FINDING PLANETS USING THE RADIAL VELOCITY METHOD

The star moves as it is affected by the gravity of its planet. Seen from the Earth, the star wobbles backwards and forwards in the line of sight. The speed of this movement, its radial velocity, can be determined using the Doppler effect, because the light from a moving object changes colour.

Periodic movement. The star’s velocity varies as it moves to and from the Earth when the planet orbits it.

©Johan Jarnestad/The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences