

THE MOON

EVER NOTICE THE MOON'S MANY SEAS?

You've likely heard of the Sea of Tranquility. It's the site of the first Moon landing and one of the Moon's 23 maria.

Lunar maria are large plains made of hardened lava. Early astronomers mistook these dark, basalt plains for seas and dubbed them maria.

Maria are located in the Moon's low spots and are less reflective than its highlands and hence appear dark.



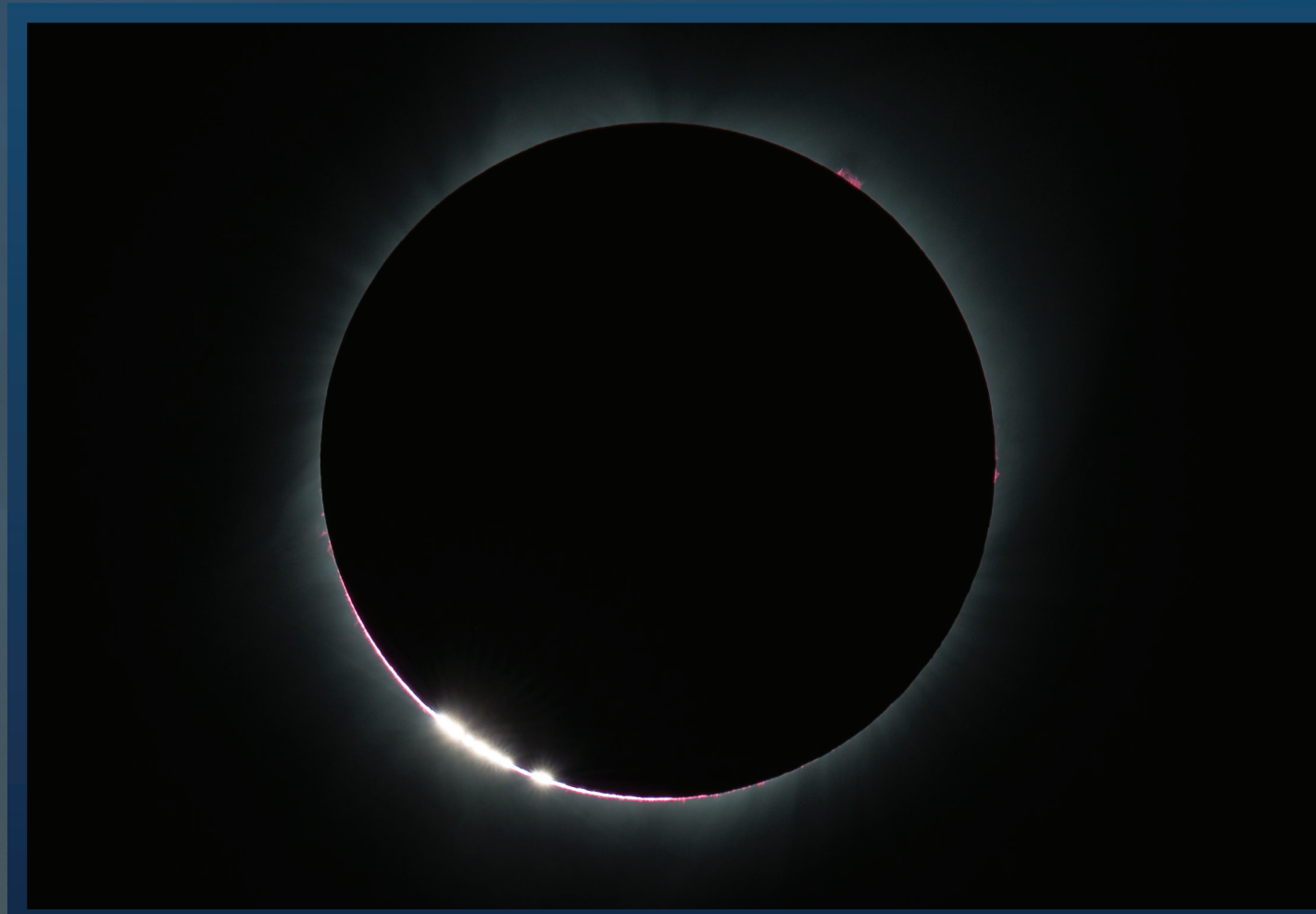
NASA/JPL

The Moon's valleys, plains, and mountains were formed by meteor impacts and volcanic activity.

