

Solar cycle

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This article is about the sunspot cycle. For the 28-year cycle of the [Julian calendar](#), see [Solar cycle \(calendar\)](#).

400 years sunspot history, including the [Maunder Minimum](#).

"The current prediction for Sunspot Cycle 24 gives a smoothed sunspot number maximum of about 69 in the late Summer of 2013. The smoothed sunspot number reached 68.9 in August 2013 so the official maximum will be at least this high. The smoothed sunspot number has been rising again towards this second peak over the last five months and has now surpassed the level of the first peak (66.9 in February 2012). Many cycles are double peaked but this is the first in which the second peak in sunspot number was larger than the first. We are currently over five years into Cycle 24. The current predicted and observed size makes this the smallest sunspot cycle since Cycle 14 which had a maximum of 64.2 in February of 1906." [[]

The **solar cycle** or **solar magnetic activity cycle** is a nearly periodic 11-year change in the [Sun](#)'s activity measured in terms of variations in the number of observed sunspots on the solar surface. Sunspots have been observed since the early 17th century and the sunspot time series is the longest, continuously observed (recorded) time series of any natural phenomena. Accompanying the 11 year quasi-periodicity in sunspots, the large-scale dipolar (north-south) magnetic field component of the Sun also flips every 11