



# Does the moon affect us?

When I think of the moon, visions of those old werewolf movies I watched as a kid pop into my head.

The man changes into the monster on the full moon, then heads out in the moonlight to wreak havoc on the village. Scared villagers peer out their windows, keeping a vigil for the appearance of the beast. Sunrise comes, and the beast is back to a regular person, leaving behind a demolished village full of terrified villagers.

As long as man has been around, the moon has carried a spiritual and mystical aura, even worshiped by some peoples. Full moons have been associated with odd or insane behavior including sleepwalking, suicide, violence and illegal activities. The words “lunacy” and “lunatic” come from the Roman goddess of the moon, Luna, who was said to ride her silver chariot across the dark sky each night.

In days of old, nighttime travel was planned around the brightest phases of the moon. Roads and paths were set out in such a way as to maximize the moonlight for travel. The moon was man’s first street light.

As a boy, I heard stories of the moon being made of green cheese, a man in the moon and weird space creatures that occupied the moon. During the 1820s, a Bavarian astronomer named Franz von Paula Gruithuisen claimed to have glimpsed entire cities on the moon with his telescope. He wrote that there were sophisticated buildings, roads and forts. In 1969, Astronaut Neil Armstrong proved all those stories to be false when he walked on the moon.

A complete moon phase cycle lasts

29.5 days. The cycle includes the phases of full, first quarter, third quarter and new. They are also referred to as crescent, gibbous, waxing and waning. Crescent means the moon is less than half illuminated while gibbous means the moon is more than half illuminated.

I know that from my own experience in law enforcement that we dreaded the full moon. Our interaction with the “crazies” always increased on the days of the brightest moon. A recent study looked at five years of data from police records in Florida, which showed an increase in cases of homicide and aggravated assault around full moons.

The moon causes ocean tides. The water in the ocean is pulled toward both sides of the planet by the moon’s gravitational force, resulting in four tides a day generally.

Since our bodies are made up of over 75 percent water, it seems logical that the moon would have some effect on us. A study published by Elsevier Ltd. in 2013 showed that the moon phases definitely affect our sleep. More restless nights seem to occur around the full moon. I can attest that I have had restless and sleepless nights, only to find out later that there was a full moon.

Supermoons have been accused of causing “baby booms.” Researchers followed 1,000 births in a Kyoto, Japan hospital, where the mothers were not labor induced. The study showed that more babies were born when the moon was the closest to earth, when the gravitational pull is the strongest. The theories still persist to this day that the moon causes baby booms.

In the oceans, most animals use the

moon’s phases as their clocks. These clocks, known as circa lunar, are possessed by plants and animals to enable them to anticipate and be prepared for regular changes in their environment.

The moon has a large effect on land animals as well. For example, many studies have shown that deer are most active when the moon is directly overhead or underfoot. These same studies also show that these same deer are more active on the nights of a full moon and much less active during the days.

Every hunter I know has a theory about full moons, new moons and the likely effect on game animals. Ask anyone hunting elk during the rut about a full moon. For years, lunar tables have been published in hunting and fishing magazines. I know of many sportsmen that use these tables religiously.

Modern science has debunked most of those ancient theories of mystery that surrounds the moon’s history. It is kind of sad really, as some of those old myths were pretty interesting.

For me, I will continue to use the moon as a source of natural light during clear evenings. I found out long ago that if I fished or hunted around good tides or the best lunar table predictions that I would never go. Nothing ever seemed to line up around my days off. Now, I just head out whenever I can. If I don’t catch anything, I just blame the moon. At least science can’t take that away from me.

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**Tips from the Posse**  
By Mark Rackay