

## 7.5: Craters

One characteristic we will find throughout the Solar System is bodies that have solid surfaces and exhibit impact or craters.

**Craters** are depressions and scars on a Solar System body's surface. The word crater comes from the Greek for bowl; these are bowl-like features. Most cratering is due to impacts by space debris, called Minor Bodies. This includes asteroids, comets, and smaller debris. Planets and satellites can also have craters due to volcanic activity. Crater sizes can span from microscopic to hundreds of miles across. Occasionally an impact not only produces a crater, it produces a ray. **Rays** are impact “splash;” imagine dropping a rock into flour.



Image courtesy of Mike Reynolds, Ph. D. of Florida State at Jacksonville.

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