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Aqua

Project Science

Aqua, Latin for water, is a NASA Earth Science satellite mission named for the large amount of information that the mission will be collecting about the Earth's water cycle, including evaporation from the oceans, water vapor in the atmosphere, clouds, precipitation, soil moisture, sea ice, land ice, and snow cover on the land and ice. Additional variables also being measured by Aqua include radiative energy fluxes, aerosols, vegetation cover on the land, phytoplankton and dissolved organic matter in the oceans, and air, land, and water temperatures.

The Aqua mission is a part of the NASA-centered international [Earth Observing System \(EOS\)](#). Aqua was formerly named EOS PM, signifying its afternoon equatorial crossing time. A timeline of Aqua on-orbit progress through the initial 120 day check-out period can be found [here](#).

Aqua was launched on May 4, 2002, and has six Earth-observing instruments on board, collecting a variety of global data sets. Aqua was the first member launched of a group of satellites termed the Afternoon Constellation, or sometimes the A-Train. The second member to be launched was [Aura](#), in July 2004, the third member was [PARASOL](#), in December 2004, and the fourth and fifth members are [CloudSat](#) and [CALIPSO](#), in May 2006. [PARASOL](#) exited the A-Train orbit in December 2009. Expected upcoming missions are [Glory](#), a NASA mission due to be launched in 2010, and [GCOM-W1](#), a JAXA mission due to be launched in 2011. After these two missions join, the A-Train will be led by [GCOM-W1](#), followed by Aqua, then [CloudSat](#), [CALIPSO](#), [Glory](#), and, in the rear, [Aura](#).

AQUA IMAGE HIGHLIGHT

January 27, 2010

The Dynamic Planet, as a backdrop to President Obama, November 23, 2009



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ANNOUNCEMENTS

+ The IEEE Transactions on Geoscience and Remote Sensing "Special Issue on the EOS Aqua Mission" is available (February 2003, Volume 41, Number 2). Science team members and affiliates may request a copy by sending an email to [Steve Graham](mailto:Steve.Graham@nasa.gov) (steve.graham@nasa.gov).

+ [Aqua EarthSky Podcasts](#)

The entire series of Aqua radio shows and podcasts being done in collaboration with EarthSky have now aired on the Earth & Sky radio show and are available as podcasts on the EarthSky website, at the following links:

1. [Podcast 1](#), highlighting Aqua Project Scientist Claire Parkinson.
2. [Podcast 2](#), highlighting AIRS Science Team Leader Mous Chahine.
3. [Podcast 3](#), highlighting MODIS Science Team member Lorraine Remer.
4. [Podcast 4](#), highlighting CERES Science Team Leader Norman Loeb.
5. [Podcast 5](#), highlighting AMSR-E Science Team member Chelle Gentemann.
6. [Podcast 6](#), highlighting CloudSat principal investigator Graeme Stephens.



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