

## Small meteorite strikes Nicaragua, government says

September 8 2014

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In this Sunday Sept. 7, 2014, publicly distributed handout photo provided by the Nicaraguan Army shows an impact crater made by a small meteorite in a wooded area near Managua's international airport and an air force base. Nicaraguan government spokeswoman Rosario Murillo said Sunday that a loud boom heard overnight by residents of the capital was a "relatively small" meteorite that "appears to have come off an asteroid that was passing close to Earth." (AP Photo/Nicaraguan Army)

Nicaragua's government said Sunday that a mysterious boom heard

overnight in the capital was made by a small meteorite that left a crater in a wooded area near Managua's airport.

Government spokeswoman Rosario Murillo said a committee formed by the [government](#) to study the event determined it was a "relatively small" meteorite that "appears to have come off an asteroid that was passing close to Earth."

Murillo said Nicaragua will ask international experts to help local scientists in understanding what happened.

The crater left by the meteorite had a radius of 12 meters (39 feet) and a depth of 5 meters (16 feet), said Humberto Saballos, a volcanologist with the Nicaraguan Institute of Territorial Studies who was on the committee. He said it is still not clear if the meteorite disintegrated or was buried.

Humberto Garcia, of the Astronomy Center at the National Autonomous University of Nicaragua, said the [meteorite](#) could be related to an asteroid that was forecast to pass by the planet Saturday night.

"We have to study it more because it could be ice or rock," he said.

Wilfried Strauch, an adviser to the Institute of Territorial Studies, said it was "very strange that no one reported a streak of light. We have to ask if anyone has a photo or something."

Local residents reported hearing a loud boom Saturday night, but said they didn't see anything strange in the sky.

"I was sitting on my porch and I saw nothing, then all of a sudden I heard a large blast. We thought it was a bomb because we felt an expansive wave," Jorge Santamaria told The Associated Press.

The site of the [crater](#) is near Managua's international airport and an [air force base](#). Only journalists from state media were allowed to visit it.

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