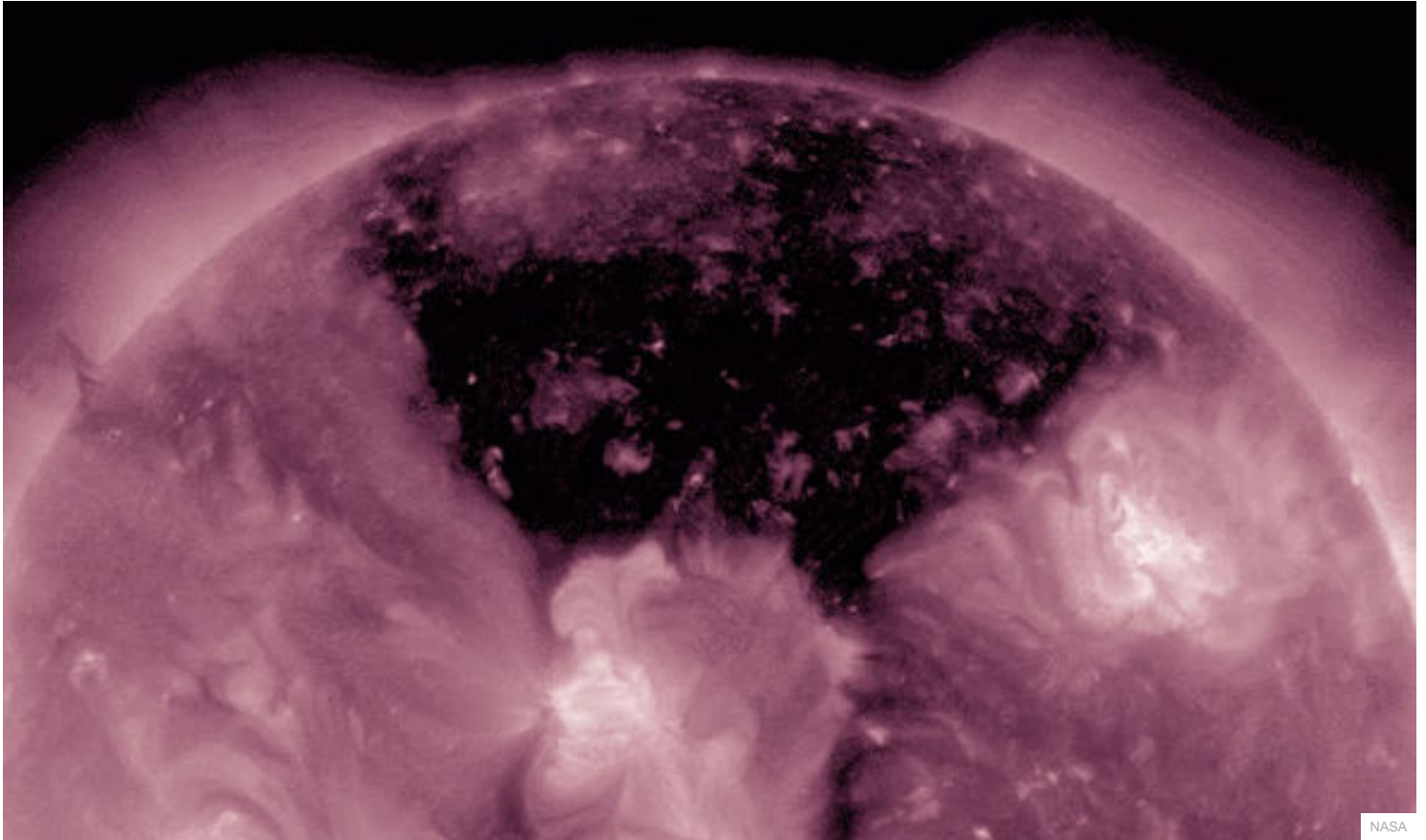




# Is the Sun DISINTEGRATING? NASA spots monster hole open up on our star

NASA has revealed that a massive hole, measuring more than ten per cent of the Sun's surface area, has opened up on our star.



