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Meteor showers are regular appearances in the night skies, and some of them even have their own names  
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## [Meteor Shower over English Channel Causes Confusion](#)

### *Captains have reported distress signals in the sky*

A number of captains, sailing their ships in the crowded waters of the English Channel on Monday night, signaled to the coastguard services in France and the United Kingdom, saying that they noticed warning flares in the night sky. The lights, they reported, were either white or bright green, and they urged authorities to take steps to save the ships in distress. The cause of the strange phenomenon, which began at around 21:30 BST (2030 GMT), was quickly found to be an expected meteor shower, of which the boat captains in the area had no idea.

Three successive meteor showers were visible yesterday, all coming from the same comet passing near our planet. Astronomers had predicted the shower in advance, and this was made possible by the fact that our planet takes roughly the same course around the Sun every year. Comets and other celestial bodies slamming into our planet's atmosphere are the things that produce what are known as "shooting stars," swarms of meteorites that plummet to the ground at large speeds, which causes them to burn up.

"There were reports of flares all down the coast which went on for about half an hour, but there was a forecast for a meteor shower," a Solent Coastguard spokesman explained to the [BBC News](#). Because most meteor showers are regular occurrences in the evening skies, and are particularly visible when there are no clouds, some of them have names. The spokesman said that the one seen the night before might be either June Lyrids, or the Ophruchids, or maybe the Zeta Perseids.

"For a minute there last night I thought we had made such good progress that we were seeing the Northern Lights. We later learned that the pyrotechnic display was actually a meteor shower, which was an amazing sight," the British news agency quoted Dee Caffari, a yachtswoman, as saying. She was sailing in the English Channel last night as well, along with her all-women crew, in an attempt to break the record at sailing around England and Ireland.