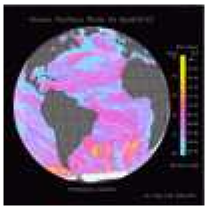
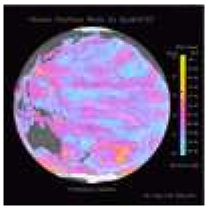


Hi-Res (1.0M)
Caption



Hi-Res (1.0M)
Caption

MEDIA RELATIONS OFFICE
JET PROPULSION LABORATORY
CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION
PASADENA, CALIF. 91109. TELEPHONE (818) 354-5011
http://www.jpl.nasa.gov

Contact: Diane Ainsworth

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE August 9, 1999

SEAWINDS RADAR INSTRUMENT CAPTURES FURY OF TYPHOON OLGA

NASA's newly launched ocean-viewing radar instrument, SeaWinds, has been able to capture the fury of Typhoon Olga as it grew in intensity last week in the China Sea, packing high winds of more than 50 knots (57 miles per hour) and delivering torrential rains to South Korea, North Korea and other coastal communities of south Asia.

Newly released animated data from the radar instrument, which is flying onboard the recently launched QuikScat spacecraft, captured Typhoon Olga in its infancy, measuring daily wind speeds and direction as it progressed from a tropical depression on July 28, east of the Philippines, to a raging typhoon. Olga flooded farmlands, shut down highways and railways and forced at least 15,000 people in Seoul, South Korea, to flee their homes last week.

SeaWinds is keeping a watchful eye over another tropical depression, labeled 12W, which has developed west of Mariana Island in the tropical Pacific and is heading northwest toward the Asian continent.

"SeaWinds is allowing scientists to determine the location, structure and strength of these tropical depressions, typhoons and severe marine storms very quickly as they develop," said Dr. Timothy Liu, QuikScat project scientist at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Pasadena, CA. "Fifteen times a day, the satellite beams down science data to ground stations, which then relay the information to scientists at NASA and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Early notification can help meteorologists and disaster preparedness services disseminate information within hours and give people more warning of a storm's severity and likely path."

Also apparent in the animation are monsoon winds blowing from the southwest to the northeast across the Arabian Sea and into India, then gusting over the Bay of Bengal. Swirling regions of yellow represent high wind speeds of greater than 20 meters per second (45 miles per hour).

"Typhoons and monsoons have strong economic and environmental impacts in Japan," said Dr. Naoto Ebuchi of Tohoku University, Japan, who is participating in calibration testing of QuikScat at JPL. "Japanese scientists should have a strong interest in the QuikScat observations."

South of 40 degrees latitude, a series of intense winter storms are brewing around Antarctica. SeaWinds' spaceborne ability to monitor winds and their interactions with both the ocean's surface and large ice sheets will shed new light on the interplay of the atmosphere, ocean, land and ice with Earth's global climate system. Images of the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, showing the locations of these storms, are available at http://photojournal.jpl.nasa.gov or at http://winds.jpl.nasa.gov/news/newsindex.html.

Since the beginning of its science mission, SeaWinds has performed beyond expectations, providing a near-global portrait of wind speeds around the world every day. "The spacecraft and its SeaWinds instrument are performing fabulously," said Jim Graf, QuikScat mission manager at JPL. "The data are looking great, better even than we expected."

"SeaWinds' unprecedented coverage, high resolution and accuracy, is already providing unique information on Earth's atmosphere and ocean," said. Dr. Michael Freilich, science team leader at Oregon State University in Corvallis. "In the coming months and years, we expect that SeaWinds measurements will play an increasingly important role in weather prediction, oceanographic research and climate studies."

The orbiting SeaWinds radar instrument is managed for NASA's Office of Earth Science, Washington, DC, by the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, which also built the SeaWinds radar instrument and is providing ground science processing systems. NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center, Greenbelt, MD, managed development of the satellite, designed and built by Ball Aerospace & Technologies Corp., Boulder, CO. NOAA has contributed support to ground systems processing and related activities.

NASA's Earth Sciences Enterprise is a long-term research and technology program designed to examine Earth's land, oceans, atmosphere, ice and life as a total integrated system. JPL is a division of the California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, CA.

#####

8/9/99 DEA
#99-067