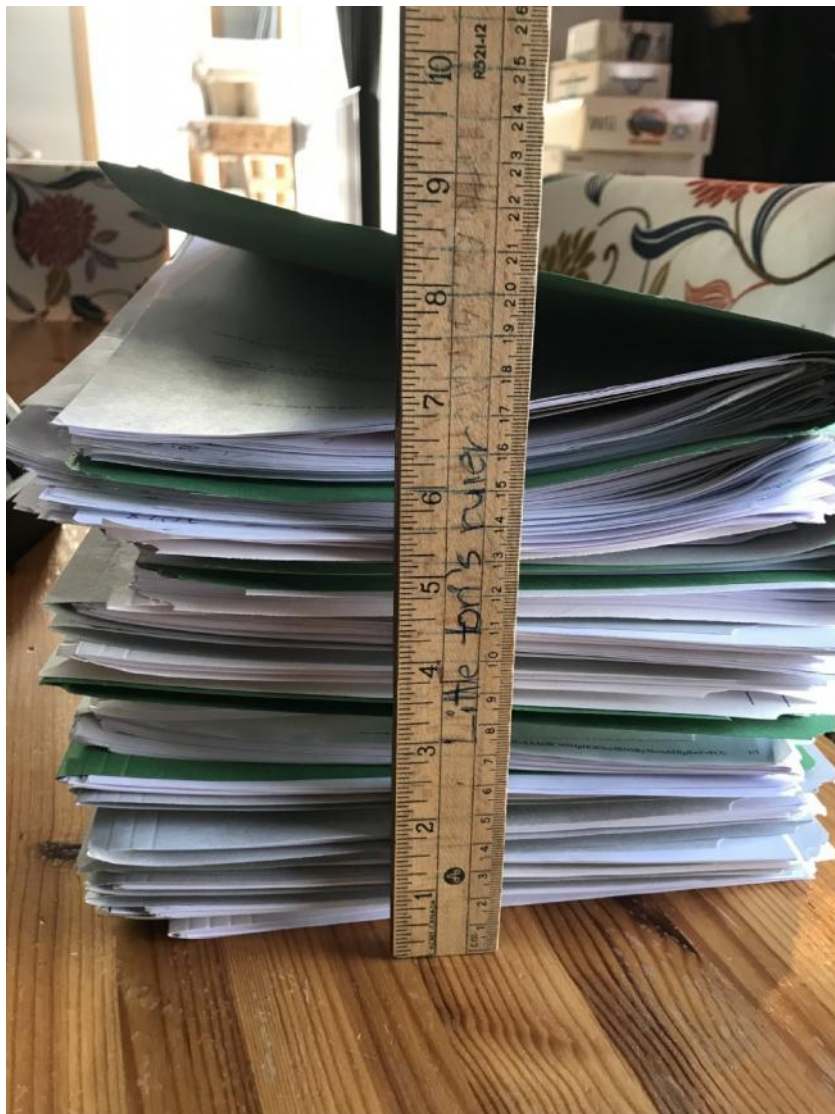
These are questions that only continued and rational research can answer, and only if researchers have the support and encouragement of both scientists and the public.

## Method

Data for each UFO case was obtained by Ufology Research from participating researchers across Canada, through receipt of reports directly from witnesses, or through data mining of known websites devoted to UFO reports. This method has not changed significantly during the past 30 years.

The original intent of the Canadian UFO Survey was to understand exactly how many cases were being reported in a given year, and how they were distributed across the country. It was also deemed desirable to know other characteristics of the UFO reports, such as predominant colours, the durations of sightings, reported shapes, and which UFO types were most common.

The information available on each case was then coded by members of Ufology Research, entered into a database, and statistically analysed.



An example of the coding key is as follows:

Example: 2018 01 09 1530 Vernon BC DD 900 silver 2 ps 6 5 UFOBC p 4 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.

