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COMET C/2006 W3 (CHRISTENSEN)

E. J. Christensen reports his discovery of a comet on Catalina Sky Survey images obtained in good seeing with the 0.68-m Schmidt telescope (discovery observation tabulated below); four 60-s exposures showed a 15″ coma extended very slightly toward p.a. 70°–100°. Following posting on the Minor Planet Center's 'NEOCP' webpage, several astrometric CCD observers have commented on the object's cometary appearance. Stacked 15-s images obtained by L. Buzzi and F. Luppi (Varese, Italy, 0.60-m *f*/4.6 reflector) on Nov. 19.1 UT show a 10″ coma elongated in p.a. 80° with a 25″ tail in the same direction. P. Birtwhistle (Great Shefford, Berkshire, England, 0.40-m *f*/6 Schmidt-Cassegrain reflector) writes that his images from Nov. 19.1 show the object to be distinctly diffuse and only moderately condensed, with the center of light slightly offset toward the west in a 14″ coma (no tail). J. McGaha (Tucson, AZ, 0.62-m *f*/5.1 reflector) reports that his 120-s exposures on Nov. 19.4 show a 9″ coma elongated in p.a. 35°, with no apparent nuclear condensation or tail. J. G. Ries (McDonald Observatory, 0.76-m reflector) notes that his *R*-band images on Nov. 19.4 show an asymmetric diffuse coma that is more prominent on the side opposite to the comet's direction of motion.

2006 UT	α_{2000}	δ_{2000}	Mag.
Nov. 18.40414	$7^h00^m04^s.24$	$+46°16'11''.3$	18.1

The available astrometry, the following *very* preliminary orbital elements, and an ephemeris appear on *MPEC* 2006-W42.

$$
\begin{array}{llll}
T = 2008\ \text{Dec. } 25.327\ \text{TT} & \omega = 154^\circ.652 & \\
 & \Omega = 109.832 & \Big\} 2000.0 \\
q = 1.46888\ \text{AU} & i = 121.736 &
\end{array}
$$

COMET C/2006 U7 (GIBBS)

Additional astrometry of this comet (cf. *IAUC* 8769) reveals an elliptical orbit (the following elements taken from *MPEC* 2006-W18):

$$
\begin{array}{llll}
T = 2007\ \text{Feb. } 10.974\ \text{TT} & \omega = 6^\circ.897 & \\
e = 0.63310 & \Omega = 57.906 & \Big\} 2000.0 \\
q = 4.40745\ \text{AU} & i = 6.992 &
\end{array}
$$

$$a = 12.01272\ \text{AU} \qquad n^\circ = 0.023672 \qquad P = 41.6\ \text{years}$$

2006 November 20 *Daniel W. E. Green*