

An Observing Campaign to Monitor the Reentry of the Automated Transfer Vehicle "Jules Verne" in August 2008

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The next great opportunity to investigate aspects of entry and descent dynamics is the reentry of ESA's Automated Transfer Vehicle (ATV) called "Jules Verne". This first in a series of ATVs was launched on March 9, 2008. It has a function similar to that of the Russian Progress, a re-supply ship for the International Space Station (ISS). It is scheduled to dock with ISS in April, then undock in early August. An observing campaign is being organized to monitor the reentry of the 15-ton ATV-1 over the south Pacific ocean on August 8. An international team of researchers from governments, universities, and private institutions will deploy from NASA Ames Research Center in California, travel to the staging area, and field a wide range of imagers and spectrographs to record the manner in which ATV breaks during entry. This data is expected to constrain the model uncertainties in the size of the debris footprint and help ensure future safe returns of ATV.