



Lake Ballard Illumination

Astrophotographer: John Goldsmith

Location: Lake Ballard, Western Australia

Lat / Long: 29.4 degrees (South), 120.6 degrees (East)

Event: Galaxy centre and Aurora, July 2012

Physics: Extremely energetic charged particles from the sun cause the Southern Lights; Aurora Australis.

Web sites: www.twanight.org, www.celestialvisions.com.au

Lake Ballard (Western Australia) is home to Antony Gormley's "Inside Australia" art project in which 50 metal statues stretch across the vast landscape. The location is a superb place to observe and photograph the night sky. In July 2012, astrophotographer John Goldsmith captured a remarkable scene featuring the centre of our galaxy, the Milky Way, arching over the "Pyramid Hill", with the red glow of the Southern Lights (Aurora Australis), along the southern horizon illuminating a statue with red light. The appearance of Aurora from Lake Ballard (at -29 degrees latitude) is a fairly rare sight. The southern lights are caused by highly charged particles emitted from the sun, funnelled into the magnetic north and south poles of our planet. The sun's activity follows an 11 year cycle, and we are now entering the maximum phase, during 2012 and 2013. Goldsmith used 360 degree mosaic panoramic digital imaging, processed with Auto Pano Giga software.