
Scientists Discover Most Distant Known Object in the Solar System

12/11/2015



The distant object is between 500 and 1,000 km (310 to 620 mi.) in diameter and its orbit will not be able to be determined for another year while more data on it is gathered by telescopes, as its discoverers reported at the annual meeting of the U.S. Astronomical Society held near Washington.

“We can’t really classify the object yet, as we don’t know its orbit,” said Scott Sheppard, an astronomer with the Carnegie Institution for Science in Washington, D.C. who headed the scientific team that made the find. “We only just found this object a few weeks ago.”

V774104 is currently located 15.4 billion km (some 10 billion mi.) from the Sun, or 103 times the Earth-Sun distance.

Up to now, the most distant known object in the Solar System was the dwarf planet Eris, discovered in 2005, which has a small moon named Dysnomia and is located some 14.5 billion km (9 billion mi.) from the Sun.

Joseph Burns, an astronomy professor at Cornell University, said Wednesday that this discovery is one more piece of evidence that the Solar System is much larger than we had thought.

He said we need a little more time to determine the object’s orbit and precise size.

