

# Space junk harpooned like whale in orbit-cleanup test

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This Feb. 8, 2019 image from video made available by the RemoveDEBRIS Consortium shows a harpoon striking a square target mounted 1.5 meters (5 feet) from the RemoveDEBRIS spacecraft. The same team used a net to capture a

piece of space junk, in a test last September. (RemoveDEBRIS Consortium via AP)

A harpoon flung from a satellite has successfully captured a piece of pretend space junk, like a whale.

The British-led experiment is part of an effort to clean up debris in orbit.

The University of Surrey's Guglielmo Aglietti said Friday that the steel-tipped harpoon scored a bull's-eye last Friday. The [harpoon](#)—no bigger than a writing pen—pierced an aluminum panel the size of a table tennis racket attached to the end of a satellite boom. The distance was just 5 feet ( 1.5 meters), but researchers were thrilled.

The same team used a net to capture a piece of [space](#) junk, in a test last September.

The experiment was released from the International Space Station last year.

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