

The (transient?) high-energy neutrino sky

Anna Franckowiak

RUHR
UNIVERSITÄT
BOCHUM

RUB

Astroparticle Symposium, November 19, 2025



SFB1491

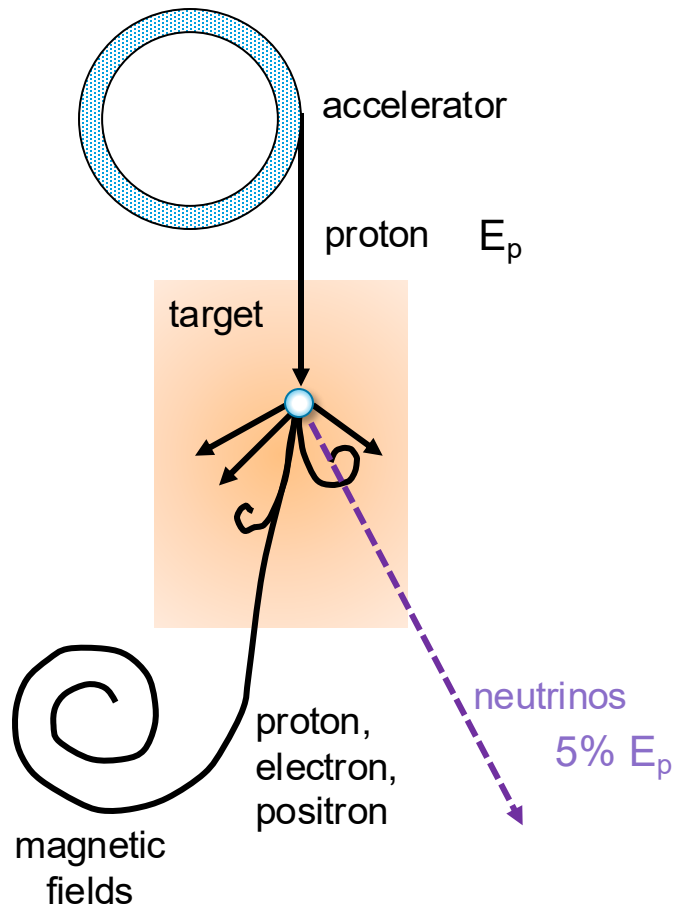
This Talk

- Why high-energy neutrinos?
- First results
- Realtime search for transient / variable sources
- Future improvements

Why high-energy Neutrinos?



High-energy neutrino sources



Cosmic-ray “beam dumps” produce TeV-PeV neutrinos

Two ingredients:

- Proton acceleration
- Target for interaction

Neutrino Production Processes

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{Cosmic ray} \\ p \\ p \\ \text{target} \end{array} \rightarrow \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \dots + \pi^+ \\ \dots + \pi^- \\ \dots + \pi^0 \end{array} \right.$$

Neutrino Production Processes

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{Cosmic ray} \\ pp \\ p\gamma \\ \text{target} \end{array} \rightarrow \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \dots + \pi^+ \rightarrow \mu^+ + \nu_{\mu} \\ \dots + \pi^- \\ \dots + \pi^0 \end{array} \right.$$

Neutrino Production Processes

$$\begin{array}{l}
 \text{Cosmic ray} \\
 \text{\textit{pp}} \\
 \text{\textit{p}\gamma} \\
 \text{target}
 \end{array}
 \rightarrow \left\{ \begin{array}{l}
 \dots + \pi^+ \rightarrow \mu^+ + \nu_\mu \rightarrow e^+ + \nu_e + \bar{\nu}_\mu + \nu_\mu \\
 \dots + \pi^- \\
 \dots + \pi^0
 \end{array} \right.$$

Neutrino Production Processes

$$\begin{array}{l}
 \text{Cosmic ray} \\
 \text{ } pp \\
 \text{ } p\gamma \\
 \text{target}
 \end{array}
 \rightarrow \left\{ \begin{array}{l}
 \dots + \pi^+ \rightarrow \mu^+ + \nu_\mu \rightarrow e^+ + \nu_e + \bar{\nu}_\mu + \nu_\mu \\
 \dots + \pi^- \rightarrow \mu^- + \bar{\nu}_\mu \rightarrow e^- + \bar{\nu}_e + \nu_\mu + \bar{\nu}_\mu \\
 \dots + \pi^0
 \end{array} \right.$$

Neutrino Production Processes

$$\begin{array}{l}
 \text{Cosmic ray} \\
 \text{ } pp \\
 \text{ } p\gamma \\
 \text{target}
 \end{array}
 \rightarrow
 \left\{
 \begin{array}{l}
 \dots + \pi^+ \rightarrow \mu^+ + \nu_\mu \rightarrow e^+ + \nu_e + \bar{\nu}_\mu + \nu_\mu \\
 \dots + \pi^- \rightarrow \mu^- + \bar{\nu}_\mu \rightarrow e^- + \bar{\nu}_e + \nu_\mu + \bar{\nu}_\mu \\
 \dots + \pi^0 \rightarrow \gamma\gamma
 \end{array}
 \right.$$

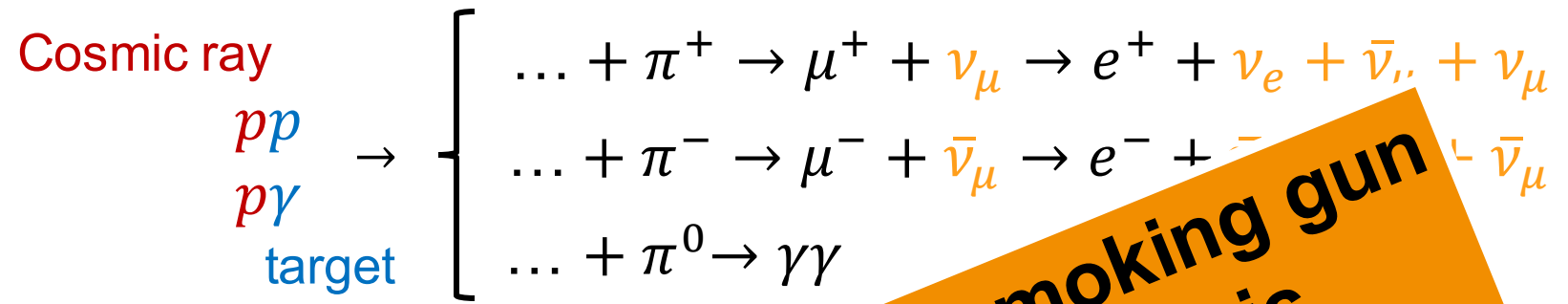
Neutrino Production Processes

$$\begin{array}{l}
 \text{Cosmic ray} \\
 \begin{array}{l}
 pp \\
 p\gamma \\
 \text{target}
 \end{array}
 \end{array}
 \rightarrow \left\{ \begin{array}{l}
 \dots + \pi^+ \rightarrow \mu^+ + \nu_\mu \rightarrow e^+ + \nu_e + \bar{\nu}_\mu + \nu_\mu \\
 \dots + \pi^- \rightarrow \mu^- + \bar{\nu}_\mu \rightarrow e^- + \bar{\nu}_e + \nu_\mu + \bar{\nu}_\mu \\
 \dots + \pi^0 \rightarrow \gamma\gamma
 \end{array} \right.$$

