

# Earth-facing sunspot doubles in size

February 13 2012, by Jason Major

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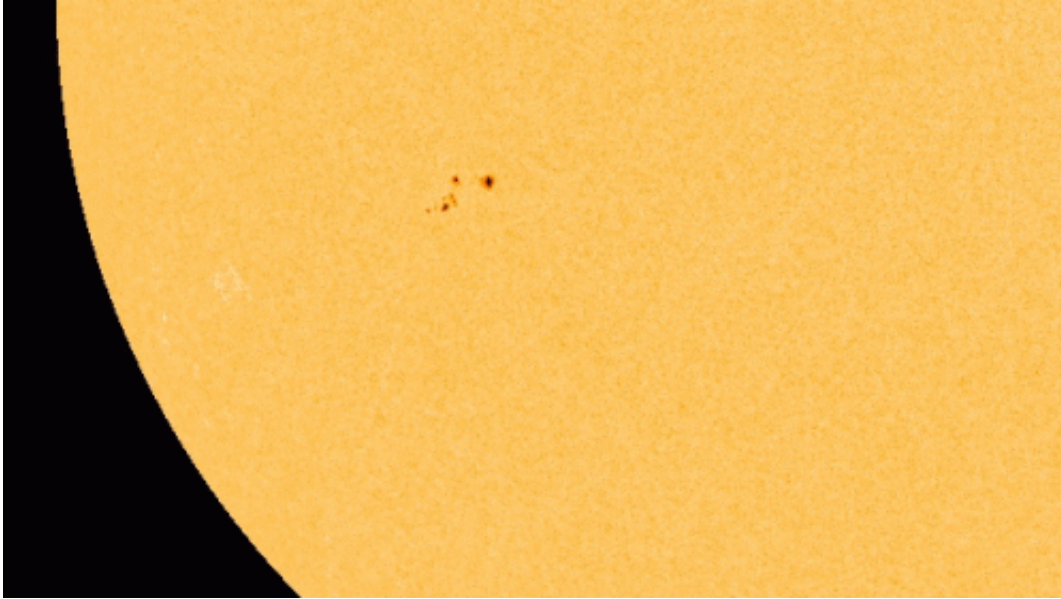


Image courtesy NASA/SDO and the AIA and HMI science teams.

The latest sunspot region to traverse the face of the Sun has nearly doubled in size as it aims Earthward, as seen in the animation above from NASA's Solar Dynamics Observatory. (Click image to play the animation.)

This is the second day in a row that the region has been seen expanding.

According to [SpaceWeather.com](http://SpaceWeather.com), active region 1416 has the right sort of magnetic energy to potentially send M-class flares our way.

M-class flares are medium-sized solar [flares](#). They can cause brief radio blackouts that affect Earth's polar regions. Minor radiation storms sometimes follow an M-class flare event.

If AR1416 produces a flare over the next 24 hours we would likely see increased auroral activity in upper latitudes early next week.

Source: [Universe Today](#)

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