

Lake Tahoe prime spot to see Sunday's solar eclipse

By Matt Weiser, Sacramento Bee

Stargazing enthusiasts across Northern California are mobilizing for the biggest event of its kind to visit the region in two decades: a "Ring of Fire" solar eclipse visible across half the state Sunday evening.

The so-called "annular" eclipse means the moon will pass directly in front of the sun without obscuring it completely. As a result, the sun will appear as an orange ring in the sky.

The moon will be at one of its more distant points in its orbit around Earth, making it appear about 94 percent of the sun's diameter. The effect will be visible across virtually all of Northern California in a 200-mile-wide diagonal swath from the Oregon border to Lake Tahoe.

Some of the best viewing locations will include Crescent City, Redding, Susanville and, in Nevada, Pyramid Lake. These areas lie along the central path of the moon's alignment with the sun on Sunday evening, and the eclipse will be truly concentric along this path.

People in many other areas of Northern California and northern Nevada will be able to observe the annular effect, although not perfectly concentric.

The eclipse is expected to begin at about 5:13pm, when the moon starts its transit in front of the sun. The full annular effect will be visible for four and a half minutes starting at about 6:26pm Sunday, though the exact time and duration will vary slightly depending on location.

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