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Saturn now the planet with the most moons – 10th October, 2019

Level 4

Saturn is now the planet with the most moons. It has overtaken Jupiter as "king of the moons". Astronomers found 20 new moons orbiting Saturn, which now has 82 moons. Jupiter has 79. Each of the newly-discovered moons is at least 5km in diameter. Seventeen of them orbit Saturn backwards. They take three years to complete one orbit of Saturn. The astronomers will now look for moons that are a kilometer in diameter.

An astronomer spoke about the origins of the moons. He said: "We don't think they formed with the planet. We think they were captured by the planet in the past." He thinks Saturn sucked in a mixture of gas and dust to form the moons. He added: "We think these are the last remnants of what formed Saturn." The moons will be named in a competition after giants from Gallic, Inuit and Norse mythology.

Level 5

Astronomers say Saturn is now the planet with the most moons. It has overtaken Jupiter as the "king of the moons". The astronomers found 20 new moons orbiting Saturn, which brings the planet's total to 82. Jupiter has 79 celestial bodies. Each of the newly-discovered moons is at least 5km in diameter. Seventeen of them orbit Saturn backwards and take over three years to complete one orbit of Saturn. The astronomers found the moons using a powerful telescope in Hawaii. The research team will now look for moons that are a kilometer in diameter.

Lead astronomer Dr Scott Sheppard commented on the origins of the moons. He said: "We don't think they formed with the planet. We think they were captured by the planet in the past." He thinks Saturn sucked in a mixture of gas and dust to form the moons. He added: "We think these moons interacted with that gas and dust. These were comets or asteroids that happened to be passing by.... We think these are the last remnants of what formed Saturn." The moons will be named in a competition after giants from Gallic, Inuit and Norse mythology.

Level 6

Astronomers have promoted Saturn as the planet with the most moons. Saturn has overtaken the solar system's largest planet Jupiter as the "king of the moons". The astronomers recently discovered 20 new moons orbiting Saturn, which brings the planet's total number to 82. This edges out Jupiter, with 79 celestial bodies, into second place. Each of the newly-discovered moons is at least 5km in diameter. Seventeen of them orbit Saturn backwards and take more than three years to complete one orbit of Saturn. The astronomers found the moons using the powerful Subaru telescope, located on Hawaii. The research team will now look for moons that are around a kilometer in diameter.

Lead astronomer Dr Scott Sheppard commented on the perceived origins of the new moons. He said: "We don't think they formed with the planet. We think they were captured by the planet in the past." He posited that Saturn sucked in a swirling mixture of gas and dust to form the moons. Dr Sheppard added: "We think these moons interacted with that gas and dust. These were comets or asteroids that happened to be passing by....They were captured into orbits around the planet rather than falling into the planet. We think these are the last remnants of what formed Saturn." The moons will be named in a competition after giants from Gallic, Inuit and Norse mythology.