

Slooh to broadcast live feeds of total solar eclipse from Kenya

November 1 2013

SLOOH, the community observatory, is sending host and technical officer, Paul Cox, on a wild expedition to the remote countryside of Kenya to globally broadcast the great spectacle of a total solar eclipse, live on Slooh.com, on November 3rd starting at 3:45 AM PST , 6:45 AM EST , 11:45 UTC and ending at 7:15AM PST , 10:15 AM EST , 15:15 UTC. Cox will be accompanied by a team from the Institute of Astrophysics of the Canary Islands (IAC), and he will provide updates of his journey throughout the week on Slooh under a special section called Total Solar Eclipse Kenya. In addition to multiple feeds coming from Kenya, Slooh will have live feeds coming from Gabon, Africa and the Canary Islands, off the coast of West Africa. Viewers can watch live on their PC/MAC or by downloading the free Slooh iPad app in the iTunes store.

The coverage of the Eclipse will be hosted by Cox and will include a range of special guests including documentary filmmaker Duncan Copp and Slooh astronomer Bob Berman. Viewers can ask questions to the panel during the broadcast using the Twitter hashtag #solareclipse.

Of the many worthy periodic celestial events, casual observers and professional astronomers are unanimous that the brief minutes of solar totality surpasses everything else in terms of spectacle and scientific usefulness.

Only at totality can prominences be seen leaping like geysers of pink nuclear flame from the solar limb. Only then do the brighter stars

emerge, while the Sun's ultrahot corona or outer atmosphere splays far across the sky, its pattern of plasma channeled along visually distinctive magnetic field lines.

The very shape of the solar corona appears different and distinctive for each eclipse, and largely depends on the stage of its sunspot cycle. This eclipse occurs during the year of solar max, which should create a more symmetrical corona, along with the possibility of striking prominences detached from the Sun's visible surface or photosphere. However, 2013 has been an unusually weak maximum, and it will be interesting to see if this shows itself in the Sun's large-scale magnetic structure as visibly evidenced during this totality.

Another unusual aspect of the November 3 eclipse is its challenging path across Africa. Totality, which in this eclipse is unusually short at under two minutes at best, crosses the steamy equatorial central Atlantic ocean before making landfall in one of the cloudiest parts of Africa. As the track continues eastward across that continent, leaving the most accessible regions, it finally encounters statistically clearer weather but also diminishes in length. By the time it reaches the part of Kenya with a better than 50/50 chance of clear-enough skies—far from any large towns, hotels or amenities, and requiring a true expedition complete with multiple nights of outdoor camping—its duration shrinks to less than a quarter-minute!

Nonetheless, this is where successful eclipse prospects are greatest. And this is where SLOOH is going, complete with satellite-transmitting equipment, to bring this event live to the world.

"This will be the most difficult eclipse we've covered at Slooh over the years. Our expedition will be made in a series of 4x4 vehicles carrying our delicate observation equipment across some of the harshest terrain in Africa. After three days across country, we'll be setting up camp near the

home of the largest population of crocodiles in the world—Lake Turkana. The challenging conditions and lack of amenities, at what is considered the 'cradle of mankind', make this a unique location for a global live broadcast—but it's the type of challenge we relish at Slooh! I'm looking forward to interviewing our line-up of expert guests throughout the live broadcast; we'll discuss just about every aspect of these awe-inspiring celestial events, and also explain why this particular eclipse is of the rare 'hybrid' variety. I look forward to answering viewers questions during the live broadcast, but they can also email them to me at coxy@slooh.com prior to the event."

Provided by SLOOH

Citation: Slooh to broadcast live feeds of total solar eclipse from Kenya (2013, November 1) retrieved 16 July 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2013-11-slooh-total-solar-eclipse-kenya.html>

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