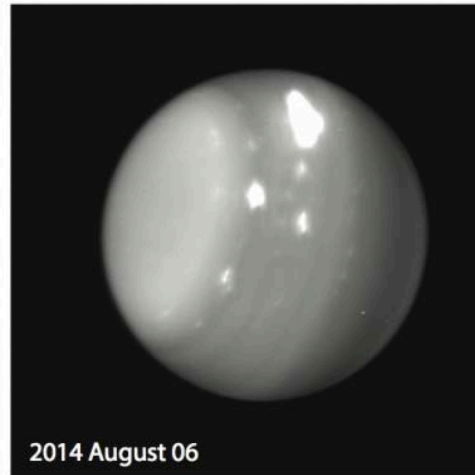
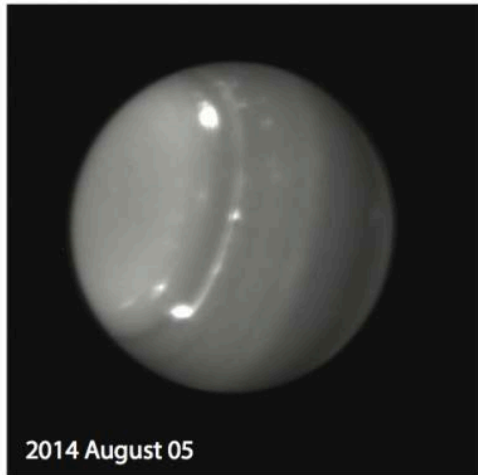
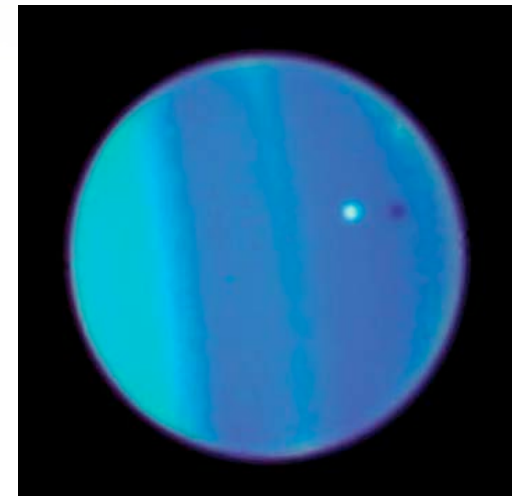


# Stormy Uranus



The appearance of a number of massive and bright new storms on Uranus over the past few days have surprised astronomers at the Keck Observatory in Hawaii accustomed to observing the cool, blue planet.

- When Voyager reached the planet in 1986, only a small number of very dim clouds were observed in the atmosphere.
- In 2007, when Uranus was at its equinox (image at right), with the Sun's light shining directly over its equator, large storms raged on the planet, but these have since dissipated as the North pole has come into view and the south pole has retreated into darkness.
- One of these storms, nicknamed the "Berg" since it was visible just below the polar haze and looked like an iceberg calving off a polar shelf, survived until 2009, when it moved close to the equator and dissipated.
- The brightest of the new storms shown above is even brighter than the Berg storm, and is likely tied to a vortex deep in the atmosphere that propagates upward to the cloud tops.



Hubble Space Telescope image of Uranus and its moon Ariel taken in 2006, close to the planet's equinox. 08/22/14