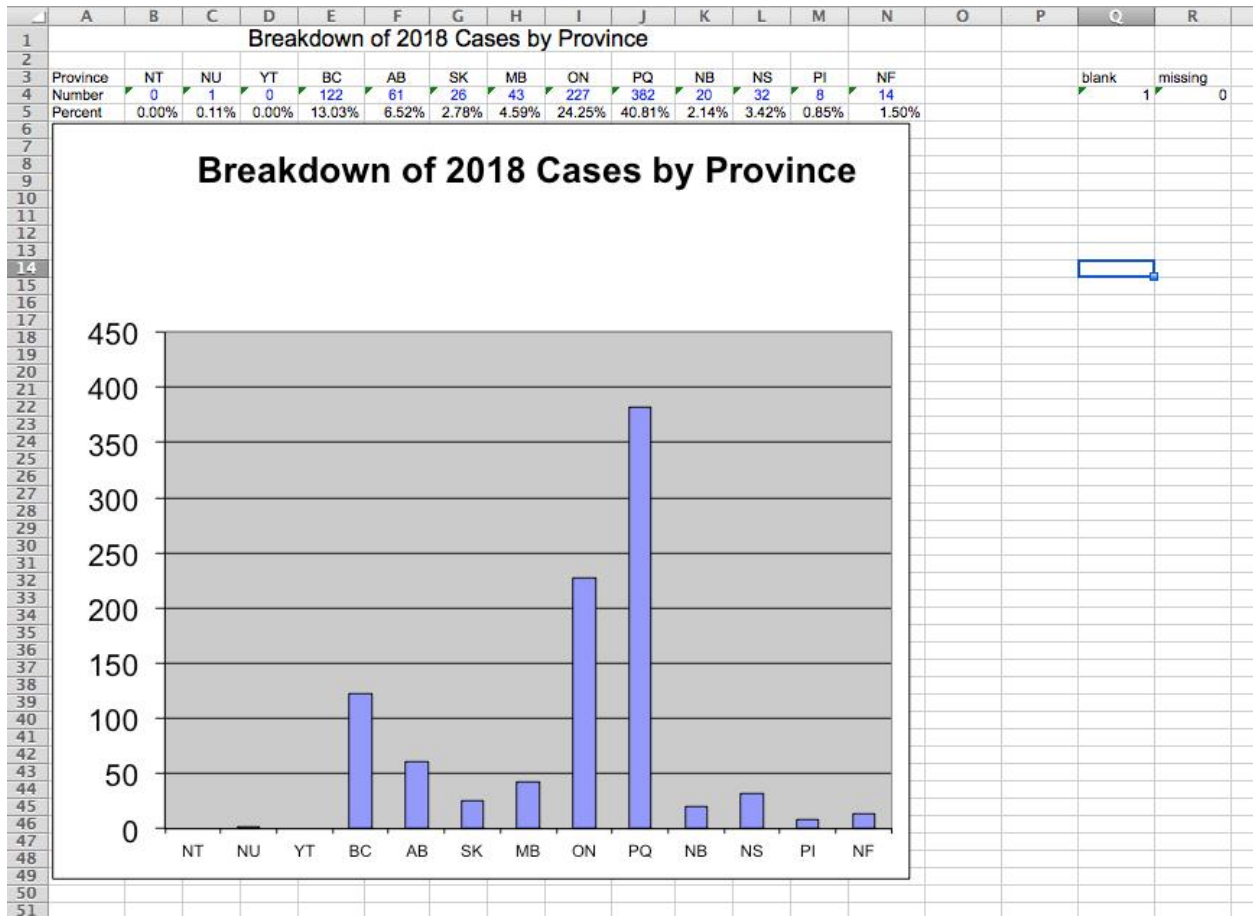
A detailed set of guidelines for coding the case information was provided to those working on the data.



## Distribution of UFO Reports Across Canada

In 2018, Quebec had about 41 per cent of all UFO sightings reported in Canada. This is slightly down from 47 percent in 2017. Conversely, the percentage of UFO reports in Ontario increased from 22 per cent in 2017 to 24 per cent in 2018. The decrease in Quebec cases is also offset by slight gains in other provinces. For example, Manitoba cases increased from about two per cent to nearing five percent, and Saskatchewan more than doubled its percentage of UFO reports compared with the national values. BC numbers remained more or less stable, and the Maritime provinces had almost 75 sightings, or almost eight percent of all reported UFOs.

In addition, geographical names of UFO sighting locations were examined for trends. Many cities were found to have multiple reports, as noted. (Large metropolitan areas include their suburbs.)



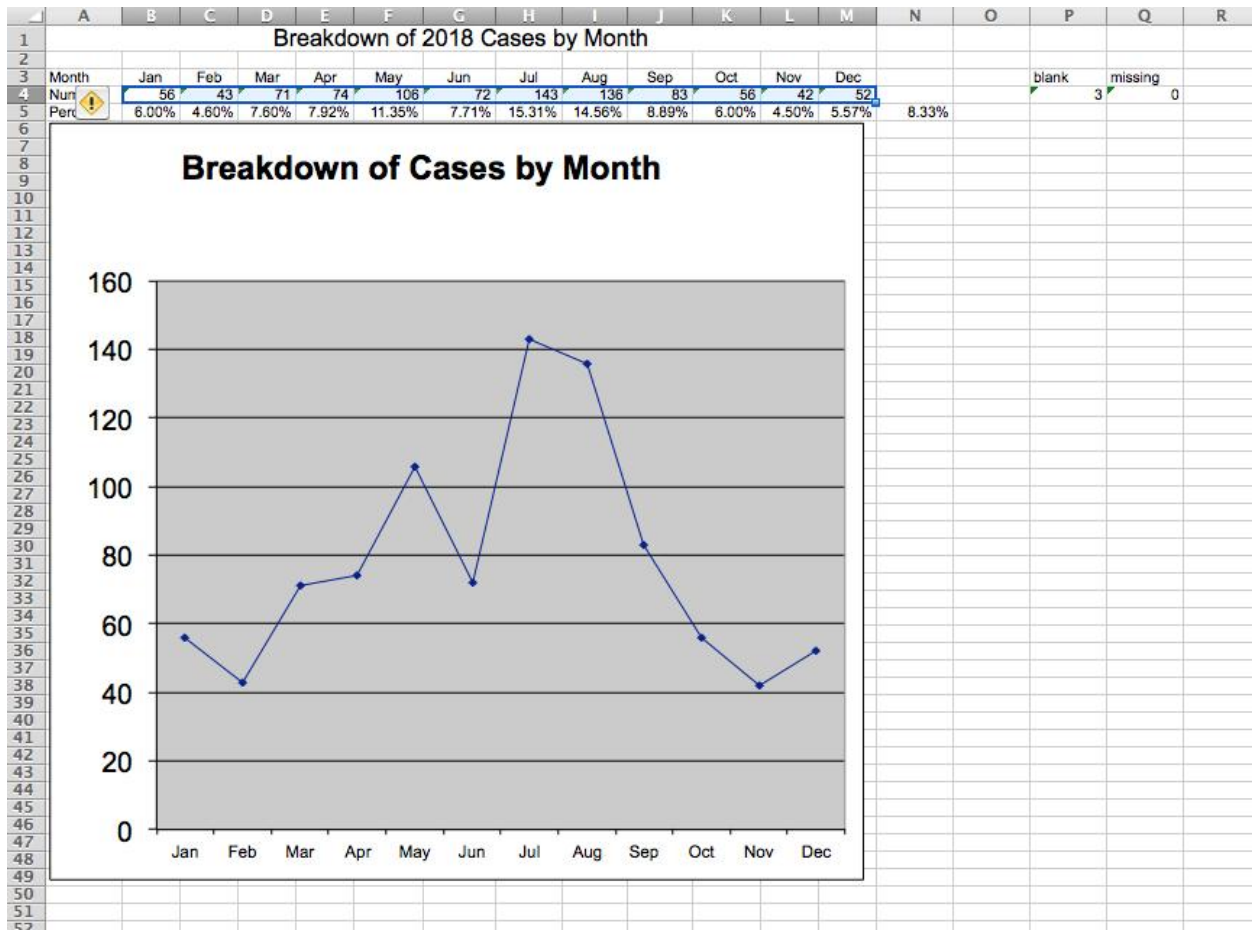
## Number of UFO Reports in Metropolitan Areas

