

STORMS

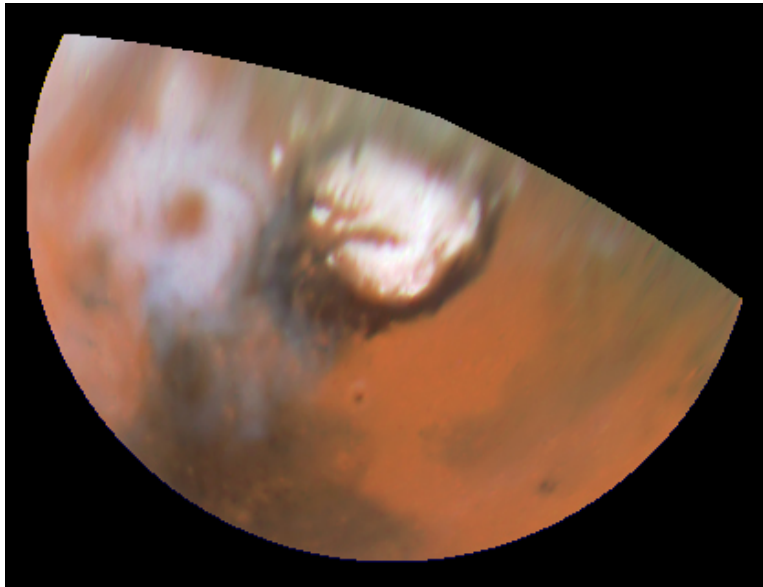
Typhoon Odessa, Western Pacific Ocean, Earth

Hurricanes (or typhoons) form in tropical regions where warm ocean waters trigger local thunderstorms. Wind currents and the Earth's rotation organize them into large spirals. When winds reach 119 kilometers per hour, a hurricane is born.

When observed by shuttle astronauts in August 1985, Typhoon Odessa was a mature and powerful storm with a tightly formed eye wall. Hurricane circulation forms a cylindrical wall of thunderstorms up to 100 kilometers wide near the center called the eye wall, which is the site of the most damaging winds. Hurricanes can affect an area 600 kilometers wide. The general circulation in a hurricane is part of the mechanism that redistributes equatorial heat to the poles.

3-D Tour of the Solar System ©Lunar and Planetary Institute, 1997

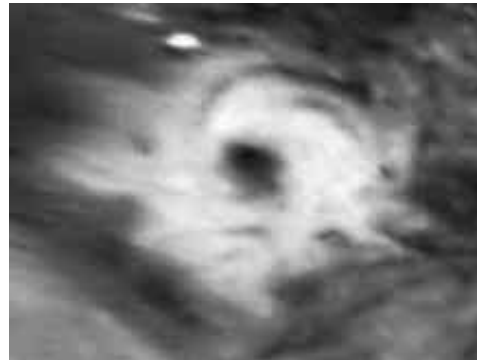
use 3-D glasses to view image



Storms on Mars

Astronomers using NASA's Hubble Space Telescope have

discovered an enormous cyclonic storm system in the northern polar regions of the planet Mars. Slightly larger than the state of Texas, the storm is composed of water ice clouds like storm systems on Earth rather than dust typically found in martian storms. The storm is more than 1000 miles across, and the eye of the storm is nearly 200 miles in diameter.



Similar storms, some comparable in size to the martian storm, have been seen in Earth's polar regions. *NASA STSci-PR99-22*

Lunar and Planetary Institute
<http://www.lpi.usra.edu>