Gamma-rays are not exclusively produced in hadronic processes

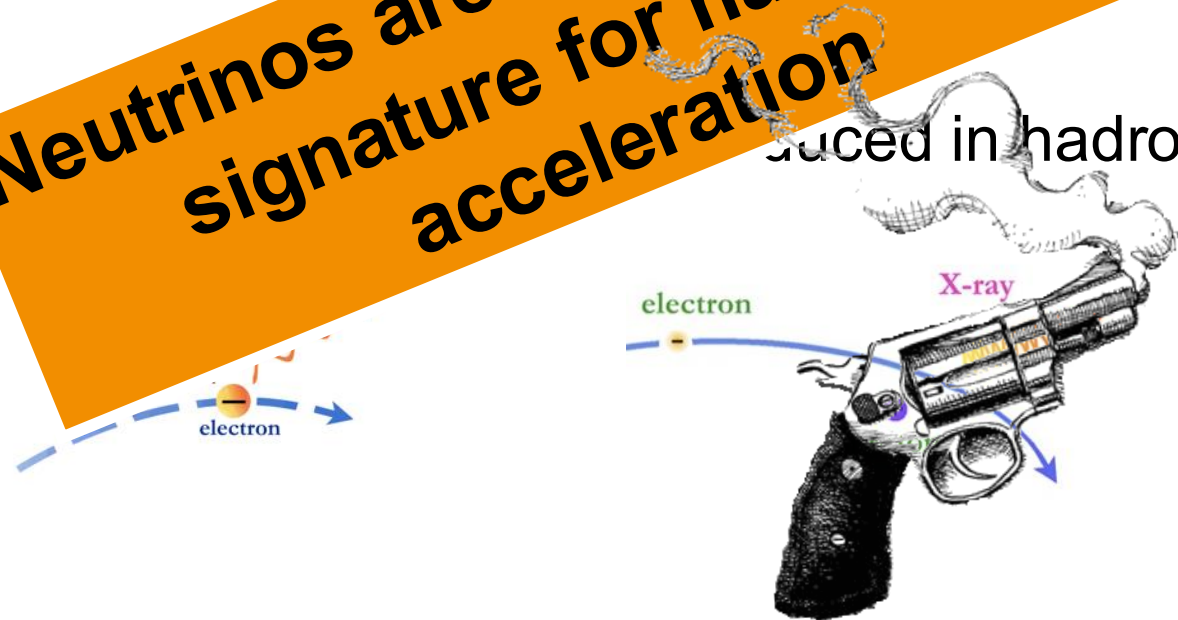


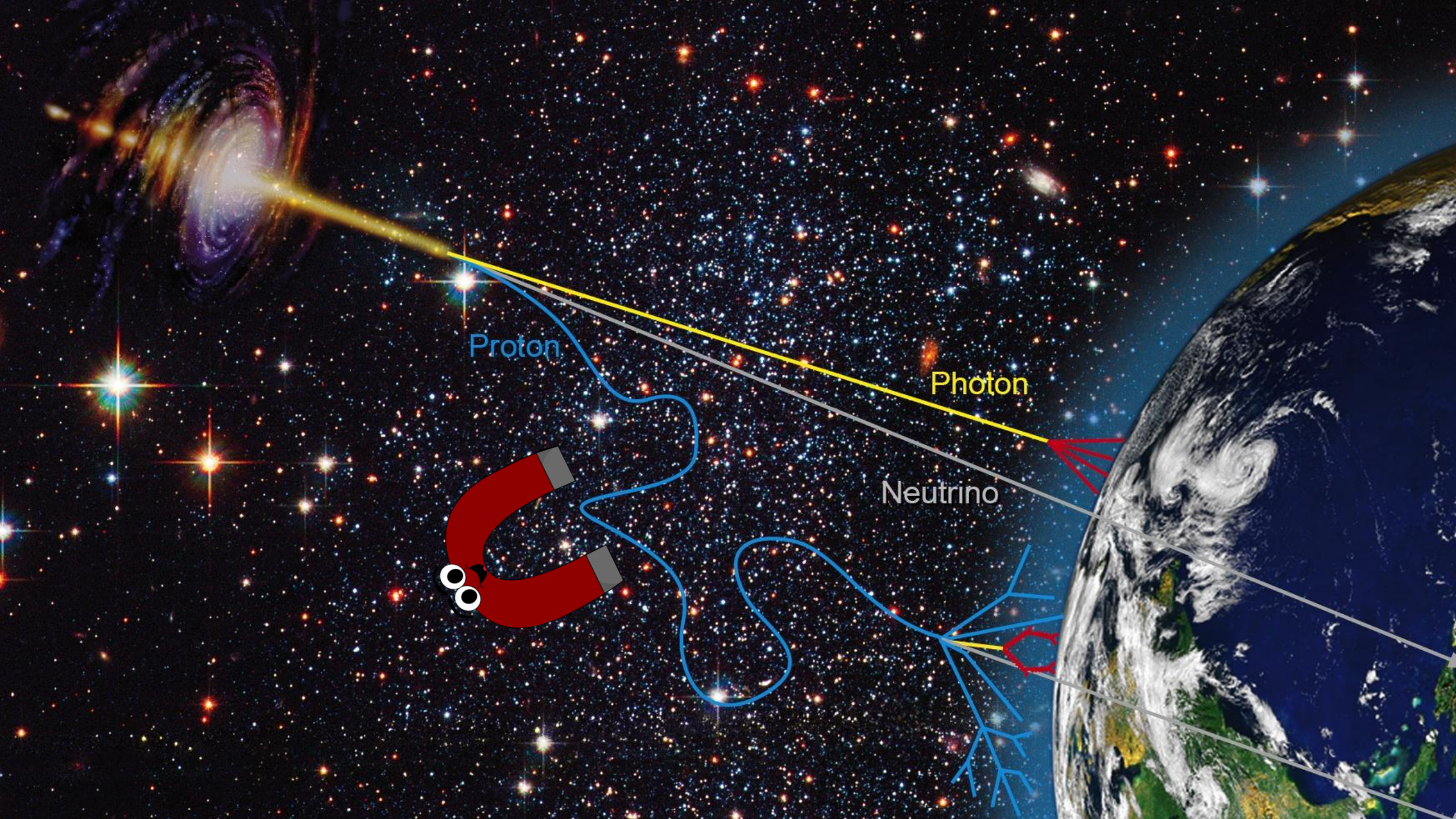
Neutrino Production Processes



Gamma rays produced in hadronic processes

Neutrinos are the smoking gun signature for hadronic acceleration



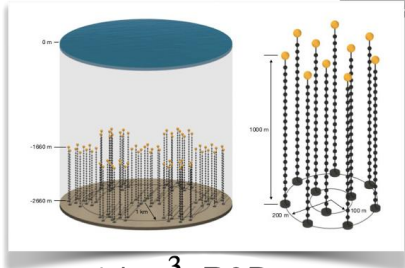


Proton

Photon

Neutrino

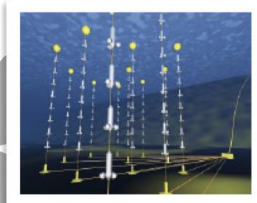
**How can we detect those
neutrinos?**



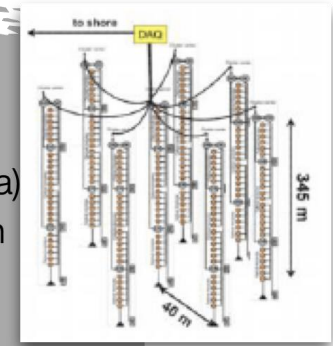
1 km³, R&D

P-ONE (Canada)

ANTARES, dismantled
>0.01 km³, 2008-2022



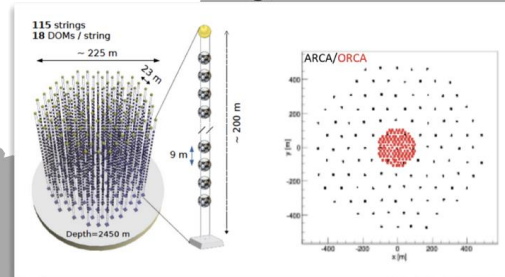
Baikal/GVD (Russia)
1 km³, in construction



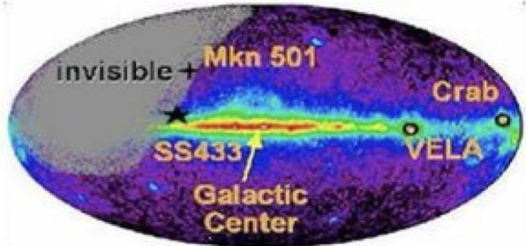
KM3NeT-ORCA
(France)

KM3NeT-ARCA
(Sicily, Italy)

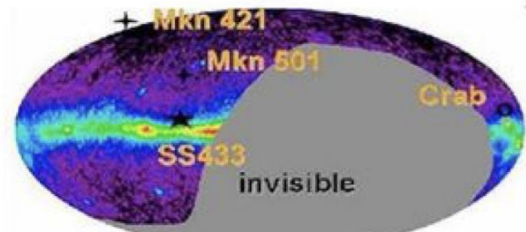
>1 km³, data taking, in construction



