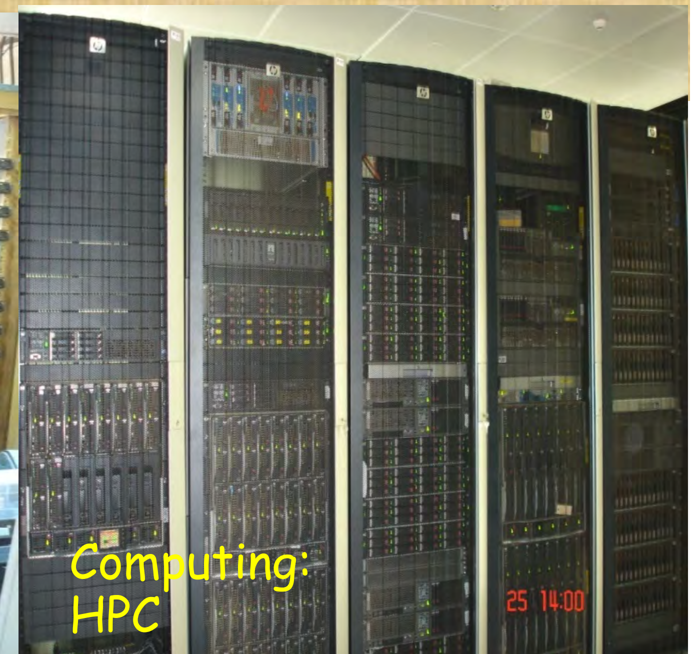
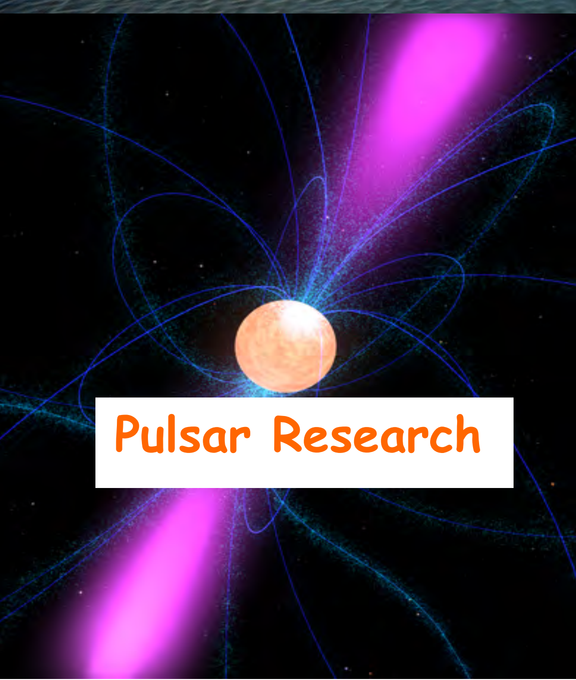
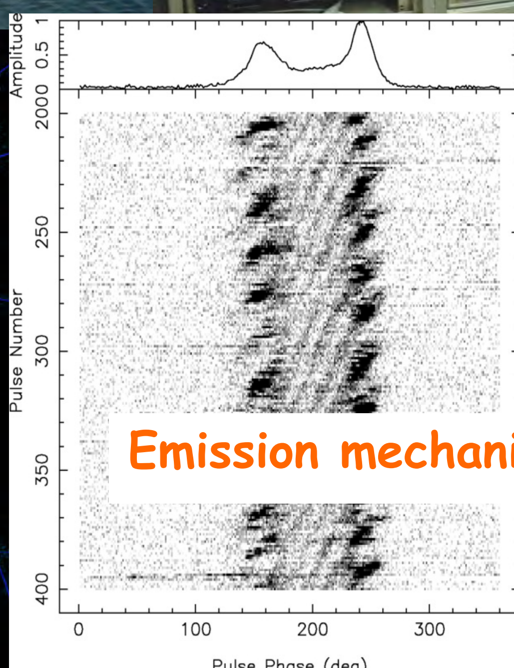
Science with Pulsars

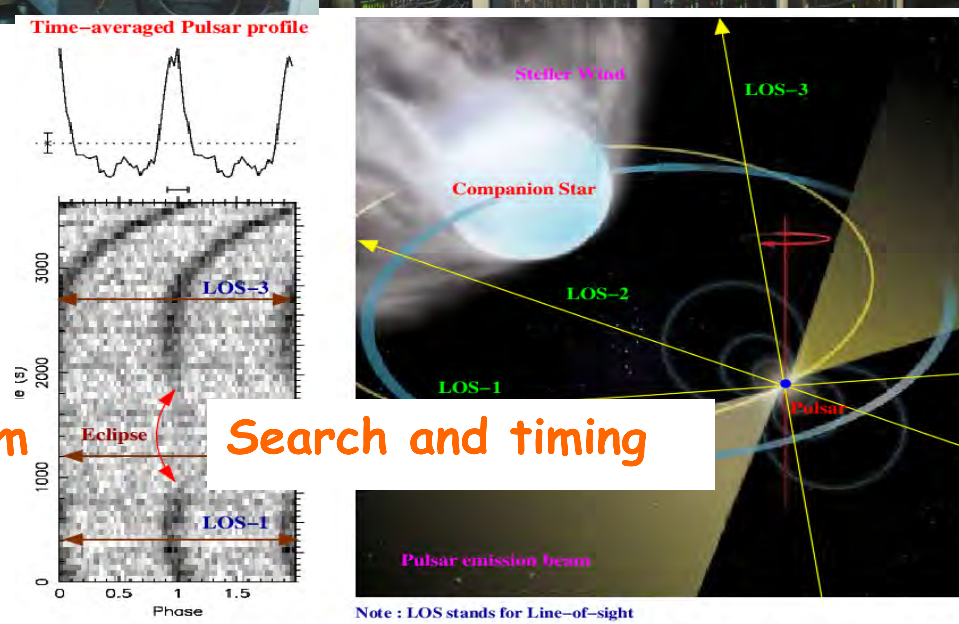
IAS-Summer School Talk
6th July, 2018

Bhaswati Bhattacharyya









Artistic impression of a Black Widow system with real data of the discovered MSP

Plan of Talk

- ✓ Pulsars in a nutshell
- ✓ Neutron stars and pulsars – Early History 1930-1970
- ✓ Introduction to pulsars
  - Radio pulsars
  - Interstellar dispersion effect
  - Pulsar classification: normal pulsars and MSPs
  - Pulsars as astrophysical tools
- ✓ Search of pulsars
  - Targeted and Blind Radio surveys
- ✓ Timing of pulsars
- ✓ Investigation of emission mechanism

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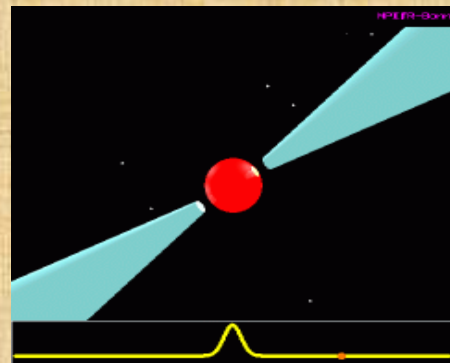
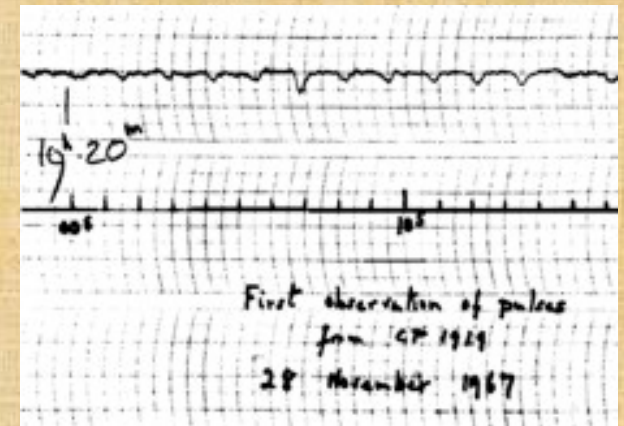
Pulsars in a Nutshell

Light Houses



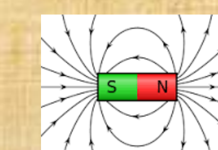
Pulsars are interstellar light houses

Radio Observations →



Pulsars are

Rapidly rotating – 1ms to 10s -- faster than kitchen blender



Strongly magnetised - 10^8 to 10^{15} G –100 billion times earth

Neutron stars – stellar undead of mass ~ 1.4 $M_\odot$ compressed to ~15 km

Very dense :500,000 earth masses in < 2 times Pune University

Neutron Stars and Pulsars – Early History
Time line :1930 - 1970

Neutron Stars and Pulsars – Early History

Walter Baade & Fritz Zwicky 1934

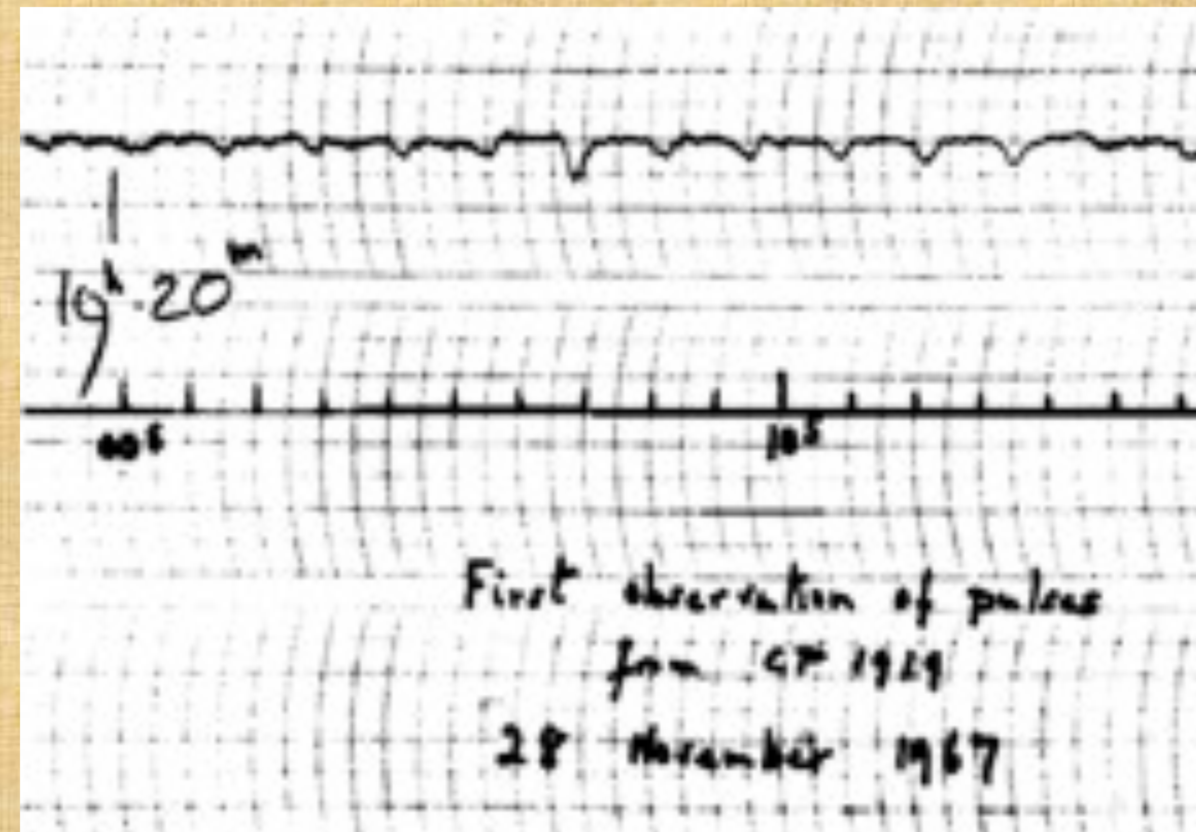
Proposed existence of a new form of star : **neutron star**

Franco Pacini 1967

Rapid rotation of highly magnetised neutron star as the energy source

Neutron Stars and Pulsars – Early History

Jocelyn Bell (graduate student), Antony Hewish et al. 1967

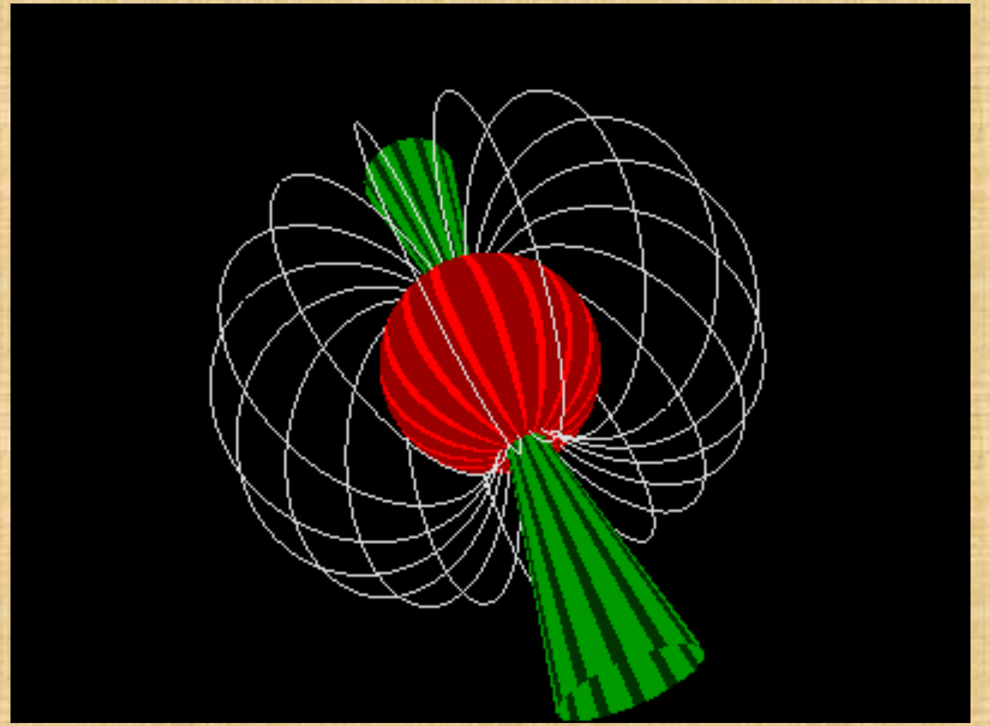


Discovery of radio pulsars ⟶ **Nobel Prize in 1974**

Neutron Stars and Pulsars – Early History

Franco Pacini 1968

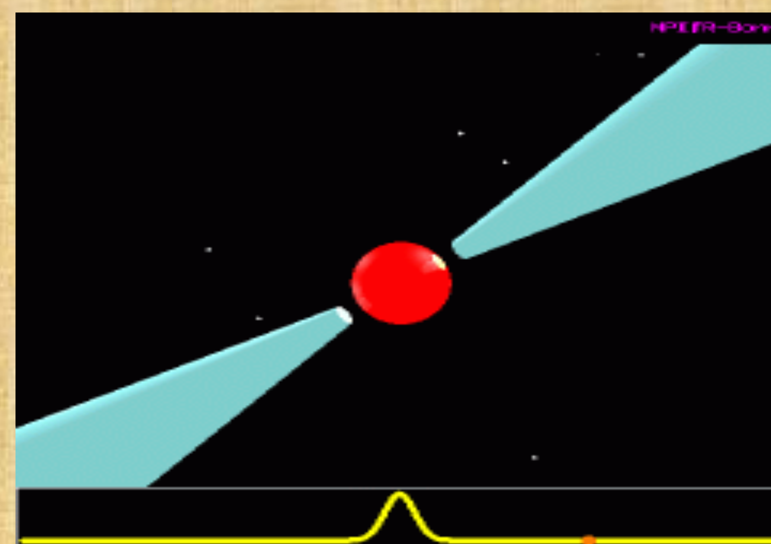
✓"Pulsars" are formed after supernovae explosion !



