

NASA and NOAA successfully launch next-generation polar orbiting satellite

November, 18 2017

On November 18, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) launched a new satellite for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), which has significantly better imaging capabilities than any of its predecessors.

The satellite, previously referred to as the Joint Polar Satellite System-1 (JPSS-1) and now officially known as NOAA-20 after reaching its orbit, lifted off from Vandenberg Air Force Base, California, at 1:47 a.m. PST. NOAA-20 joins the Geostationary Operational Environmental Satellite-16 (GOES-16), launched just over a year ago, to provide forecasters unprecedented access to high-quality data.

NOAA-20 is the first in a series of four polar orbiting satellites, referred to as the JPSS series, equipped with next-generation technology to help improve the timeliness and accuracy of U.S. weather forecasts three to seven days out. The satellite will provide detailed images of the Earth's surface and observations of atmospheric temperature and moisture, clouds, sea-surface temperature, ocean color, sea ice cover, volcanic ash, and fire detection. In addition to improving weather forecasting, the data will assist emergency managers in responding to natural disasters and help communities recovering from severe storms by providing better views of storm damage and showing the extent of power outages. Scientists and forecasters will be able to use the satellite's data after its five advanced instruments complete three months of tests.

JPSS satellites are designed to operate for seven years, with the potential for several more years. The three other polar orbiting satellites developed in the JPSS series are scheduled to launch in 2021, 2026, and 2031.

Sources: National Aeronautics and Space Administration, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