Northern visibility

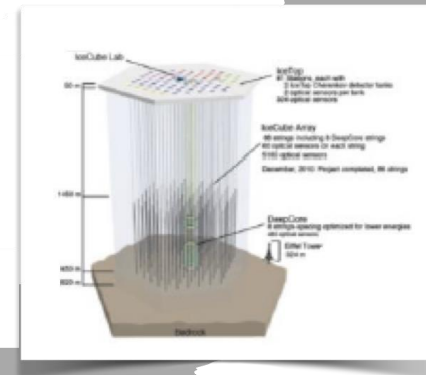


Southern visibility



IceCube
(South Pole)
1 km³, 2011-data taking

IceCube-Gen2
(South Pole)
10 km³, R&D



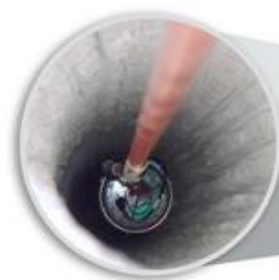


ICECUBE

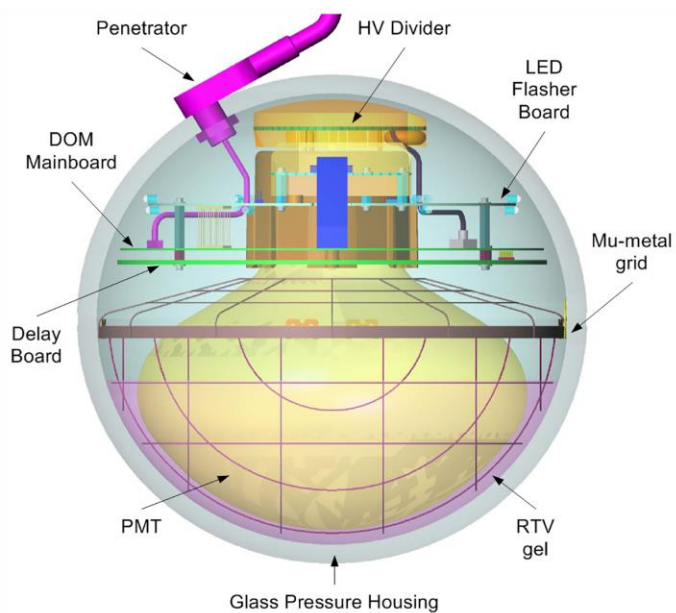
SOUTH POLE NEUTRINO OBSERVATORY



IceCube Laboratory
Data is collected here and sent by satellite to the data warehouse at UW-Madison



Digital Optical Module (DOM)
5,160 DOMs deployed in the ice



50 m

Ice Top

1450 m

2450 m

IceCube detector

86 strings of DOMs,
set 125 meters apart

DeepCore

Antarctic bedrock



Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station, Antarctica
A National Science Foundation-managed research facility

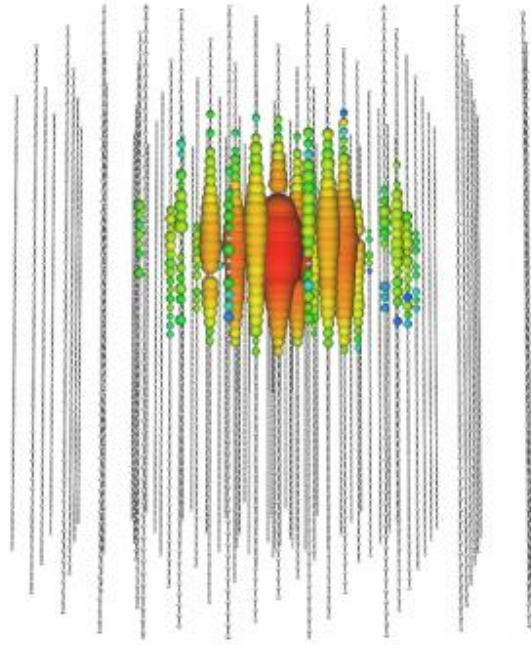
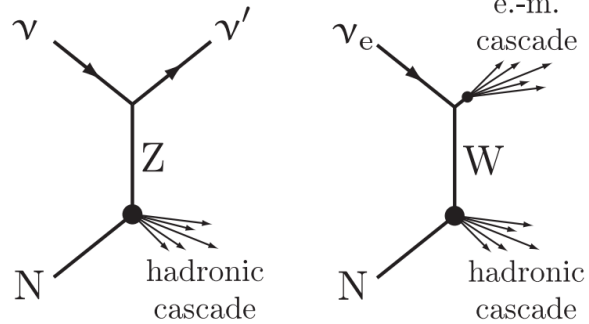
60 DOMs
on each
string

