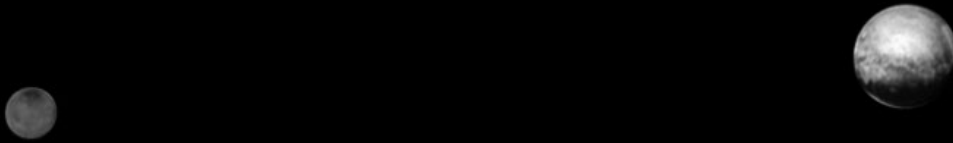
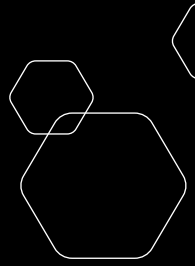


Pluto and Charon

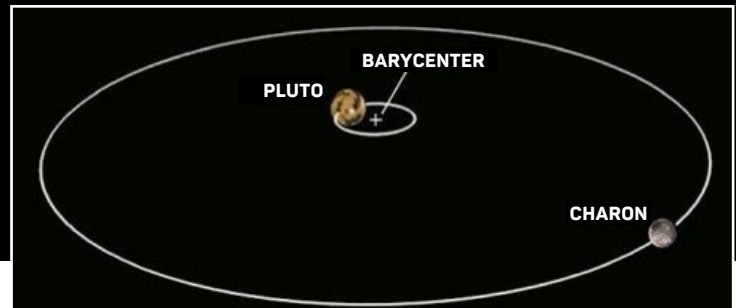
Most moons are much smaller than the planets they orbit, but that's not the case for the dwarf planet Pluto and its moon Charon.



This image of Pluto (right) and Charon (left) was taken by the New Horizons spacecraft.

LEARN MORE:

nasa.gov/feature/pluto-and-charon-new-horizons-dynamic-duo



Pluto and Charon orbit around a common center of mass—their barycenter—that lies between the two worlds.

The *barycenter* of Pluto and Charon—the point that they both orbit around—is between the surfaces of the two bodies. Pluto and Charon are more similar in size than any other planet (or planetary body) and moon pair in the solar system. In most other planet and moon systems scientists have observed, the barycenter lies well within the planet itself. Pluto and Charon actually whirl around one another, which causes Pluto's other moons to wobble chaotically in their orbits. If you lived on those moons, you wouldn't know where the Sun would rise the next day!