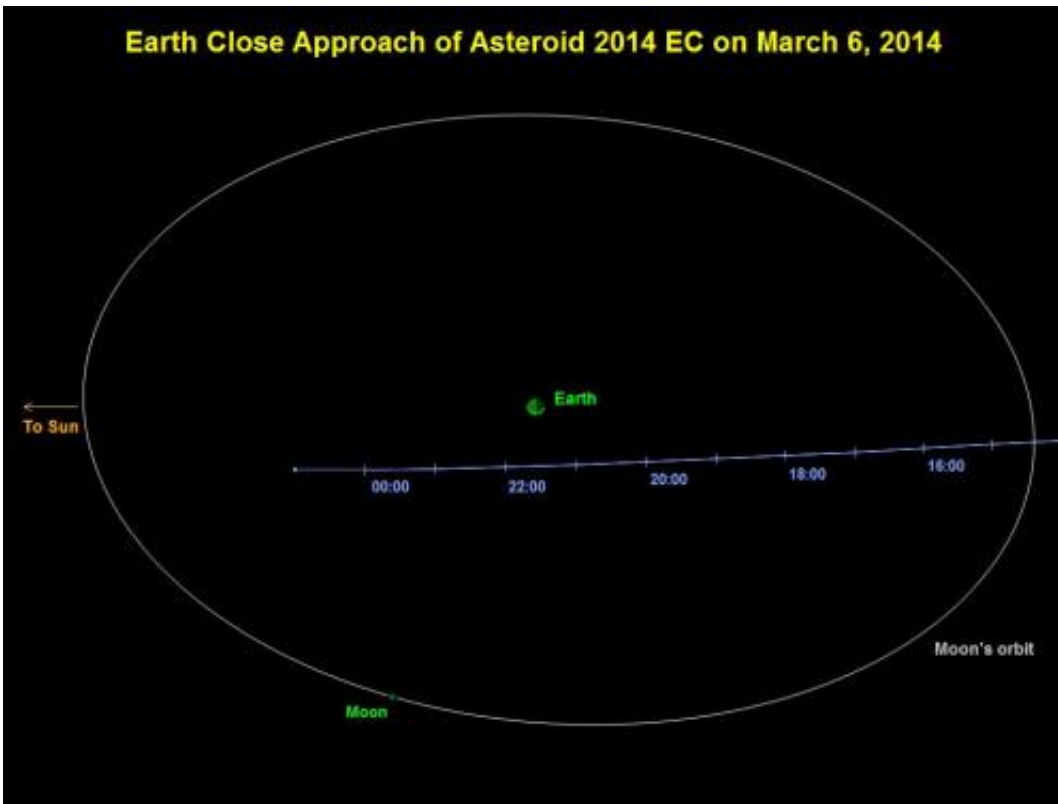


Small asteroid will pass earth safely on Thursday

March 7 2014



This graphic depicts the passage of asteroid 2014 EC past Earth on March 6, 2014. The asteroid's closest approach is a distance equivalent to about one-sixth of the distance between Earth and the moon. The indicated times are in Universal Time. Image Credit: NASA/JPL-Caltech

(Phys.org) —An asteroid about 25 feet (8 meters) across will safely pass Earth at about 1:21 p.m. PST (4:21 p.m. EST) today, March 6,

approaching us six times closer than the moon.

This distance, though not unusual, is closer than the Earth flyby of a larger asteroid on Wednesday afternoon, March 5.

This afternoon's flyby object, asteroid 2014 EC, was discovered on March 5 by the Catalina Sky Survey near Tucson, Ariz. Its closest-approach distance, about 38,300 miles (61,600 kilometers), is between four and five Earth-diameters away from our home planet. It will not be visible to the unaided eye.

"This is not an unusual event," said Paul Chodas, a senior scientist in the Near-Earth Object Program Office at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Pasadena, Calif. "Objects of this size pass this close to the Earth several times every year."

A larger asteroid's flyby on Wednesday afternoon came within about nine-tenths of the distance to the moon. That asteroid, named 2014 DX110, is about 100 feet (30 meters) across. A third asteroid, 2014 EF, which is closer in size to today's 2014 EC, passed Earth at about 7 p.m. PST (10 p.m. EST) Wednesday, with closest approach about twice as far from Earth as 2014 EC's [closest approach](#).

NASA detects, tracks and characterizes asteroids and comets using both ground- and space-based telescopes. The Near-Earth Object Observations Program, for which the asteroid-watching portion is commonly called "Spaceguard," discovers these objects, characterizes a subset of them and identifies their close approaches to determine if any could be potentially hazardous to our planet.

Provided by NASA

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