Neutron Stars and Pulsars – Early History

Tommy Gold 1968
: Pulsars are rotating neutron stars

Lighthouse model of pulsations

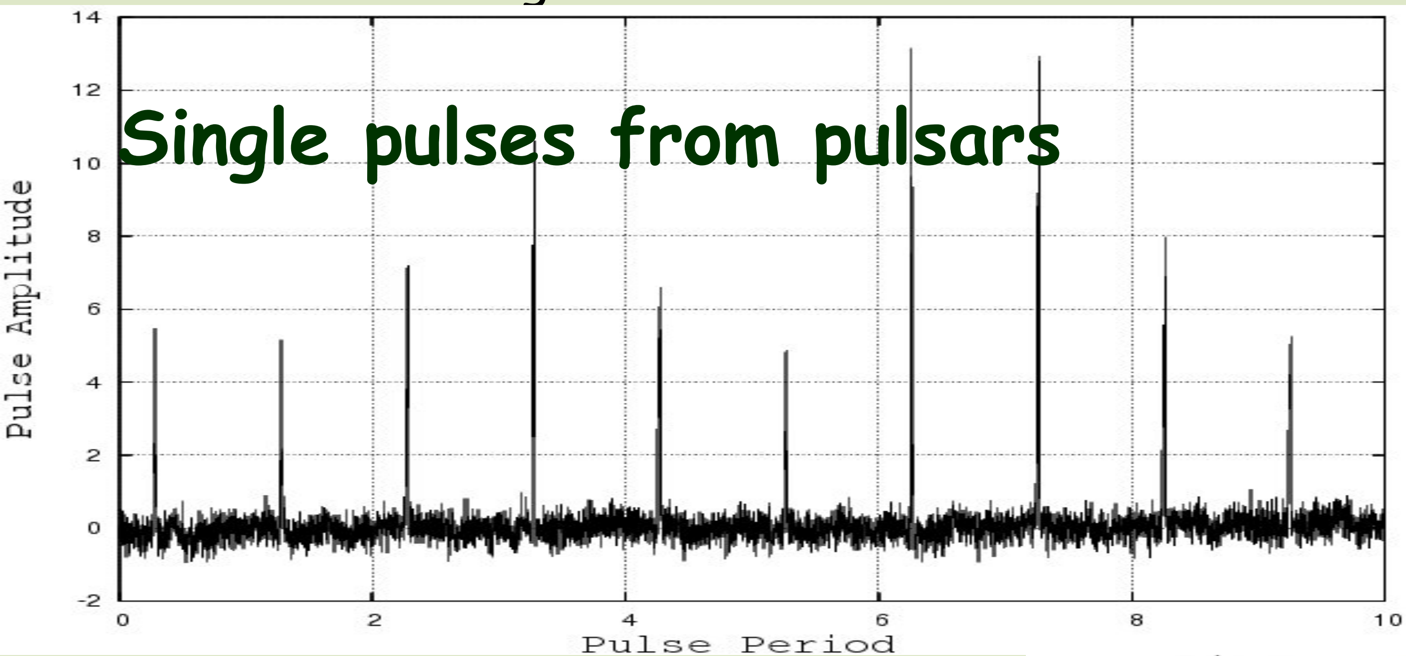


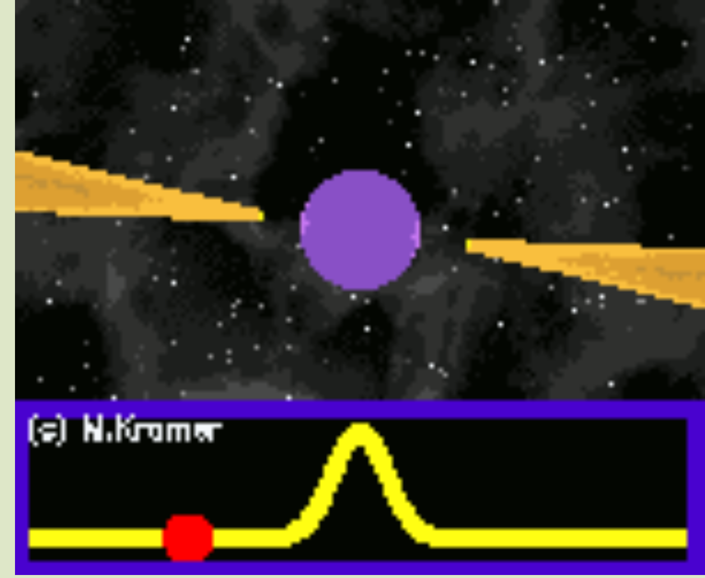
Radio pulsars

Pulsars

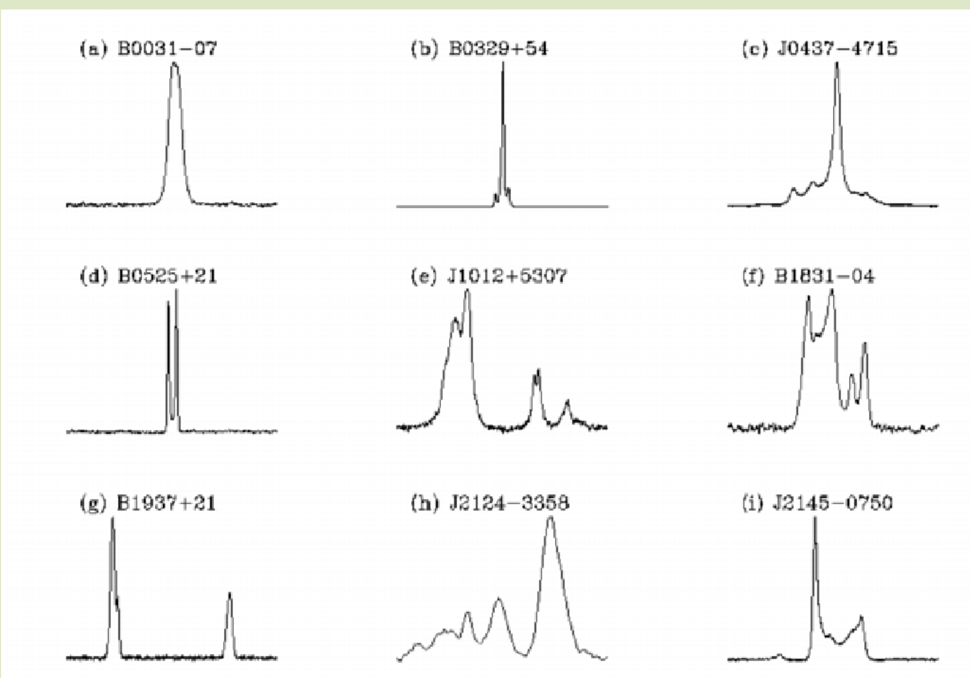
Rapidly rotating strongly magnetized neutron stars

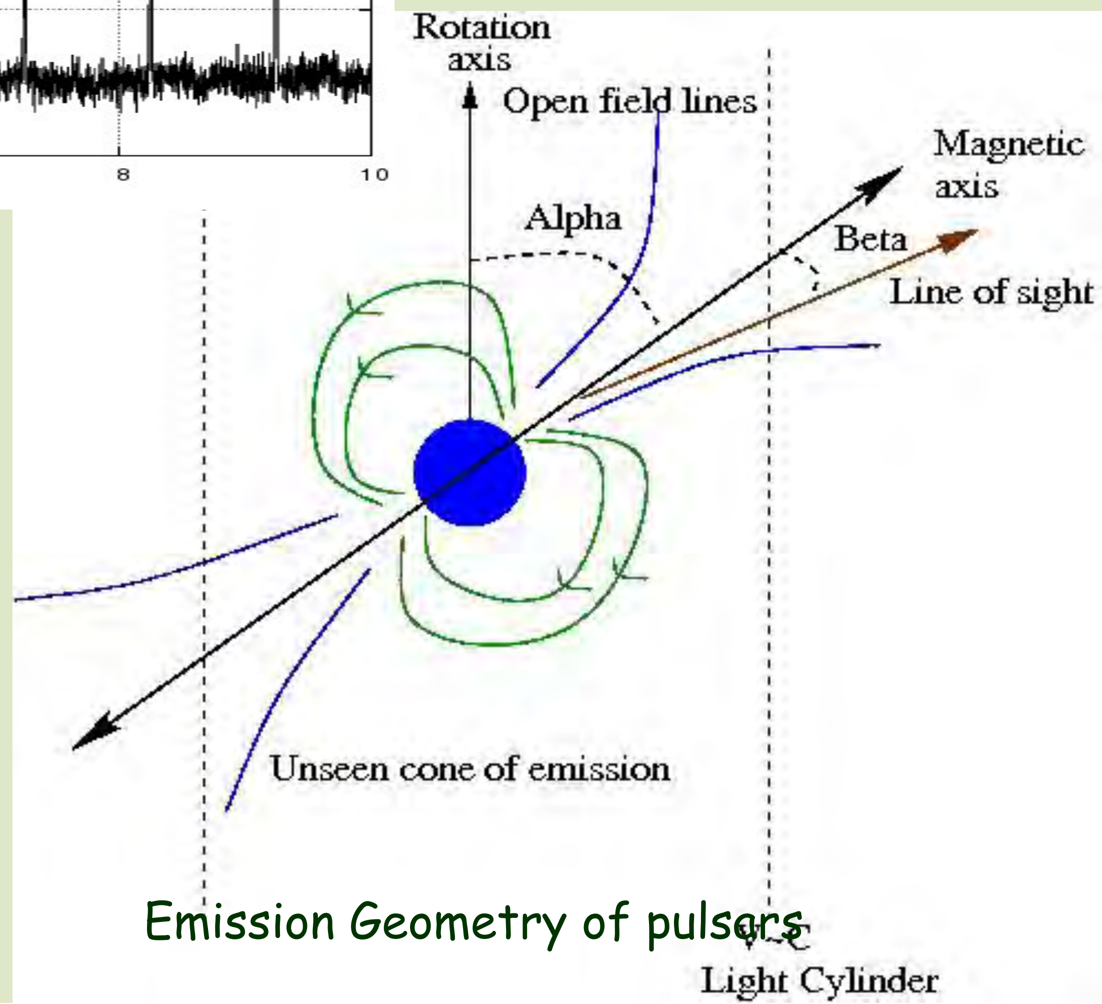
Single pulses from pulsars





Average pulse profile of pulsars

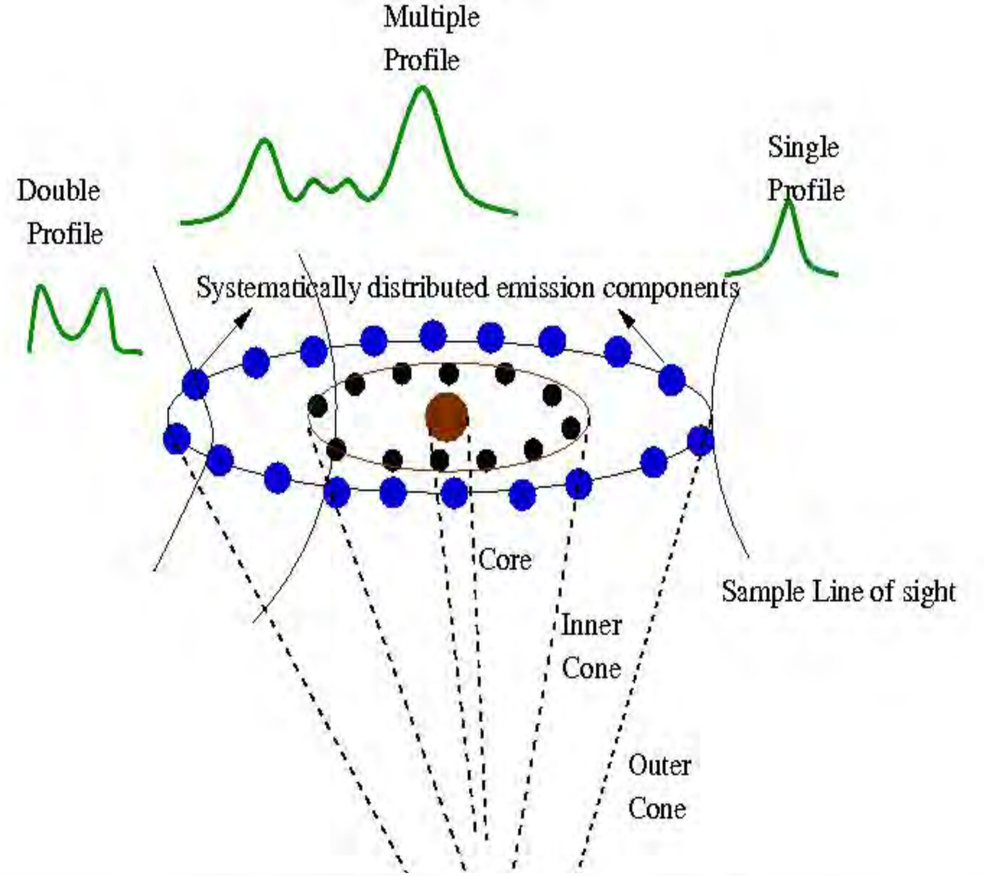




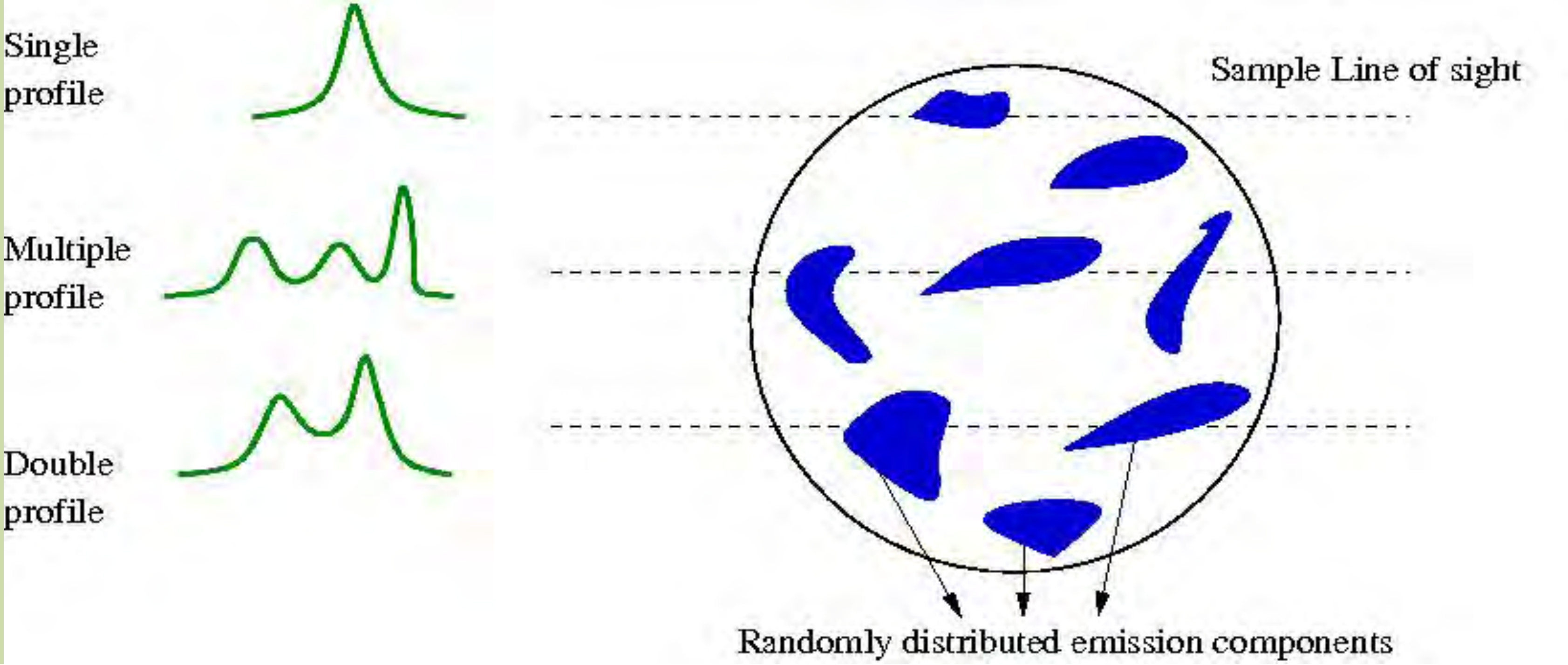
Emission Geometry of pulsars

Phenomenological models of pulse shapes produced by different LOS cuts across the beam

