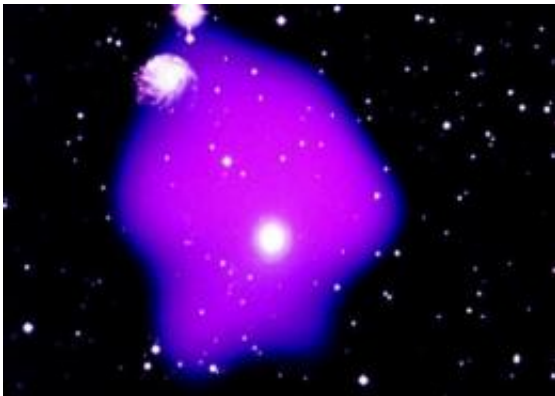


German satellite hurtles towards Earth: officials

October 12 2011



This photo released by NASA in 1993 shows galaxies taken in X-ray light by ROSAT (Roentgen Satellite). A German satellite around the size of a car is speeding towards Earth, officials said Wednesday, due to re-enter the atmosphere later this month but with little idea where fragments could land.

A German satellite around the size of a car is speeding towards Earth, officials said Wednesday, due to re-enter the atmosphere later this month but with little idea where fragments could land.

The x-ray observatory, named ROSAT, is expected to return to Earth between October 20 and 25, travelling at a speed of around 28,000 kilometres (17,000 miles) per hour, the German Aerospace Centre (DLR) said in a statement.

"The latest studies reveal that it is possible that up to 30 individual pieces

weighing a total of 1.6 tonnes may reach the surface of the Earth," the DLR said in a statement on its website.

"The time and location of re-entry cannot be predicted precisely," added the agency, citing [fluctuations](#) in [solar activity](#) for the uncertainty.

The satellite could re-enter the atmosphere three days before or after this range, the DLR said, stressing there was very little danger to humans.

Last month, a bus-sized US satellite that hurtled unpredictably toward Earth crossed over Africa and the northern Atlantic before plunging into the [Pacific Ocean](#) off California, [NASA](#) said.

There were no sightings or reliable accounts of damage as the six-tonne Upper Atmosphere Research Satellite (UARS) fell from the sky.

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