



Credit: Joe Yates

A Rare 'Christmas Star' is Coming This December for the First Time in 800 Years

On December 21, Jupiter and Saturn will appear closer to one another than they have in eight centuries.

Alignments between the planets, is unusual but not uncommon, and is known as a 'conjunction'- however this conjunction is more unusual as the planets will appear closer together in this conjunction.

The last time these gas giants appeared so closely, at a visible separation of only 0.1 degrees, was in the Middle Ages: at predawn on March 4, 1226. This closeness, makes the planets appear as one 'star-like' object in the sky. The phenomenon, is so called the 'Christmas star' as it creates a shining point of light, which is only viewable from the Earth.

To fully enjoy the experience, be sure to look close to the equator between dusk and just after nightfall on December 21st, but not so late that they have disappeared below the horizon. Looking low on the western horizon, on winter solstice, the two planets will appear to be separated by less a fifth of the diameter of a full moon.



New baby at The Smithsonian's National Zoo and Conservation Biology Institute, Washington DC.

Xiao Qi Ji (SHIAU-chi-ji), which translates as "little miracle", was born August 21st 2020, at the Conservation zoo.

Giant Pandas are an international symbol of endangered wildlife and hope, and Xiao Qi Ji's birth offers the world a much-needed moment of joy amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

His name reflects the extraordinary circumstances under which he was born and celebrates the collaboration between colleagues who strive to conserve this species.

For an uplifting moment in your day, view the new-born panda at Washington DC zoo via the live panda cam:

<https://nationalzoo.si.edu/webcams/panda-cam>

A man planned on proposing to his girlfriend on a holiday trip to Iceland, but due to Covid restrictions, was unable to. Instead he proposed in the supermarket Iceland!

Where there's a will there's a way!

Happy News



Credit: Amanda McCormick / 1300Koalaz, Facebook

Australian Woman finds a Koala hanging from her Christmas tree.

Amanda McCormick found that her Christmas tree had a new ornament after a live koala wandered into her home and snuggled up the branches of the white pine. Before taking the photos, she called a local Koala rescue group; "Our hotline operator took a call," the charity said, "At first the call handler thought she was the victim of a prank call."

They merrily reported that the koala was "desperate to get in the Christmas spirit."

The juvenile female was released into the neighbourhood, which is in a region of habitat perfect for koalas, and scurried up a nearby tree.