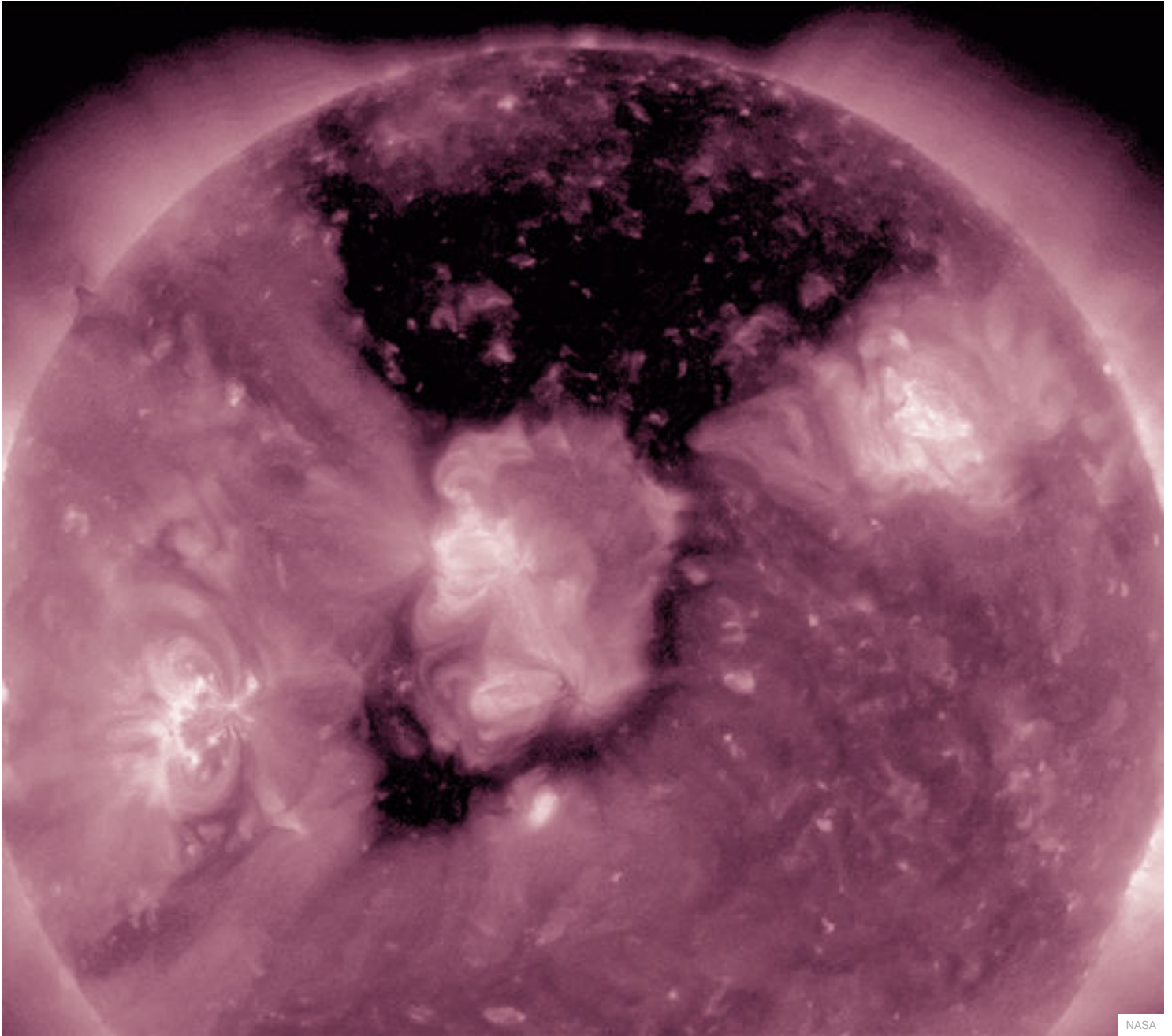
NASA

The enormous hole takes up much of the top half of the star

The remarkable footage was captured by the US space agency's Solar Dynamics Observatory between May 17 and 19.

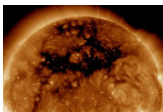
The video shows a giant dark area on the star's upper half, known as a coronal hole.

A NASA spokesman said: "Coronal holes are low-density regions of the sun's atmosphere, known as the corona.



It's massive: The footage was recorded between May 17 and 19

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"Because they contain little solar material, they have lower temperatures and thus appear much darker than their surroundings."

"Coronal holes are visible in certain types of extreme ultraviolet light, which is typically invisible to our eyes, but is colorised here in purple for easy viewing."

NASA says the huge hole is actually not of great concern, but it remains unclear why the coronal holes actually form.

But it does mean that large amounts of solar winds, that cause the Aurora Borealis or Northern Lights to form, have been blasted to Earth.

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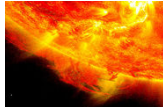


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**While it's unclear what causes coronal holes, they correlate to areas on the sun where magnetic fields soar up and away, without looping back down to the surface, as they do elsewhere.**

NASA spokesman



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**These giant 'wounds' have the potential to disrupt our communications and blast us with cancer-causing UV rays, if it were not for the Earth's magnetosphere which shields us from them.**

The spokesman added: "These coronal holes are important to understanding the space environment around Earth through which our technology and astronauts travel.

"Coronal holes are the source of a high-speed wind of solar particles that streams off the sun some three times faster than the slower wind elsewhere.

## Amazing Aurora Pictures from Alaska

Fri, December 27, 2013

Keen snapper Nolan Nitschke travelled to Alaska from his home in Bishop, California, after he and his friends worked out the time of year most likely to see the best aurora activity. And they weren't let down - as the amazing array of colours danced across the Alaskan skies in a theatrical performance locals described as the most spectacular they had seen in over 30 years. Nolan and his pals spent the night photographing the stunning sights throughout a strong solar storm which he described as almost like tentacles uncontrollably waving through the air.


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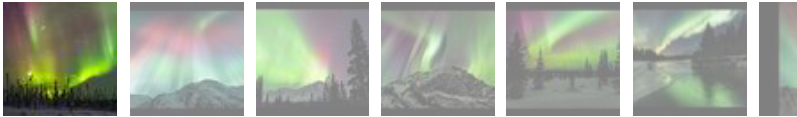

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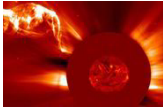
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NOLAN NITSCHKE / CATERS NEWS

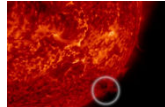
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While it is unclear what causes coronal holes, they are the areas on the sun where magnetic fields soar up and away, without looping back down to the surface, as they do elsewhere."

It could also mean the large holes are getting bigger.

Last October, NASA released images showing a smaller hole, which was the size of 50 Earths, had formed in the same area.

At that time, it was believed to have been one of the biggest ever recorded.

[Space \(/latest/space\)](#)