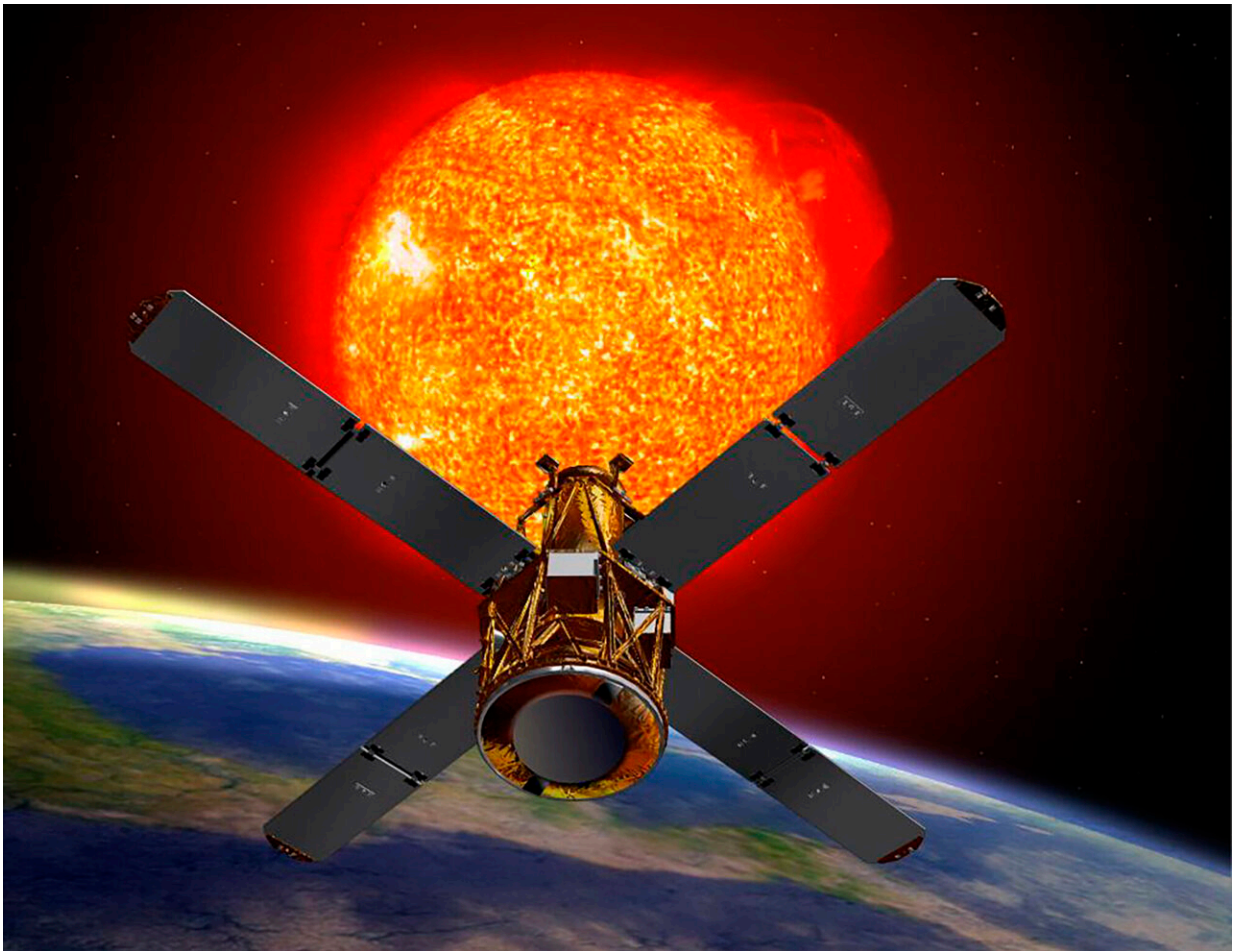


Old NASA satellite falling to Earth, risk of danger 'low'

April 18 2023, by Marcia Dunn



This illustration provided by NASA depicts the RHESSI (Reuven Ramaty High Energy Solar Spectroscopic Imager) solar observation satellite. The defunct science satellite will plummet through the atmosphere Wednesday night, April 19, 2023, according to NASA and the Defense Department. Experts tracking the spacecraft say chances are low it will pose any danger. Credit: NASA via AP

An old NASA satellite is expected to fall to Earth this week, but experts tracking the spacecraft say chances are low it will pose any danger.