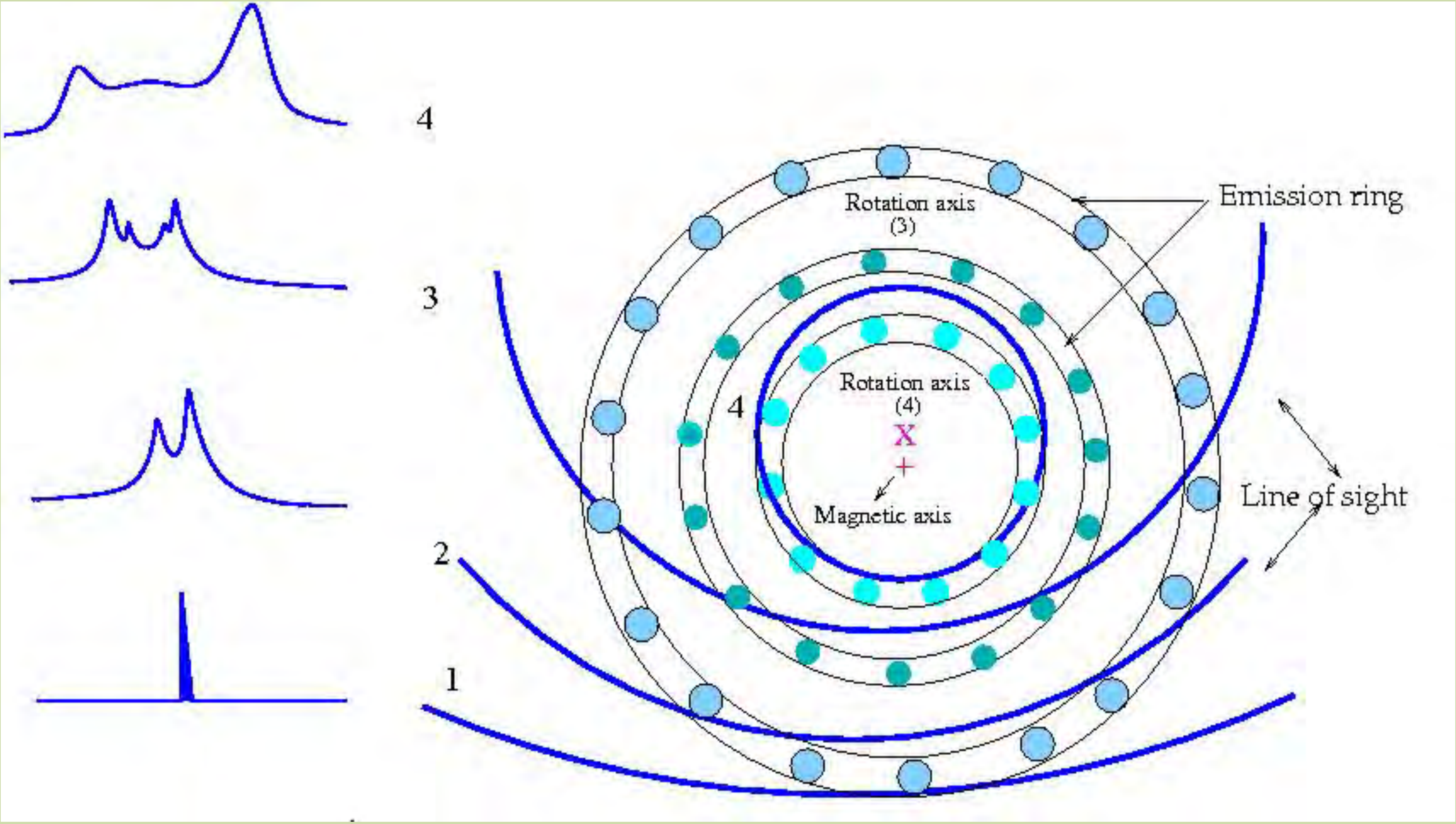
(1) Core – Conal Model
(Rankin 1993)



(2) Patchy beam Model
(Lyne & Manchester 1988)

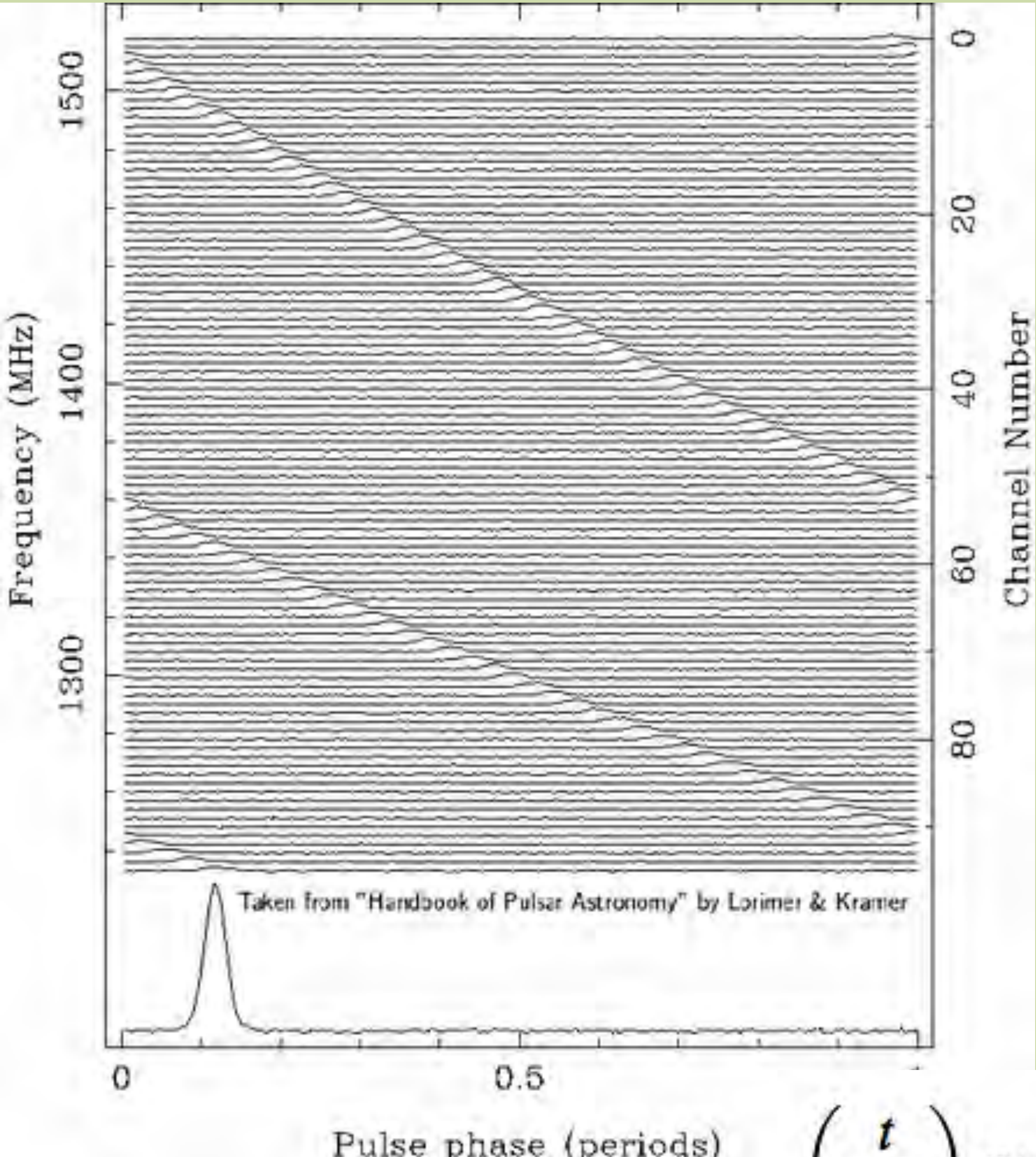


Pulse profiles : Looking down on the polar cap



LOS cuts with corresponding pulse profiles

Interstellar disspersion effect:



Interstellar medium (in fact the free electrons in it) is a dispersive medium for radio waves.

Radio waves of different frequencies have different speeds, while traveling through such medium

The efect is such, that the pulse comes at higher frequencies first (the speed of its travel is higher), and at lower frequencies later.

$$\left(\frac{t}{\mathrm{sec}}\right) \approx 4.149 \times 10^3 \left(\frac{\mathrm{DM}}{\mathrm{pc\ cm^{-3}}}\right)\left(\frac{\nu}{\mathrm{MHz}}\right)^{-2}$$

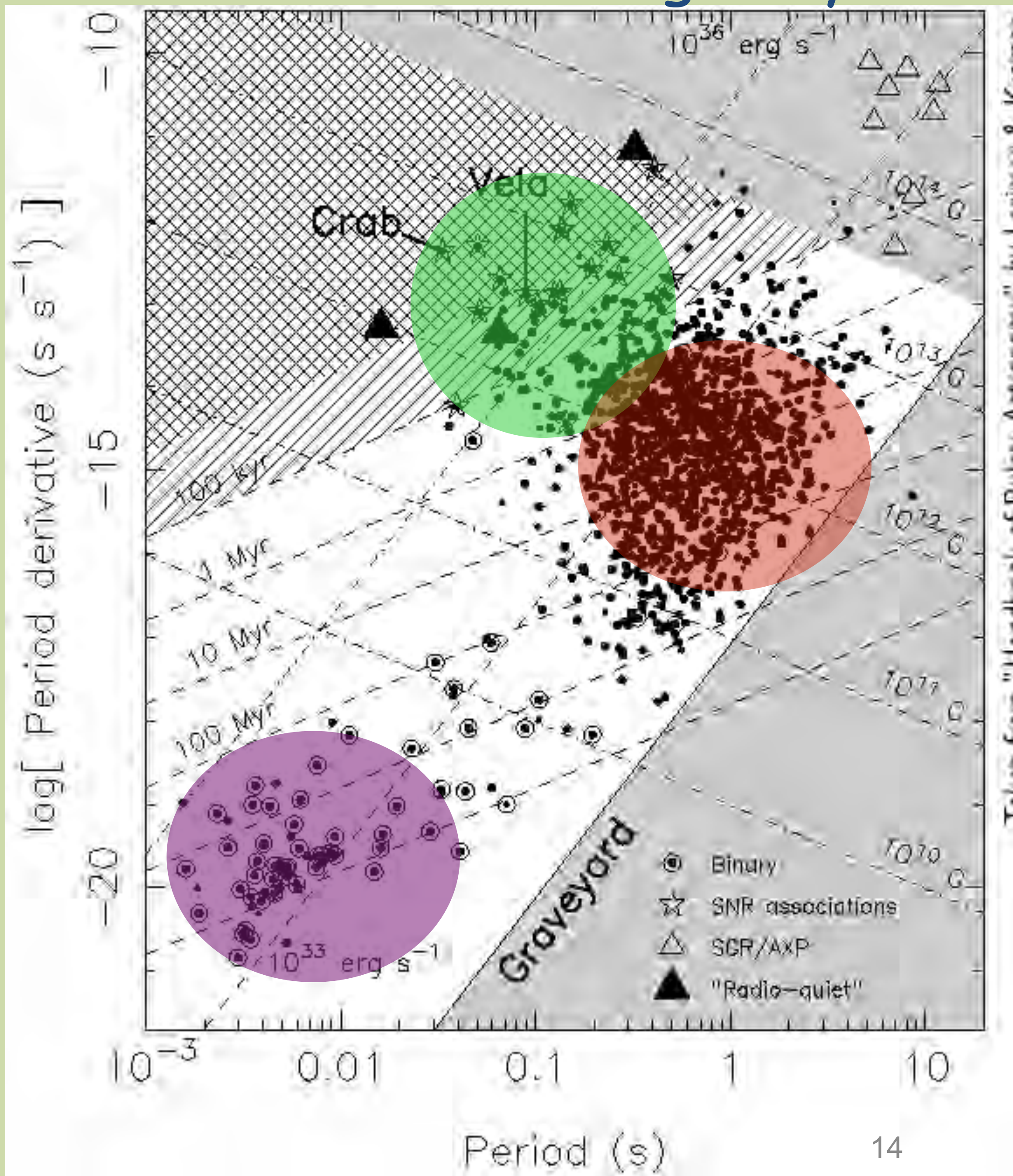
Pulsar classification

2500 known radio Pulsars in our galaxy

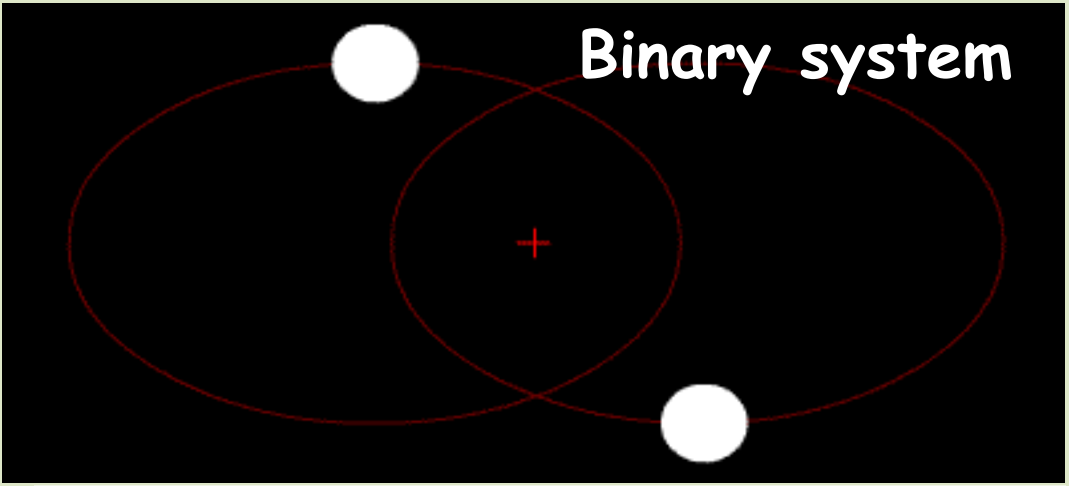
Young (~20)
– Energetic, with significant spin-down noise and glitches.

