Solar cycle update. Solar max could be double peaked, presented by science at NASA.

Something unexpected is happening on the Sun. 2013 is supposed to be the year of solar max, the peak of the 11-year sunspot cycle. Yet, 2013 has arrived and solar activity is relatively low. Sunspot numbers are well below their values in 2011, and strong solar flares have been infrequent for many months. The quiet has led some observers to wonder if forecasters missed the mark. Solar physicist Dean Paz.
knell of the Goddard Space Flight Center has a different explanation this is solar maximum he suggests but it looks different from what we expected because it is double peaked conventional wisdom holds that solar activity swings back and forth like a simple pendulum at one end of the cycle there is a quiet time with few sunspots and flares at the other end solar max brings high sunspot numbers and solar storms it's a regular rhythm that repeats every 11 years reality however is more complicated
astronomers have been counting sunspots for centuries and they have seen that the solar cycle is not perfectly regular. For one thing, the back and forth swing in sunspot counts can take anywhere from 10 to 13 years to complete. Also, the amplitude of the cycle varies. Some solar Maxima are very weak, others very strong. PES Nell notes yet another complication: the last two solar Maxima around 1989 and 2001 had not one but two peaks. Solar activity went up, dipped then resumed performing a mini cycle that lasted about two years.
the same thing could be happening now

44 00:02:03,670 --> 00:02:10,368
sunspot counts jumped in 2011 dipped in

45 00:02:07,250 --> 00:02:14,209
2012 and PES nel expects them to rebound

46 00:02:10,368 --> 00:02:16,129
again in 2013 I am comfortable in saying

47 00:02:14,209 --> 00:02:21,170
then another peak will happen in 2013

48 00:02:16,129 --> 00:02:23,659
and possibly last into 2014 he predicts

49 00:02:21,169 --> 00:02:25,818
another curiosity of the solar cycle is

50 00:02:23,659 --> 00:02:28,189
that the Sun's hemispheres do not always

51 00:02:25,818 --> 00:02:30,139
peak at the same time in the current

52 00:02:28,189 --> 00:02:33,199
cycle the South has been lagging behind

53 00:02:30,139 --> 00:02:35,059
the north the second peak if it occurs

54 00:02:33,199 --> 00:02:37,369
will likely feature the southern

55 00:02:35,060 --> 00:02:40,659
hemisphere playing catch-up with a surge

56 00:02:37,370 --> 00:02:43,219
in activity south of the sun's equator

57 00:02:40,659 --> 00:02:45,500
PES Nell is a leading member of the NOAA
NASA solar cycle prediction panel a blue-ribbon group of solar physicists who assembled in 2006 and 2008 to forecast the next solar max at the time the Sun was experiencing its deepest minimum in nearly a hundred years sunspot numbers were pegged near zero and x-ray flare activity flatlined for months at a time recognizing the deep minima are often followed by weak maxima and pulling together many other threads of predictive evidence the panel issued this statement the solar cycle 24 prediction panel has reached a consensus
the panel has decided that the next
solar cycle cycle 24 will be below
average in intensity with a maximum
sunspot number of 90 given the date of
solar minimum and the predicted maximum
intensity solar maximum is now expected
to occur in May 2013 note this is not a
unanimous decision but a supermajority
of the panel did agree
given the tepid state of solar activity
in February 2013 a maximum in May now
seems unlikely we may be seeing what
happens when you predict a single
amplitude and the Sun responds with a
Double peak comment PES Nell

Incidentally PES knell notes a striking similarity between solar cycle 24 underway now and solar cycle 14 which had a double peak during the first decade of the 20th century if the two cycles are in fact twins it would mean one peak in late 2013 and another in 2015 no one knows for sure what the Sun will do next it seems likely though that the end of 2013 could be a lot livelier than the beginning for more news about the progress of the solar cycle stay tuned