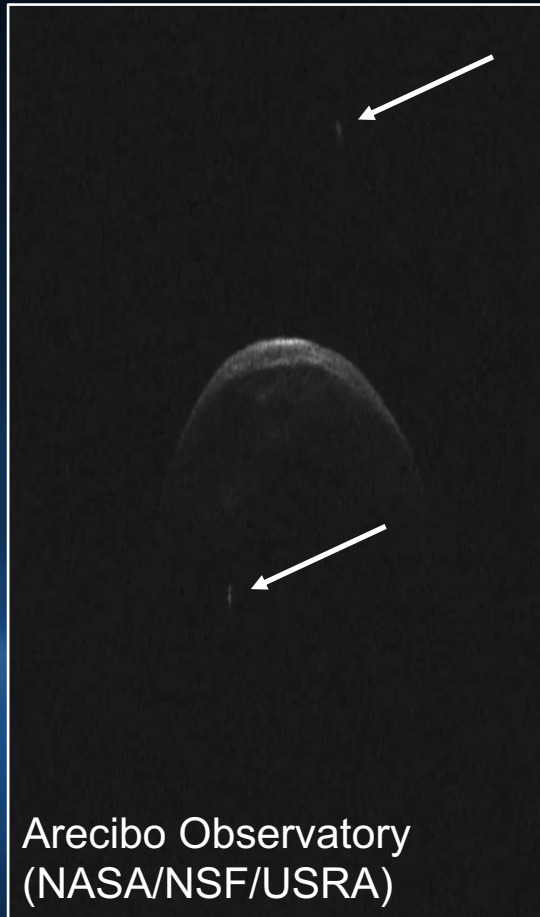


Large Near-Earth Asteroid (3122) Florence Found to be Ordinary Stony Chondrite - With TWO moons!

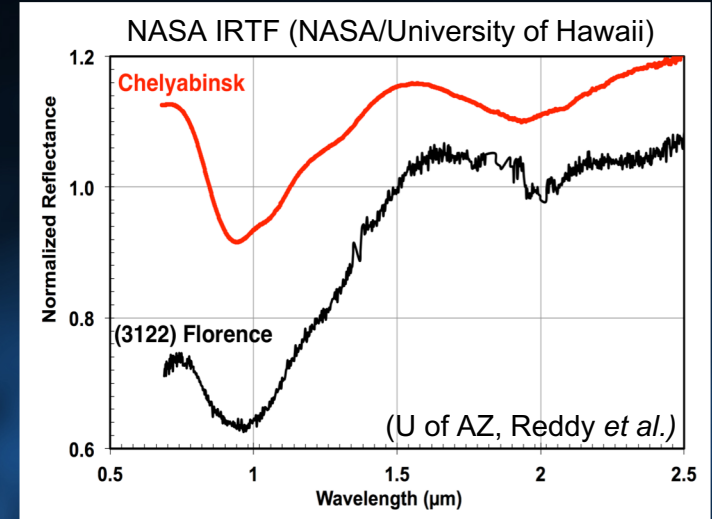


Goldstone
(NASA/JPL)



Arecibo Observatory
(NASA/NSF/USRA)

Radar imagery of Florence, which measures 2.8 miles in diameter, revealed surface features along with two moons orbiting the asteroid and measuring ~300-1000 feet in diameter. Florence is only the third triple asteroid known in the near-Earth population out of more than 16,500 discovered to date.



Spectroscopic observations by astronomers operating NASA's Infrared Telescope Facility (IRTF) on Maunakea, Hawaii, indicate that (3122) Florence is an S-type or "stony" asteroid with surface composition similar to ordinary chondrite meteorites, such as the Chelyabinsk meteorite.

Florence passed 4.4 million miles from Earth on September 1, 2017 and was the largest asteroid to make such a close approach since NASA began its Near-Earth Object Observations program in 1998. Florence was discovered in 1981 by astronomer Schelte "Bobby" Bus and named for Florence Nightingale.

