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Russian Satellite Takes Highest-Ever Resolution Picture of Earth

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A stunning 121-megapixel snapshot of the Earth was taken by a Russian weather satellite in what is thought to be the highest resolution picture of the planet ever taken from space.

The picture was taken by a camera aboard the Elektro-L, a geostationary satellite that travels at the speed of the Earth's rotation and remains at a fixed point about 36,000 kilometers above the equator.

In contrast to NASA's iconic Blue Marble images, which were created by pasting together several smaller, true-color pictures, the Elektro-L picture is a single shot of the entire globe.

Tech-blog Mashable explained that the pictures were produced by overlaying four pictures of the Earth — three taken at three wavelengths of visible light and one infrared image.

The infrared light makes vegetation appear orange, showing a strangely unfamiliar rusty brown in place of the normally green vegetation.

The Electro-L satellite was launched from the Baikonur cosmodrome in January last year. The satellite is designed to help predict weather patterns, analyze the condition of oceans and seas, geological objects and carry out other tasks. It takes pictures of the Earth every 30 minutes.

Electro-L is scheduled to orbit the Earth for a period of 10 years.

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