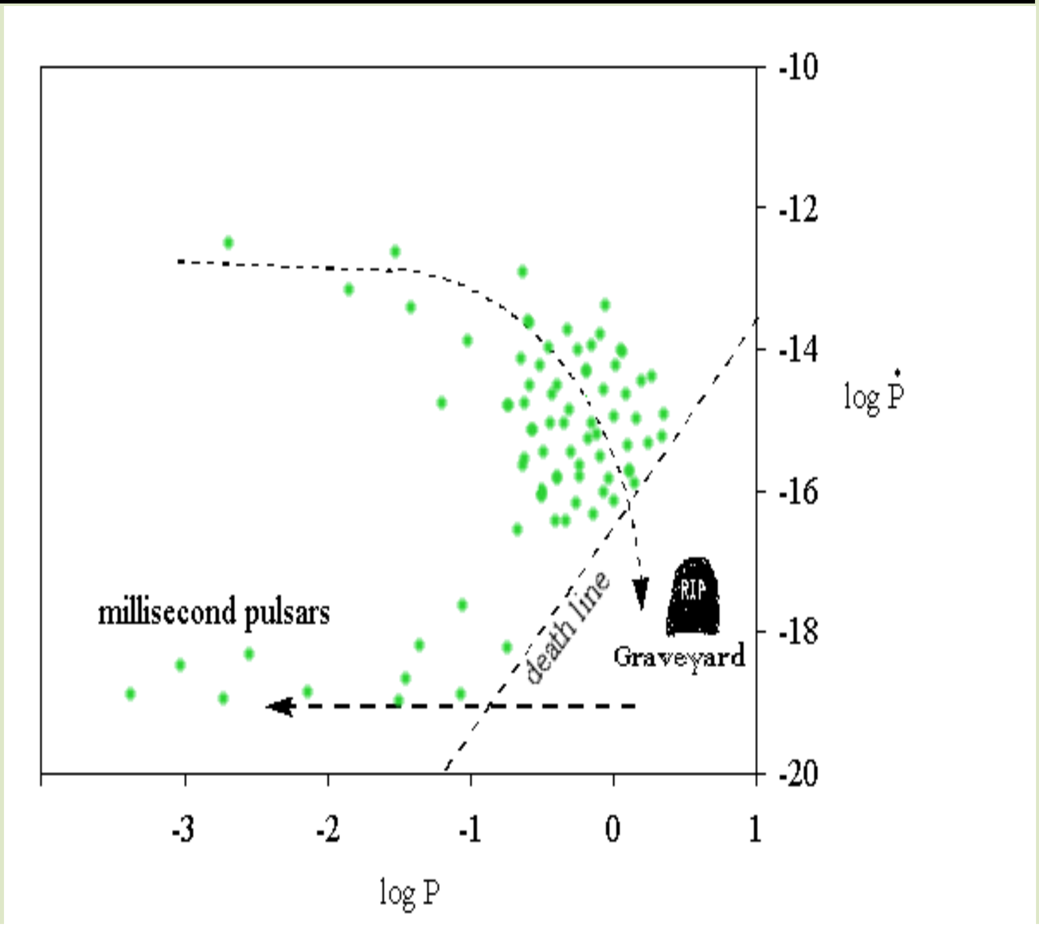
Normal (~2200)
– Slower, More stable, Mostly isolated

Recycled pulsars (~250)
- Faster, Most in binaries, **extremely** stable rotators
->**MILLISECOND PULSARS**



Millisecond pulsars :back from Dead





- ✓ Millisecond pulsars are a small population compared to the normal pulsars with period ~ millisecond, magnetic Field ~10^9G

- ✓ Majority of MSPs are in binary MSPs are detected in the radio, x-ray and gamma-rays

- ✓ Origin of millisecond pulsars is yet not pinned down.

Leading theory :

MSPs begin their life as longer period pulsar but are spun up or recycled through accretion

thus millisecond pulsars are often called recycled pulsars.

MSPs considered as Celestial GPS

Binary and isolated MSPs

✓ Majority of MSPs are naturally expected to be in binaries
about 81% of MSPs are in binaries

What about Isolated MSPs?

✓ Isolated MSPs are conceived to be formed in binary systems where the pulsar radiation can ablate the companion !

"Black widow systems" – Missing link between
Binary and isolated MSPs

Pulsars as astrophysical "tools"

- **Time keeper in Sky**: Due to their physical properities pulsars are (in most cases) VERY stable rotator
  pulses → ticking of cosmic clocks precise up to 1 s in about 31 million years
  Examples of Pulsar Clocks in Earth

- **Sensitive GW detector**: Combined observations of many pulsars to detect Gravitational wave

- **Probs of matter in extreme state**: can treat pulsars as naturally created probes of specific conditions in which they exist – i.e. strong gravitational fields.

- **Investigation of dynamics** – especially the movement caused by external forces. This includes binary systems, and globular clusters dynamics.

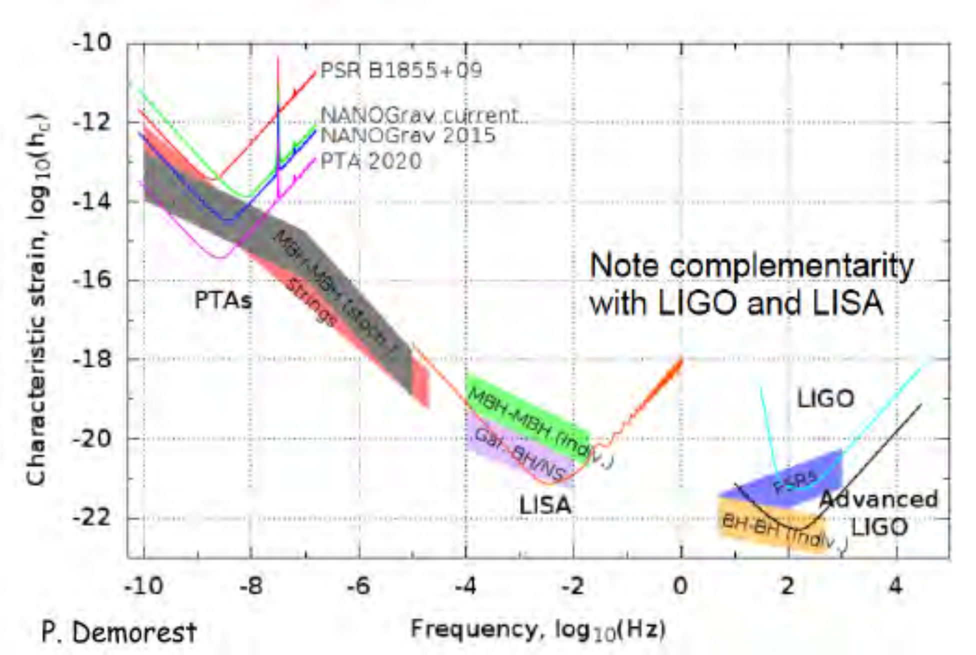
- **Probes of space-time**

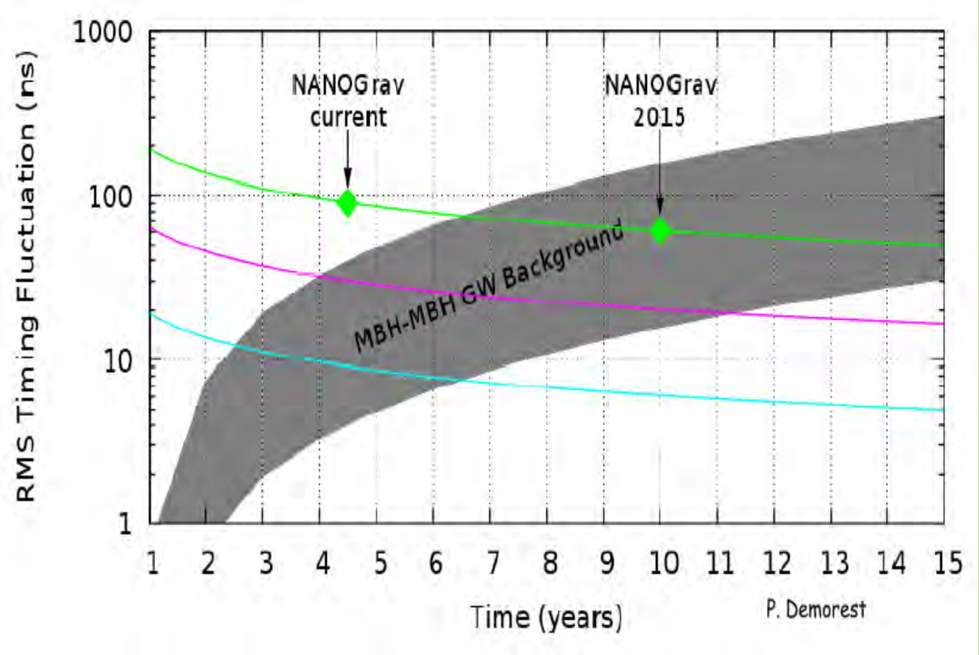
- **Probes of interstaller medium**

MSP as a Probe to fundamental physics

- Equation of state at nuclear density
- Gravitational wave detection
- Interstellar medium
- Binary evolution
- Plasma physics (eclipse and magnetosphere)

20 MSP NanoGrav Pulsar timing array





h ~ σ_{rms} / T ~ 100ns/5 yr ~ 10^{-15}

$$h = \frac{\sigma_{rms}}{T\sqrt{N_{TOAs} N_{PSR}}}$$

TOP 10 !

B1919+21 : First pulsar discovered in 1967

B1913+16 : The first binary pulsar (Hulse-Taylor binary pulsar)
Orbit is decaying at the exact rate predicted due to emission of gravitational radiation by general relativity

B1937+21 : The first millisecond pulsar

J0437-4715 : The brightest millisecond pulsar, with very stable period

B1257+12 : First millisecond pulsar with planets

J0737-3039 : Double pulsar system

B1748-2446 : Pulsar with shortest period, 716 Hz

J1311-3430 : First MSP discovered via gamma-ray pulsations, part of binary system with shortest period

J1023+0038 : Transition between the LMXB and MSP state

Search for Pulsars

Reference: Chapter 6; Handbook of Pulsar Astronomy
Lorimer and Kramer

Pre-requisites for searching of millisecond pulsars

- 3-D search :
  - search in dispersion delay in order to compensate ISM effect
  - searching for periodicity in time-series data using spectral domain search algorithm
  - search in acceleration (required in case of binary objects)

1. **High time resolution data recording facility (~micro secs)**
2. **Managing Large data volume** ~ 1TB per epoch of observation
3. **Compute intensive search analysis**

3-D search is very expensive ~ **3.5 Tflops** over the same range of DM grid (1200 values)

On a single Desktop 1hr of data (~ 60 GB) takes ~ 1280 hours

On typical High Performance compute cluster 1 hr of data takes ~ 10 hrs

✓ *217600 CPU hrs of GMRT search data analysis ~ 25 years on single CPU !!*

Pulsar Search Problem

Two popular ways to search for pulsars

✓ Targeted search : With apriori knowledge of position

✓ Blind search : With out apriori knowledge of position

Pulsar Search with GMRT

Pulsars are faint – surveys are sensitivity limited → array of telescopes

GMRT being the largest array telescope

→ have potential to undertake sensitive pulsar searches

Explored in past resulting in discovery of 5 pulsars (2002-2009)–

a pulsar in Globular cluster (Freire et al. 2004)

a pulsar in supernovae remnant (Gupta et al. 2005)

3 pulsars in 610 MHz blind search (Joshi et al. 2009)

Pulsar Search with GMRT

✓ Targeted search : With apriori knowledge of position

Fermi directed targeted searches

✓ Blind search : With out apriori knowledge of position

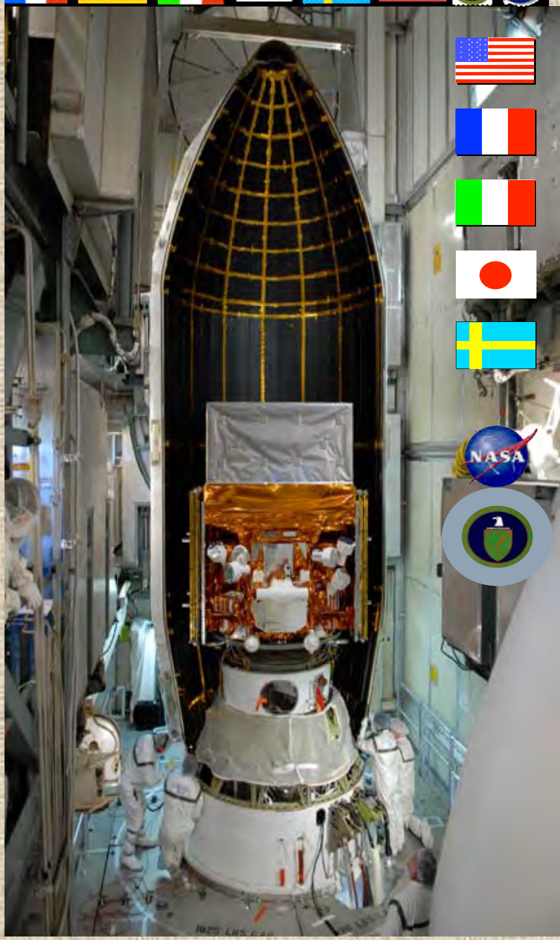
GHRSS survey :
GMRT High Resolution Southern Sky survey for pulsars and transients

Fermi γ-ray Space Telescope

Large AreaTelescope (LAT)
20 MeV - >300 GeV

Established pulsars as dominant γ-ray sources in Milyway

(Atwood et al. 2009, ApJ, 697, 1071)



Fermi-directed pulsar searches

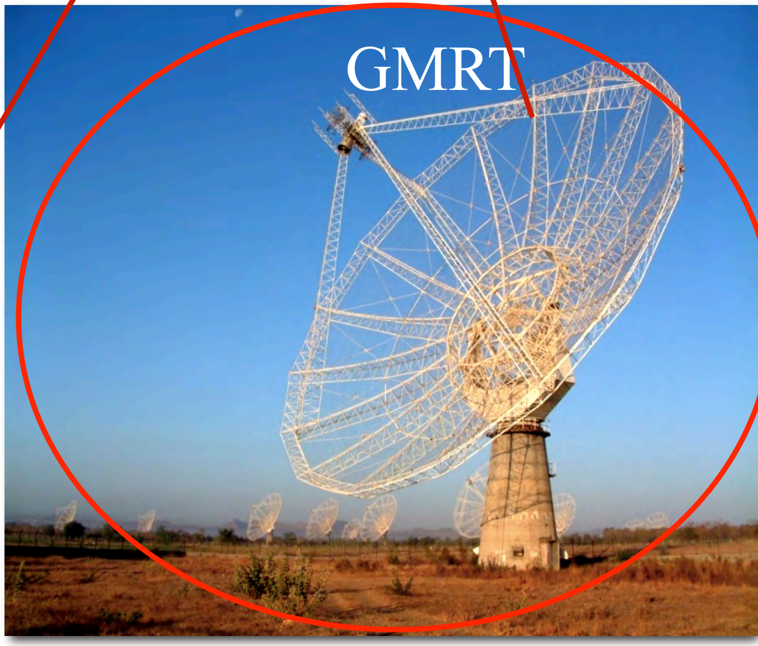
1) Catalogs of unassociated γ-ray point sources
2) These sources are rank ordered according to their likeliness of being pulsars
3) Radio telescopes all over the World searches for pulsations from these sources as part of Fermi Pulsar Search Consortium (PSC)

