Comets and Asteroids Up-close

Asteroids and comets are left over remnants from the formation of the Solar System. Asteroids exist primarily in a donut-shaped “torus”, called the asteroid belt, located between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter. Comets exist primarily in a region called the Kuiper Belt, which is much farther away from Earth beyond the most distant planet, Neptune, and in a spherical region called the Oort cloud, at the most distant reaches of the Solar System.

Is Earth in danger?
Asteroids and comets can hurtle close to Earth. Some have crashed into our planet with disastrous results. Could a collision happen again? Almost certainly. But it’s very unlikely that a dangerous one will hit anytime soon.

Killer from Space
Scientists think a giant asteroid or comet killed the dinosaurs – and three-fourths of other animal and plant species – 65 million years ago. This artist’s concept envisioned the moment of impact.