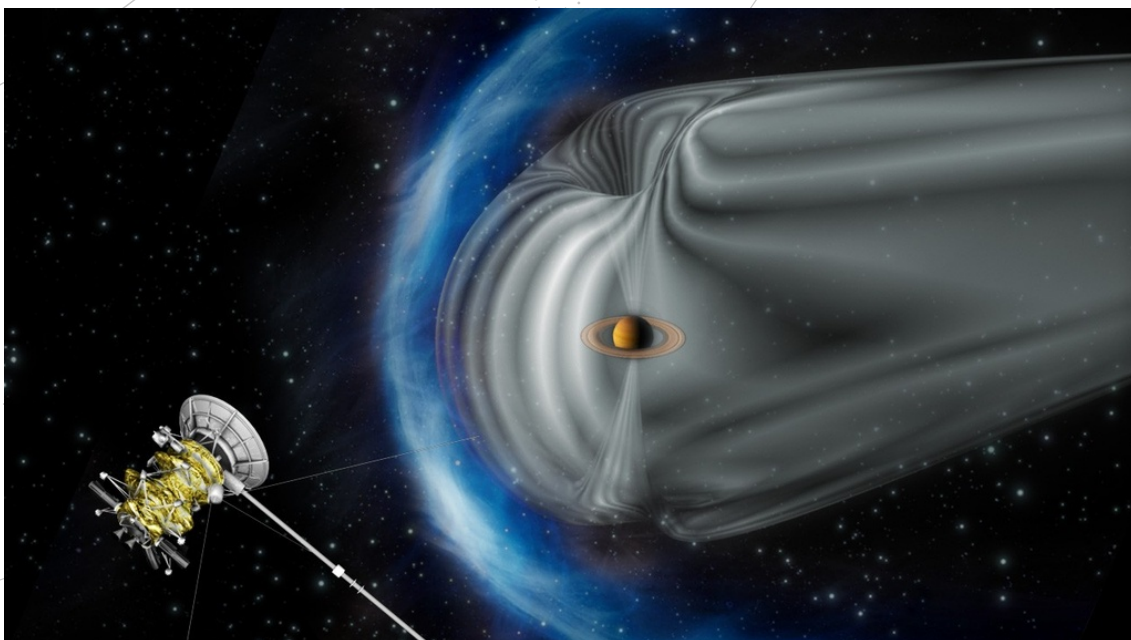


SPACE SCOOP
NEWS FROM ACROSS THE UNIVERSE



Sailing in the Solar Wind

Feb. 18, 2013

Have you ever seen the lights of the Auroras? If you travel close enough to the North or South Pole, you can sometimes see elegant trails of colourful light dancing across the night sky. People who've been lucky enough to see the so-called Northern or Southern lights often say it was one of the most amazing experiences they've ever had!

The Auroras are caused by particles from the Sun flying at Earth. These particles are called the 'solar wind'. They collide with an invisible force field surrounding Earth's, called the magnetic field.

They then travel along the invisible lines of the magnetic field, like electricity travelling along a cable, and are carried to the North and South poles. When they reach the poles, these tiny particles collide with other tiny particles in Earth's atmosphere (like the air we breathe). The collision causes the beautiful light shows we see!

Just like Earth, other planets in our Solar System have magnetic fields, including Saturn. And a spacecraft orbiting Saturn recently witnessed the same phenomenon at Saturn's poles!

▲ COOL FACT!

The Auroras are not always green, they can be all colours of the rainbow! The colour depends on how high in the atmosphere the light is shining.