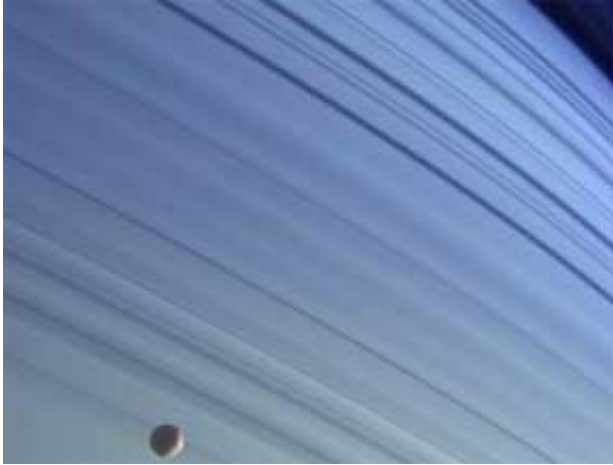


Cassini Spacecraft Witnesses Saturn's Blues

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Colorful new images from the Cassini spacecraft show that Saturn's northern hemisphere has a case of the blues. In the first image, the icy moon Mimas is set against a dazzling and dramatic portrait of Saturn's azure northern hemisphere and the shadows of its rings. A second image shows Saturn's northern polar region is a dim blue.

The blue color of Saturn's northern latitudes may to be linked to the apparently cloud-free nature of the upper atmosphere there. A precise understanding of the phenomenon may come from further study by Cassini imaging scientists.

In the first of these colorful views, Mimas moves in its orbit against the

blue backdrop of Saturn's atmosphere, which is draped by sweeping shadows cast by the rings. A few large craters are visible on Mimas, giving the icy moon a dimpled appearance.



The second view shows Saturn's northern polar region, where shadows cast by the rings surrounding the pole appear as dark bands. The ring shadows at higher latitudes correspond to locations on the ring plane that are farther from the planet - in other words, the northernmost ring shadow in this view is cast by the outer edge of Saturn's A ring. Spots of bright clouds also are visible throughout the region.

The view of Saturn and Mimas was taken by the Cassini spacecraft's narrow angle camera on Jan. 18, 2005, at a distance of approximately 1.4 million kilometers (870,000 miles) from Saturn. The view of Saturn's northern polar region was taken with Cassini's wide angle camera on Dec. 14, 2004, at a distance of 719,200 kilometers (446,900 miles) from Saturn.

Source: NASA

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