

NASA and Slooh will ask amateur asteroid hunters for help

May 23 2014, by Elizabeth Howell



Artist's impression of an asteroid breaking up. Credit: NASA/JPL-Caltech

Do you lack a telescope, but have a burning desire to look for asteroids near Earth? No problem! NASA and the Slooh telescope network will soon have you covered, as the two entities have signed a new agreement allowing citizen scientists to look at these objects using Slooh.

This is all related to NASA's Asteroid Grand Challenge (which includes the agency's desire to [capture and redirect an asteroid](#) for further study.) What the two entities want to do is show citizen astronomers how to study asteroids after they are discovered by professionals, looking at properties such as their size and rotation and light reflectivity.

Additionally, Slooh will add 10 new telescopes to the Institute of Astrophysics of the Canary Islands, the facility it is using until at least 2020. The hope is to add to the total of 10,957 discovered near-Earth asteroids, which include 1,472 that are "potentially hazardous." Astronomers believe only about 30% of the 140-meter sized asteroids near Earth have been discovered, and less than 1% of 30-meter sized asteroids. (Bigger ones more than a kilometer across are about 90% discovered.)

We talk about Slooh frequently on Universe Today because it is one of the go-to locations for live events happening in the cosmos, such as when a solar eclipse occurs. NASA also plans to work with Slooh on these live events, beginning with looking at [Comet 209P/LINEAR](#) and its meteor shower when it goes past our planet Friday (May 23).

"This partnership is a great validation of our approach to engage the public in the exploration of space," stated Michael Paolucci, the founder and CEO of Slooh.



Screenshot from a live webcast from SLOOH Space Camera.

"NASA understands the importance of citizen science, and knows that a good way to get amateur astronomers involved is to offer them ways to do productive astronomy. Slooh does that by giving them remote access to great telescopes situated at leading observatory sites around the world."

Source: [Universe Today](#)

Citation: NASA and Slooh will ask amateur asteroid hunters for help (2014, May 23) retrieved 24 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2014-05-nasa-slooh-amateur-asteroid-hunters.html>

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