

SpaceX unmanned spaceship splashes down near Southern California

February 11 2015



SpaceX Dragon is seen while undocking from the International Space Station (ISS), on February 10, 2015

An unmanned Dragon spaceship splashed back to Earth on Tuesday after a successful supply run to the International Space Station but its owners were forced to scrub the launch of an important weather satellite on the other side of the continent.

The Dragon parachuted into the Pacific west of Mexico's Baja Peninsula at 4:45 p.m., according to Hawthorne, California-based SpaceX.

The capsule flew 5,000 pounds (2,250 kilograms) of groceries and belated Christmas presents to the space station last month. The station's astronauts had been awaiting supplies since a ship from another company was destroyed in an October launch explosion.

Dragon returned with science samples and broken equipment, including bad spacesuit parts.

The landing came about 90 minutes after SpaceX scrubbed the planned launch of a [weather satellite](#) called the Deep Space Climate Observatory from Cape Canaveral in Florida.

SpaceX called off its sunset launch with just 12 minutes remaining in the countdown because of gusts of 115 mph (185 kph) several miles (kilometers) up—strong enough to damage the rocket in flight.

It was the private company's second attempt in three days to launch the spacecraft first envisioned by former Vice President Al Gore and resuscitated by NASA, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Air Force.

Last-minute radar trouble foiled Sunday's launch effort, then SpaceX skipped Monday because of heavy rain.

SpaceX must launch the observatory by Wednesday or face a delay until Feb. 20.

The flight also is designed to test the potential for reusing its [launch](#) rockets. SpaceX will try to land the leftover first-stage booster on a floating platform off the Florida coast.

SpaceX tried to land the Dragon's booster rocket on a barge last month but it landed too hard and broke into pieces.

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Citation: SpaceX unmanned spaceship splashes down near Southern California (2015, February 11) retrieved 20 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2015-02-spacex-unmanned-spaceship-splashes-southern.html>

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