BAILY'S BEADS AND A DIAMOND RING

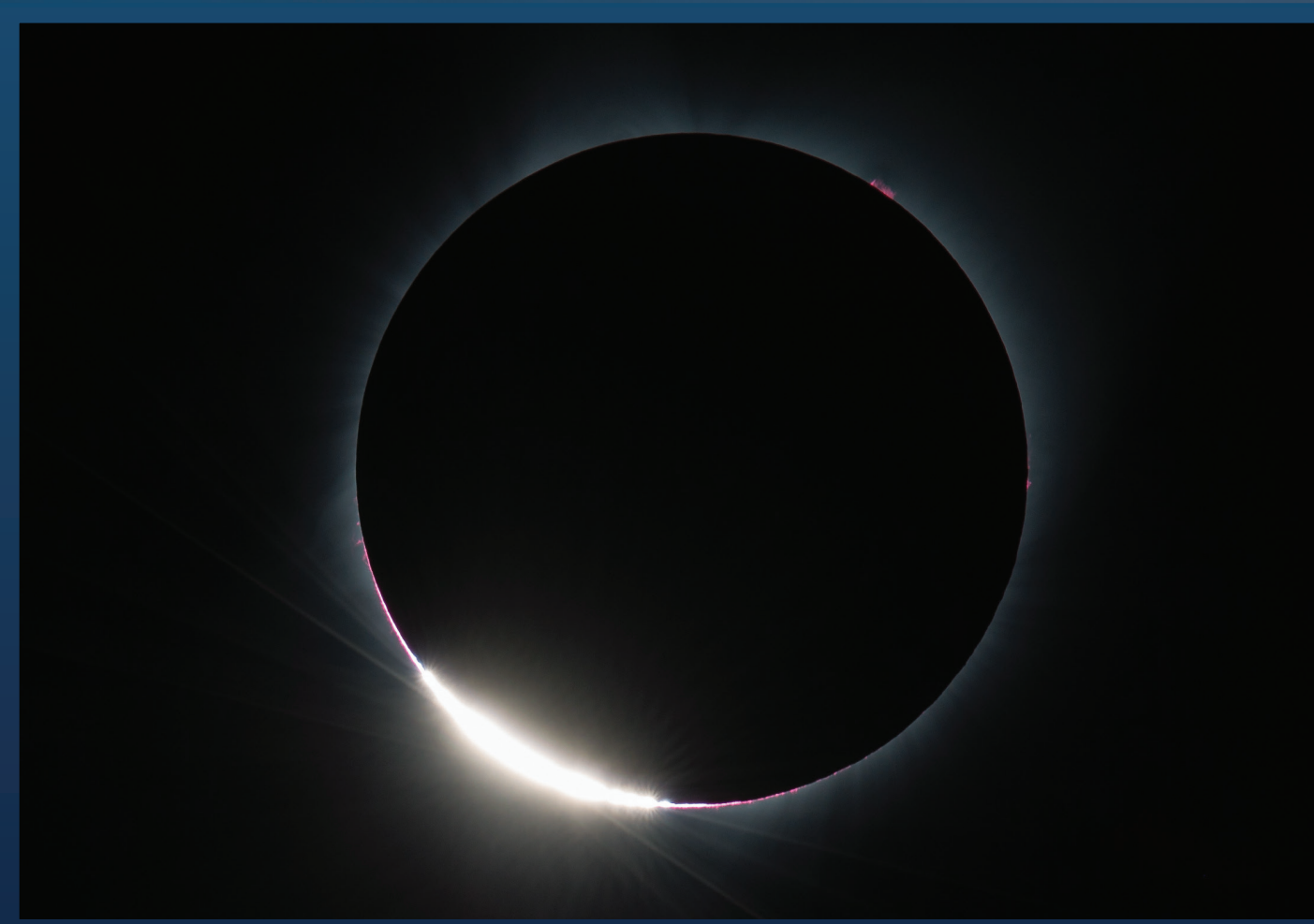
Watch for these two effects as the April eclipse approaches totality. As the Moon moves across the Sun, several points of light will appear as if strung on a necklace around the Moon. Known as Baily's Beads,

this effect results from the Sun's rays streaming through valleys along the Moon's horizon. As Baily's Beads disappear, a single bright spot will remain. This bright spot resembles a diamond in a celestial ring.



NASA/Aubrey Gemignani

The Baily's Beads effect can be seen close to totality.



NASA/Aubrey Gemignani

The Diamond Ring effect follows Baily's Beads.