

Canadian space agency beams northern lights over Web

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A display of the northern lights in Sweden in 2003. Skywatchers can turn their gaze to a computer for a glimpse of the northern lights: the Canadian Space Agency on Monday launched an online observatory streaming the aurora borealis live over the Internet.

Skywatchers can turn their gaze to a computer for a glimpse of the northern lights: the Canadian Space Agency on Monday launched an online observatory streaming the aurora borealis live over the Internet.

"Armchair skywatchers everywhere can now discover the wonder of the northern lights live on their home computer screen," Canadian Space Agency president Steve MacLean said in a statement.

"We hope that watching the dance of the [northern lights](#) will make you

curious about the science of the sky and the relationship we have with our own star, the sun."

Auroras occur when charged particles from the Sun collide with gases in Earth's [upper atmosphere](#), resulting in a ribbon of lights dancing across the night sky.

The launch of the website (www.asc-csa.gc.ca/auroramax) coincides with the beginning of aurora season in northern Canada, which generally begins in late August or early September and ends in May.

Aurora enthusiasts will be able to catch the most frequent and intense auroras when the Sun reaches the most active period of its 11-year cycle, called solar maximum, in 2013.

In addition to nightly broadcasts of the [aurora](#), the website will also explain the science behind the phenomenon and offer tips for seeing and photographing auroras.

As well, it offers an image gallery with photographs and videos of the auroras from previous nights.

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