Montreal	84
Toronto	82
Vancouver	52
Quebec City	29
Winnipeg	21
London	18
Edmonton	15
Calgary	14
Hamilton	11
Ottawa	8



## Monthly Trends in UFO Reports

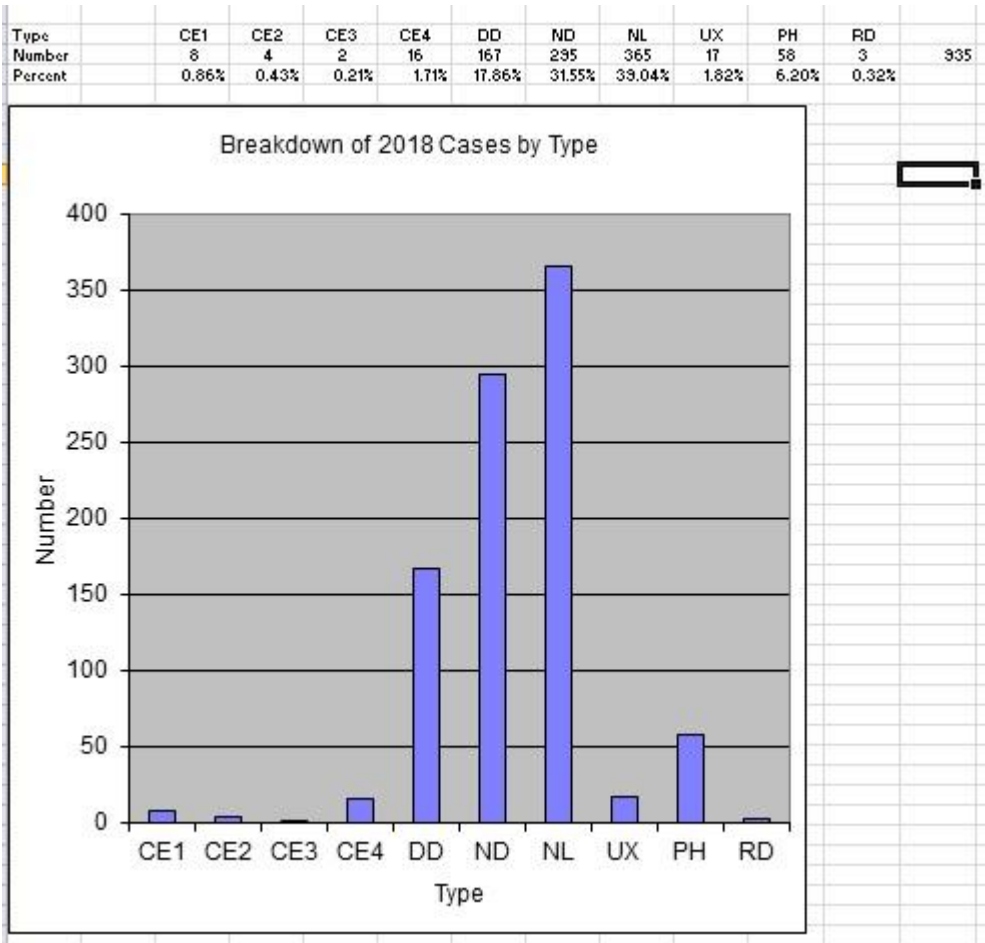
Monthly breakdowns of reports during each year tend to show slightly different patterns. UFO reports are generally thought to peak in summer and are at minimum in winter, presumably due to the more pleasant observing conditions during the summer months, when more witnesses are outside. In Canada in 2018, July and August numbers were again high, but report numbers were unusually high in May as well, with a pronounced trough in June. In fact, June only had about as many UFO cases as in much cooler months of March and April.



## 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. Proportionally, Daylight Discs increased significantly in 2018, from 13 percent in 2017 to almost 18 percent, but most cases still were Nocturnal Lights and Nocturnal Discs, which comprised more than 70 per cent of cases, similar to 2017.

Three per cent of all reported UFO cases in 2018 were Close Encounters, emphasizing the reality that 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. Speculation on what aliens may or may not be doing in our airspace seems almost completely unconnected to the question of what are actually being reported as UFOs.



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.

