



SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

NASA's Juno Spacecraft Finds Out More about Jupiter's Great Red Spot

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Researchers have made a new discovery about a huge and long-lasting storm in the atmosphere of the planet Jupiter.

A study published recently in *Science* says that Jupiter's Great Red Spot, a storm wide enough to cover the Earth, is also extremely deep.

The U.S. space agency NASA's spacecraft, Juno, is using special tools to make images of the planet.

Scott Bolton of the Southwest Research Institute in Texas was the lead scientist in the study. He said microwave radiation and gravity-mapping tools from Juno show the storm “**fades** out” slowly and “keeps going down.” He explained that the storm does not have a clear ending point below the clouds.

The storm probably has a depth between 350 and 500 kilometers. It is 16,000 kilometers wide.

The planet is known for powerful storms in its atmosphere. Thousands of storms **swirl** around Jupiter at any time, scientists said. The storms cause the colorful cloud **patterns** shown by photography and mapping tools. Some of the tools produce images in three **dimensions**.

Bolton said the next project for Juno is to map the storms in the extreme north and south of the planet. They could be even deeper than the Great Red Spot.

Bolton said he did not want to guess that the Great Red Spot was the deepest of the planet's storms. He said, however, since the spot is the widest, it might also be the deepest.

The Juno spacecraft started orbiting Jupiter in 2016. NASA recently announced the project will be extended to 2025.

I'm Dan Friedell.

Dan Friedell adapted this story for Learning English based on a report by The Associated Press. Mario Ritter, Jr. was the editor.

What is your guess about what else NASA will discover about Jupiter? Tell us in the Comments Section and visit our Facebook page.

Words in This Story

fade – v. to become weaker; to disappear slowly

swirl – v. to move in circles or to cause such a motion

pattern – n. a repeated form or design

dimension – n. the length, width, height, or depth of something : a measurement in one direction (such as the distance from the ceiling to the floor in a room)