

A Faraway World May Join Pluto's Family

Astronomers found a distant object that could become a new official dwarf planet.



A telescope looks toward a faint icy object in a starry night sky.

Astronomers may have found a small new world far beyond Neptune. According to reporting by Live Science, the object is called 2026 ED138. It was spotted by the Vera C. Rubin Observatory, a powerful telescope in Chile. If more observations confirm it, ED138 could become an officially recognized dwarf **planet**.

A dwarf planet is round like a planet, because its own **gravity** pulls it into shape. But it has not cleared its path around the sun. That means other objects still share its space. Pluto is the best-known dwarf planet. Scientists also count Ceres, Eris, Haumea and Makemake as official dwarf planets.

ED138 is hard to find because it is very far away. It orbits the sun about 46 times farther out than Earth does. From here, **distant** objects look dim. They also seem to move very slowly. This one was even harder to see because it sits near the bright band of the Milky Way. That is our **galaxy**, or giant group of stars.

The Rubin Observatory is built for this kind of hunt. Its **camera** images the whole southern sky every few nights. Then computer programs look for things that changed place or brightness. That can reveal a moving object in our solar system. It can also reveal a star explosion far away.

ED138 may be one of the largest bright objects found past Neptune. Scientists estimate its width from its brightness, its distance, and how shiny its surface

may be. The estimate is still wide. ED138 could be smaller than Ceres, or more than half as wide as Pluto. Future observations should give a better size. They may also show whether ED138 is round enough for the dwarf planet list.

The place where ED138 travels is called the Kuiper Belt. It is a cold area beyond Neptune with many icy bodies. These objects are made from **frozen** materials and rock. Scientists study them because they can hold clues from the early solar system. They are like leftovers from when the planets formed.

This discovery also shows how new tools can change what people notice. ED138 was not nearby. It was not quick. It was hidden in a busy part of the sky. But Rubin will scan again and again for ten years. That means more quiet, far-away worlds may soon come into view.

Written from reporting by Live Science.

THINK IT THROUGH

1. Should scientists talk about a possible dwarf planet before they are completely sure? Defend your answer.

2. What are the benefits and risks of using computers to search the sky for hidden objects?

3. Why might a cold, faraway object be worth studying, even if people may never visit it?

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N C S A I F E N W A
L E E G A L A X Y T
D R H D R I E T T B
A A A A I G M A R G
A E Y Z E S A E P R
S S R P O F T H L A
A U C A M E R A A V
A T I F R O Z E N I
A T L R M E R N E T
E A A F O R B I T Y

CAMERA

DISTANT

FROZEN

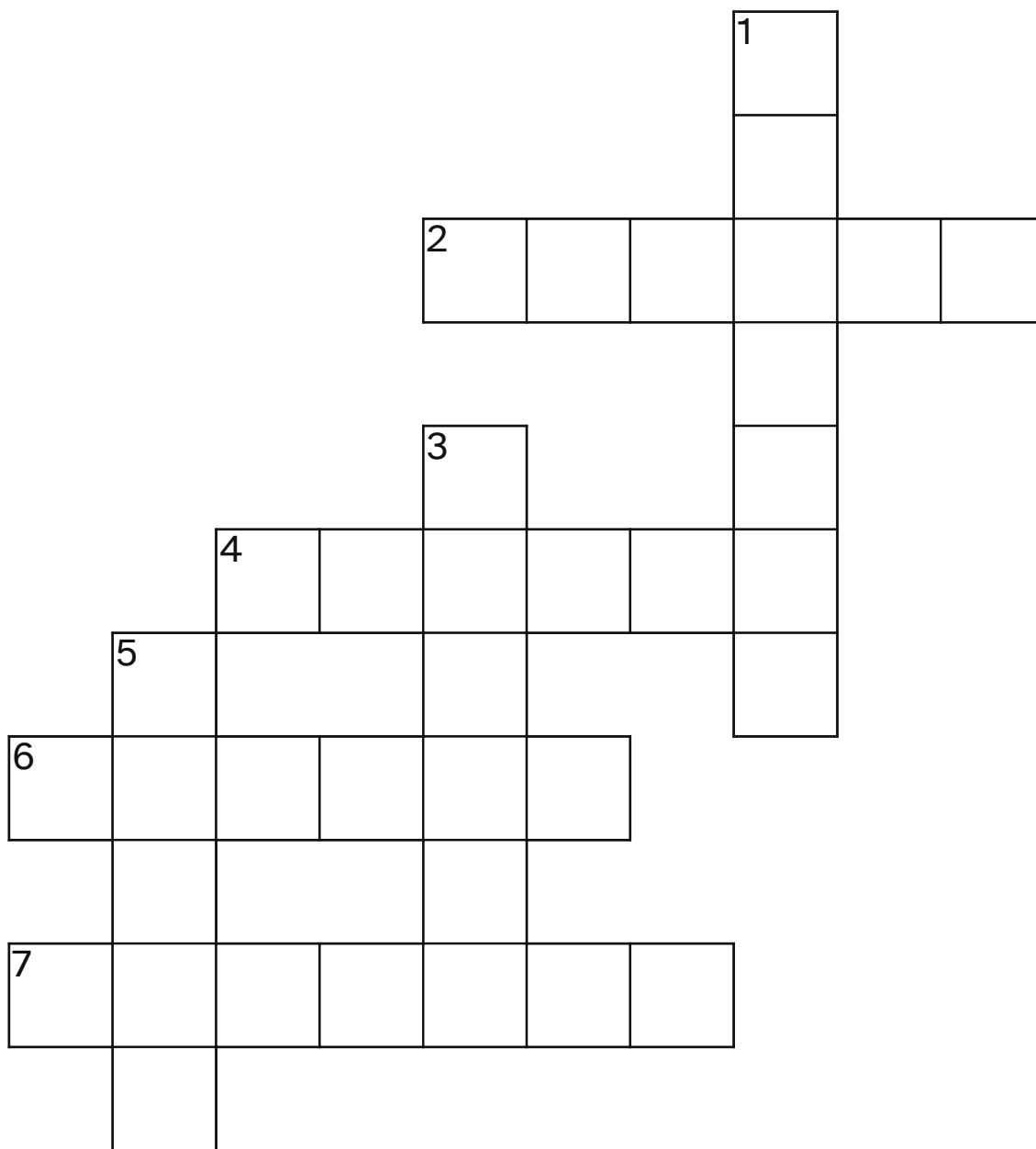
GALAXY

GRAVITY

ORBIT

PLANET

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ACROSS

- 2 Huge group of stars, gas, and dust in space
- 4 Round world that travels around a star
- 6 Turned to ice by very cold temperatures
- 7 Far away from where you are looking

DOWN

- 1 Pulling force between things with mass
- 3 Tool used to take pictures of the sky
- 5 Route a world follows around a star

Where this came from

This article was written for 3andB from the reporting below. It is not a reprint — the wording is ours and the facts are theirs.

Live Science

“Bright object beyond Pluto may be the solar system's sixth dwarf planet”

Published Thursday, October 29, 2026

Read by us on Friday, October 30, 2026

<https://www.livescience.com/space/planets/bright-object-beyond-pluto-may-be-the-solar-systems-sixth-dwarf-planet>

WHAT IS IN THIS PACKET

The article and its discussion questions, a word search, and a crossword.

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