Fermi pulsar search consortium (PSC)

Low frequency facility

Jodrell Bank (UK)

Nançay (France)



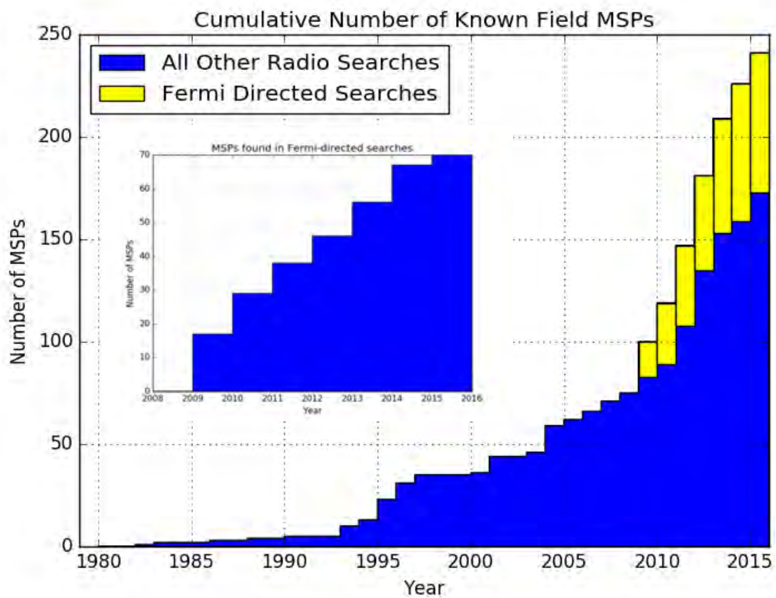
Parkes (Australia)

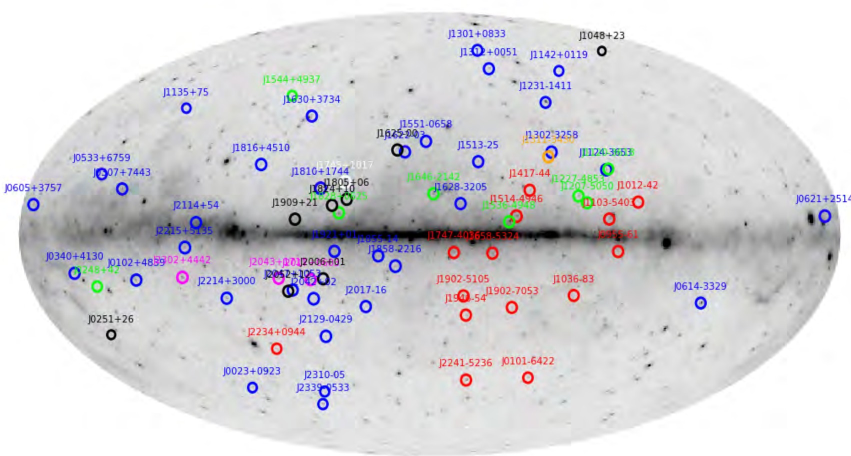
Green Bank (USA)

Fermi pulsar search consortium (PSC)

Fermi Pulsar Search Consortium efforts ➡ >100 new MSPs

GMRT discovery (2012 to 2014) ➡ 7+1 MSPs





Nançay (France) GMRT (India) GreenBank (USA) Parkes (Asutralia) Effelsberg(Germany)





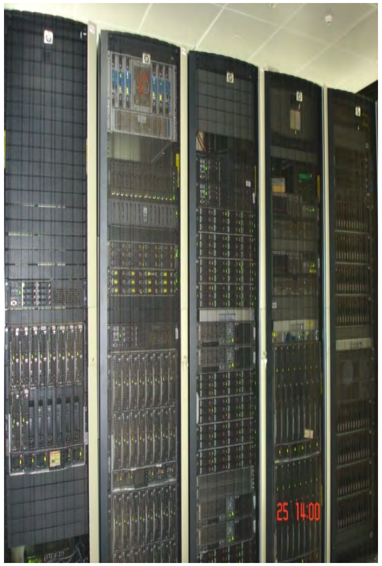
Fermi directed radio searches

Team GMRT: Bhattacharyya, Roy, Ray, Gupta, Bhattacharya, Ferrara +PSC

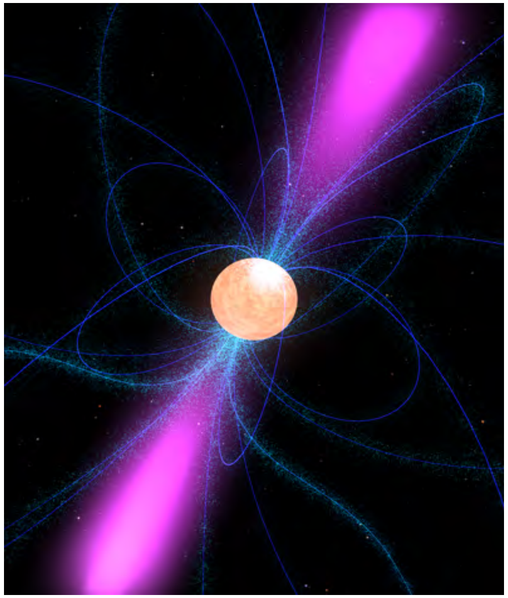
Source selection : Fermi

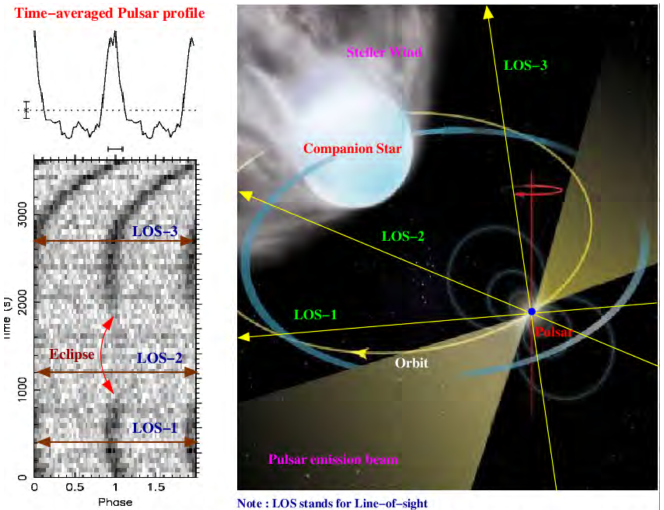
Observations: GMRT

Analysis: HPC



Result: Pulsar discovery

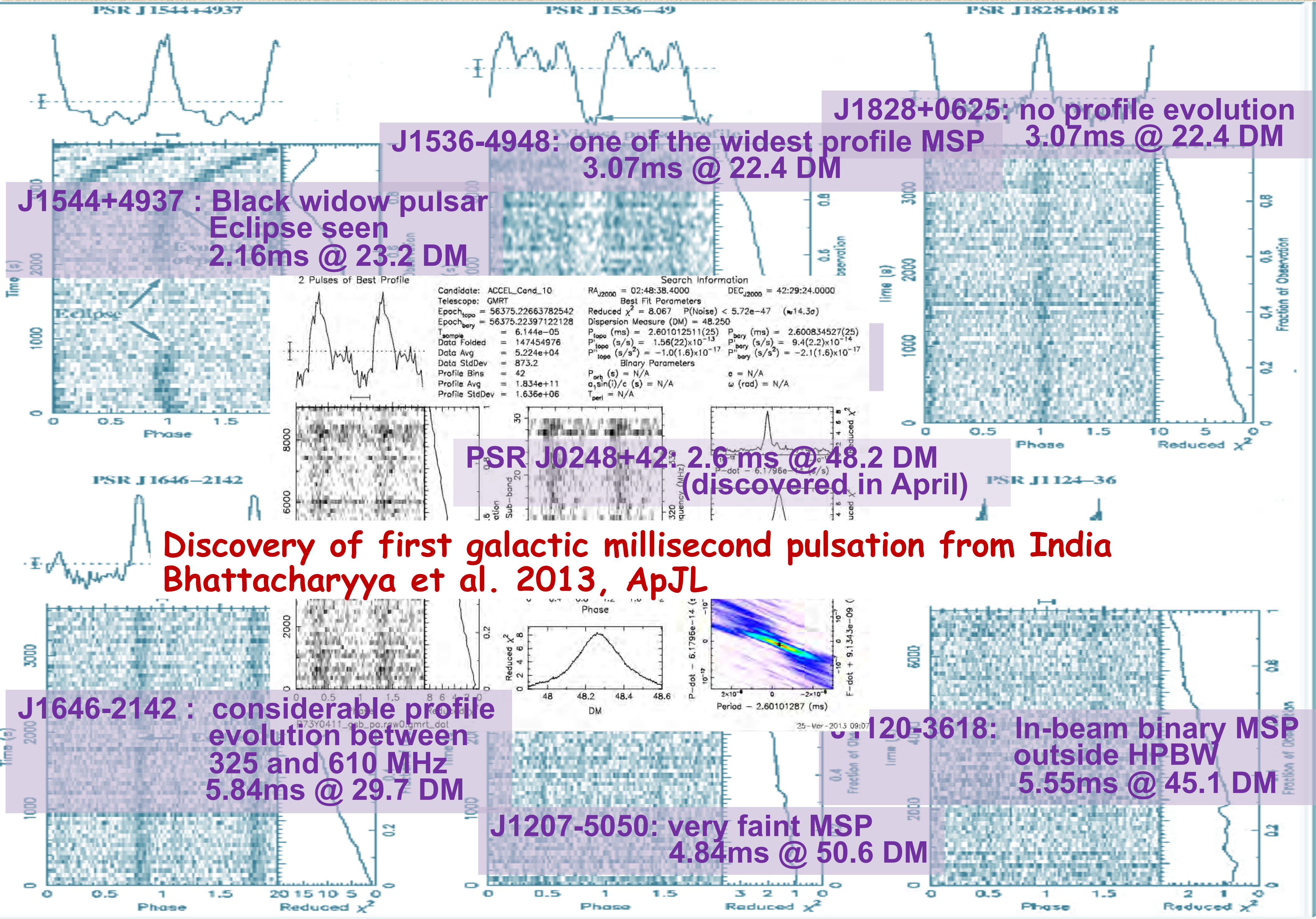




Artistic impression of a Black Widow system with real data of the discovered MSP

Eclipsing Black-widow pulsar
Provides clue on isolated MSP formation
GMRT discovery
Bhattacharyya et al. 2014

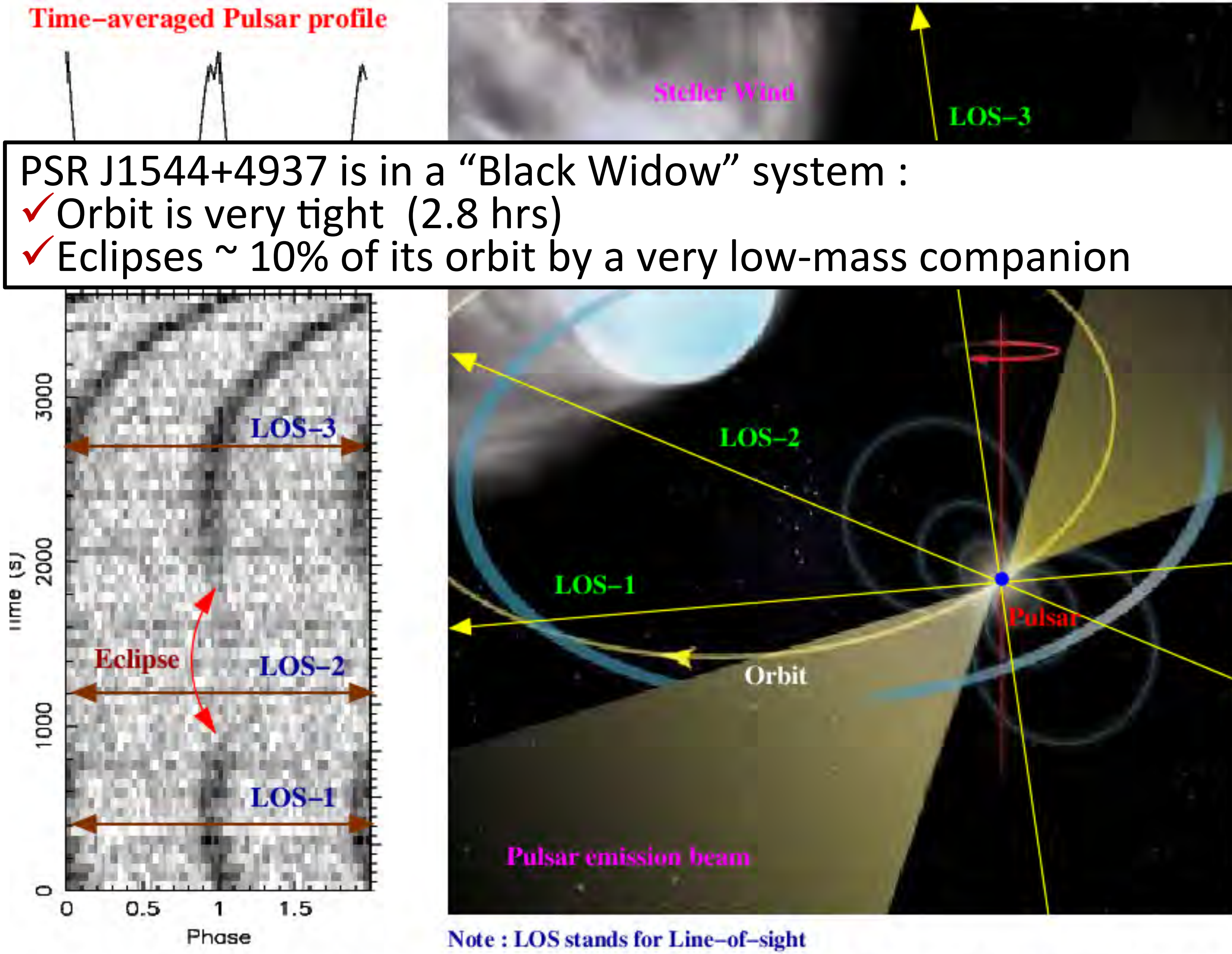
Seven MSPs discovered at GMRT from 2011-2013



J1544+4937 : Third eclipsing black widow !

