

September 4th, 2014

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Text & Image:

Slooh Tracking Rogue Asteroid 2014 RC “Pitbull” LIVE Skimming by Earth at about 25,000 miles (40,234 km) away

Discovered days ago on the night of August 31st by the Catalina Sky Survey, super Near-Earth Asteroid 2014 RC, which we nicknamed “Pitbull” due to its small size of up to 85 feet (26m) and scary demeanor, will make its unexpected close approach to Earth this weekend. Slooh will cover its near-approach on Saturday, September 6th, with a special live show on Slooh.com, free to the public, starting at 7 PM PDT / 10 PM EDT / 02:00 UTC (9/7) - International times here: goo.gl/YyBeqj - accompanied by real-time discussions with Slooh astronomer Bob Berman, and Slooh host Geoff Fox. Viewers can watch live on their PC or mobile device and ask questions during the show by using hashtag #sloohpitbull.

On September 7th, Asteroid 2014 RC will only be about 0.1 lunar distances away, zipping by many weather and television satellites, which orbit approximately 22,000 miles above Earth.

This is not the closest flyby of an asteroid. One of the closest, Asteroid 2012 DA14, estimated to be around 98ft (30m), was tracked live by Slooh as it missed Earth by a measly 17,200 miles (27,680km) back in February of 2013. Nevertheless, this extremely close visit by 2014 RC is hardly a surprise, as over 11,000 Near-Earth Objects have been discovered in Earth’s neighborhood, with thousands more lurking undiscovered.

It is fortunate that this asteroid will definitely miss hitting Earth on the 7th. The repercussions of such an impact could be greater than the Chelyabinsk event last year, which damaged thousands of houses, breaking innumerable windows, and causing injuries from broken glass. The Russian object, later discovered to be an asteroid, was approximately 65ft (20m) in diameter and exploded 18-miles above Siberia releasing the equivalent energy of more than 20 atomic bombs (approximately 460-kilotons of TNT).

Slooh will track Asteroid 2014 RC live from its flagship observatory at the Institute of Astrophysics of the Canary Islands, off the coast of Africa. The asteroid currently has a Minor Planet Center condition code of 7 making it potentially difficult to track - but Slooh will be using advanced imaging techniques and patented technologies to image the rogue asteroid live as it zips by Earth.

Says Slooh's Paul Cox. "With a small number of observations made of 2014 RC, there is still uncertainty in its precise orbit. Slooh members will be tracking the asteroid as it approaches Earth, and will submit their observations to the Minor Planet Center to enable them to better define its orbit."

"At approximately 85 feet, Pitbull will be too small to appear to the unaided eye," says Slooh astronomer Bob Berman. "Although amateur telescopes could theoretically see it, its rapid motion will make locating this asteroid a major challenge for all but a small coterie of dedicated, serious astronomers with good star charts."

Asteroid 2014 RC Pitbull Broadcast Details:

Start time: Saturday, September 6th at 7:00 PM PDT / 10:00 PM EDT / 02:00 UTC (9/7)

Link: www.slooh.com

Hashtag: #sloohpitbull

Embed - please link back to slooh.com:

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<iframe  
src="http://new.livestream.com/accounts/8724297/events/3356287/player?width=560&height=315&autoplay=true&mute=false" width="560" height="315" frameborder="0" scrolling="no">  
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About Slooh

Slooh makes astronomy incredibly easy, engaging and affordable for anyone with a desire to see outer space for themselves. Since 2003 Slooh has connected telescopes to the Internet for access by the broader public. Slooh's automated observatories develop celestial images in real-time for broadcast to the Internet. Slooh's technology is protected by Patent No.: US 7,194,146 B2 which was awarded in 2006. Slooh members have taken over 2.5-million photos/140,000 FITS of over 40,000 celestial objects, participated in numerous discoveries with leading astronomical institutions and made over 2,000 submissions to the Minor Planet Center. Slooh's flagship observatories are situated on Mt. Teide, in partnership with the Institute of Astrophysics of the Canary Islands (IAC), and in Chile, in partnership with the Catholic University. Slooh has also broadcast live celestial events from partner observatories in Arizona, Japan, Hawaii, Cypress, Dubai, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand and Norway. Slooh's free live broadcasts of potentially hazardous

asteroids (PHAs), comets, transits, eclipses, solar activity etc. feature narration by astronomy experts Bob Berman and Paul Cox and are syndicated to media outlets worldwide. Slooh signed a Space Act Agreement with NASA in March 2014 to "Bring the Universe to Everyone and Help Protect Earth Too."

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