

NEPTUNE OPPOSITION 2013

1- Abstract :

8 drawings were collected over the last opposition.

With some chance a brightening was collected on the 5th and the 20th September and well seen.

The good 280mm cassegrain was the tool for the exercise.

2- Main events:

2.2 The general planet figure:

A clear south hemisphere was accessible.

A darker north hemisphere was seen with a boundary difficult to locate due to the pale disk under 400-470x magnification. However the boundary smooth in contrast transition seemed to be located still in south hemisphere near the planet equator.

2.2 Brightening near the sun rise limb on the 20th September and on the 5th September:

The brightening was firstly captured on the 5th September at the sunset limb and was faint at the eyepiece. Images were good at the 280mm.

With good to very good images it was possible to follow the rotation of the brightening on the 20th September from 20H50UT until 22H00UT (well seen until 21H45UT at the limit).

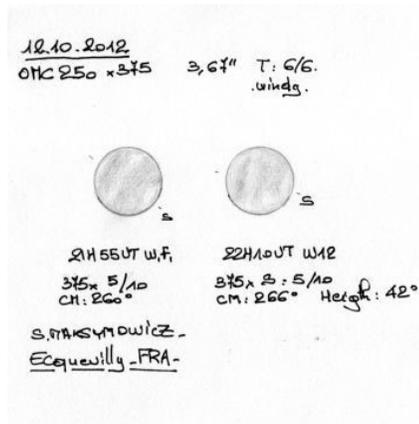
This mean the feature rotating with the planet disk (planet rotation in 16.11H.): so about 20° rotation in 1H time.

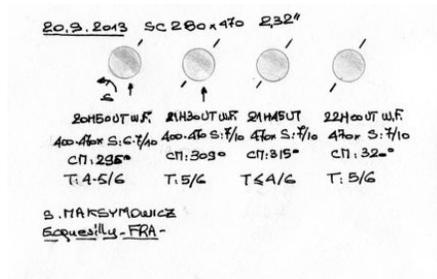
For making comparison with Uranus, similar views were seen on the 12th October 2012, were the brightening seemed at the eyepiece “floating” on the atmosphere.

It had the aspect of a light milky stain but fading after the 1H time.



EC 280mm x 470
2,31"
Note: a brightening at the limb.
faintly visible with no contour.
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3- Further observations:

In spite of the few reports, this means Neptune not featureless and shows sometimes some activities accessible to average apertures. This brightening is probably a high iced methane cyrrus having a reflectivity very high at low light reflection angles. What is obvious is the fact that the feature rotated with the planet because entering on the disk and not staying at the limb with the time elapsing.

Reference document:

The drawings are accessible at the BAA Section Director and at the Japanese Alpo website.

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