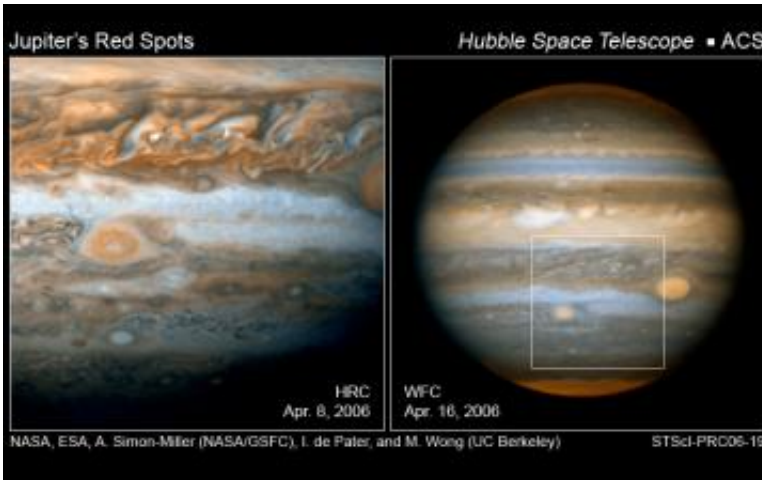


Astronomers marvel at 'Red Spot Jr'

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NASA's Hubble Space Telescope is giving astronomers their most detailed view yet of a second red spot emerging on Jupiter. For the first time in history, astronomers have witnessed the birth of a new red spot on the giant planet, which is located half a billion miles away. The storm is roughly one-half the diameter of its bigger and legendary cousin, the Great Red Spot. Researchers suggest that the new spot may be related to a possible major climate change in Jupiter's atmosphere. These images were taken with Hubble's Advanced Camera for Surveys on April 8 and 16, 2006. Credit: NASA, ESA, A. Simon-Miller (Goddard Space Flight Center) and I. de Pater (University of California, Berkeley)

Astronomers say NASA's Hubble Space Telescope is giving them their most detailed view yet of a second red spot emerging on Jupiter.

The sighting marks the first time in history astronomers have witnessed

the birth of a new red spot on the Solar System's giant planet, half a billion miles from Earth. Researchers suggest the new red spot may be related to a possible major climate change in Jupiter's atmosphere.

Dubbed by some astronomers as "Red Spot Jr.," the new spot has been followed by amateur and professional astronomers for the past few months. But Hubble's new images provide a level of detail comparable to that achieved by NASA's Voyager 1 and 2 spacecraft as they flew by Jupiter a quarter-century ago.

The smaller spot formed after three white oval-shaped storms merged during 1998 to 2000. At least one or two of the progenitor white ovals can be traced back 90 years, but they may have been present earlier.

A third spot appeared in 1939, while The Great Red Spot has been visible for 400 years, since telescopes were invented.

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