PSR J1544+4937 is in a "Black Widow" system :

- ✓ Orbit is very tight (2.8 hrs)
- ✓ Eclipses ~ 10% of its orbit by a very low-mass companion



Artistic impression of a Black Widow system with real data of the discovered MSP

Significance of MSP discovery

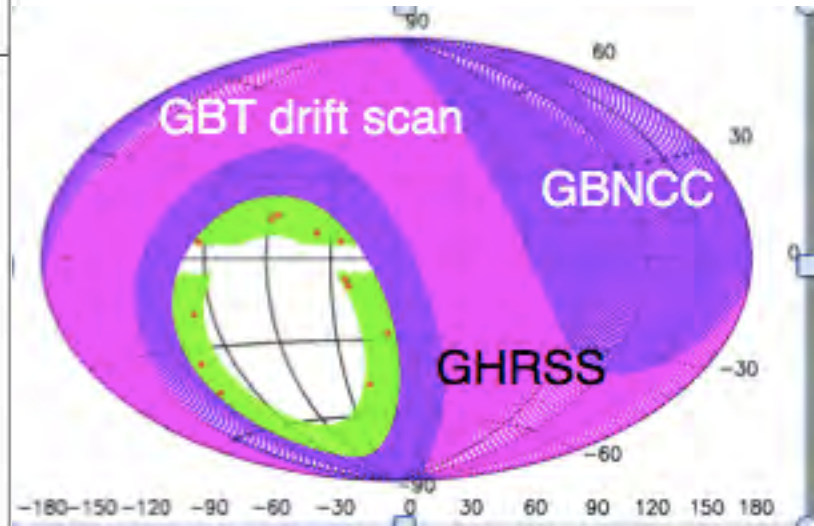
- Enhance the population of MSPs that can contribute to International Pulsar Timing Array designed to study the gravitational wave background

- With the increased population of MSPs the number of MSPs in special Evolutionary phases would increase and hence will allow a more detailed study of evolutionary processes leading to MSP formation.
e.g. the black widow system discovered by us will aid to track evolutionary history of isolated MSPs

- Simultaneous study of gamma-ray and radio light curve Lag, lead or alignment of gamma-ray and radio profile can lead to the question of offset or co-location of the emission radio and gamma-ray regions

Major ongoing low-frequency survey

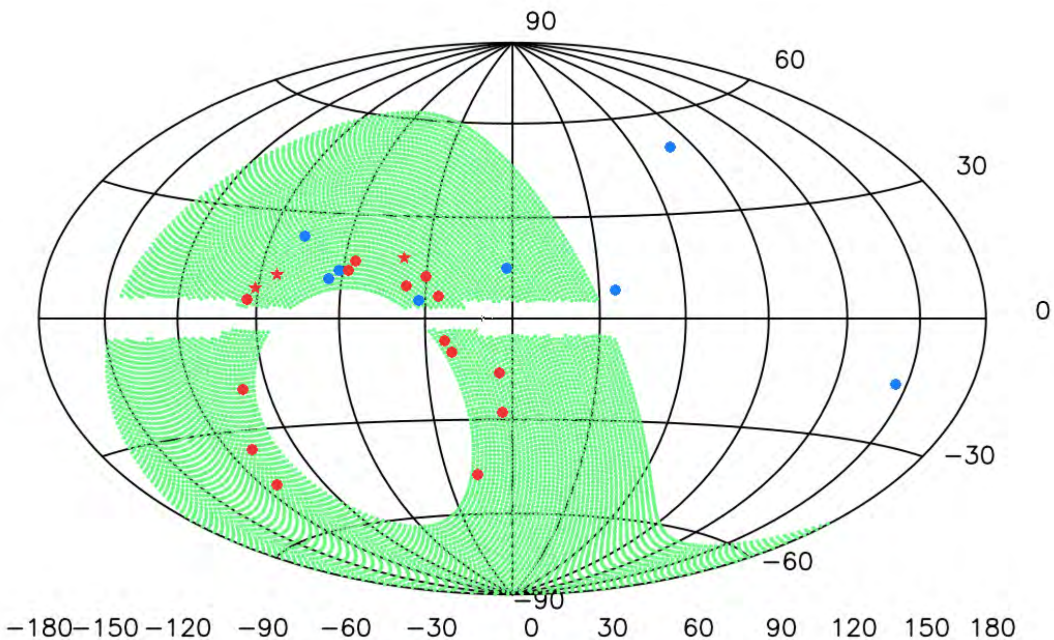
Survey name – Telescope	Frequency of search (MHz)	Sky coverage	Discoveries	Sensitivity† (mJy)
HTRU[1] – Parkes	1352	−120°<l, l<30° $\|b\|$<15° 4500 deg^2	104 PSR, 26 MSP	1.5
HTRU–N – Effelsberg	1360	$\|b\|$ > 15°, Dec > −20°	12 PSR	1.5
GBNCC[2] – GBT	350	Dec>−40° 19500 deg^2	108 PSR, 12 MSP (158 PSR 20 MSP)	0.6
GBTdriftscan[3] – GBT	350	−21° <Dec <26°	26 PSR, 7 MSP	0.9
AO327[4] – Arecibo	327	0° <Dec< 28°	24 PSR, 3 MSP	0.3
LOTAAS[5] –LOFAR	135	Dec >0 °	30 PSR	0.3
GHRSS‡[6] – GMRT	322	−20° <Dec < −54° 2900 deg^2	13 PSR, 1 MSP 2 mildly recycled	0.5



GHRSS Team: Bhattacharyya, Cooper, Malenta, Roy, Chengalur, Keith, Kudale, McLaughlin, Ransom, Ray, Stappers (Bhattacharyya et al 2016)

Blind survey with GMRT

Pulsar per square degree discovery rate of the GHRSS survey
→ one of the highest among the surveys.
→ Effort with upgraded GMRT (wide band system)
4+ Pulsars in GHRSS Phase 2 with wide band system (1 psr @ 20 hrs)
2+ Pulsar with another survey with upgraded GMRT



Timing of pulsars

Reference: Chapter 8; Handbook of Pulsar Astronomy
Lorimer and Kramer

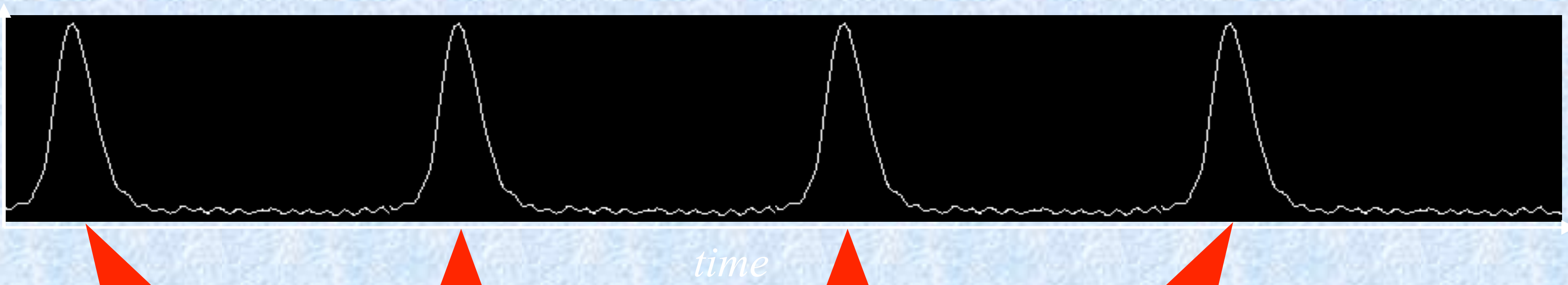
Pulsar Timing – a cryptic name for a very simple procedure

So, how to measure pulsar period?

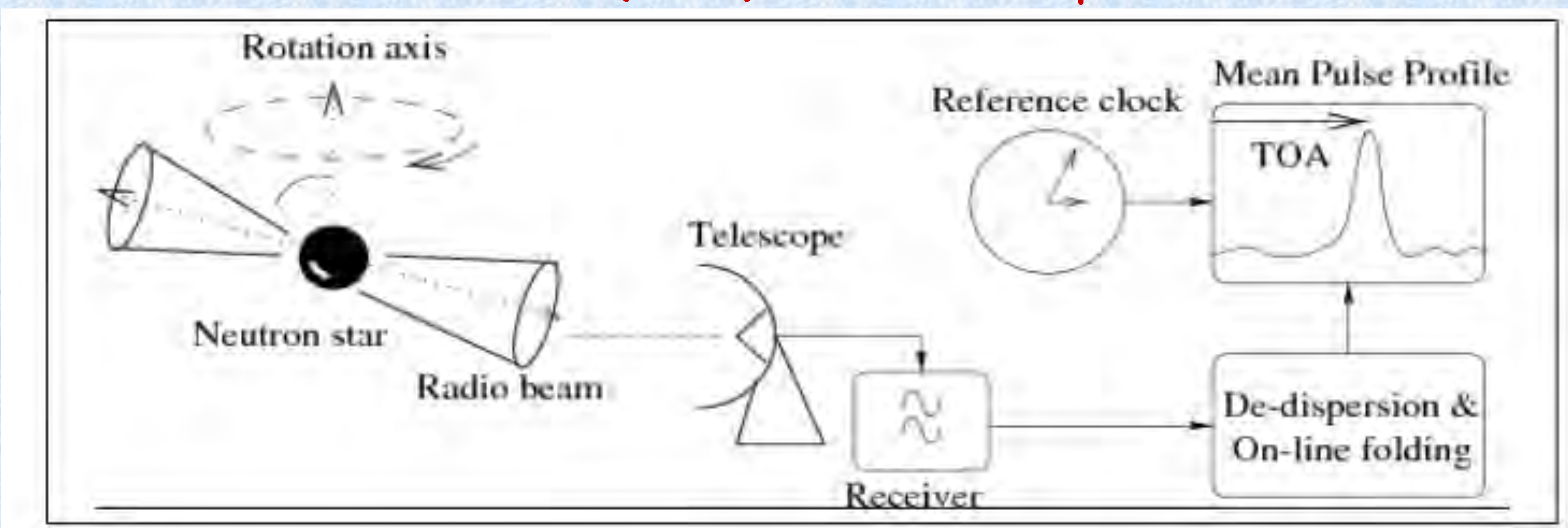
- ✓ How to measure how long is a second on your pulsar watch?
- ✓ Prediction and observation of pulse arrival time (TOA)
- ✓ Pulsar timing model – a collection of the important physical parameters, describing its rotation, movement etc.

How the timing actually works?

Time of Arrival (TOA) is the moment in time, when the pulsar reaches some arbitrary decided phase (usually close to the pulse maximum).

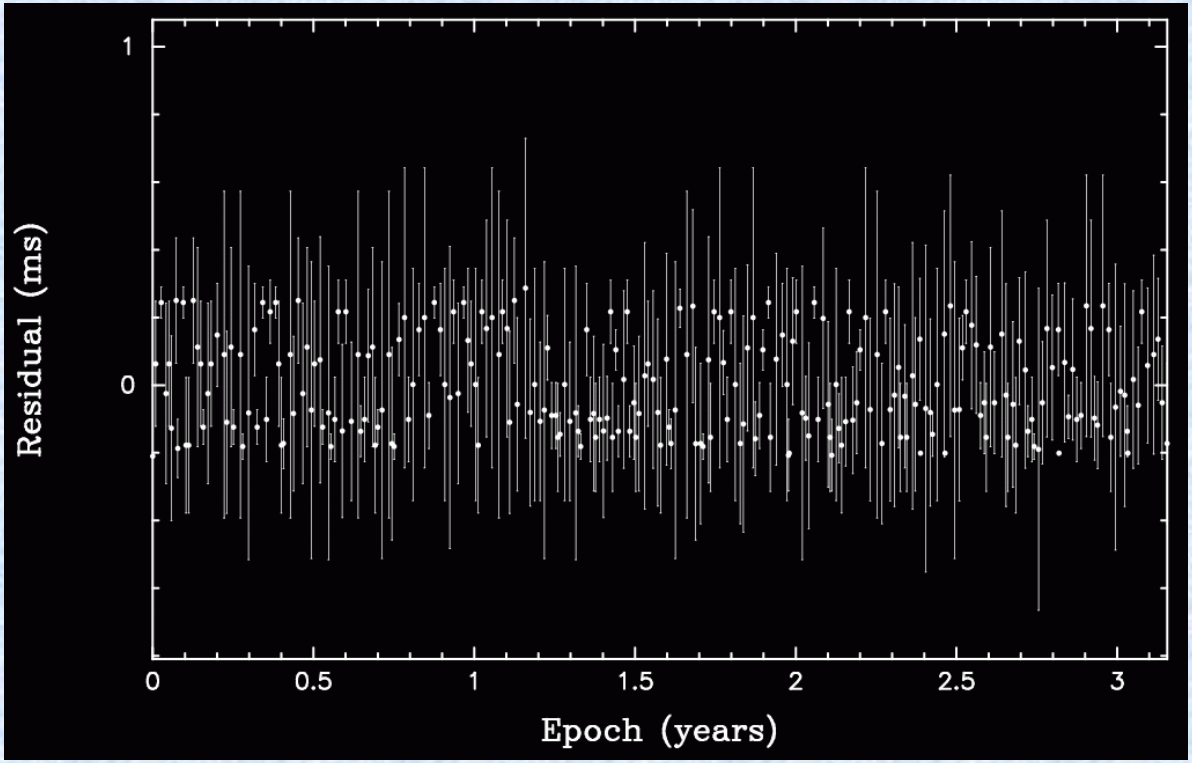


Times of Arrival (TOA's) for consecutive pulses



Now it is necessary to apply corrections to your TOA’s (basically subtract your observatory position and movement).

Finally, with a proper timing fit, this is what you would like to see - nothing but white noise, which is due to the TOA measurement uncertainties comming mainly from the receiver noises (and the pulsar itself) .



If the residuals show only the white noise - this means, that we know everything there is to know about the pulsar (at least from the timing point of view).

How precisselly one can measure pulsar period?

86	J0525-6607	cdp+80	8.0470	2	kkm+03	6.5E-11	5	kkm+03
87	B0525+21	sr68	3.74551267840	3	hlk+04	4.003633E-14	8	hlk+04

Pulsar PSR J0613-0200:

- ✓Rotation period: 0.00306184403674401 +/- 0.00000000000000005 sec
- ✓The precission we know it's period allows us to predict the arrival times of all incoming pulses for long (the next 10 million years)!
- ✓It is the order of magnitude simillar to the best atomic clocks used on Earth!

101	J0611+30	cnst96	1.412090	3	cnst96	*	0	*
102	B0609+37	stwd85	0.29798232657184	18	hlk+04	5.94681E-17	18	hlk+04
103	J0613-0200	lnl+95	0.00306184403674401	5	tsb+99	9.572E-21	5	tsb+99
104	B0611+22	dls72	0.33495996611	16	hlk+04	5.94494E-14	12	hlk+04
105	J0621+1002	cnst96	0.028853860730049	1	sna+02	4.732E-20	2	sna+02
106	B0621-04	mlt+78	1.0390764758510	15	hlk+04	8.30442E-16	12	hlk+04
107	J0625+10	cnst96	0.498397	3	cnst96	*	0	*
108	B0626+24	dth78	0.476622836038	4	hlk+04	1.99573E-15	3	hlk+04
109	B0628-28	lvw69a	1.24441859615	8	hlk+04	7.1229E-15	3	hlk+04
110	J0631+1036	zcwl96	0.287772559545	10	hlk+04	1.046836E-13	3	hlk+04
111	J0633+1746	hh92	0.237093230014	14	hsb+92	1.097495E-14	14	hsb+92
112	J0635+0533	cmn+00	0.033856495	12	cmn+00	*	0	*
113	B0643+80	dbtb82	1.2144405115160	20	hlk+04	3.798787E-15	15	hlk+04
114	B0656+14	mlt+78	0.384891195054	5	hlk+04	5.500309E-14	3	hlk+04
115	B0655+64	dth78	0.19567094516627	16	hlk+04	6.853E-19	12	hlk+04

From ATNF pulsar catalogue: http://atnf.csiro.au/research/pulsar/psrcat/

Seventeenth significant digit!!!

The fastest pulsar is PSR J1748-2446ad, which is rotating 713 times per second.

What do we learn from pulsar timing?

We can learn a lot by just timing the solitary pulsars:

- their sky coordinates
- their movements
- their age
- their evolutional stage (and of course the overal evolution of a pulsar)
- their magnetic fields
- details of their births (natal kicks)
- their associations with supernova remnants
- their galactic distribution
- the galactic distribution of free electrons (from the dispersion measure)
- also about neutron star interiors..

