

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910830620603321
Titolo	Magnetospheres in the solar system // Romain Maggiolo [and three others], editors
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Hoboken, NJ : , : Wiley, , 2021
ISBN	1-119-81562-2 1-119-81564-9 1-119-82998-4
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (803 pages)
Collana	Space physics and aeronomy collection ; ; 2 Geophysical monograph ; ; 259
Disciplina	538.766
Soggetti	Magnetosphere Planets - Magnetospheres
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references and index.
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Sommario/riassunto

"This book provides an overview of the magnetospheres in the solar system, from the small induced magnetospheres that form around unmagnetized bodies to the large magnetospheres of the giant planets. Magnetospheres are highly complex, structured and time-dependent systems constantly interacting with the solar wind and the components of the planetary systems like their ionosphere, atmosphere, surface, rings and moons. Each magnetosphere is unique and contains various intertwining sub-regions, particle populations and plasma processes. This explains the scientific interest of magnetospheric physics: magnetospheres are accessible natural laboratories for studying fundamental physical processes of universal application. Moreover, the Earth's magnetosphere is a key component of our near-space environment on which our modern societies are increasingly dependent. The book is divided in eleven sections that cover the current state of our understanding as well as future directions for scientists. Section I starts with a brief history of magnetospheres and presents the basic principles and equations. Section II addresses the fundamental processes that govern magnetospheric physics. The three following sections are dedicated to the Earth's magnetosphere, the most studied and best known of the solar system magnetospheres. They respectively focus on its coupling with the Earth's ionosphere (section III), its coupling with the solar wind (section IV) and its dynamics (section V). The next sections are oriented toward other solar system bodies. After a discussion about planetary magnetic fields in section VI, we focus on the induced magnetospheres in section VII, on the magnetospheres of giant planets in section VIII and, in section IX, on "mini-magnetospheres" like those of Mercury and magnetized moons. Section X considers the tools that are used to investigate magnetospheric processes. Finally, section XI discusses the key questions and challenges to be addressed in the coming years,

providing some insights on the future developments of magnetospheric research. The chapters contained herein include contributions from experimentalists, theoreticians and numerical-modelers."--