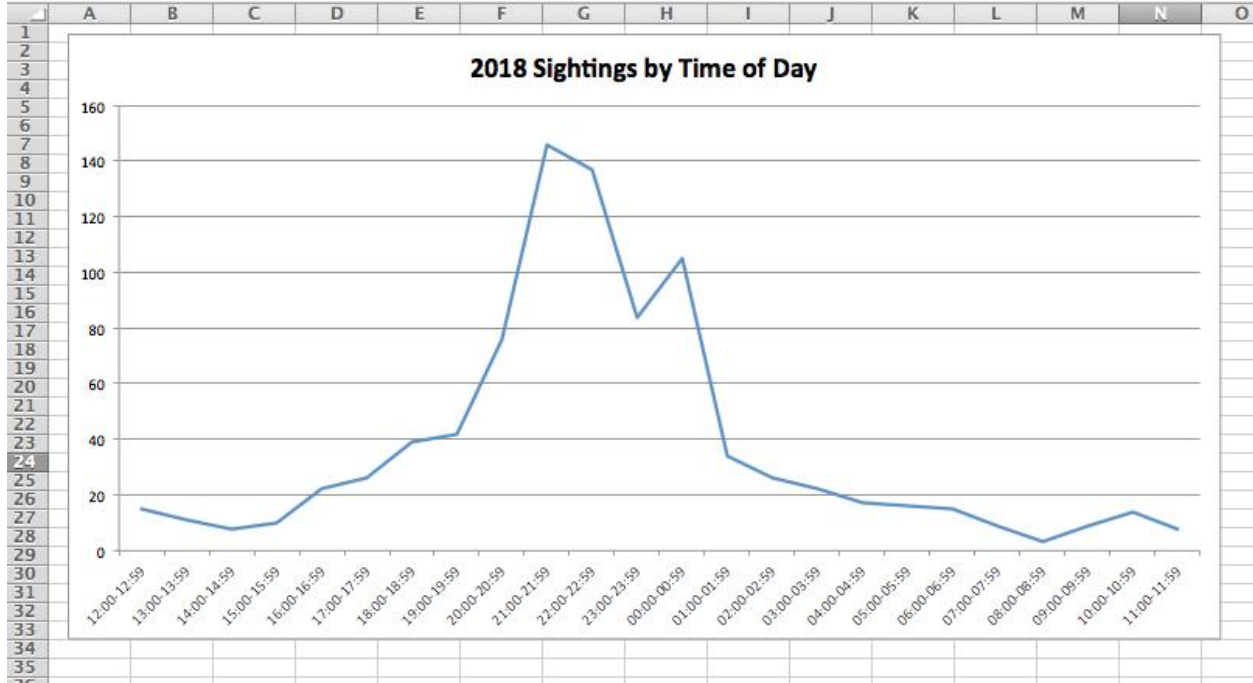
### **Other Report Types**

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. However, about 30 per cent of all UFO reports are accompanied by photographs or videos (usually from cell phone cameras). This is one rejoinder to the complaint to there are no photos of UFOs, considering the abundance of cameras. Of course, the problem is not that there are no photos or videos of UFOs, but that there are so few good, high-quality, and information-rich useful photos of UFOs.

EV indicates a case in which physical evidence was observed (not necessarily related to any observed object) and RD is a case in which an object was detected with radar but not necessarily observed. UX cases are those in which anomalous phenomena are reported and believed by witnesses to be UFO-related, but no UFO was actually seen. These include reports of "odd sounds" and dreams.

## Hourly Distribution

The hourly distribution of cases has usually followed a similar pattern every year, with a peak at 2200 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. The otherwise bell-shaped distribution in 2018 has one anomaly, the 11:00 pm hour, which is lower than expected.



## 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 most people tend to badly misjudge the flow of time.

Although a witness' 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.

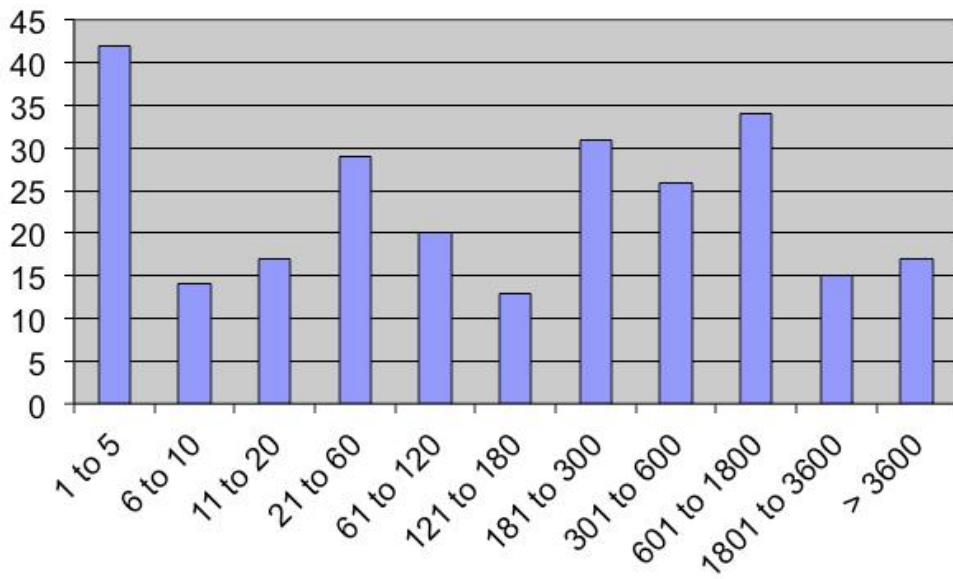
The average duration of UFO sightings in Canada in 2018 was about 16 minutes, similar to other years. These significant lengths of time suggest some simple explanations. In fact, the duration of a sighting is one of the biggest clues to its explanation. Experience in studying UFO reports has shown us 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. Long-duration sightings tend to occur in the early morning hours, from about midnight until 6:00 a.m.

