

Slooh space camera to track near-earth asteroid Apophis as it passes by Earth

January 8 2013

(Phys.org)—Named after an ancient Egyptian mythological demon, Apophis, a near-Earth asteroid with an estimated diameter of almost three football fields (270m), will make its close approach to Earth this week. Slooh Space Camera will cover its near-approach on Wednesday, January 9th, with several live shows on Slooh.com, free to the public, starting at 4 p.m. PST / 7 p.m. EST / 00:00 UTC (1/10)—International times here: goo.gl/ud5UL—accompanied by real-time discussions with Slooh President Patrick Paolucci, Slooh Outreach Coordinator and Engineer Paul Cox, and Documentary Filmmaker Duncan Copp. Viewers can watch live on their PC or iOS/Android mobile device.

This is not the first time Apophis has whizzed past [Earth](#). Discovered in 2004 by astronomers at the Kitt Peak National Observatory, Apophis was calculated at the time to have a 1 in 45 chance of it hitting the Earth in 2029. Thankfully, improved [prediction models](#) have eliminated those concerns, but there still is a chance Apophis could impact Earth sometime in the distant future, perhaps as soon as 2036.

In 2029, Apophis will still give Earth a very close shave as it will fly past at only 30,000 km. In comparison, the Moon orbits the Earth at 385,000 km and [communication satellites](#) at 36,000 km.

At its maximum brightness, Apophis on January 9th will be at a magnitude of 19.7—not bright enough to view through a backyard telescope, but reasonably bright through Slooh telescopes in the Canary Islands.

Says Patrick Paolucci, "Alone among all these near-Earth asteroids that have passed our way in recent years, Apophis has generated the most concern worldwide because of its extremely close approach in 2029 and potential impact, albeit small, in 2036. We are excited to cover this asteroid live for the general public."

Provided by Slooh

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