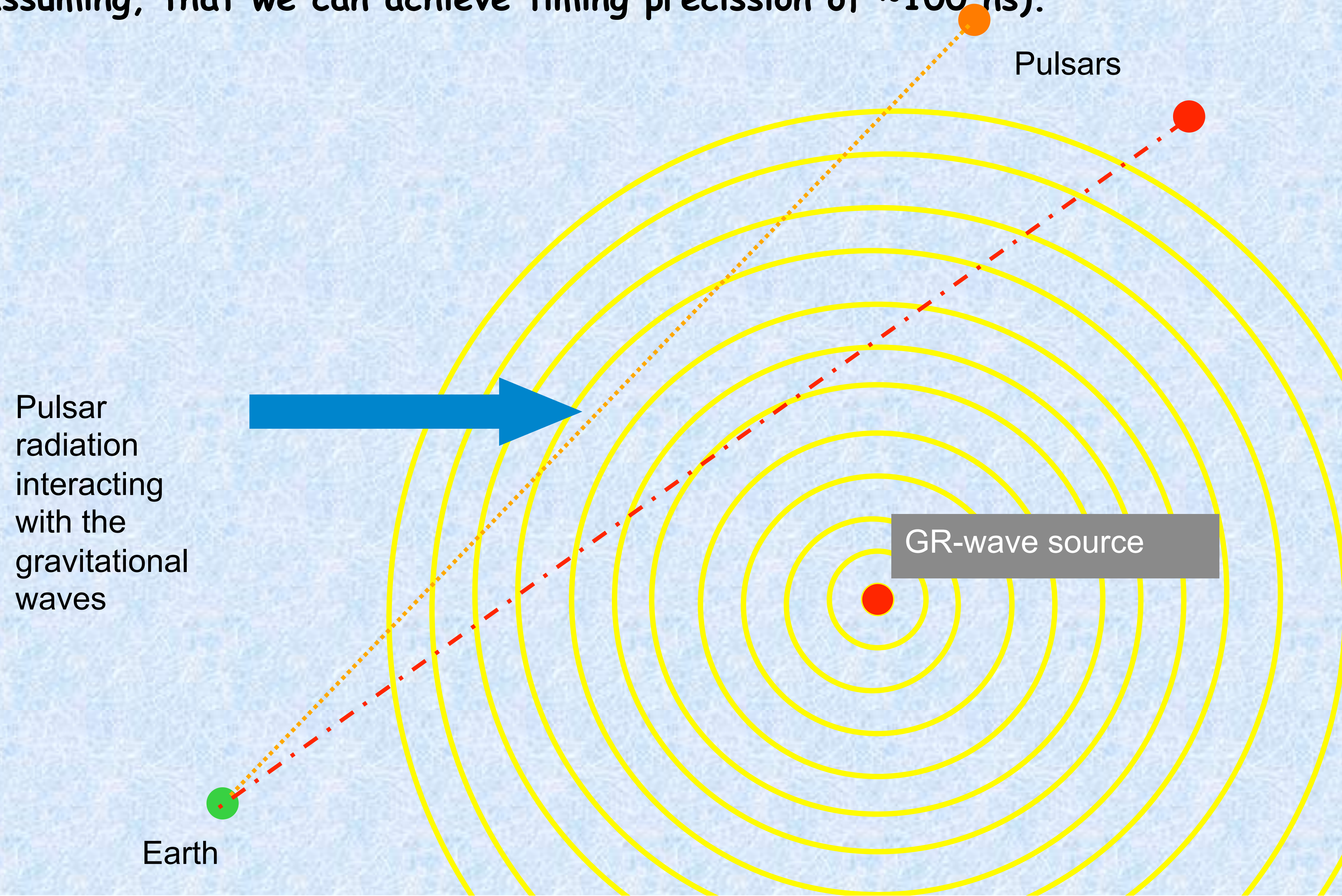
But that is only a beginning. It gets more interesting with the binary pulsars...

- Eccentricity of the orbit
- Semi major axis
- Orbital period
- Planets around pulsar

And lots more depending on the particular system

Pulsar timing array for detecting Gravitational wave

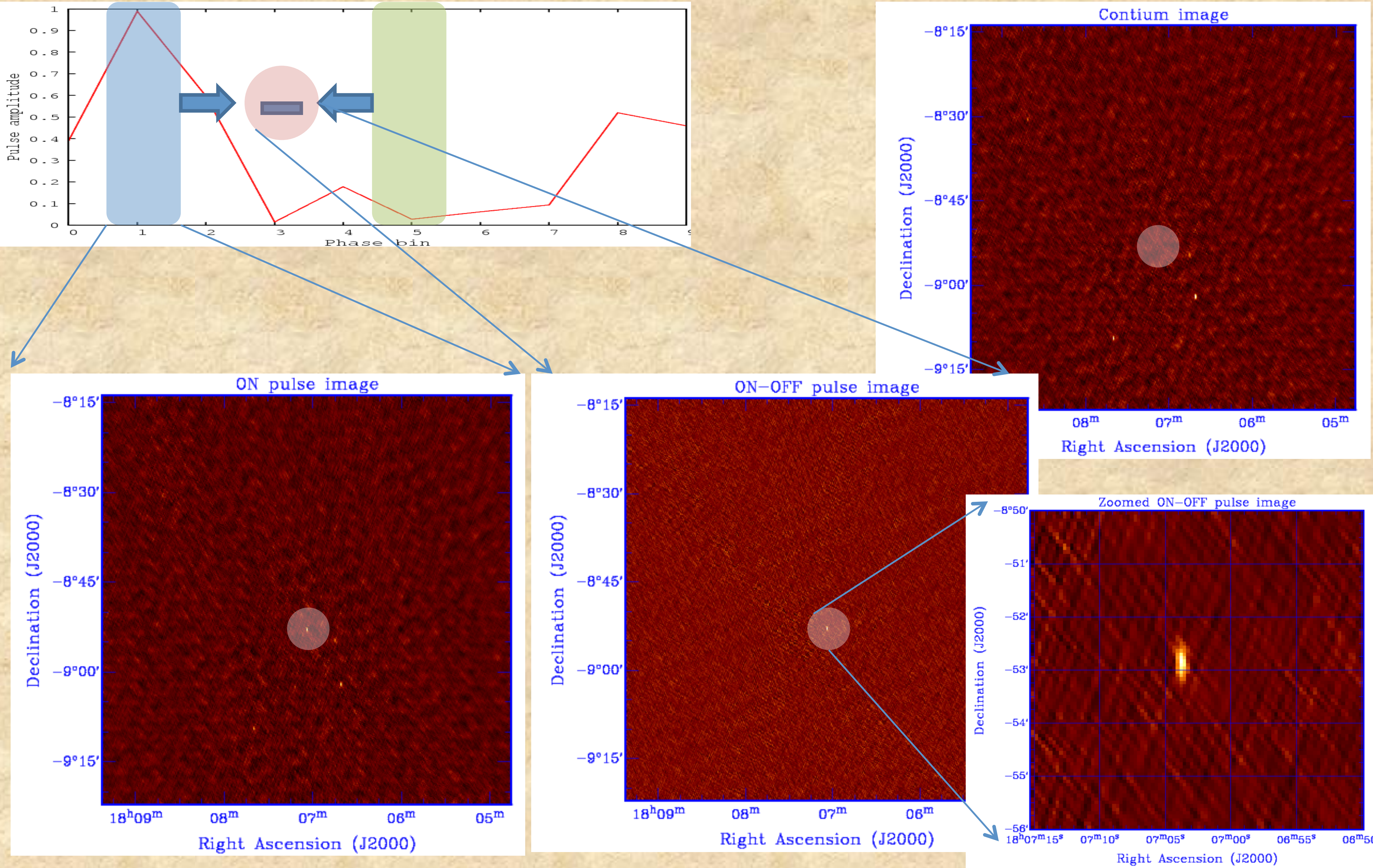
Measuring the Gravitational waves:
(assuming, that we can achieve timing precission of ~100 ns).



Imaging of pulsars

Pulsar gating

Roy & Bhattacharyya 2013, ApJL

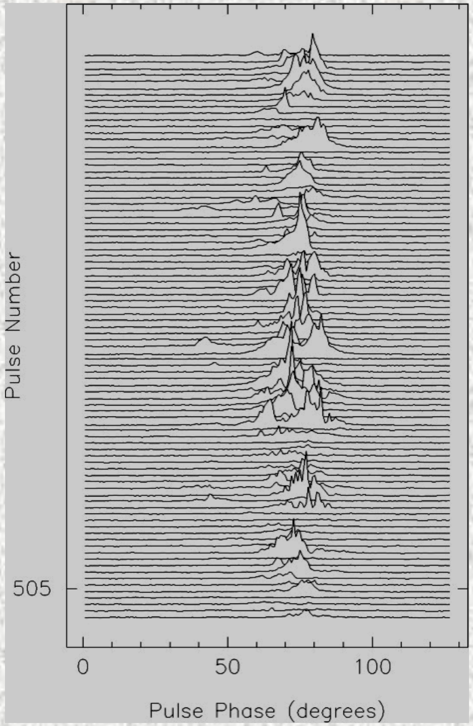


Investigation of pulse emission mechanism

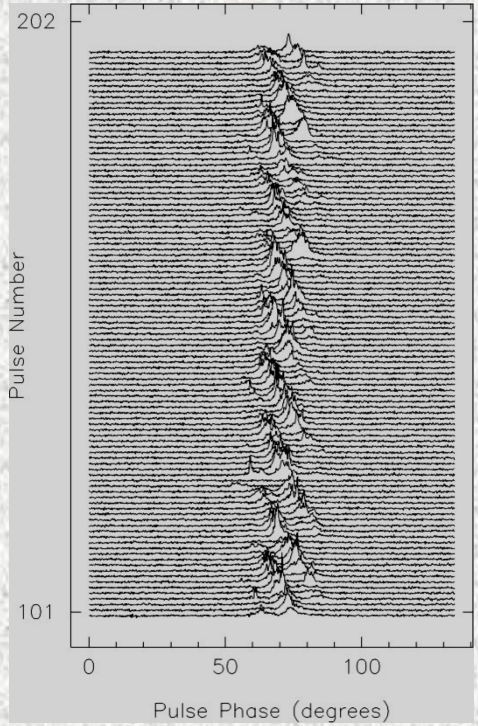
Drifting & Nulling

Sequence of pulses

PSR B0950+08



PSR B0809+74



Subpulse : Individual pulses are composed of narrower emission features

- Drifting:

Subpulses appear in progressively changing longitude & follow pulsar specific patterns

Weltevrede et al. (2006) , (2007) : some kind of drifting behaviour is seen in a large number of pulsars

Drifting is intrinsic property of the emission mechanism

- Nulling: pulse intensity suddenly drops abruptly returns

Reason for such switching off is not known…and is subject to investigation

Mechanism of nulling is expected to be very closely tied with pulse emission mechanism

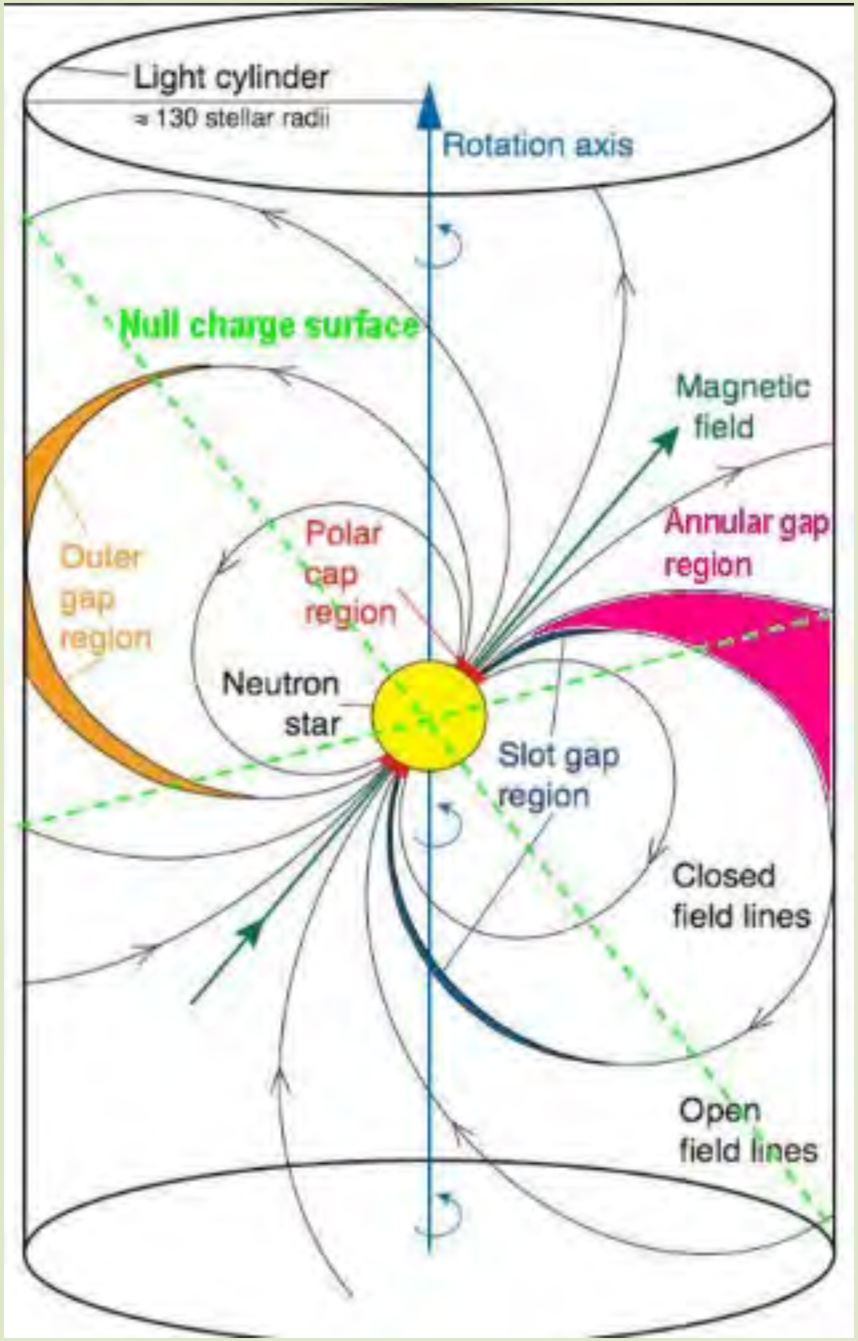
Emission models

Broadly emission models can be divided into three different families that place emitting regions at different locations of pulsar magnetosphere

Polar cap model (for radio and gamma-ray emission) : Radio and Gamma ray photons are produced closed to neutron star surface
(Daugherty & Harding 1996)