DOMs
are 17
meters
apart



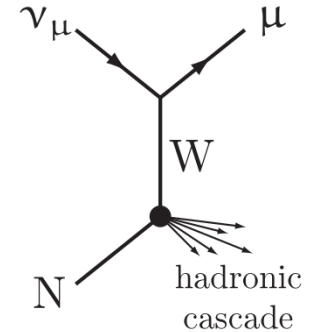
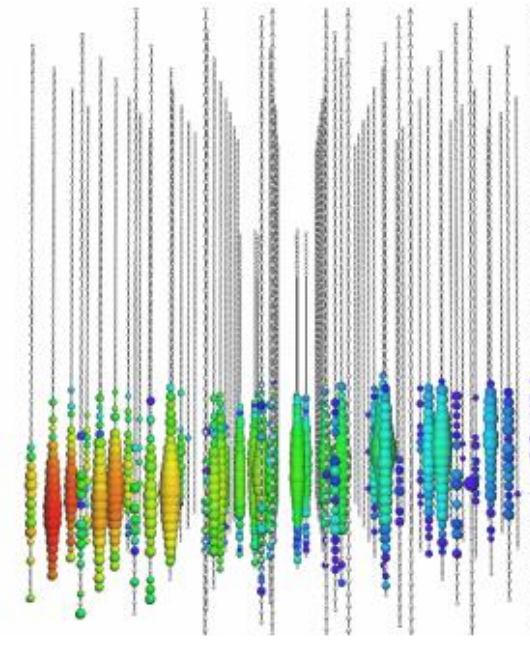
Event Signatures

“shower” events: neutrinos interacting inside the detector



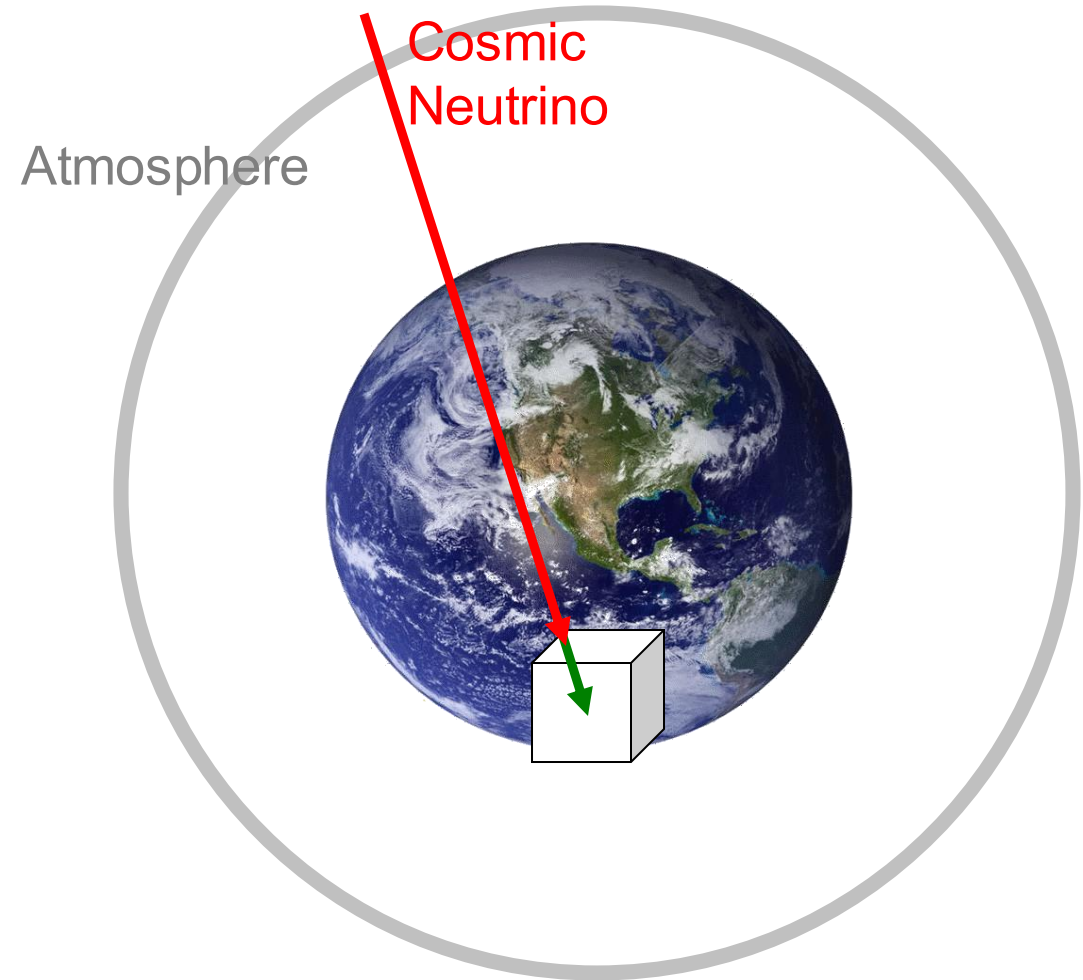
total energy measurement
to 10%, all flavors, all sky

