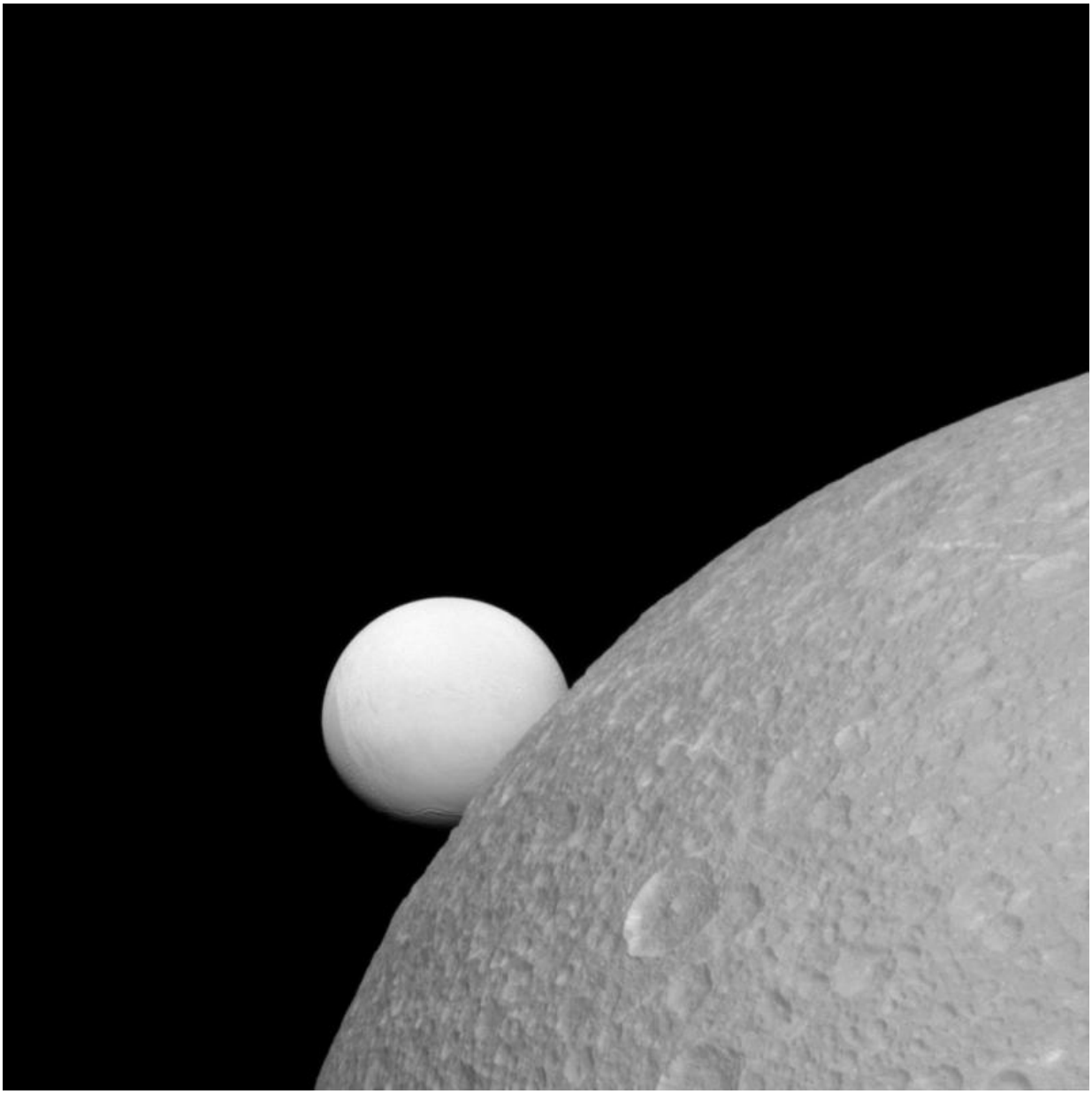
Image: Stunning shot of Dione and Enceladus

November 18 2015



Credit: NASA/JPL-Caltech/Space Science Institute

Although Dione (near) and Enceladus (far) are composed of nearly the same materials, Enceladus has a considerably higher reflectivity than Dione. As a result, it appears brighter against the dark night sky.

The surface of Enceladus (313 miles or 504 kilometers across) endures a constant rain of ice grains from its south polar jets. As a result, its surface is more like fresh, bright, snow than Dione's (698 miles or 1123 kilometers across) older, weathered surface. As clean, fresh surfaces are left exposed in space, they slowly gather dust and radiation damage and darken in a process known as "space weathering."

This view looks toward the leading hemisphere of Enceladus. North on Enceladus is up and rotated 1 degree to the right. The image was taken in visible light with the Cassini spacecraft narrow-angle camera on Sept. 8, 2015.

The view was acquired at a distance of approximately 52,000 miles (83,000 kilometers) from Dione. Image scale is 1,600 feet (500 meters) per pixel. The distance from Enceladus was 228,000 miles (364,000 kilometers) for an image scale of 1.4 miles (2.2 kilometers) per pixel.

More information: For more information about the Cassini-Huygens mission visit saturn.jpl.nasa.gov or www.nasa.gov/cassini . The Cassini imaging team homepage is at ciclops.org.

Provided by NASA

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