# Breakdown of 2018 Cases by Duration of Sighting

Average = 977

Duration (in seconds)	Number	
1 to 5	42	16.28%
6 to 10	14	5.43%
11 to 20	17	6.59%
21 to 60	29	11.24%
61 to 120	20	7.75%
121 to 180	13	5.04%
181 to 300	31	12.02%
301 to 600	26	10.08%
601 to 1800	34	13.18%
1801 to 3600	15	5.81%
> 3600	17	6.59%

## Duration of 2018 Sightings

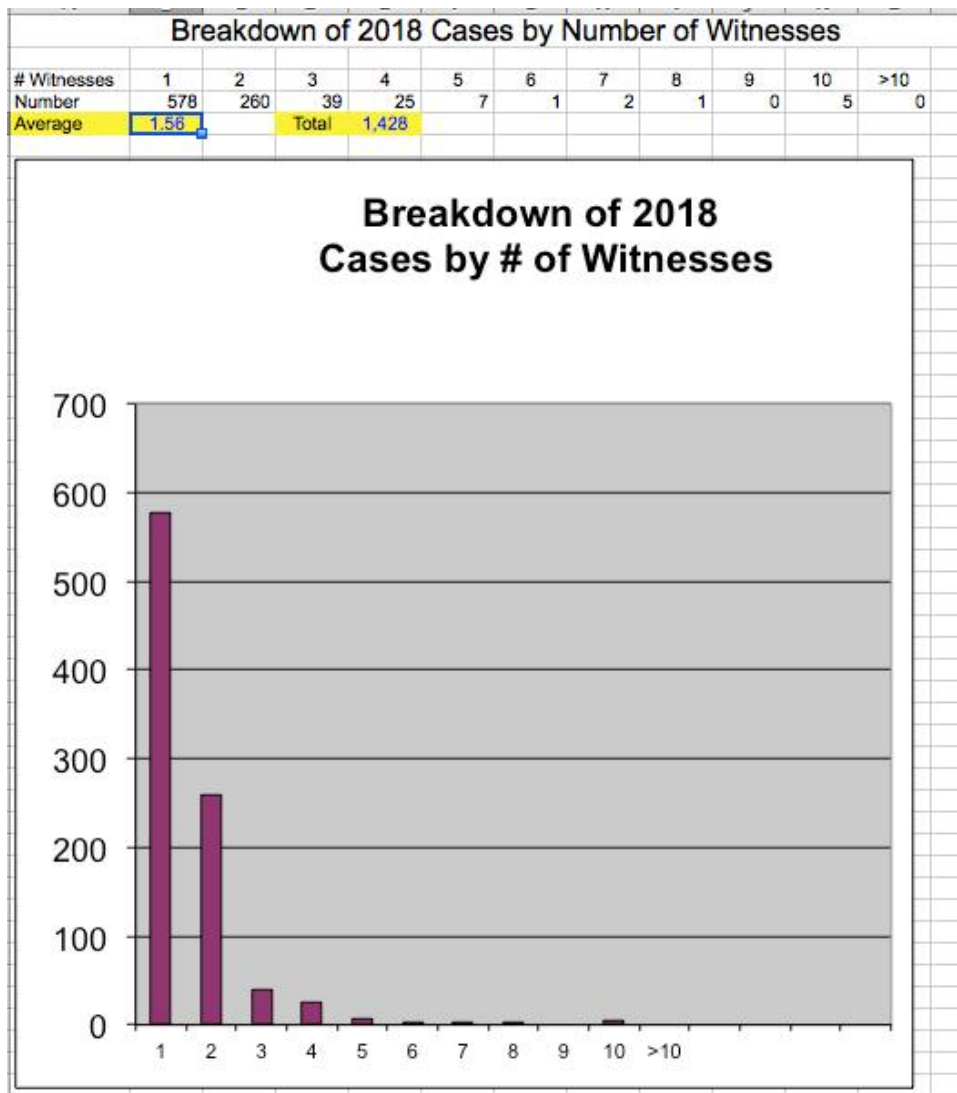




## Witnesses

The average number of witnesses per case in 2018 was approximately 1.5. This value has fluctuated between a high of 2.4 in 1996 to as low as 1.4 in 1990. This indicates that the typical UFO experience often has more than one witness, and supports the contention that UFO sightings represent observations of real, physical phenomena, since there is usually at least one corroborator present to support the sighting.

We can then extrapolate the number of Canadians who had seen UFOs in 2018. Given the number of cases in 2018 as 937, and using 1.5 as the number of witnesses per case, we get a value suggesting that over 1,400 people saw UFOs in 2018. Actually, the number is likely higher, as studies have shown that only about ten per cent of all UFO sightings are reported (most witnesses choose not to tell anyone, out of fear of ridicule or concern for their reputation). Multiplying by ten, this means it is probable that about 14,000 Canadians saw UFOs in 2018.





## Shape

Witnesses' descriptions of the shapes of UFOs vary greatly. In 2018, like other years, most reported UFOs were simply "point sources"—that is, "starlike" objects or distant lights. The classic "flying saucer" or disc-shaped object was reported in only 24 cases in 2018, suggesting perhaps that the classic model is out of vogue. Even the "triangle" shape, which some ufologists suggested had supplanted the classic "saucer," was only reported in 46 cases in 2018.

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.

One recurring problem is the description by a witness of a distant light as an "orb," implying a spherical shape. The term "orb" has also been adopted by many in ufology who infer that an orb is something mysterious and distinct from a simple light. Upon interviewing witnesses who describe orbs, however, it is clear they only observed a distant light, and their personal belief in alien visitation drove them to label it as something unexplainable.

