

Declassified Intelligence Satellite Photographs

Recently declassified photographs from spy satellites are an important addition to the record of the Earth's land surface held by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS).

More than 800,000 high-resolution photos taken between 1959 through 1972 were made available by Executive Order of the President. The collection is held at the USGS EROS Data Center, near Sioux Falls, S. Dak., and are offered for public sale. For some purposes in earth science studies, these photos extend the record of changes in the land surface another decade back in time from the advent of the Landsat earth-observing satellite program.

1992 Landsat Multi-spectral Scanner Image

In the Cape Canaveral, Florida, image pair (at right), the Landsat MSS image (acquired March 1992) shows how agricultural use of a marshy region near Cape Canaveral has expanded since the declassified image was acquired (Mission 9059A, October 30, 1963). In the declassified image, the region is dissected by ponds and small stream channels. In the Landsat image, acquired more than 28 years later, many of the small streams have been modified by dams and reservoirs, a network of roads has been constructed in the area, and agricultural development has increased.

Summary of Satellite Missions

KH-1 Dates: June '59-Sep. '60
Ground Resolution: 25 ft
Notes: Single camera
Frames: 1,432

KH-2 Dates: Oct. '60-Oct. '61
Ground Resolution: 25 ft
Notes: Single camera
Frames: 7,246



1963 declassified image over Cape Canaveral, Florida.



1992 Landsat image over Cape Canaveral, Florida.

KH-3 Dates: Aug. '61-Jan. '62
Ground Resolution: 25 ft
Notes: Single camera
Frames: 9,918

KH-4 Dates: Feb. '62-Dec. '63
Ground Resolution: 25 ft
Notes: Two cameras
Frames: 101,743

KH-4A Dates: Aug '63.-Oct. '69
Ground Resolution: 9 ft
Notes: Two cameras
Frames: 517,688

KH-4B Dates: Sep. '67-May '72
Ground Resolution: 6 ft
Notes: Two cameras
Frames: 188,526

KH-5 Dates: Feb. '61-Aug. '64
Ground Resolution: 460 ft
Notes: Global coverage,
mapping camera
Frames: 38,578

KH-6 Dates: July '63
Ground Resolution: 6 ft
Notes: Panoramic camera
Frames: <910

For information related to image products from this collection, contact:

Earth Science Information Center
EROS Data Center
Sioux Falls, SD 57198
Telephone: 605-594-6151
Fax: 605-594-6589
E-mail: custserv@usgs.gov

For information related to mission documents, contact:

National Archives and Records Administration
Cartographic and Architectural Branch (NNSC)
8601 Adelphi Rd.
College Park, MD 20740-6001
Telephone: 301-713-7030
Fax: 301-713-7488
E-mail: carto@arch2.nara.gov

Available Products

Products available from the USGS include contact-scale, black-and-white, positive film, negative film, and paper prints. In addition, custom enlargements are available if customers purchase a contact-scale paper print and annotate on that print the area to be enlarged and the amount of enlargement. The National Archives and Records Administration holds the original negatives as well as technical mission-related documents that include the orbit parameters for each mission.

For information on other USGS products and services, call 1-888-ASK-USGS, or visit the general interest publications Web site on mapping, geography, and related topics at erg.usgs.gov/isb/pubs/pubslists/.

For additional information, visit the ask.usgs.gov Web site or the USGS home page at www.usgs.gov.

World Wide Web Access

An online description of this photographic collection is available on a USGS World Wide Web server. The Web address for this document is edc.usgs.gov/products/satellite/declass1.html.

Information

For prices and other information, visit the Declassified Satellite Imagery-1 Web site at edc.usgs.gov/products/satellite/declass1.html. To preview and order images, visit the earthexplorer.usgs.gov Web site. Currently, only ARGON images can be ordered on Earth Explorer. For information on ordering CORONA and LANYARD images, contact the USGS Customer Service at edc.usgs.gov/includes/contactform.html.