

SOFIA Prepares for Short Science

November 10 2010, by Beth Hagenauer



Cornell University's Faint Object Infrared Camera for the SOFIA Telescope, or FORCAST, is mounted on the telescope during preparation leading to Short Science flights. (NASA / Tom Tschida)

(PhysOrg.com) -- The SOFIA flying observatory was the subject of several nights of telescope system checkout activities in mid-October in preparation for upcoming early astronomical science flights.

The Stratospheric Observatory for Infrared Astronomy's 747SP was rolled out of its hangar in Palmdale, Calif., on several nights in mid-October for ground-based telescope activities that concluded on Oct. 24. These tests of the individual subsystems and the entire integrated observatory system were in preparation for upcoming early astronomical science flights.

A Cornell University team, under the direction of principal investigator Terry Herter, developed the Faint Object Infrared Camera for the

[SOFIA](#) Telescope, or FORCAST, now mounted on the German-built telescope. FORCAST participated in evaluation of recent upgrades to the Mission Control and Communication System, or MCCS, a hardware and software system used by the on-board crew and scientists to control the flying observatory.

Within the MCCS is the Mission Control Subsystem, a software suite that monitors and controls the telescope assembly and ensures the telescope and the cavity door are positioned correctly. SOFIA scientists and engineers also assessed the pointing stability of the [telescope](#) assembly and accuracy of line-of-sight resets.

Additional nighttime ground operations testing occurred Nov. 2 and 3 using the Fast Diagnostic Camera developed by the German SOFIA Institute, University of Stuttgart, under the leadership of Juergen Wolf. This testing is a rehearsal for the upcoming observatory characterization flights scheduled for mid-November when operation of the entire [observatory](#) system will be checked out. The "Short Science" flight series will follow these two flights.

Provided by JPL/NASA

Citation: SOFIA Prepares for Short Science (2010, November 10) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2010-11-sofia-short-science.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.