“track” events: muon neutrinos
filtered by the Earth

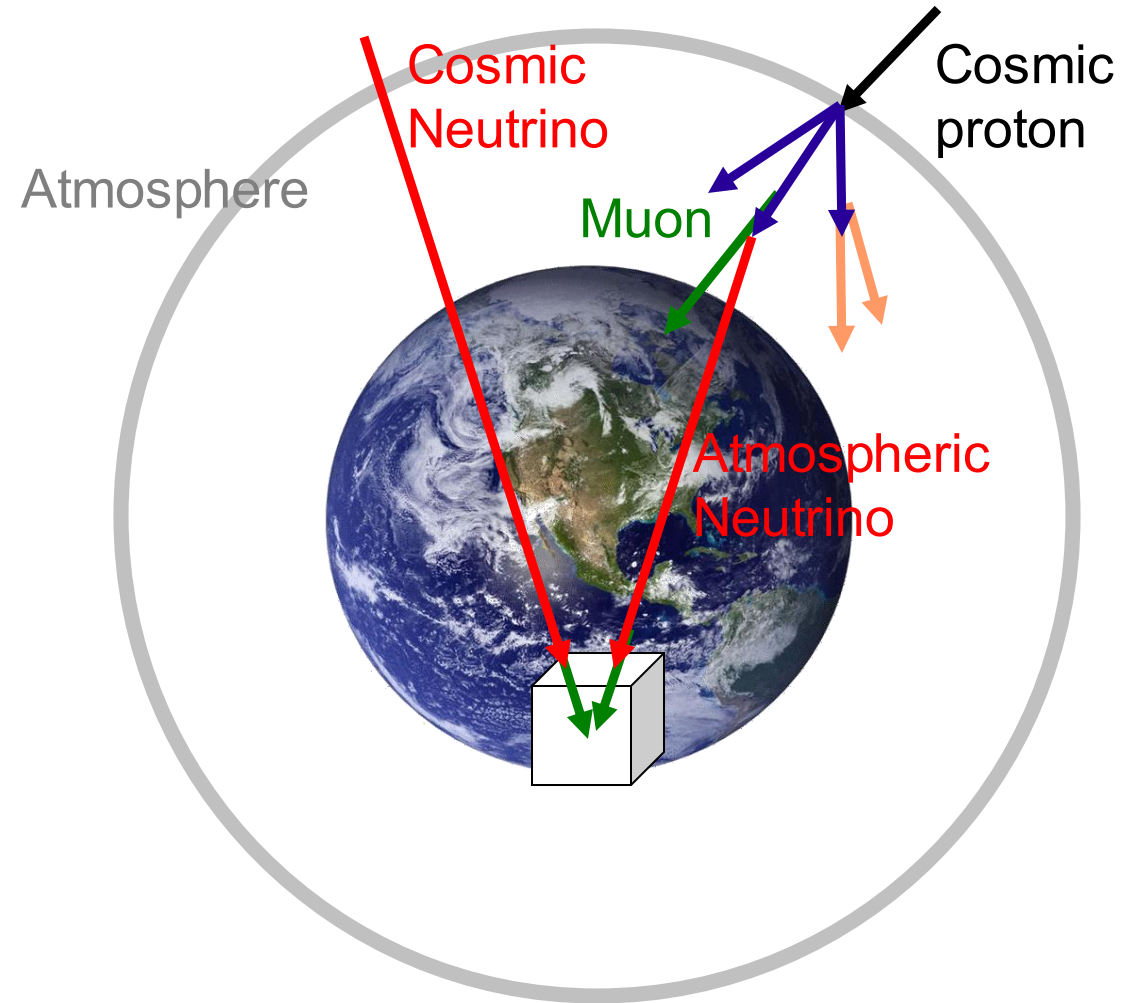


astronomy: angular resolution
superior ($0.2^\circ \sim 0.4^\circ$)

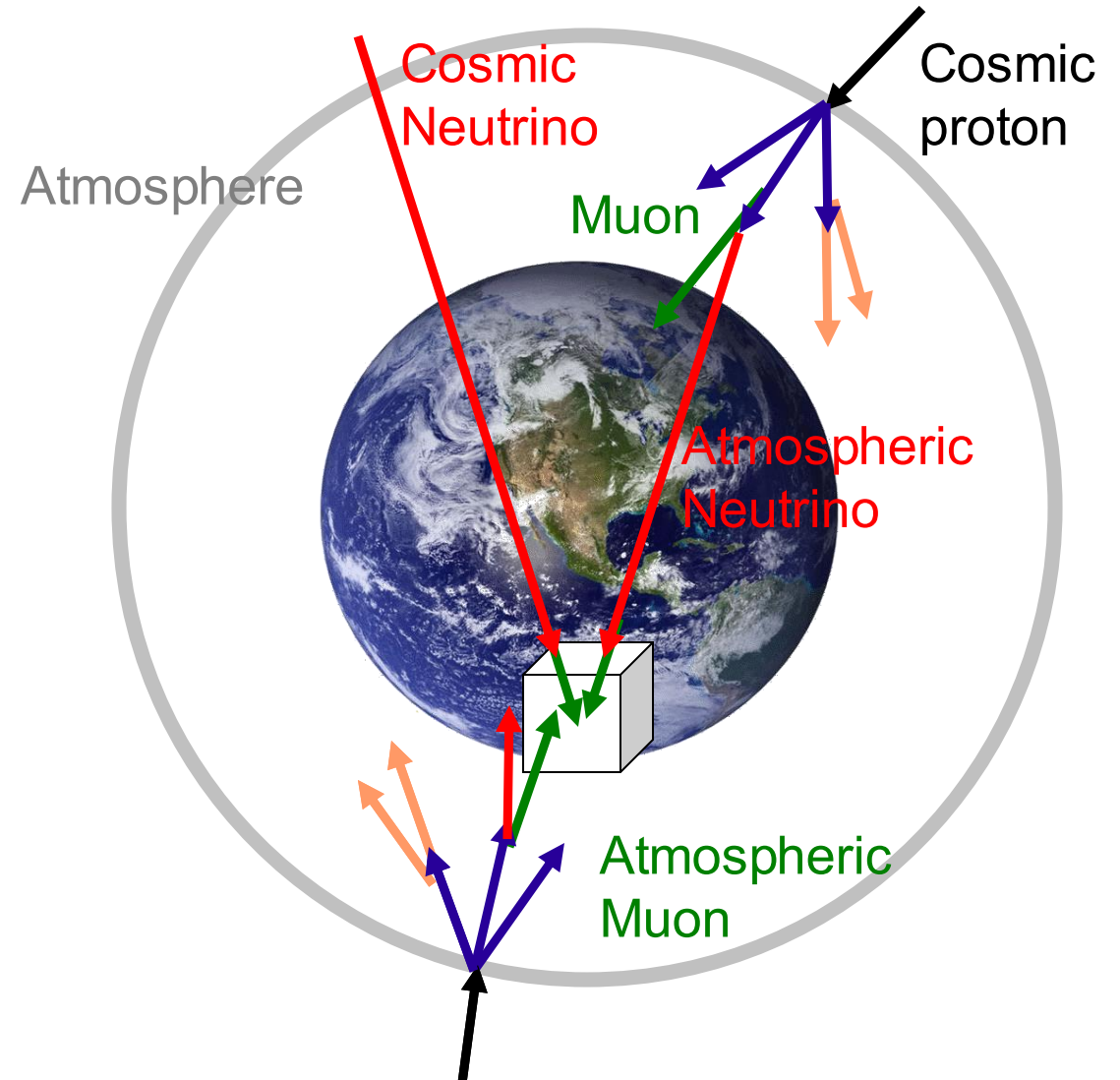
Background in Search for Cosmic Neutrinos