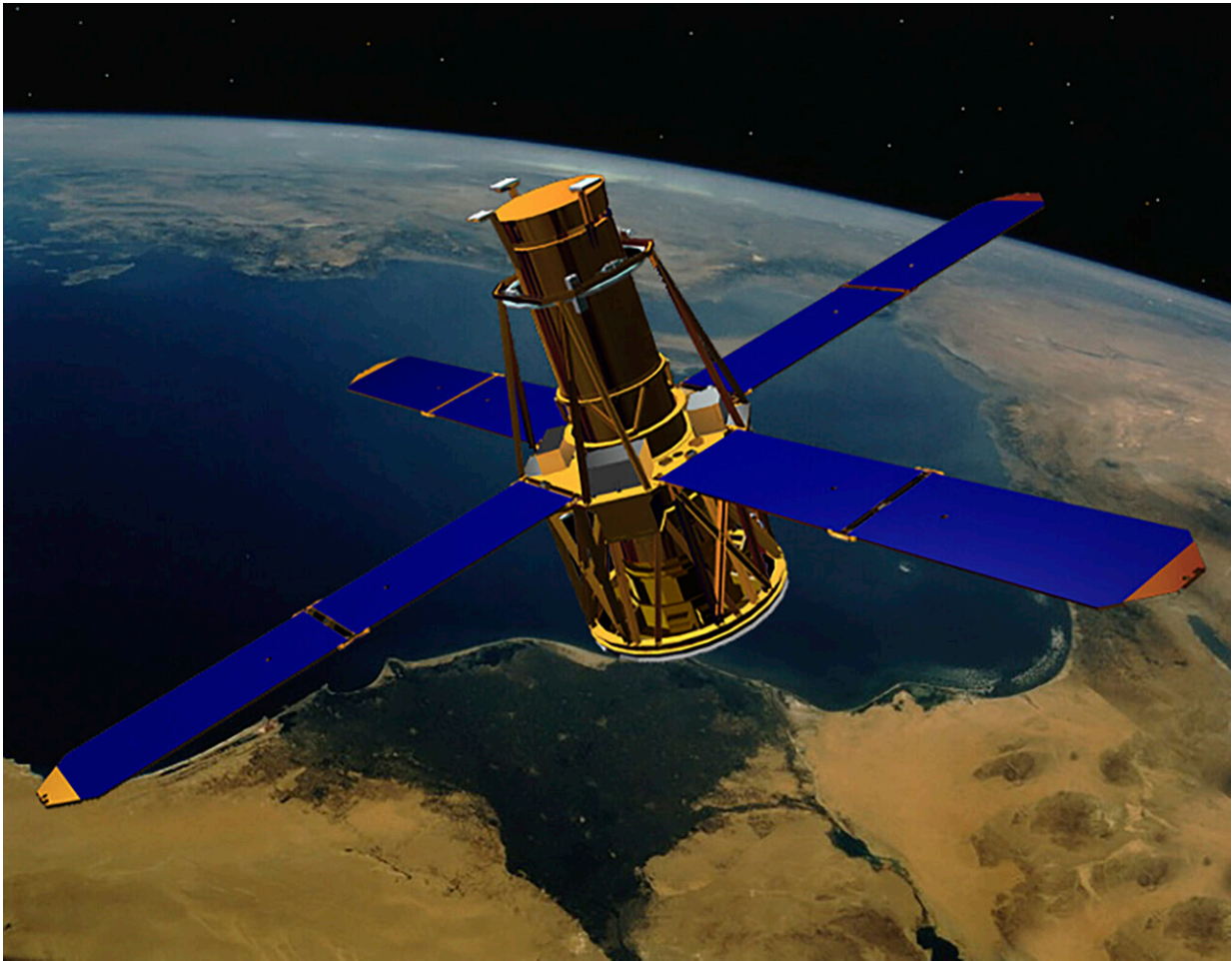
The defunct science satellite known as Rhesi will plummet through the atmosphere Wednesday night, according to NASA and the Defense Department.

NASA said Tuesday that the reentry location is not being disclosed, given lingering uncertainty over when and where it might go down. Most of the 660-pound (300-kilogram) satellite should burn up upon return, but some parts are expected to survive.

The space agency said in a statement the risk of anyone on Earth being harmed by plunging satellite pieces is "low"—about 1-in-2,467.

Rhesi—short for the Reuven Ramaty High Energy Solar Spectroscopic Imager—rocketed into orbit in 2002 to study the sun.

Before being shut down in 2018 because of communication problems, the satellite observed solar flares as well as coronal mass ejections from the sun. It captured images in high-energy X-rays and gamma rays, recording more than 100,000 solar events.



This illustration provided by NASA depicts the RHESSI (Reuven Ramaty High Energy Solar Spectroscopic Imager) solar observation satellite. The defunct science satellite will plummet through the atmosphere Wednesday night, April 19, 2023, according to NASA and the Defense Department. Experts tracking the spacecraft say chances are low it will pose any danger. Credit: NASA via AP

© 2023 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed without permission.

Citation: Old NASA satellite falling to Earth, risk of danger 'low' (2023, April 18) retrieved 20

June 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2023-04-nasa-satellite-falling-earth-danger.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.