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NewsTrack - Science

NASA looks at a monster storm on Saturn

PASADENA, Calif., Nov. 9 (UPI) -- NASA says its [Cassini spacecraft](#) has found a hurricane-like storm at Saturn's [South Pole](#), nearly 5,000 miles across -- or two-thirds Earth's diameter.

"It looks like a hurricane, but it doesn't behave like a hurricane," said Andrew Ingersoll, a member of Cassini's imaging team at the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena, Calif. "Whatever it is, we're going to focus on the eye of this storm and find out why it's there."

Images taken by Cassini indicate clockwise winds blowing at 350 miles per hour and a ring of towering clouds surrounding the pole. The ring clouds, 20 miles to 45 miles above those in the center of the storm, are two to five times taller than [thunderstorm](#) and hurricane clouds that form on Earth.

The storm is apparently different than hurricanes on Earth because it is stationary and does not drift. Also, since Saturn is a gaseous planet, the storm formed without an ocean at its base.

NASA says observations taken as the South Pole season changes from summer to fall will help scientists understand the role seasons play in driving the dramatic [meteorology](#).

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