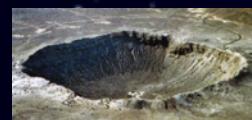


# IMPACTS AND NEAR-MISSES

## ASTEROIDS, METEOROIDS AND THEIR IMPACT CRATERS ON PLANET EARTH



**METEOROID:** a sand to boulder-sized particle of debris in the Solar System. The visible path of a meteoroid that enters Earth's atmosphere is called a meteor. If a meteoroid reaches the ground and survives impact, then it is called a meteorite.

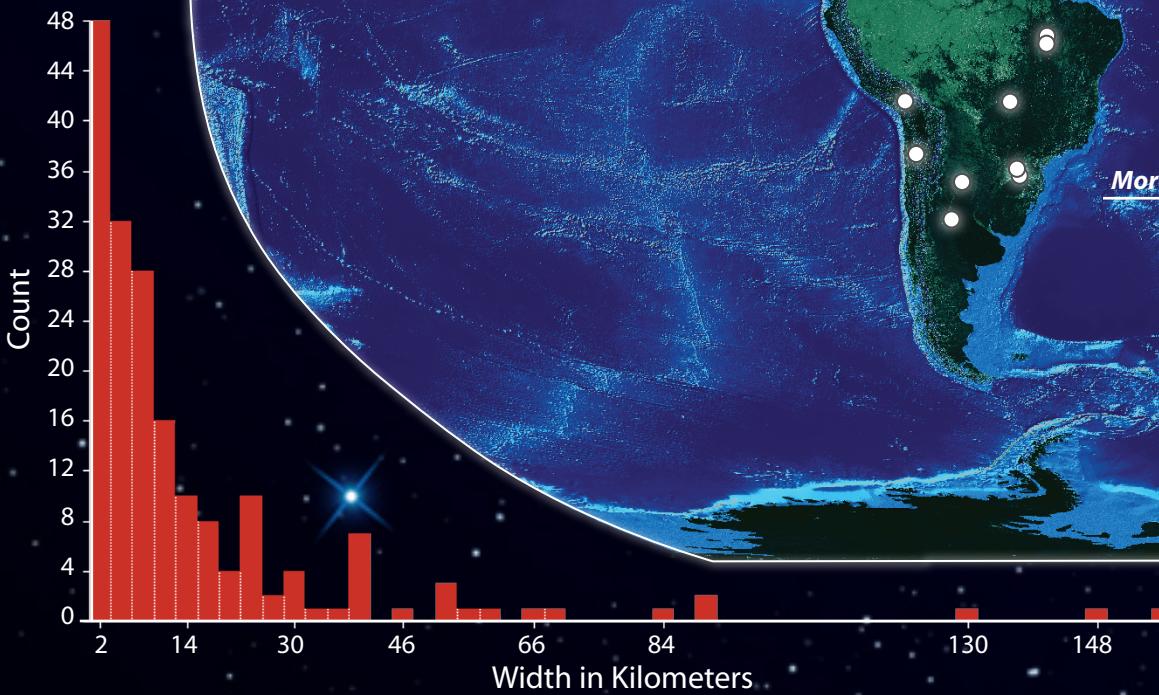
**ASTEROID:** rocky bodies that do not have an atmosphere. They are small Solar System bodies in orbit around the Sun. They are smaller than planets but larger than meteoroids, meaning that an asteroid can range from a few meters wide to hundreds of kilometers wide.

**IMPACT CRATER:** the approximately circular depression in the surface of a planet, moon or other solid body in the Solar System, formed by the hypervelocity impact of a smaller body with the surface. If an asteroid just 1 kilometer across were to hit the Earth, we wouldn't get a pretty light show. We'd get a jolt equivalent to a 20-megaton nuclear blast, leaving an impact crater with a diameter equal to the length of Manhattan.

## CONFIRMED IMPACT CRATERS ON EARTH

Earth's atmosphere, water, and tectonic activity make impact craters harder to recognize. These three forces weather and erode Earth's surface and erase all but the most recent impacts.

### Earth's Impact Craters



Impact Crater Data: <http://www.passc.net/EarthImpactDatabase/index.html>  
Near-Earth Object Data: <http://neo.jpl.nasa.gov/ca/>  
Projection: Robinson  
Center Point: 0 latitude, 0 longitude  
Created: December 2012  
Author: Katie Ginther

