

With the formation of the NJAA UAP/UFO Group (whew! Lots of acronyms there) I naturally gave some thought to what we have flying over our heads that are NOT mysterious. After all, we are located within the busy Philadelphia-Newark/New York flight corridor, with aircraft rising regularly from Allentown and Teterboro. I am particularly intrigued by reports from civil and military pilots, since they make their living in the skies and hesitate to discuss their sightings for fear of losing their licenses. I'm most critical (but still very interested) in reports from the average "man-in-the street," but they don't have a history of looking up that often. So, for FUN I put together a list of "things" that might be misconstrued as extraterrestrial (or at least weird).

1. **Drones** – probably the greatest growing nuisance we will encounter and a favorite of hoaxers.
2. **Mylar Balloons** – years ago I tracked one very high in the day sky as it moved along an irregular path, occasionally stopping.
3. **Sky Lanterns** – using fire to send off your trash.
4. **Venus** – UFO reports increase when this planet is high in the sky.
5. **The International Space Station** – with its eerie lack of navigation lights and fast motion across the sky.
6. **Iridium satellite flares** – I have encountered these unexpectedly.
7. **Starlink satellite trains** – plus whatever constellations of satellites other countries are placing into orbit.
8. **Triplet Low Earth Orbit satellites** (i.e Chinese Yaogan 31) – I saw one of these tight-formation triplets on its north-to-south-pole orbit. I was informed that they track naval vessels.
9. **Moonlight through dark trees** – admit it. We have all been fooled for at least a few seconds by a crescent moon we forgot about that is peeping through the leaves of a tall, darkened tree.
10. **Fireflies** – during June, especially when observing near water, these appear suddenly off the corner of our eye and across our eyepiece field. Meteors?
11. **Slow Meteors** – long ago, at an NJAA star party in Chester, NJ, we were all treated to a meteor cruising across the sky for 15+ seconds.
12. **Twilight rocket launch exhaust plumes and released vapor tracers** – saw the latter once as a kid low in the southern sky from NJ.
13. **Birds!** – look up the 1951 Lubbock Lights to understand.

- 14. Geological phenomena** – “spook lights” along railroad tracks. These have been reported around the country, including in Hillsborough, NJ. Rather than the ghost of a deceased lineman searching for his head with his lantern, there is another theory. Rock pressure piezo-electric effects amplified by the parallel rails.
- 15. Aircraft** – depending upon the aircraft type and distance and angle at which you are viewing it, its lights may not be visible – or may be deceiving! Some airliners with vertical stabilizer logo lights add to the confusion. During the day reflected sunlight off very distant airliners cause them to appear only as a glowing letter “L” on its side.
- 16. Atmospheric optics** – halo complex features such as sundogs, moon dogs, 22 degree haloes and horizontal mirages (Fata Morgana).

**Parting note:** if you should see three lights in formation but the stars or clouds between them are not blotted out, you are only seeing three lights. Not a triangular starship.

**John Andrews**