

Asteroids, Comets and Dwarf Planets, Oh My! Philately and spacecraft explore the other denizens of the Solar System

Our Solar System is much more than the Sun and planets. Space-faring nations have launched spacecraft to probe every planet in the Solar System, but there are other inhabitants of our Solar System that spacecraft have visited – and philately hasn't missed highlighting these space explorers and their exciting missions.



The JAXA asteroid mission, *Hayabusa-1* (2003) actually landed on asteroid **25143 Itokawa** in 2005 and returned samples to Earth in 2010.



The ESA's *Rosetta* spacecraft (2004) on its way to **Comet 67/P** captured images of several asteroids including **21 Lutetia** in 2010.



The NASA asteroid probe *OSIRIS-REx* (2016) briefly touched down on asteroid **101955 Bennu** in 2020 and is on its way back to Earth with samples, arriving in 2023).



The ESA's *Rosetta* spacecraft rendezvoused with **Comet 67/P Churyumov-Gerasimenko** and placed a lander, called *Philae* on its surface in 2014.

The former Soviet Union launched twin probes, *Vega 1* and *Vega 2* (1984) and the ESA launched *Giotto* (1985) to observe **Halley's Comet** in 1986.



Technically a dwarf planet, NASA's *Dawn* (2007) spacecraft orbited asteroid **1 Ceres** from 2015-2018.

Dwarf planet **Pluto** and trans-Neptunian object **486958 Arrokoth** were visited by NASA's *New Horizon* (2006) spacecraft in 2018 & 2019.

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