



---

*Japanese astronomers claim to have found 'planets' which don't go round a star. Writing in the magazine 'Nature' they say they have found ten Jupiter-sized objects which they could not connect to any solar system. Neil Bowdler reports for the BBC:*

The researchers claim to have found ten dark **gas giants** floating at the heart of our Milky Way without any nearby star to illuminate them. Astronomers have long suspected such **rogue** planets existed, but this is the first evidence, and the Japanese team believe there could be as many out there as there are stars, a finding likely to shock many.

How they **came into being** is unclear. One theory is that they may be **cast-outs**, forgotten worlds **ejected from** infant solar systems by **gravitational forces** or **interplanetary collisions**.

**Strictly speaking**, the objects aren't even planets, as by definition planets orbit a star or **the remains of** one. But should the researchers have their calculations right, then strange dark **orbs** which look very much like planets are out there, far far from any shining star.

Neil Bowdler, BBC News

## Vocabulary and definitions

<b>gas giants</b>	large planets which don't have a solid surface
<b>rogue</b>	unconventional, not normal
<b>came into being</b>	were formed, created
<b>cast-outs</b>	objects that have been thrown away
<b>ejected from</b>	thrown out of
<b>gravitational forces</b>	the natural attraction that pulls objects in space together
<b>interplanetary collisions</b>	crashes between planets
<b>Strictly speaking</b>	Being accurate
<b>the remains of</b>	what is left of
<b>orbs</b>	round, ball-shaped objects

### More on this story:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-13416431>

### Read and listen to the story and the vocabulary online:

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/language/wordsinthenews/2011/05/110520\\_witn\\_planet.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/language/wordsinthenews/2011/05/110520_witn_planet.shtml)