

# Looking Down at Earth

NASA observes the whole Earth system from above.

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Scientists launch a balloon to study charged particles in Earth's atmosphere.



**NASA scientists use satellites, rockets, balloons, planes, and drones to study Earth.** NASA may be best known for space exploration, but it also conducts many different kinds of missions to investigate Earth systems. These include studying land, atmosphere, glaciers, forests, and oceans.

Through a coordinated series of missions, NASA's Earth science program looks down from above to learn more about our constantly changing planet. For example, the Global Precipitation Measurement mission uses satellites to observe how much rain and snow fall onto Earth—and where—to better model the complex relationship between precipitation, weather, and climate. The Operation IceBridge mission uses aircraft-mounted instruments to map Arctic and Antarctic ice to understand how climate change affects the coldest parts of our planet.



A plane flies over an iceberg during NASA's Operation IceBridge mission.