



Preliminary Model for the Solar Wind Interaction with Pluto's Extended Plasma Tail

I. Sillanpää (1), R. Ebert (1), H. Elliott (1), and E. Kallio (2)

(1) Southwest Research Institute, Space Science and Engineering, San Antonio, Texas, United States (ilkka.sillanpaa@fmi.fi),

(2) Finnish Meteorological Institute, Helsinki, Finland

We are developing a hybrid model of the Pluto plasma environment (HYB-Pluto) to study the solar wind interaction with Pluto's plasma tail to distances of 1000 Pluto radii (R_P) while still resolving the shock and/or wave features upstream of Pluto with good resolution. The HYB-Pluto model features an extended domain and adaptable grid structure along with important processes such as ion-neutral interactions. We present results from our first simulations with the HYB-Pluto model that used realistic values for the solar wind bulk properties and included He^{++} ions. The results show the formation of a bow shock upstream of Pluto as well as asymmetries of ion density and bow shock in the direction of the convection electric field. This model, along with other current models [1], will provide tools to interpret and understand the plasma observations obtained during expected encounter of the New Horizons spacecraft with the Pluto system in July 2015.

[1] P.A. Delamere, Hybrid Code Simulations of the Solar Wind Interaction with Pluto, *J. Geophys. Res.*, 114, A03220, doi:10.1029/2008JA013756, 2009.