

# Video: Proba-2 watches Mercury transit

November 13 2019

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ESA's Proba-2 had a ring-side seat for the transit of Mercury on 11 November 2019. Proba-2 monitors the sun from Earth orbit and was able to spot Mercury's transit as a small black disc—seen here moving from left to right across the face of the sun.

The images in this movie were taken with the satellite's extreme ultraviolet telescope.

Solar transits—where a celestial body is seen to pass across the solar disc from the perspective of Earth—are relatively rare events. Mercury undergoes around 13 transits a century; the last occurred in 2016 but the next is not until 2032. Both Mercury and the sun are destinations for ESA missions: BepiColombo will arrive at Mercury in 2025, while Solar Orbiter is getting ready for a 2020 launch to study the sun up close. Transits are also important outside of our solar system, in the quest to find exoplanets. For example, a transiting planet causes a dip in brightness of its host star, revealing the presence of an exoplanet. Space missions like ESA's Cheops will study known transiting exoplanets to determine more about their characteristics.

Provided by European Space Agency

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