



Where is pioneer 11 today

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Approved in February 1969, Pioneer 11 and its twin probe, Pioneer 10, were the first to be designed for exploring the outer Solar System. Yielding to multiple proposals throughout the 1960s, early mission objectives were defined as:

Pioneer 11 was built by TRW and managed as part of the Pioneer program by NASA Ames Research Center. A backup unit, Pioneer H, is currently on display in the "Milestones of Flight" exhibit at the National Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C. Many elements of the mission proved to be critical in the planning of the Voyager program.

The Pioneer 11 bus measures 36 centimeters (14 in) deep and with six 76-centimeter-long (30 in) panels forming the hexagonal structure. The bus houses propellant to control the orientation of the probe and eight of the twelve scientific instruments. The spacecraft has a mass of 259 kilograms.

Pioneer 11 has one additional instrument more than Pioneer 10, a flux-gate magnetometer.

Includes an unfocused Cerenkov counter that detects the light emitted in a particular direction as particles passed through it recording electrons of energy, 0.5 to 12 MeV, an electron scatter detector for electrons of energy, 100 to 400 keV, and a minimum ionizing detector consisting of a solid-state diode that measured minimum ionizing particles (<3 MeV) and protons in the range of 50 to 350 MeV.

The Pioneer 11 probe was launched on April 6, 1973, at 02:11:00 UTC, by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration from Space Launch Complex 36A at Cape Canaveral, Florida aboard an Atlas-Centaur launch vehicle, with a Star-37E propulsion module. Its twin probe, Pioneer 10, had been launched on March 3, 1972.

Pioneer 11 passed by Saturn on September 1, 1979, at a distance of 21,000 km (13,000 mi) from Saturn's cloud tops.

Besides Epimetheus, instruments located another previously undiscovered small moon and an additional ring, charted Saturn's magnetosphere and magnetic field, and found its planet-sized moon, Titan, to be too cold for life. Hurtling underneath the ring plane, the probe sent back pictures of Saturn's rings. The rings, which normally seem bright when observed from Earth, appeared dark in the Pioneer pictures, and the dark gaps in the rings seen from Earth appeared as bright rings.

On February 25, 1990, Pioneer 11 became the fourth human-made object to pass beyond the orbit of the planets.

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NASA terminated routine contact with the spacecraft on September 30, 1995, but continued to make contact for about two hours every two to four weeks. Scientists received a few minutes of good engineering data on November 24, 1995, but then lost final contact once Earth moved out of view of the spacecraft's antenna.

Due to power constraints and the vast distance to the probe, the last routine contact with the spacecraft was on September 30, 1995, and the last good engineering data was received on November 24, 1995.

Pioneer 11 has been overtaken by the two Voyager probes launched in 1977. Voyager 1 has become the most distant object built by humans and will remain so for the foreseeable future, as no probe launched since Voyager has the speed to overtake it.

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