

2007 in pictures from ENVISAT

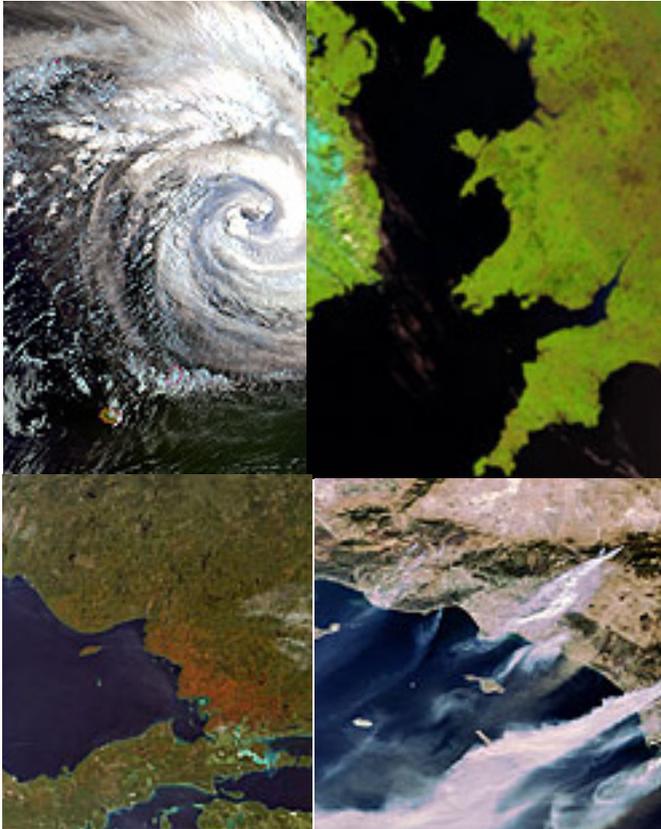


Image Credits: ESA

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These images were taken by ENVISAT, the European Space Agency's Earth Observation spacecraft – the largest of its kind ever built. Launched in 2002, ENVISAT uses ten radar and optical instruments to provide continuous observation of the Earth, allowing us to monitor human activity and environmental changes on land, sea and in the atmosphere (see last month's Astronotes for

more on this project).

Clockwise from top left: ENVISAT's Medium Resolution Imaging Spectrometer (MERIS) captured this image of tropical cyclone Gamede sweeping across the Indian Ocean on 23 February 2007. The cyclone lasted for ten days and broke several world records for the amount of rainfall during a tropical cyclone.

The Advanced Along Track Scanning Radiometer (AATSR) sensor onboard ENVISAT took this rare image of a virtually cloudless UK during a heat-wave on 18 July this year. Temperatures rose to a record high, but so too did pollution levels.

MERIS also gave us this spectacular view of the autumn foliage around three of the Great Lakes (Superior, Michigan and Huron) in eastern North America on 23 September. Along with Lakes Eerie and Ontario, the five Great Lakes make up the largest area of connected fresh water on Earth.

ENVISAT captured this image of the wildfires in Southern California on 22 October. Easterly desert winds can be seen blowing the smoke from the fires out over the Pacific Ocean. Eighteen fires burned over 2000 km² from Santa Barbara to the Mexican border. Over 1500 homes were destroyed and seven people lost their lives, with many more injured. Hot weather and strong winds were thought to be the major contributing factors to the fires, but some were caused by falling power lines and at least one was reported to have been started deliberately.