

PLANETARY SCIENCE Size and Scale of a Celestial Scene

STAR TURN: An artist's rendering illustrates new details about the size and scale of a system of rings circling a celestial object about 430 light-years from Earth that has been studied by Eric Mamajek, associate professor of physics and astronomy, for the past several years. Mamajek and colleagues from Leiden Observatory in the Netherlands reported this winter that the system, located near the sun-like star J1407, consists of more than 30 rings, is about 200 times larger than that of Saturn, and may provide the first evidence of a moon orbiting an object outside the solar system. The ring system, discovered by Mamajek in 2012, circles a brown dwarf star or an exoplanet as much as 40 times the size of Jupiter. ILLUSTRATION BY RON MILLER