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Slooh Space Camera to Track Enormous Asteroid Toutatis as it zooms by Earth on its close approach

First viewed in 1934 and then officially discovered by Christian Pollas in 1989, Potentially Hazardous Asteroid, Toutatis, an asteroid with an estimated diameter of over 3 miles (5.4km), will make its close approach to Earth this week. In comparison, the asteroid that destroyed the Dinosaurs was approximately 6 miles wide (10km). Slooh Space Camera will cover its near-approach on Tuesday, December 11th, with several live shows on Slooh.com, free to the public, starting at 12 PM PST / 3 PM EST / 20:00 UTC (International times here: http://goo.gl/qwMWy) - accompanied by real-time discussions with Slooh President, Patrick Paolucci, and Astronomy Magazine columnist, Bob Berman. Viewers can watch live on their PC or IOS/Android mobile device.

This is not the first time Toutatis has given Earth a close shave as it returns to Earth every four years for a visit. On September 29th, 2004 the asteroid zipped by Earth at only .01 AU - about 4 lunar distances. On December 11th/12th, Asteroid Toutatis will be a comfortable but still concerning .04 AU away from Earth or about 18 Lunar distances. At its maximum brightness, Toutatis might be barely glimpsed through binoculars, and should be very bright through Slooh telescopes at its being tracked.

“We will be tracking Asteroid Toutatis live from two observatory locations - Canary Islands, off the coast of Africa and Arizona,” says Patrick Paolucci, President at Slooh.

The general public will not be able to follow the asteroid effectively without a good pair of binoculars or a telescope and with a good professional star chart.

Bob Berman said, "Slooh technical staff will let the public follow this fast-moving asteroid in two different ways. In one view, the background stars will be tracked at their own rate and the asteroid will appear as an obvious streak or a moving time-lapse dot across the starry field. In a second view, Toutatis itself will be tracked and held steady as a tiny pointlike object, while Earth's spin makes the background stars whiz by as streaks. Both methods will make the asteroid's speedy orbital motion obvious as it passes us in space."

Embed the live broadcast into your online coverage
Please contact Patrick Paolucci to receive embed code 30 minutes prior to broadcast.

About Slooh

Slooh is the leader in live, celestial event programming with weekly shows featuring the great wonders of the Universe - shown live by observatories worldwide. SLOOH is powered by its members—men, women and children in 80 countries who have taken 1.8 million photos of 46,000 unique objects and events in the night sky since our launch on Christmas Day, 2003. Slooh's patented instant imaging technology makes astronomical objects appear in true color and in real time over a 5 to 10 minute time frame.

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