	A	B	C	D	E
1	<b>Breakdown of 2018 Cases by Shape</b>				
2					
3					
4					
5		Shape	Number		
6					
7		Boomerang	6		
8		Cigar	38		
9		Cone	0		
10		Cylinder	0		
11		Diamond	12		
12		Disc	24		
13		Fireball	57		
14		Irregular	117		
15		Line	0		
16		Oval	21		
17		Point Source	397		
18		Rectangle	1		
19		Round	26	incl circle	
20		Sphere	138		
21		Square	0		
22		Triangle	46		
23					
24					
25					

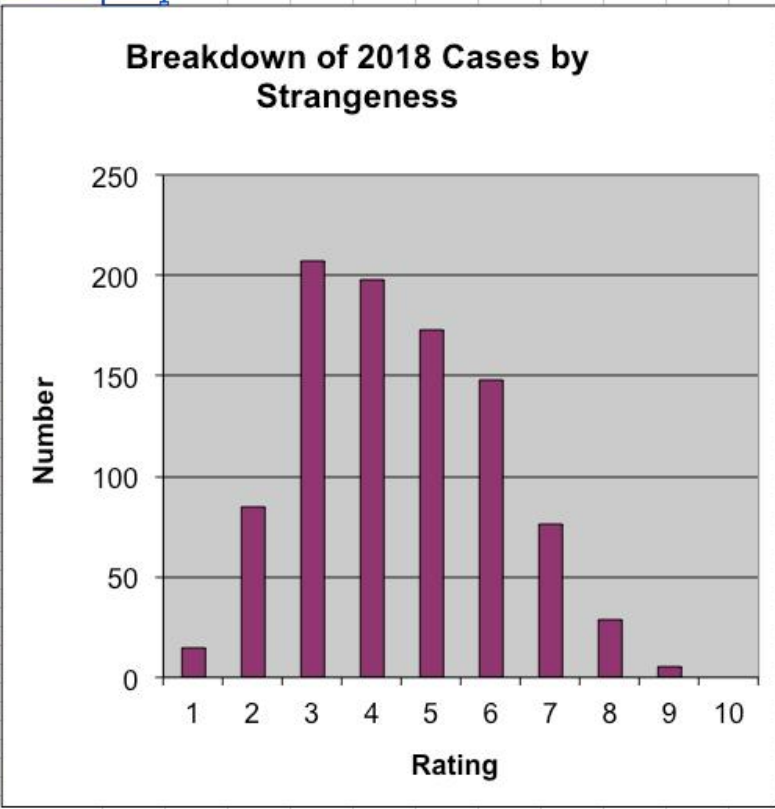
## Strangeness

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. A Strangeness rating is assigned during the data entry process, based on the given information about each case. It is subjective, but based on the general criteria noted above.

The numbers of UFO reports according to a 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 2018 was 4.44, up from the some previous years. Where 1 is considered not strange at all and 9 is considered exceptionally unusual, 4.4 suggests that most UFO reports are more interesting than simple lights in the sky, but not spectacular. 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. The overall Strangeness rating of Canadian UFO reports has been sliding slightly over time.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q
1	Breakdown of 2018 Cases by Strangeness																
2																	
3	Rating	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10					blank	missing
4	Number	15	85	207	198	173	148	76	29	5	0					1	0
5	Average	4.44															



## Reliability

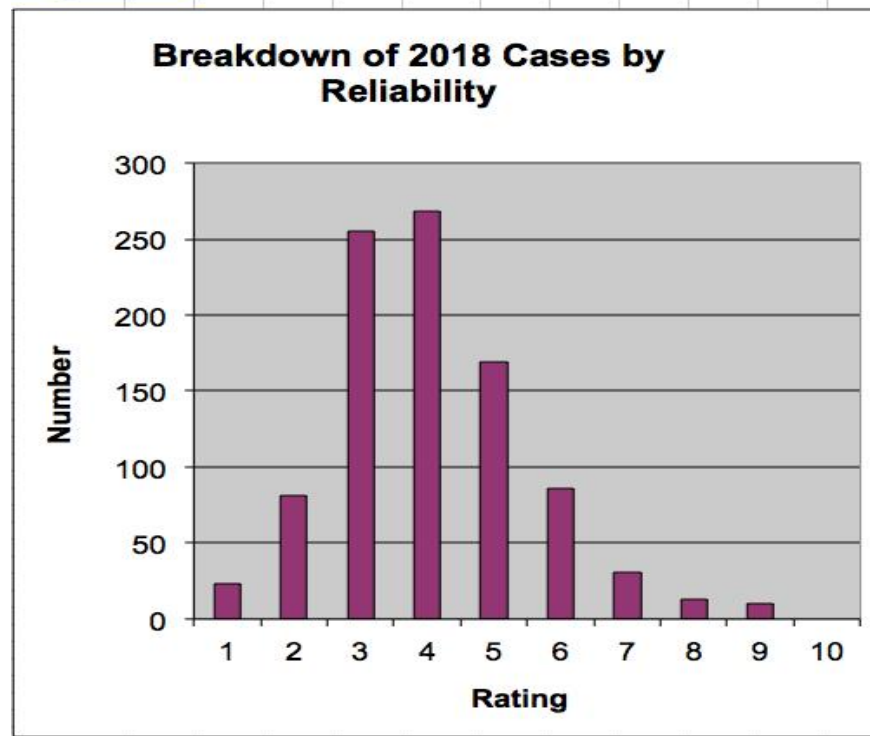
The average Reliability rating of Canadian UFO reports in 2018 was about 4, meaning that most cases had relatively little investigation, likely only a report form filled out by a witness, and without extensive supporting documentation or investigation.

