

Comet Catalina (C/2013 US10) Outbound

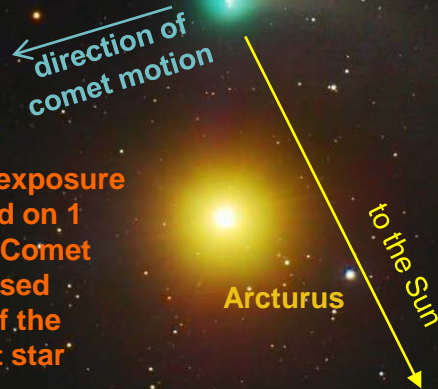
Comet Catalina (C/2013 US10) was discovered on 31 Oct 2013 by the 0.7-m Schmidt telescope of the Catalina Sky Survey. It is a dynamic 'new' comet from the farthest reaches of our solar system, the Oort cloud.

As these icy bodies approach the inner part of the solar system, the Sun's radiation causes the volatiles sublimate and vaporize – creating the fuzzy coma and tails.

The ion tail points directly away from the Sun whereas the wispy dust trail curls towards the comet's orbital path.

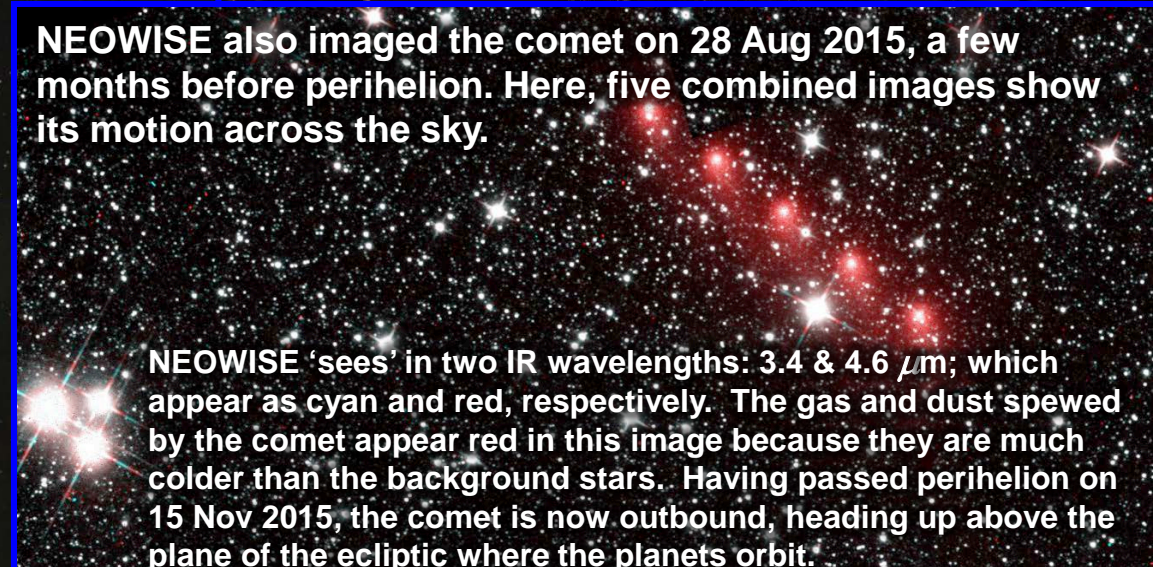


The 0.7-m Schmidt telescope, located in the Catalina Mtns, north of Tucson, Arizona.



This 54-sec exposure was captured on 1 Jan 2016 as Comet Catalina passed within $\frac{1}{2}^\circ$ of the orange giant star Arcturus.

NEOWISE also imaged the comet on 28 Aug 2015, a few months before perihelion. Here, five combined images show its motion across the sky.



NEOWISE 'sees' in two IR wavelengths: 3.4 & 4.6 μm ; which appear as cyan and red, respectively. The gas and dust spewed by the comet appear red in this image because they are much colder than the background stars. Having passed perihelion on 15 Nov 2015, the comet is now outbound, heading up above the plane of the ecliptic where the planets orbit.