

Astronomy of history



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Icy Ball Is Larger Than Pluto. So, Is It a Planet? . Published: March 15, 2013

A team of German astronomers reported a ball of ice and dust discovered last year in the outlying areas of the solar system which is thirty percent wider than Pluto. The astronomers' main object of concern was the solar system. Furthermore, they concentrated on Pluto and icy ball around it. This icy ball is a kuiper Belt member; an icy debris ring that orbits beyond Neptune. Moreover, a combination of both present and previous optical observations methods was used in the research. Dr. Bertoldi and his colleagues at Max Planck Institute for radio Astronomy determined the size of the object by measuring the heat getting out of it. Consequently, this gave them the capability to compute the surface temperature of about minus-418 degrees Fahrenheit.

The findings showed that the icy balls around Pluto that was given the nickname Xema. . Xema was among the largest objects to be discovered orbiting Earth's sun after the 1846 identification of Neptune. This findings of 2003 UB313, was 1, 860 miles, take 250milles added debate on whether this icy ball should be considered a planet. Moreover, the findings discovered were announced on July 2005 illustrated to astronomers that the icy ball was definitely larger than Pluto, since it looked in a surprising manner bright in the sky, although it is nine billion miles from the sun. Apparently, the similarities between Pluto and 2003 UB313, extend beyond size and reflectivity. Similar to Pluto, 2003 UB313 also has a moon and has methane ice on its surface. These findings brought out more debates as planet definition in different context made it a planet.

This mission is important, as it helps astronomers to put more thought on what a planet really entails. Consequently, most research in the past have

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described planet as any object in the solar system large enough that gravity has shaped it into a sphere or anything larger than planet Pluto (heacademy.ac.uk). Generally, this report will help stakeholders in the astronomy and science fields put a clear definition on what a planet should entail. However, the finding of the report will not be of any interest to the general public who are not interested in science. Therefore, the report is only relevant to astronomers.

My preconception of the article before reading it was that, a planet like object in the solar system, which is bigger than Pluto can be classified as a planet. However, going through the report changed this preconceptions as it shows how complicated the definition of a planet is. The fact that the definition of planet is stated and the icy ball covers some of that. Yet, it is not really acknowledge as one due to the many debates surrounding it gives a mixed conception. However, my preconception change as the report has so much on the definition of a planet, but eventually does not have a conclusion on it.

References

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