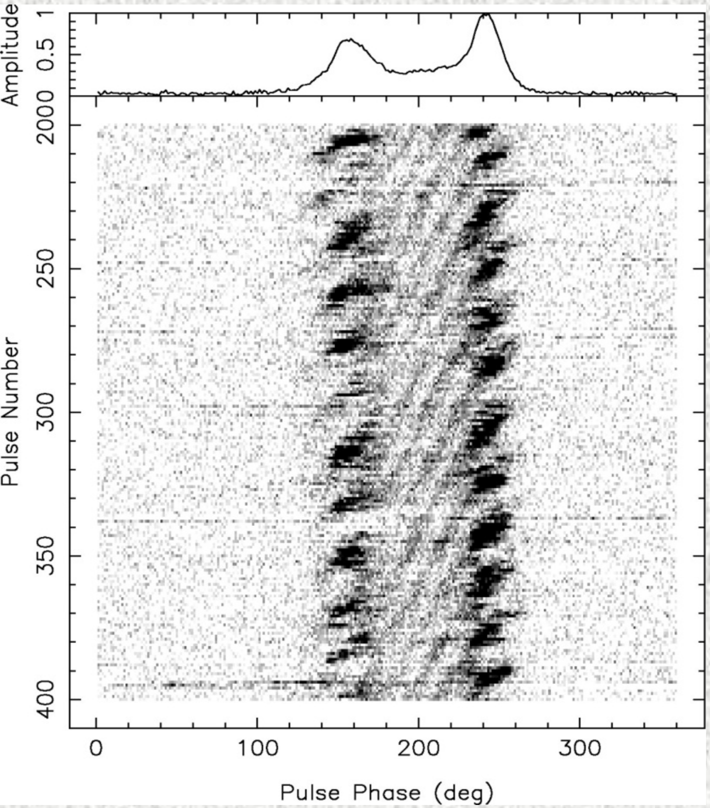
Outer gap model : Gamma-ray emission near light cylinder (Romani & Yadigaroglu et al. 1995)

Slot-gap model : Gamma-ray emission due to particle acceleration occurs in a region bordering the open field lines.
two-pole caustic model
- geometrical realization
(Muslimov & Harding 2004; Dyks & Rudak 2003)



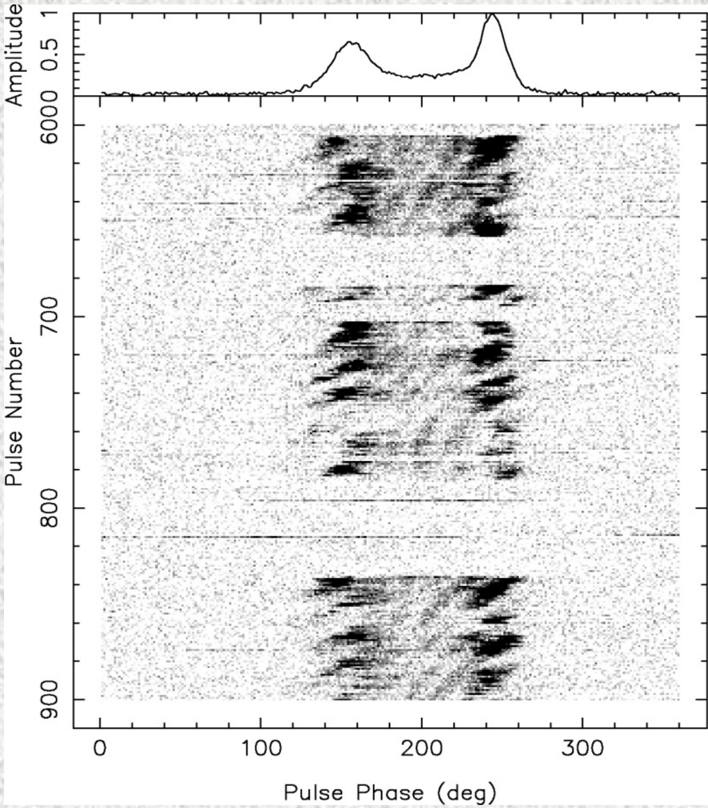
Remarkable drift pattern of PSR B0818-41

Single pulses at 325 MHz (regular drifting)



- Three drift regions
  - Inner region: Multiple drift bands
  - Outer region: Single drift band
- **"Phase locked" drift regions**
- Frequent Nulls

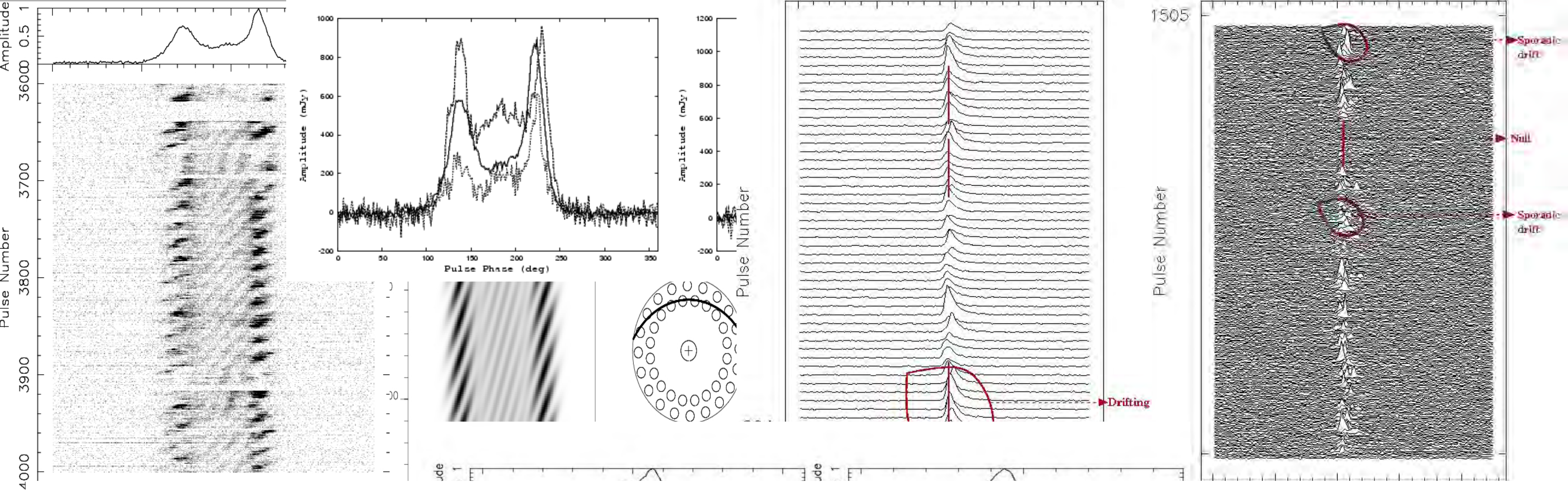
Single pulses at 325 MHz (irregular drifting)



Synchronised drifting of subpulses from multiple rings of emission from pulsar magnetosphere (e.g. B0818-41, B0826-34) : constrains to pulsar emission models

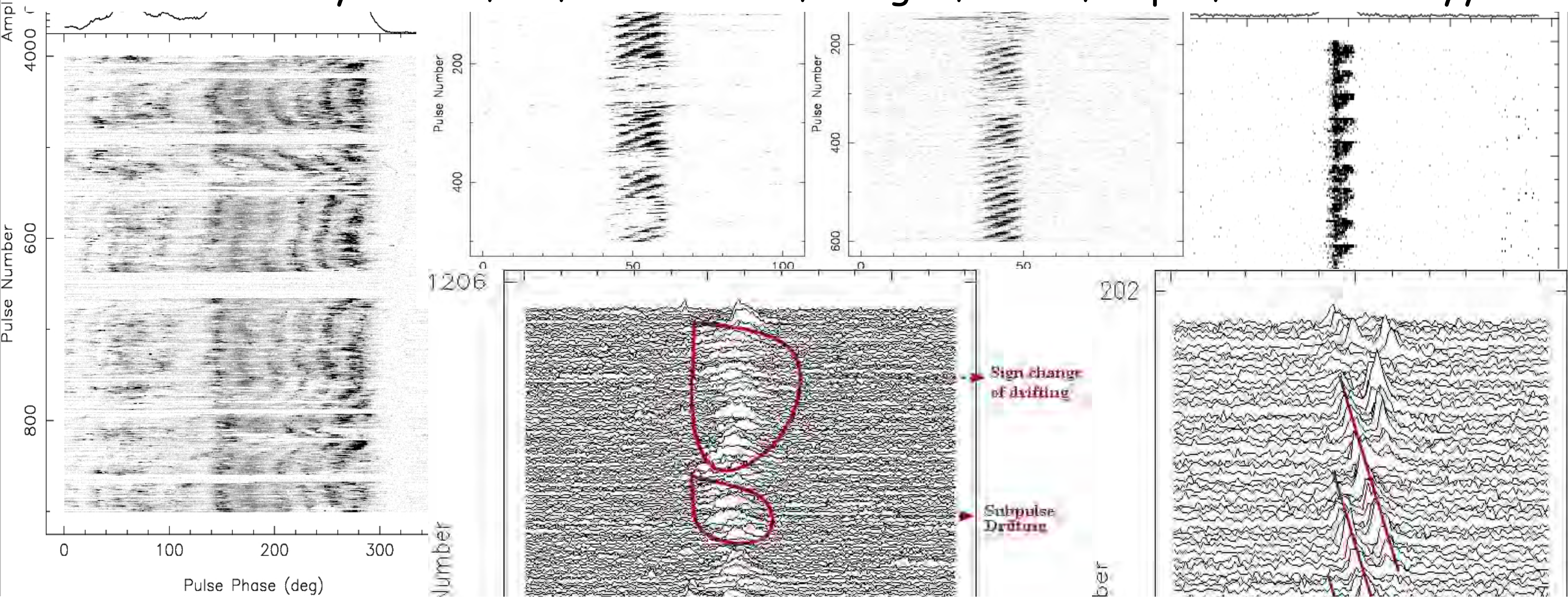
Electromagnetic conditions in magnetosphere responsible for radio emissions emission reach a well defined state during or towards end of each nulls: Reset of pulsar's radio emission engine takes place

Bhattachraryya et al. 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010 MNRAS



More on emission mechanism?

Refer to work by Rankin, Gil, Weltevrede, Wright, Mitra, Gupta, Bhattacharyya ...



Pulsar Research last 50 years

Discovery of pulsars :
Hewish, Bell et al. 1968, Nature, 217, 709

Vacuum Gap model pulsar radio radiation:
Ruderman & Sutherland 1975, ApJ, 196,51

Discovery of pulsar in a binary system:
Hulse & Taylor, 1975, ApJ, L51

Discovery of the 1st Millisecond pulsar:
Becker, Kulkarni et al., 1982, Nature, 300, 615

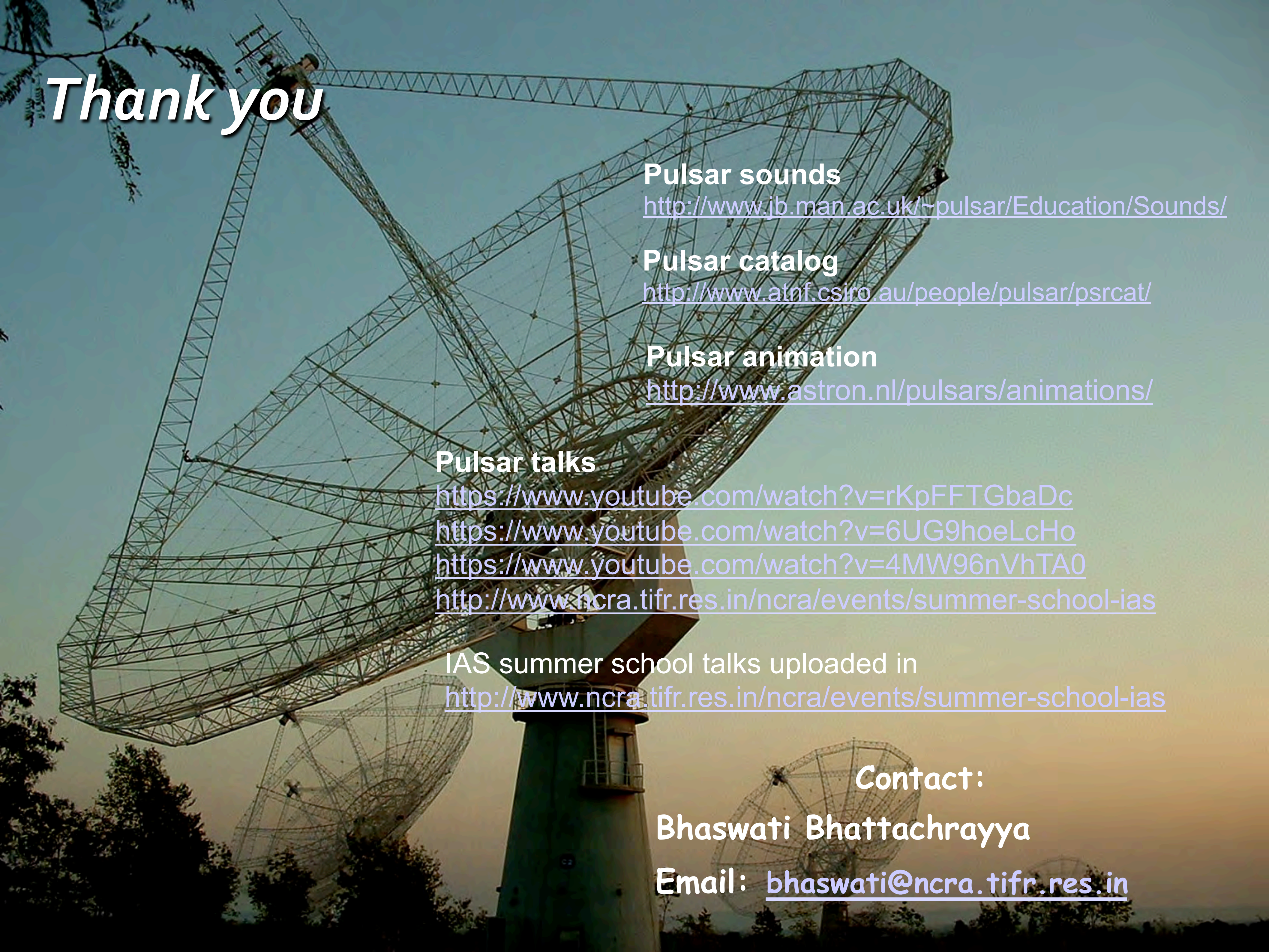
Discovery of the 1st extrasolar planet around PSR J1257+12:
Wolszczan, Frail, 1992, Nature, 355, 145

Discovery of the double pulsar system:
Burgay et al. 2004, Science, 303, 1153

Synchronous X-ray and radio mode switches of pulsar magnetosphere of PSR B0943+10 :
Hermsen et al. 2013

+ Fast Radio Bursts
+ Rotating radio Transients
+ MSP-LMXB transitioning systems

Pulsar research in different directions :
2 Nobel prizes : 1 on discovery of pulsars(1974), 1 on discovery of Hulse-Taylor binary (1993)
More than 50 Nature papers


Thank you
Pulsar sounds
http://www.jb.man.ac.uk/~pulsar/Education/Sounds/
Pulsar catalog
http://www.atnf.csiro.au/people/pulsar/psrcat/
Pulsar animation
http://www.astron.nl/pulsars/animations/
Pulsar talks
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rKpFFTGbaDc
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6UG9hoeLcHo
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4MW96nVhTA0
http://www.ncra.tifr.res.in/ncra/events/summer-school-ias
IAS summer school talks uploaded in
http://www.ncra.tifr.res.in/ncra/events/summer-school-ias
Contact:
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Email: bhaswati@ncra.tifr.res.in

Open Questions

Different emission patterns are observed in radio and gamma rays:
difference in number of peaks, separation between peaks, observed radio-gamma ray lag

Some open questions:

- ✓ What mechanisms produce radio and Gamma ray emission from pulsars?
- ✓ Location of the emission regions in Magnetosphere?
- ✓ What is the ratio of radio loud and radio quiet pulsars?

Gamma ray + Radio observations can help disentangle pulsar emission mechanism