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COMET C/2009 W2 (BOATTINI)

A. Boattini reports his discovery of a comet (discovery observation tabulated below) on CCD images taken with the 0.68-m Schmidt telescope in the course of the Catalina Sky Survey; he notes a moderately condensed coma $\sim 7''$ wide, with no tail visible. R. E. Hill reports that four co-added 60-s CCD images taken in $2''$ seeing with the Mt. Lemmon 1.5-m reflector on Nov. 23.5 UT show a bright nuclear condensation with a small ($1''$–$2''$) coma and a short, broad tail $6''$–$7''$ long in p.a. $\sim 80°$; his similar exposures on Nov. 24.44–24.46 show a $4'' \times 5''$ nuclear condensation that is elongated east-west with a $1''$ coma surrounding, and a broad, diffuse $30''$ tail in p.a. 90°. After posting on the Minor Planet Center's 'NEOCP' webpage, W. H. Ryan writes that CCD images taken by E. V. Ryan and himself with the Magdalena Ridge Observatory 2.4-m *f*/8.9 reflector on Nov. 24.5 show a tail in p.a. $\sim 90°$.

2009	UT	α_{2000}	δ_{2000}	Mag.	*Observer*
Nov.	23.47597	$6^h21^m30^s.50$	$+39°58'41''.9$	19.5	Boattini

The available astrometry (including observations by Boattini on Nov. 21), the following preliminary parabolic orbital elements, and an ephemeris appear on *MPEC* 2009-W103.

$$T = 2010\ \text{Mar.}\ 23.937\ \text{TT} \qquad \left.\begin{array}{l}\omega = 118°.066\\ \Omega = 199.323\\ i = 164.512\end{array}\right\}2000.0 \qquad q = 6.95031\ \text{AU}$$

COMET 169P/NEAT

B. G. Marsden, Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory, has identified a comet found in STEREO spacecraft images with comet 169P. K. Battams, Naval Research Laboratory, reports that the comet appears very clearly (marginally diffuse with no tail) at apparent mag $\sim$ 9–10 on Nov. 12.9 UT in HI-1B images (limiting mag ~ 13.5), when it was only $\sim 4°.5$ from the sun ($r = 0.69$ AU, $\Delta = 0.88$ AU, and 0.38 AU from STEREO), so that forward scattering is a likely explanation for 169P's being well above its observed brightness from ground-based observations (cf. *MPEC* 2009-W102). Over the next few days, 169P moved to increasing elongations, with its brightness falling gradually; by Nov. 21 (elongation 18°), STEREO images show the comet to be noticeably smaller and fainter (mag perhaps 11–12).

2009 November 24 *Daniel W. E. Green*