In most years, there are approximately the same number of higher quality cases as those of low quality. However, in 2018, most reports had less than average information on the witness, basic investigation, and sparse data or description of the object(s) observed. Higher reliability cases 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 seem to comprise only a small fraction of all UFO data, a fact that makes 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 “high-quality unknowns” which will be discussed later. 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.

Breakdown of 2018 Cases by Reliability

Rating	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Number	23	81	255	268	169	86	31	13	10	0
Average	4.053									

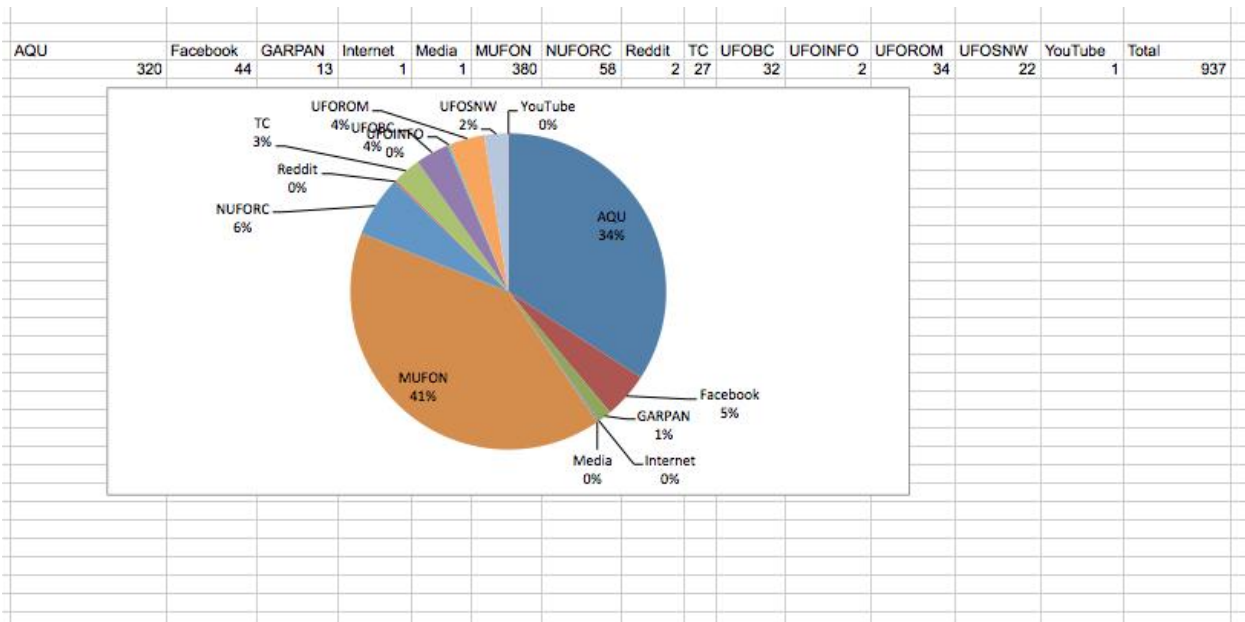


## Sources

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.

About 41 per cent of Canadian cases in 2018 were reported to the large organization known as the Mutual UFO Network (MUFON), which has a good online reporting system. Another lion's share was through l'Association québécoise d'ufologie (AQU), from which came 34 per cent of the 2018 case data. About six per cent of the total cases were obtained through the National UFO Reporting Center in the USA. Like MUFON, both AQU and NUFORC have a toll-free telephone number for reporting UFOs and a large sightings list created through voluntary submission of online report forms by witnesses. About four per cent of all UFO sightings reported in 2018 were sent directly to Ufology Research. About three per cent of all cases 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 directly data to UFOROM, despite requests, 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 good and thorough UFO investigation has nearly become extinct, if it existed at all. 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.



