

NASA NAMES GAMMA-RAY CONSTELLATIONS AFTER GODZILLA, HULK

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The background shows the gamma-ray sky as mapped by Fermi. The prominent reddish band is the plane of our own galaxy, the Milky Way; brighter colors indicate brighter gamma-ray sources.
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NASA scientists have devised a new set of 21 modern gamma-ray constellations and named them after fictional characters such as the Hulk and Godzilla. The constellations, constructed with sources visible through its gamma-ray telescope, were devised to celebrate the completion of 10 years of operations of the Fermi Gamma-ray Space Telescope.

The new constellations include a few characters from modern myths. Among them are the Little Prince, the time-warping TARDIS from 'Doctor Who,' Godzilla and his heat ray, the antimatter-powered U.S.S. Enterprise from 'Star Trek: The Original Series' and the Hulk, the product of a gamma-ray experiment gone awry.

"Developing these unofficial constellations was a fun way to highlight a decade of Fermi's accomplishments," said Julie McEnery, the Fermi project scientist at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center in the US. "One way or another, all of the gamma-ray constellations have a tie-in to Fermi science."

Gamma-rays in the sky, seen by our [@NASAFermi](#) telescope! To celebrate the mission's 10-year anniversary, scientists used Fermi sources to create a set of unofficial gamma-ray constellations. Explore the interactive map and find them all: <https://t.co/m3pF7WHOQT>
[pic.twitter.com/pPtIPfHJY1](https://t.co/m3pF7WHOQT)

Since July 2008, Fermi's Large Area Telescope (LAT) has been scanning the entire sky each day, mapping and measuring sources of gamma rays, the highest-energy light in the universe.

The emission may come from pulsars, nova outbursts, the debris of supernova explosions and giant gamma-ray bubbles located in our own galaxy, or supermassive black holes and gamma-ray bursts — the most powerful explosions in the cosmos — in others.

"By 2015, the number of different sources mapped by Fermi's LAT had expanded to about 3,000 — 10 times the number known before the mission," said Elizabeth Ferrara, who led the constellation project. "For the first time ever, the number of known gamma-ray sources was comparable to the number of bright stars, so we thought a new set of constellations was a great way to illustrate the point."

The 21 gamma-ray constellations include famous landmarks — such as Sweden's recovered warship, Vasa, the Washington Monument and Mount Fuji in Japan — in countries contributing to Fermi science.

Others represent scientific ideas or tools, from Schrodinger's Cat, to Albert Einstein, Radio Telescope and Black Widow Spider, the namesake of a class of pulsars that evaporate their unfortunate companion stars.

Researchers also developed a web-based interactive to showcase the constellations, with

artwork from Aurore Simonnet, an illustrator at Sonoma State University in Rohnert Park, California, and a map of the whole gamma-ray sky from Fermi. Clicking on a constellation turns on its artwork and name, which includes a link to a page with more information. Other controls switch on the visible sky and selected traditional constellations.

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