

What to Know About the Mysterious Drones Flying Over New Jersey

The craft are said to be the size of an SUV, and have been observed flying in groups.

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Multiple drones are seen over Bernardsville, N.J., on Dec. 5, 2024 Brian Glenn/TMX via AP



By Stacy Robinson

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Dozens of sightings of unmanned drones across the state of New Jersey have local residents concerned, and lawmakers baffled. These aren't pranks or crackpot reports, either—sightings have been reported by police and the Coast Guard.

Here's what we know so far:

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The Sightings

The drones were first reported around Nov. 18 in Morris and Hunterdon counties; sightings have spread to more than a dozen areas, including Monmouth, Ocean, and Camden counties.

Over 49 sightings were reported on Sunday, Dec. 8, although New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy noted that some of these were either duplicates, or turned out to be normal aircraft.

Witnesses say the drones are large, around the size of an SUV, and they often travel in groups. Murphy told reporters on Dec. 9 that the technology appears to be “very sophisticated.”

“The minute you get eyes on them, they go dark,” he said.

“We’re obviously most concerned about sensitive targets and sensitive, critical infrastructure,” he said, citing the state’s military and utility assets.

Murphy also noted that President-elect Donald Trump has a home in New Jersey, saying officials are taking the matter “deadly seriously.”

On the congressional floor, Rep. Chris Smith (R-N.J.) said an Ocean County Sheriff told him one of his officers saw 50 drones come out of the ocean.

Smith said a commanding officer from the Coast Guard also told him that a flock of “between 12 and 30 of these drones” followed a Coast Guard ship.



A map of drone sightings across Monmouth County, New Jersey. Monmouth County Sheriff's Office

Pentagon: Not a Foreign Adversary

Pentagon press secretary Sabrina Singh shot down the idea that the drones were “coming from a foreign entity or adversary” during a press conference on Dec. 11. She also said they were not U.S. military drones, and that there were no threats to U.S. installations during the drone sightings.

A reporter asked Singh about a statement by Rep. Jeff Van Drew (R-N.J.) to Fox News on Dec. 11. Van Drew said he had information from “very qualified sources” that the drones were being launched from an Iranian “mothership” in the Atlantic.

The vessel pulled up along the East Coast a month ago, carrying drones purchased as part of an arms deal with China, Van Drew said.

Singh refuted the speculations.

“There is not any truth to that,” Singh replied.

“There is no any Iranian ship off the coast of the United States, and there is no so-called mothership launching drones toward the United States.”

Call for a ‘Limited State of Emergency’

New Jersey state Sen. Jon Bramnick, a Republican, has released a statement asking for a “limited state of emergency,” and urging officials to ban public drones until an explanation is released.

Bramnick considers the drones a security threat, and said the Garden State needs to be a “no-drone-fly zone.”

“We need to know. These are multiple drones coming in in a flock and then leaving. You know, that’s not somebody who has a hobby” of flying drones, he said in an interview with NTD, The Epoch Times’ sister media.

“These aren’t drones that were purchased at a Radio Shack ... in the Middle East, we have drones that are dropping bombs. So I don’t find that a drone is safe because it’s a drone.”

Demanding Answers

Smith is one of many voices calling for more transparency from the federal government about the drones’ origin and purpose.

“Understandably, New Jersey residents are very alarmed at this significant and reoccurring phenomenon—and the tepid response

from our state and federal agencies so far is totally unacceptable,” Smith said in a statement.

“As we saw with the Chinese spy balloon last year, our fiercest adversaries will stop at nothing to surveil our homeland and threaten our national security.”

Sen. Cory Booker (D-N.J.) posted a letter he wrote on X, addressed to Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg, FBI Director Chris Wray, and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas.

Booker said he recognized “the need to maintain operational security of ongoing investigations,” but urged the officials to release any information they had, in order to avoid spreading “rumors, fear, and misinformation.”

Murphy told reporters, “We don’t see any concern for public safety,” but expressed frustration that the drones’ origins are still unknown.

“I’m hoping we’ll get answers sooner than later,” the governor said. He encouraged residents to report any sightings.

Government Doesn’t Know

The FBI is currently coordinating with local authorities to get to the bottom of the matter. Murphy posted on X that he held a briefing with Mayorkas and officials from the DHS and the New Jersey State Police.

Speaking with NTD, Bramnick said no answers had been forthcoming from any agency. He said he’d also met with state police and officials from the DHS on Dec. 11, and it yielded no clear results.

“The State Police are frustrated—they don’t have a clue, and they’re honest about it,” Bramnick said.

“Now, the thing with Homeland Security, they guard our country, but they don’t have the technology, so they didn’t have any answers ...

Only the Department of Defense has the technology to monitor these drones.

“Department of Defense needs to be in here immediately.”

He also said he doesn’t believe the drones are part of a super-classified government program.

“If they’ve got a secret program, they’re surely not keeping it secret. You know, why don’t you fly it over the desert?”

Smith said he has contacted Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin about disabling or shooting down the drones, and wants to track them to find out where they are landing.

“This is a matter of national interest,” he said.

Drone sightings can be reported at tips.fbi.gov.

NTD’s Steve Lance contributed to this report.

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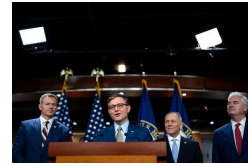
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