

Live webcast of Comet LINEAR and new meteor shower, 23-24 May

May 20 2014

On the night of May 23rd, a new meteor shower, now named the Camelopardalids, will appear in the night sky with potential to become a full meteor storm as debris from Comet 209P/LINEAR passes by Earth this month. Slooh will cover this possible meteor storm and the parent comet live as it nears Earth during its orbit. Slooh will broadcast the comet event from its telescopes located off the west coast of Africa, at the Institute of Astrophysics of the Canary Islands, on May 23rd starting at 3 pm PDT / 6 pm EDT / 22:00 UTC—and then will follow up with live coverage of the new meteor shower starting at 8 pm PDT/ 11 pm EDT/ 03:00 UTC (5/24). Viewers can watch free on Slooh.com and ask questions during the comet show by using hashtag #slooh on Twitter.

Discovered in 2004, Comet 209P/LINEAR will be approximately 7.6 million miles (12.4 million km) or about 32 lunar distances away on the night of May 23rd. The live image stream of Comet 209P/LINEAR will be accompanied by discussions led by Slooh host Geoff Fox and Slooh observatory director Paul Cox with special guests from NASA, including meteor expert and senior research scientist Dr. Peter Jenniskens and Asteroid Grand Challenge Program Executive Jason Kessler. On the broadcast, Slooh will be announcing exciting news for citizen astronomers worldwide.

The live [meteor shower](#) will be covered jointly by Slooh and NASA's Marshall Spaceflight Center in Huntsville, Alabama, and will be accompanied by expert audio from Slooh astronomer Bob Berman.

It's not every day that we experience a brand new meteor shower. After all, the most reliable showers, like the famous Perseids every August 11, have been observed annually for over two thousand years

Sure, there are famous sometimes-showers that occasionally perform but are mostly yawners. The greatest of these is the amazing Leonid shower. In the wee pre-dawn hours of November 18, 2001, it produced six brilliant green shooting stars each minute, nearly all of which left behind long lingering trails like Cheshire cat smiles. That was probably the best meteor display of the past half century.

But now, famed meteor expert Peter Jenniskens joins Russian astronomer Mikhail Maslov in predicting a rich new meteor shower created by passages through our celestial neighborhood of comet LINEAR. They think we'll get a rich enough shower to produce at least three or four "shooting stars" per minute. It will be a brand new event.

Other meteor experts are slightly more conservative, but still think we should see a solid display on the night of May 23-24, and the individual meteors could be unusually brilliant. All of this will unfold during a two or three hour period.

Of all places in the world, the United States and southern Canada alone will be best positioned to observe these brief and potentially spectacular fireworks. It should occur starting before 2 am local and last almost until dawn. It's even a convenient Friday night or, rather, early Saturday morning. The Moon will be a harmless crescent, so the sky won't be spoiled by bright moonlight. And of course, Slooh will be employing its special low-light, super-sensitivity equipment and other imaging techniques to bring the event to you live, in real-time.

As for direction, expect the meteors to emanate from the north, radiating from the very faint constellation of Camelopardalis the Giraffe, which

will be located exactly beneath Polaris, the North Star.

Says Berman, "Those who live in the US or Canada, in a rural location away from city lights, or are willing to jump in their car and drive to such a place, and who have clear skies that night, should definitely watch the skies between 2 am EDT and 4 am EDT. We'll keep you updated in the days to come. But for now, mark your calendar to set the alarm the night of May 23-24, the early hours of Saturday morning. Start watching the sky, or tuning in to Slooh. This has the potential to be the most exciting celestial event in many years."

More information: Link: www.slooh.com

Provided by Slooh Community Observatory

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