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## Blog

### After the Meteor Shower

Posted by admin on May 25, 2014



Hyped as a [new meteor shower](#) with potential for a great show, the 2014 Camelopardalid meteors were less frequent than many of the public expected. Though the quantity was low, the quality was high for some observers. From New Buffalo, MI, I saw at least a dozen from 1:00 to 5:30 a.m. EDT under dark skies. Several "Cams" were long, slow, and bright, with fragmenting obvious at the end. A surprise to me was seeing multiple bright flashes with no trail. While the paucity of streamers disappointed some people, I compliment the team that first predicted the celestial activity caused by earth's orbit intersecting an old debris field from a comet.

I set up near Lake Michigan with a clipboard and star chart and layers of clothes topped by plastic to fend off the heavy dew. The [sketch](#) shows faint constellation outlines centered on Camelopardalis with a few items labeled. The line depicting the meteor shows the meteor's path against the background stars, with some being long and others short. The time is listed (without colons) for most sightings. The W of Cassiopeia is approximate, as are all of the meteor trails. This was done for pleasure, not scientific accuracy.

Four flashes occurred at 2:12 a.m., 2:38 a.m., and a pair at 2:34 a.m. (right). I'm guessing this suggests the particles were heading almost directly toward me. Everything else would appear to radiate outward from the constellation of Camelopardalis. A few of the long meteors were spectacular. The 2:41 meteor in Cassiopeia was likely a sporadic.

At 3:39 a.m. the International Space Station popped into view near Polaris and moved to the northeastern horizon. As dawn approached, a gorgeous crescent moon with earthshine rose, followed shortly thereafter by brilliant Venus.

The "Cams" suddenly popped on the scene when the progenitor Comet 209P/LINEAR (orbiting the sun every five years) had an unusual encounter with Jupiter's gravity in February 2012. The giant planet perturbed the comet and concurrently its debris field from its previous passings. A trail of the comet's remnants from 1803 and 1924 would combine into one sky show on May 24, 2014. The next Camelopardalid meteor shower from Comet 209P/LINEAR won't likely occur until 2022. For more information, see [Dark with Chance of Fireballs](#) (Sky & Telescope, March 2014, pp. 30-35).



While some people bemoaned the absence of a dazzling apparition in the sky, I take a different approach. I credit the astronomers who went out on a limb to make a public prediction. That's science at work. A lot of qualifiers went into the predictions, but media (and its audience) often have limited time, space, and interest in the entire story. Some of the hype took center stage, leading to a bigger fall for those expecting a meteor outburst.

I wasn't disappointed. A good night under the stars is always a good night. Thanks to all of the folks who responded to the announcement and gave it a try. If you don't seek, you won't find.

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#### Other Reports:

*Camelopardalid Meteor Shower Skimpy but Sweet*

by BOB KING on MAY 24, 2014

<http://www.universetoday.com/112120/camelopardalid-meteor-shower-skimpy-but-sweet/#ixzz32jVFHT4v>

*Camelopardalids? Where is our rain of meteors? Observers report ...*

By Deborah Byrd in

BLOGS | HUMAN WORLD | SPACE on May 24, 2014

<http://earthsky.org/space/camelopardalids-where-is-our-rain-of-meteors-observers-report>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eCKKhEsPA8Y&feature=share>

Live broadcast from Slooh, May 24, 2014.

For some extended comments by astronomers while they were anticipating the Camelopardalids--to hear why they had high expectations--listen to portions of this [Slooh broadcast](#). Even in hindsight it's interesting to learn the dynamics of comets and their interaction with other solar system influences.

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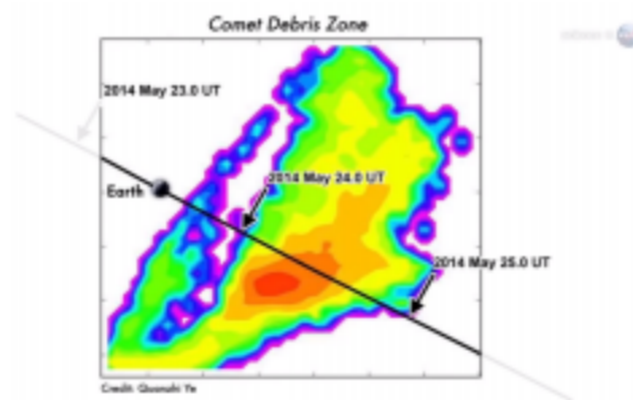
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Video: [NASA on the Lookout for a New Meteor Shower](#)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bw3hVTUQ43U>



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