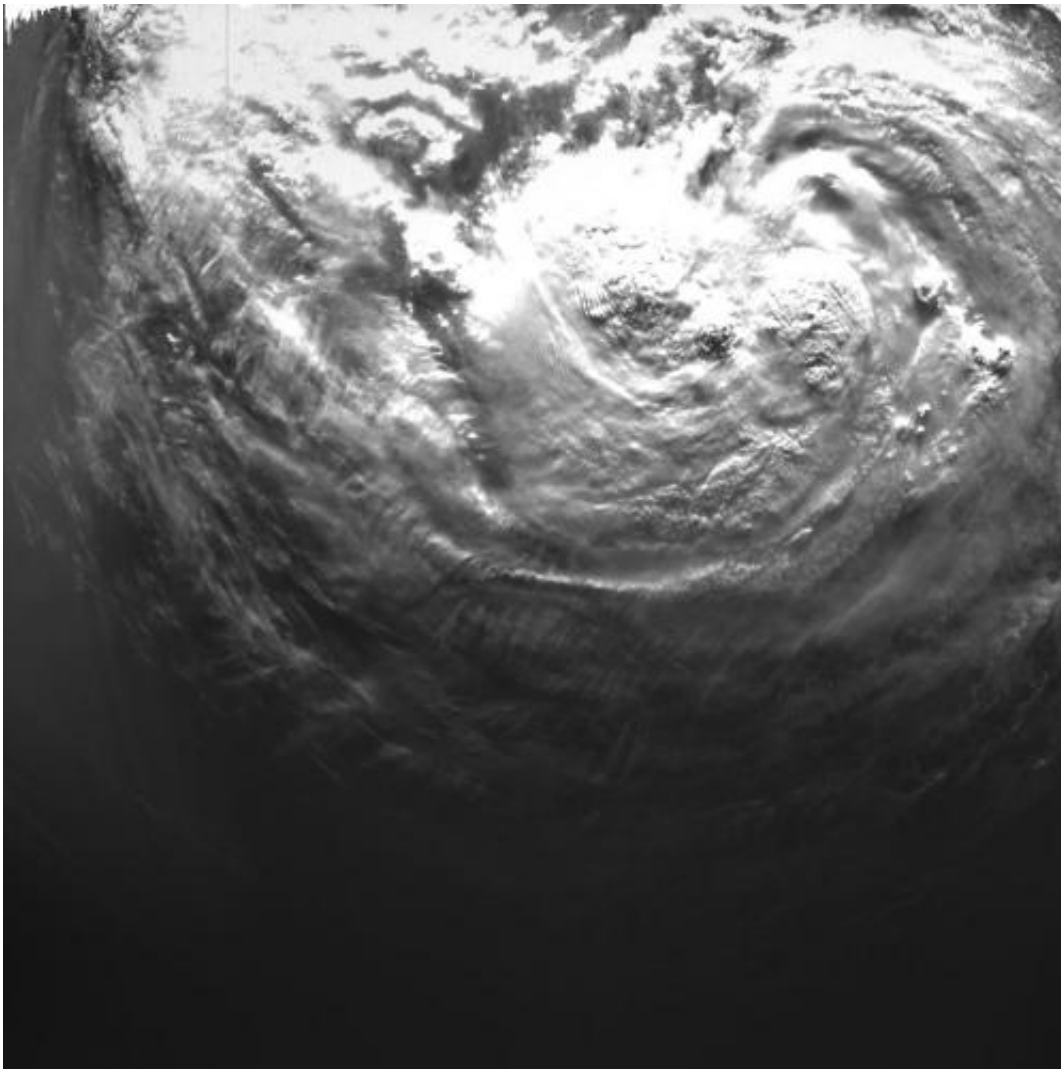


# Proba-2's espresso-cup microcamera snaps Hurricane Isaac

August 29 2012

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The X-Cam - Exploration Camera - on ESA's Proba-2 microsatellite caught this view of soon-to-be Hurricane Isaac as it moved west of the Florida coast into the Gulf of Mexico at 11:38:33 GMT on Monday 27 August 2012. Credits: ESA

An experimental camera smaller than an espresso cup on ESA's Proba-2 microsatellite caught this view of soon-to-be Hurricane Isaac as it moved west of the Florida coast into the Gulf of Mexico on Monday.

The [small satellite](#)'s X-Cam – Exploration Camera – acquired this image at 11:38:33 GMT on 27 August.

At the time, Isaac was a tropical storm with [maximum sustained winds](#) of around 100 km/hr, with storm-force winds extending around 360 km from its centre.

Isaac is expected to become a fully fledged hurricane during Tuesday, fed by the warm waters of the [Gulf of Mexico](#).

Less than a cubic metre in size, Proba-2's main mission focuses on observing the Sun and [space weather](#).

Observing in the visible and near-infrared with a 100° field of view, the monochrome X-Cam is housed on the underside of the [microsatellite](#), one of 17 new technologies being demonstrated by Proba-2.



Proba-2's wide-viewing Exploration Camera (X-Cam) is one of 17 new technologies being tested by this small satellite. The X-Cam, produced by Swiss company Micro-Cameras & Space Exploration, is only about the size of an espresso cup but can produce 100° field of view monochrome images. Credits: ESA/Micro-Cameras & Space Exploration

The instrument was designed by Swiss company Micro-Cameras & Space Exploration, the latest in a series of miniature cameras built by the company for ESA missions such as Proba-2 and SMART-1.

One on Rosetta – now cruising through deep space – should provide us with the first views from the surface of a comet in 2014.

X-Cam comes with embedded intelligence to let it judge the best automatic exposures for optimal image quality.

In future, similar compact imagers could keep watch on satellite surfaces to look out for damage or environmental effects.

The first mission in the 'Project for Onboard Autonomy' family, Proba-1, was launched in 2001 and still going strong. Proba-2 was launched in 2009. Proba-V, to monitor global vegetation, is due for launch next year.

Provided by European Space Agency

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