

# Sky Spectacle: 12P/Pons-Brooks Comet to Dazzle During Eclipse

by Dan Brannan, Content Director  
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Those fascinated with space and science are in for something special in April 2024 as the comet 12P/Pons-Brooks will be visible. On April 21, 2024, the comet, also known as “The Devil's Comet” will reach the point in orbit where it will be closest to the sun, scientists say.

The 12P/Pons-Brooks comet is known for its flareups and its outbursts also give it a horseshoe shape with a look of horns. The name The Devil's Comet came from that horned appearance.

Scientists say the latest appearance of The Devil's Comet will occur simultaneously with the total solar eclipse on April 8, 2024, and will be visible in the sky during the event.

A noted French astronomer Jean-Louis Pons spotted comets without the help of the advanced telescopic technology commonly used today to find comets far out in space. The Devil's Comet was discovered first in 1812. He discovered 37 comets between 1801 and 1827.

American comet observer William R. Brooks accidentally discovered the same comet several decades later in 1883. He discovered 27 comets in his career.

With 20,000 acres of land, 4 minutes of totality, and special eclipse events, Rend Lake in Southern Illinois, is a premier destination for eclipse viewing on Monday, April 8, 2024. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at Rend Lake will have multiple viewing locations available to the public, including Dam West Recreation Area, Spillway Recreation Area, and North Marcum Recreation Area.

These designated viewing sites will have food vendors on site and park rangers available to assist visitors. At Rend Lake, the solar eclipse will begin around 12:44 p.m. CDT and reach full totality at about 2 p.m. CDT, April 8, 2024.

“Full totality will last for 4 minutes and 8 seconds,” Rend Lake officials said. “A limited supply of eclipse glasses will be available, but visitors are encouraged to bring their own.

Along with premier viewing sites, Rend Lake also offers entertaining and educational programming leading up to the eclipse. These events are free, open to the public, and family-friendly.

For more information on all eclipse events at Rend Lake, please contact the Rend Lake Project Office/Visitor Center at 618-724-2493.

If any other area organizations have eclipse events, e-mail them to [news@riverbender.com](mailto:news@riverbender.com) and they will be publicized.



## **Senator Harriss Partners With Illinois Optometric Association To Provide Solar Glasses**

State Senator Erica Harriss (56<sup>th</sup>-Glen Carbon) also recently announced she has partnered with the Illinois Optometric Association to provide solar glasses for the upcoming 2024 Total Solar Eclipse on April 8, 2024.

“The solar eclipse is a rare occurrence and presents a unique opportunity for people across our state to witness history,” said Senator Harriss. “I want to especially thank the Illinois Optometric Association for their generosity in providing 1,000 solar eclipse glasses free of charge so residents in the 56<sup>th</sup> District can safely view the total eclipse on this monumental day.”

Solar eclipse glasses can be picked up at Senator Harriss’ District Office located at 120 North Main Street, Suite 1B, Edwardsville, between the office hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

If you are unable to make it during normal business hours, you can call the office at 618-307-5789 or email [harriss@ilsenategop.org](mailto:harriss@ilsenategop.org) to make arrangements to pick up your free glasses.

## **Rend Lake Eclipse Events**

### **Saturday April 6**

Rend Lake Visitor Center:

10:00 a.m.: Eclipse of the Senses with Animology – Live animal program

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2:00 p.m.: Science of Eclipses with Science Educator Greg Hollman

### **Sunday, April 7**

Rend Lake Visitor Center

1:00 p.m.: Kid's Astronomy Concert with Dino O'Dell

### **Sunday, April 7**

Spillway Recreation Area

7:00 p.m.: NOVA Eclipse Over America Documentary Viewing

Bring a blanket or lawn chair and enjoy an outdoor viewing of “NOVA: Eclipse Over America,” a documentary.

### **Monday, April 8**

Public Eclipse Viewing

10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Enjoy local food trucks and 4 minutes of totality at the Dam West Recreation Area, Spillway Recreation Area, and North Marcum Recreation Area.

Below is a link to the map of Rend Lake Solar Eclipse viewing areas.

<https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/edit?mid=12tWjEhG1ReWPB2JXp-OhmTqanI94dks&usp=sharing>

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