

DISCRETE AURORAS

Discrete auroras are bright thin bands — most common pictures of auroras are of this type. Discrete auroras occur closer to the magnetic poles.

DIFFUSE AURORAS

Diffuse auroras are much more spread out and thin, like a fog. They happen most often further away from Earth's magnetic poles in the lower latitudes. The charged particles are spread out over a large region when they enter the atmosphere, so the aurora is "diffused" and hazy in appearance.

DIFFERENT SHAPES

Auroras also come in many different shapes. In fact, dramatically different shapes can be seen over the course of a single night. Scientists are still trying to find out why this happens, but they do know that the shape of the aurora depends on the source of the electrons in the magnetosphere and how the electrons enter the atmosphere.