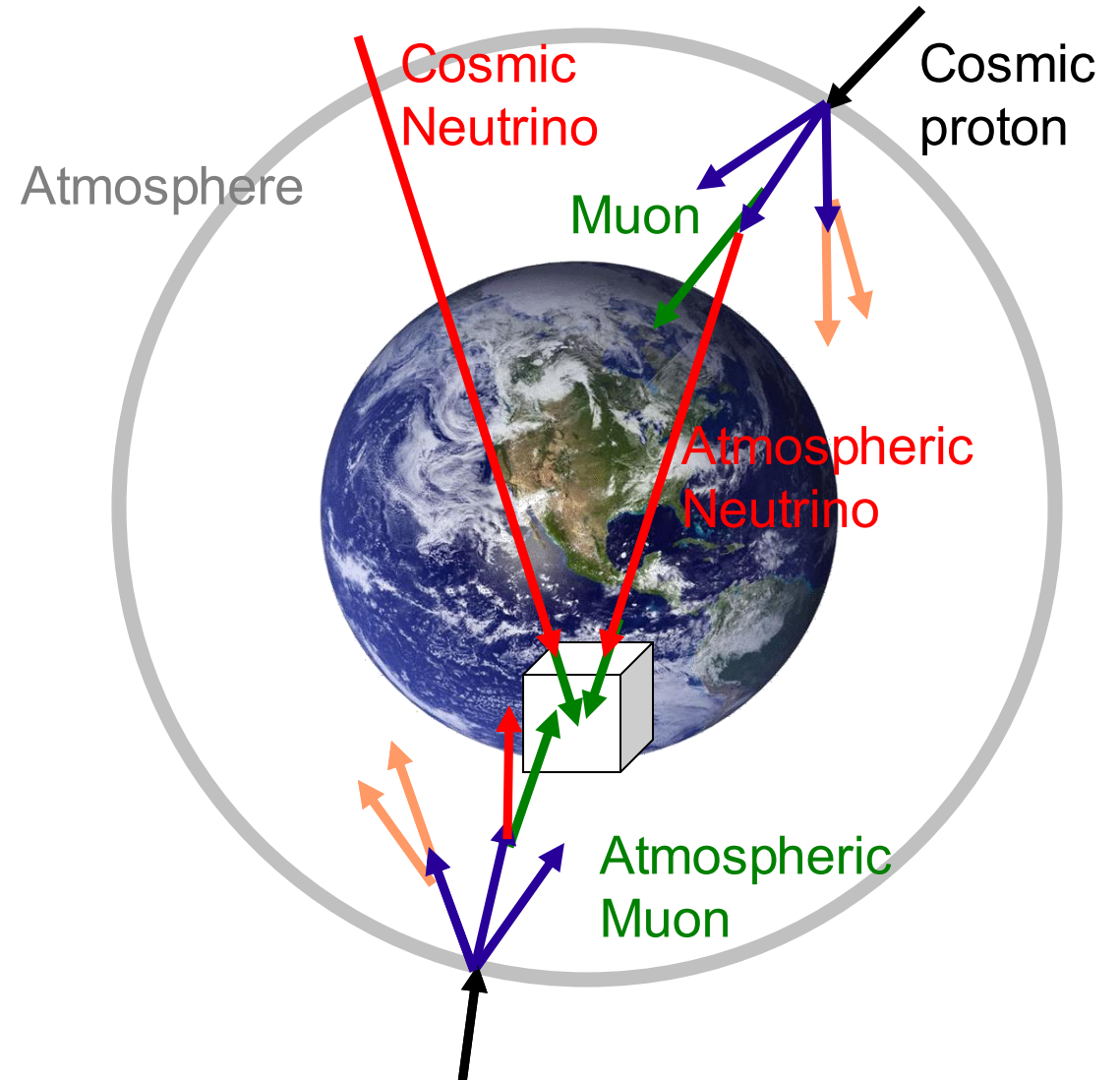
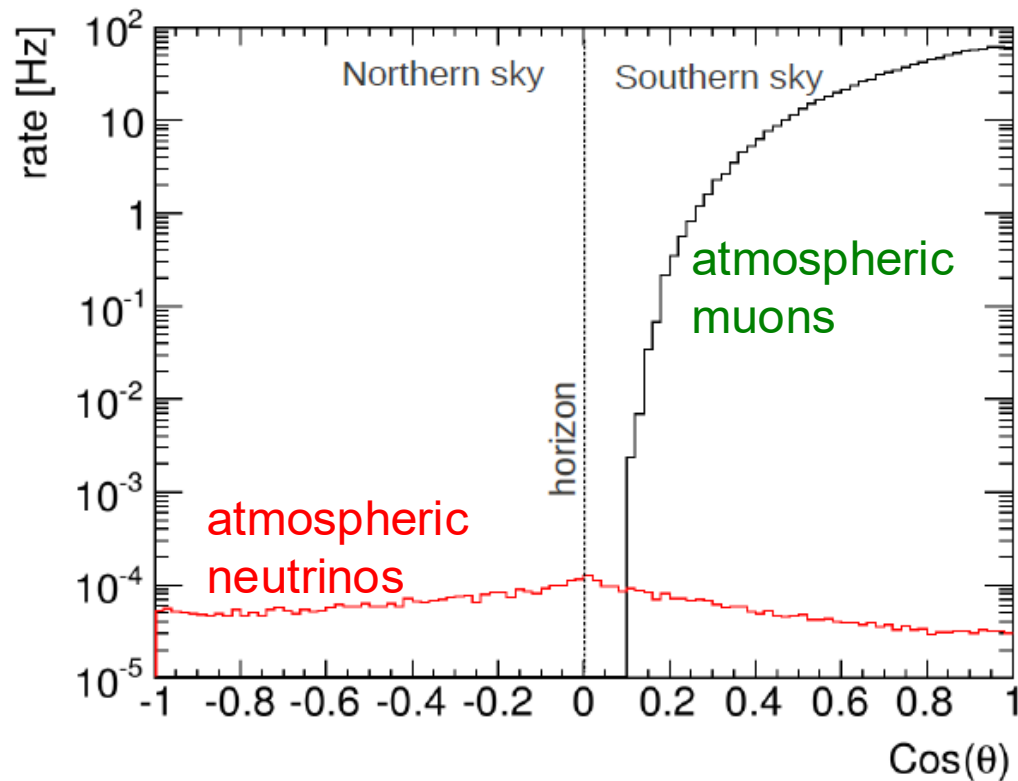
Background in Search for Cosmic Neutrinos



