

Spectacular meteor lights up the Midwest

Fireball blazes from Missouri to Wisconsin; linked to meteor shower



Meteor shower lights up Iowa skies

April 15: Dash camera video captures a meteor shower in Iowa. NBC's Chris LeClere reports.

NBC News Channel

msnbc.com staff and news service reports

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CHICAGO - Skywatchers over a wide area of the Midwest got a brief but spectacular light show as a fireball streaked across the sky Wednesday night.

Reports about the fireball began flooding law enforcement agencies as well as National Weather Service offices from Milwaukee to [St. Louis](#) at around 10 p.m. CT (11 p.m. ET). Sightings were reported in Wisconsin, Iowa, Illinois and Missouri.

"A large meteorite could have caused the brilliant fireball that has been reported," the National Weather Service's Milwaukee office said in statement. In Iowa, officials reported a prolonged sonic boom related to the display. The University of Wisconsin at Madison captured the [meteor's](#) fall in a [time-lapse Webcam sequence](#).

Meteor hunters were trying to locate the object's landing spot. David Sheets, a meteorologist at the weather service's office in Davenport, Iowa, estimated that the meteor was about 24,000 feet above Earth when it flashed across the [Quad Cities](#).

The Davenport weather service office said in a [statement](#) that the meteorite broke up into pieces during its descent through the atmosphere. As of late Wednesday, it was "unknown whether any portion of this meteorite hit the ground," the office said. Other reports suggested that a piece might have fallen in southern Wisconsin.

"While no official determination has been made of what caused the fireball ... space debris, meteor, etc. ... there is a meteor shower currently occurring called the Gamma Virginids," the Milwaukee weather service office noted. "It began April 4 and is expected to last through April 21."

A better-known meteor shower, known as the Lyrids, is just beginning and is expected to peak April 22.

Meteor showers 🌠 occur when Earth moves through the trail of cosmic dust and debris left behind by a comet or occasionally an asteroid. Most of the meteor trails occur high up in the atmosphere and have no impact on the surface, but on rare occasions, meteorites can survive the fall.

This report includes information from The Associated Press, WMAQ-TV and msnbc.com.