

Landsat 5 Stabilised and Investigated

The Landsat 5 satellite tumbled out of control and power was at a critical level in the early morning of 13 August. The cause for this anomaly is currently unknown and being investigated. The spacecraft has been stabilized after the USGS Landsat Flight Operations Team initiated recovery operations. Power is still at a critical level, and the extent of damage is yet to be determined. Imaging operations are suspended until further notice.

Landsat 5 was launched in 1984 and designed to last three years with a possible extension to five years. It is still a valuable resource and by early 2009, it had completed over 129,000 orbits and acquired over 700,000 individual scenes.

Landsat 5 provided data demonstrating alterations over Chernobyl region after the nuclear power plant eruption, de-forestation of tropical rain forests, drought and flooding in the Mississippi River basin, construction of the Three Gorges dam in China, shrinking of the Aral Sea, Northern Wisconsin after a tornado pass, the impact of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, and countless forest and wildfire outbreaks.

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