Background in Search for Cosmic Neutrinos



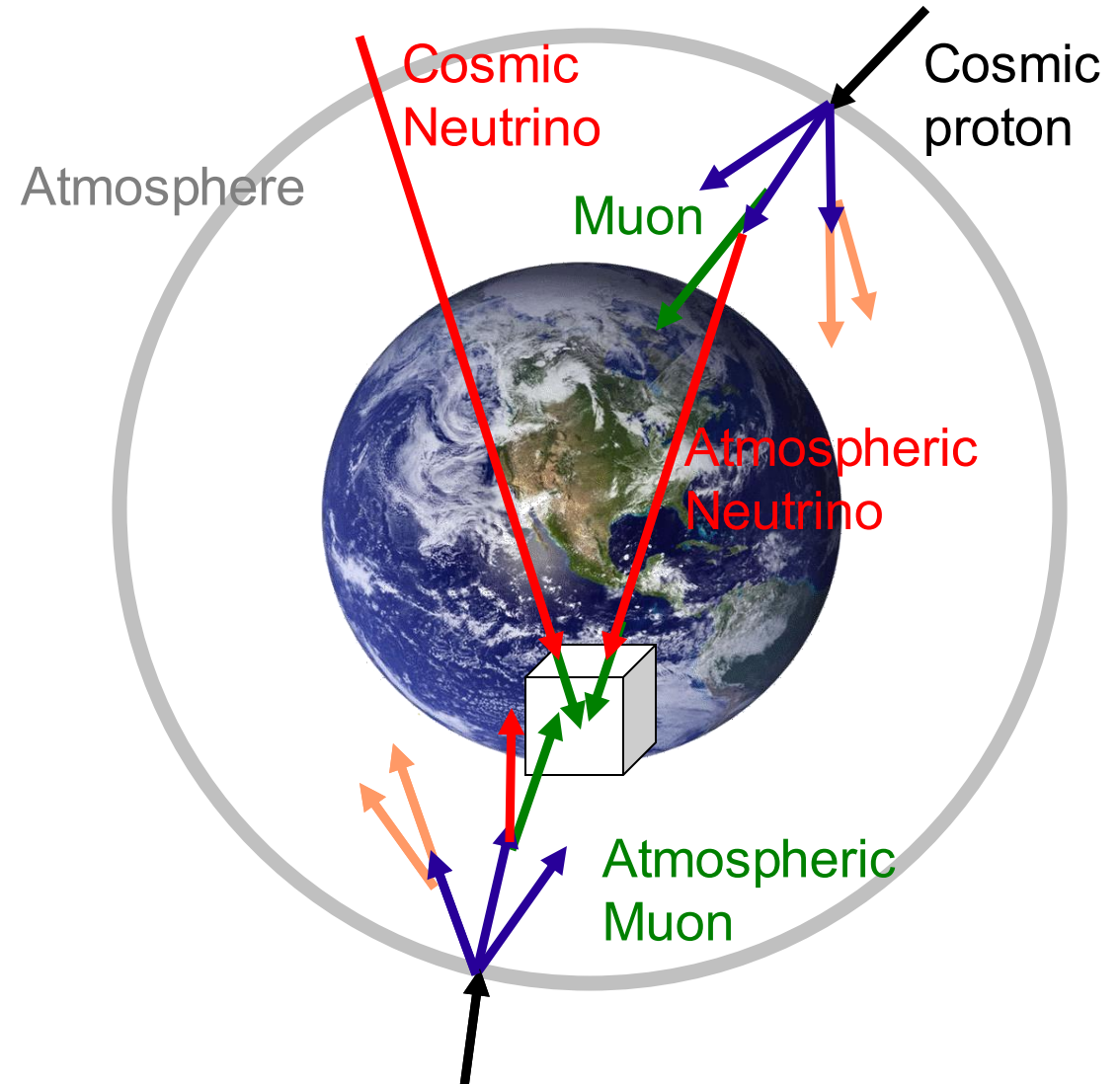
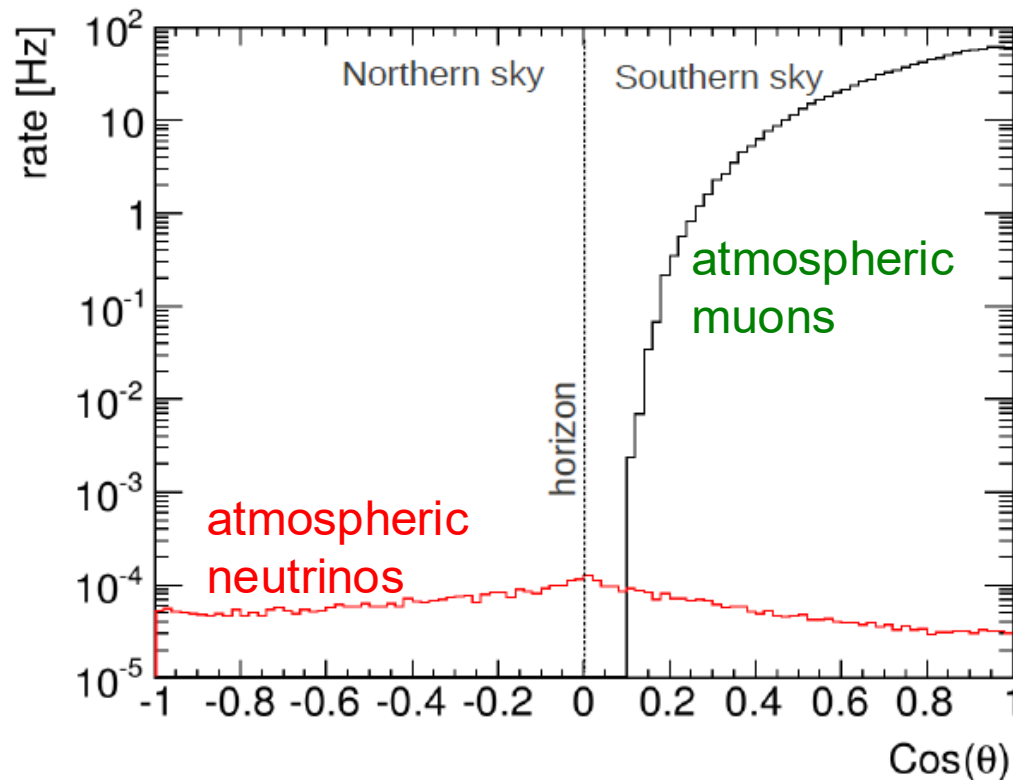
Background in Search for Cosmic Neutrinos



Background in Search for Cosmic Neutrinos

muons detected per year:

