

More space objects are discovered

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Three astronomers who in July discovered the solar system's "10th planet" this week announced finding two more objects far beyond the orbit of Pluto.

The three objects -- temporarily named Xena, Santa and Easterbunny -- are among the largest objects discovered in the Kuiper Belt, an area at the very edge of the solar system, the San Francisco Chronicle reported Friday.

The astronomers are Michael Brown of the California Institute of Technology, Chadwick Trujillo of the University of Hawaii and David Rabinovitz of Yale University. Trujillo and Rabinovitz are discussing their findings this week at a planetary conference in Cambridge, England.

In an interview with the Chronicle, Brown said while Pluto is nearly 3 billion miles from Earth, Easterbunny and Santa are nearly 5 billion miles away and Xena is about 9 billion miles distant.

"Santa is crazy, and it's my favorite -- by far the weirdest of the three," Brown told the Chronicle. "It is ... shaped like a huge cigar, and it rotates end-over-end every four hours."

The International Astronomical Union will ultimately determine what to officially name the objects.

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