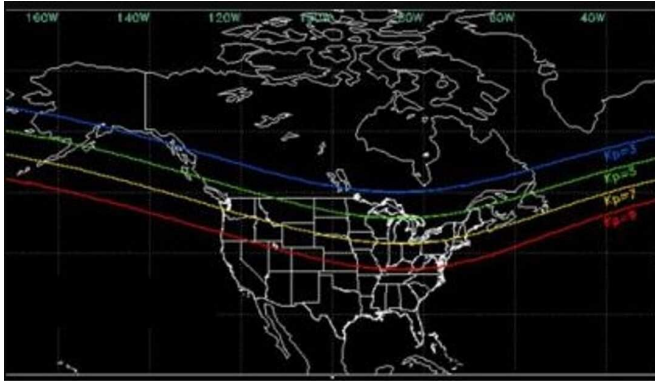


# The northern lights, aka 'aurora borealis,' could be coming to a sky near you this week

15 May 2019, by Doyle Rice, Usa Today



The aurora could be visible as far south as the yellow line, which stretches from southern Washington all the way to Maine. Credit: NOAA Space Weather Prediction Center

Thanks to a geomagnetic storm from the sun, skywatchers across the far northern U.S. and most of Canada later this week could see the aurora borealis, aka the northern lights.

The Space Weather Prediction Center on Tuesday issued a G2 (moderate) [geomagnetic storm](#) watch for Thursday, meaning an [aurora borealis](#) could be visible that day.

The watch was issued because of a series of coronal mass ejection events from the sun that are expected to arrive here on Earth on Wednesday and last through Friday. These events are "large expulsions of plasma and [magnetic field](#) from the sun's corona," the space center said.

A "surprisingly strong" [aurora](#) was visible early Tuesday across portions of the northern tier of the U.S. from an earlier geomagnetic storm, according to AccuWeather.

The sky spectacle Thursday could be visible in

states such as Montana, the Dakotas, Minnesota, Wisconsin, northern Illinois, Michigan, northern New York State and much of New England, according to the prediction center.

Folks in cities such as Minneapolis, Chicago, Detroit, Buffalo, Syracuse, Albany and Boston all have a chance of seeing the aurora.

The aurora forms when the particles flowing from the sun get caught up in the Earth's magnetic field. The particles interact with molecules of atmospheric gases to cause the famed glowing red and green colors of the aurora.

The lights are visible in both the far northern and southern parts of the world. The southern lights are known as aurora australis.

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