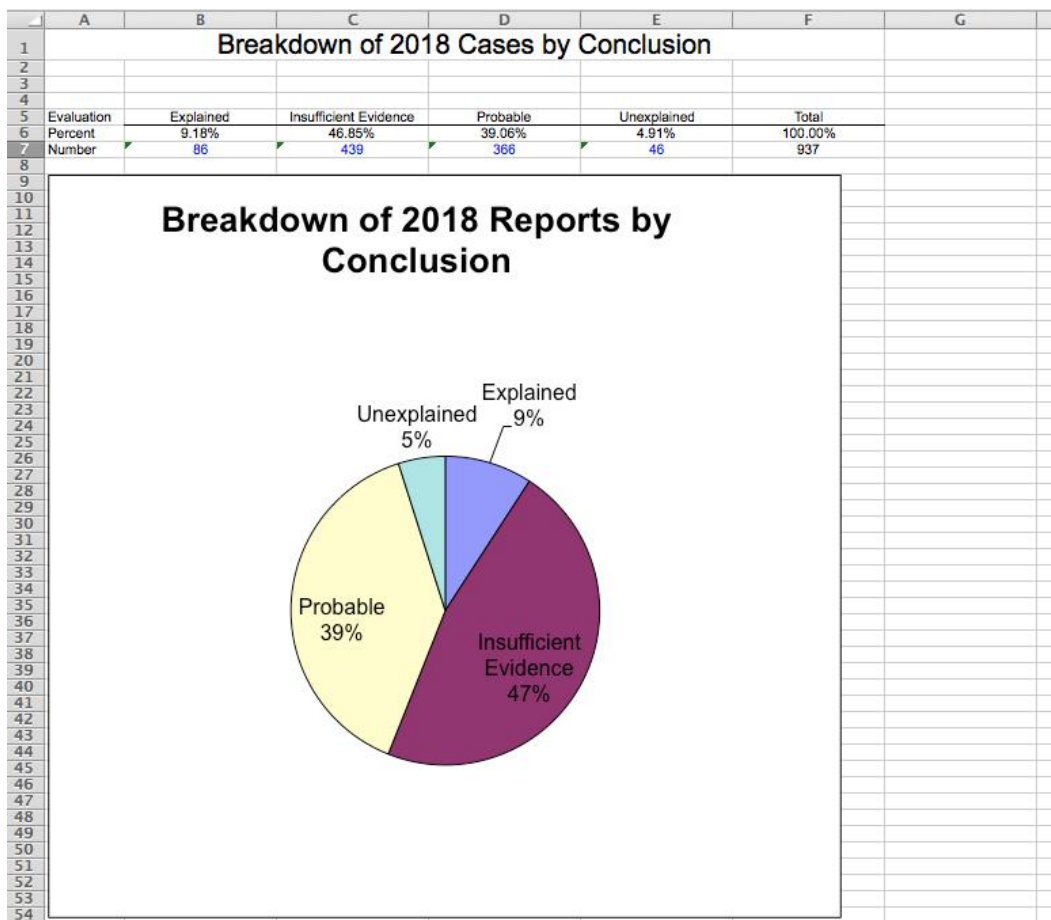
## Conclusion/Evaluation

There were four operative categories in the Canadian UFO Survey: 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.

The breakdown by Conclusion for 2018 cases was similar to results from previous years, with the percentage of unexplained cases at about five per cent of the total. This is one of the lowest rates of Unexplained cases since 2016, when the percentage was only four per cent.

The most significant finding, however, is that the percentage of cases with definite explanations is about nine per cent, the highest since 2005 when 12 per cent of cases had explanations.

In 2018, the cases labelled as having Possible or Probable explanations were at 39 per cent, while the cases considered as having Insufficient Information for an explanation were at 47 per cent, suggesting that almost half of all cases reviewed for the Canadian UFO Survey were lacking sufficient information for proper evaluation.



Evaluating UFO reports has both subjective and quantitative components.

E (Explained) is used when it can be determined with certainty that the UFO seen was a known object, such as a Chinese Lantern, a photographic defect, re-entering satellite, or astronomical object.

I (Insufficient Information) is used if there is information lacking that could help identify the UFO. A lack of a definite date or location is insufficient information, for example.

P (Possible or Probable Explanation) is used if the description of the observed UFO fits well with a prosaic explanation or a conventional object.

U (Unknown or Unexplained) is used if a data points are available, if the description and behaviour of the UFO do not easily conform to that of a conventional object. If there is supporting documentation and there has been some investigation to rule out a prosaic explanation, this increases the likelihood of coding the case as an Unknown.

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. Evaluation reflects a subjective evaluation by researchers who question whether a particular report has enough information to consider it as having a possible explanation or if there is simply not enough information to make that judgement. This situation has likely arisen because very few UFO sightings are ever fully investigated, as most are simply reported and published online, often without any follow-up or investigation possible. 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.

The level and quality of UFO report investigation varies because there are no explicit and rigorous 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.

## 2018 Higher-Quality Unknowns

February 8, 2018      6:10 pm      Qualicum Beach, BC

Over the course of about half an hour, several lights appeared over the ocean, moving around, brightening and dimming, casting reflections on the water. From UFOBC

May 21, 2018          4:54 pm      Paradise, NL

A dark crescent-shaped object moved in a peculiar rocking motion as it went across the sky before being lost to sight in the distance. From MUFON

May 22, 2018          5:29 pm      New Sarepta, AB

An unidentified aircraft was observed on radar by Edmonton ATC. The unidentified return was at 3500 feet, climbing to 8000 feet, and made no contact with the tower. From Transport Canada

July 28, 2018          3:00 am      Mississauga, ON

Triangular-shaped object with red and blue lights to lower right of Moon. Stationary, and when clouds passed in front of it, was still there. Photos taken before more clouds moved in. From MUFON

July 30, 2018          11:50 pm      Morden, MB

Silent transparent triangle with no lights, but with circular structure inside, crossed the sky from West, making no sound. From MUFON

August 4, 2018        9:48 pm      Laurentides, PQ

Lighted object approached witnesses from Northwest, changed direction, stopped over trees, then accelerated and flew to the North. From AQU

September 30, 2018   11:00 pm      Sturgeon, PI

Lighted object came from the West, stopped, shot off at 90-degree angle. It flew in a circle, stopped again, then moved off to the East and was lost to sight. From Ufology Research

November 7, 2018     6:42 am      Regina, SK

A commercial aircraft flying from Cincinnati to Calgary reported observing bright lights in the vicinity of Regina while in flight at 50,000 feet. No other air traffic was in the area at the time. From Transport Canada

December 23, 2018    10:30 pm      Yarmouth, NS

Lights were reported by both a witness on land and one at sea. Three primary radar returns were recorded at the observed location, which was about 15 km west of Yarmouth. From Transport Canada



In addition, a fascinating and very detailed report was received from witnesses to an unusual daytime sighting of a spherical object that was also recorded on video.

September 15, 2018 3:10 pm Cape Sable Island, NS

Spherical object moved from ocean towards shore in curving flight path, flying against the prevailing wind. While suggested to be a balloon of some kind, the several experienced witnesses insisted the object differed in characteristics of a balloon.

We have still listed it as having a possible explanation, but this remains a curious case.

