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Comets – Why Should We Study Them?

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Fig: Short-periodic comet 62P/Tsuchinshan observed with a 0.4 m telescope (© P. Breitenstein (AIM) & B. Gundlach (IfP)). It's current distance to Earth is about 75.251.000 km (0.5 AU).

Comets are the most primordial objects in the Solar System. We believe that they have formed together with our planets and have therefore witnessed the planet formation era. Comets consist of dust and ice, and this is why they can be impressive objects in the night sky although cometary nuclei have the lowest albedo ever measured for celestial objects. They contain pre-solar matter and since 2017 we know that these km-sized porous bodies can be also visitors from other stellar systems, which made them the first interstellar travelers ever visited our Solar System. By exploring the exciting nature of these objects, I would like to convince you that it is worth studying comets.