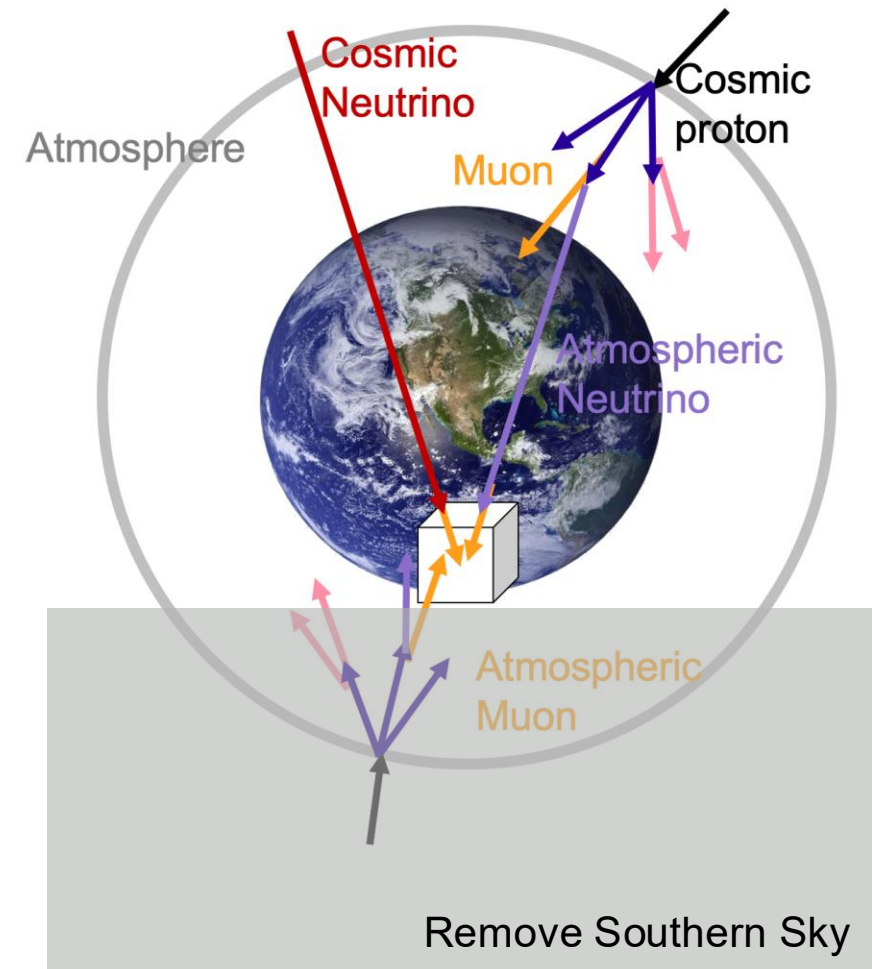
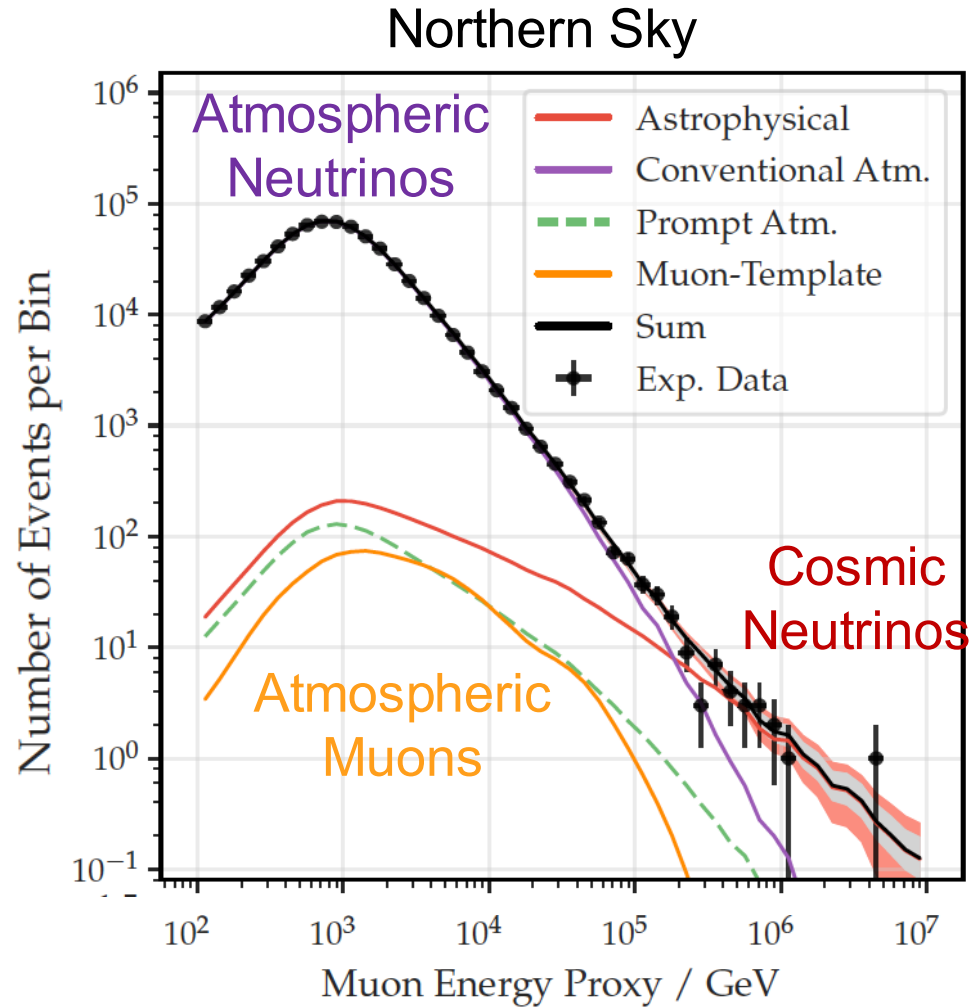
- atmospheric μ $\sim 10^{11}$ (3000/sec)
- atmospheric $\nu \rightarrow \mu$ $> 10^5$ (1/5min)
- cosmic $\nu \rightarrow \mu$ > 120 / year



Key Discoveries

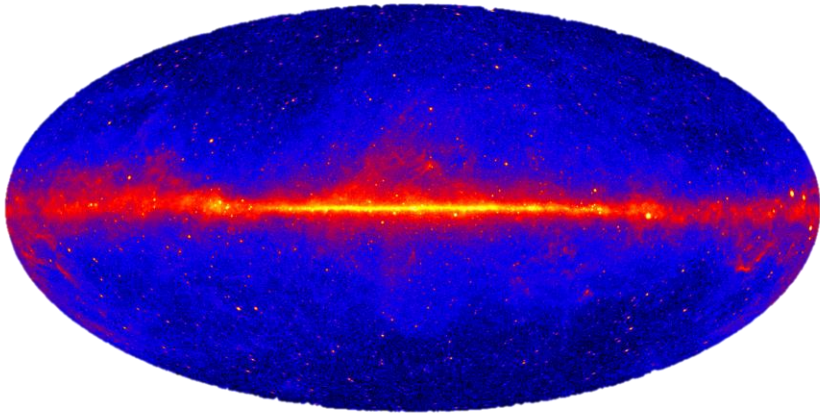


Diffuse Flux discovered!



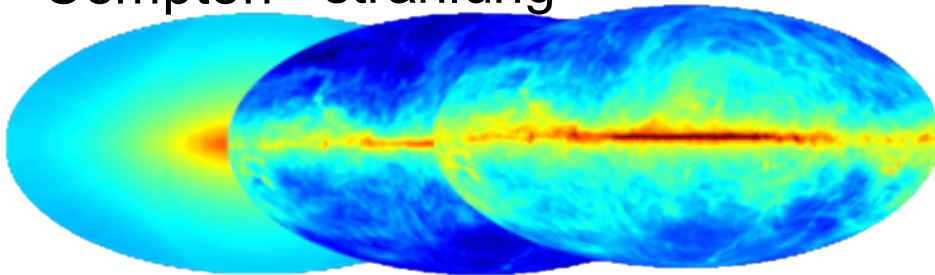
Galactic Plane

GeV gamma-ray sky by Fermi-LAT



Cosmic rays propagate through the Galaxy and interact with photons and gas

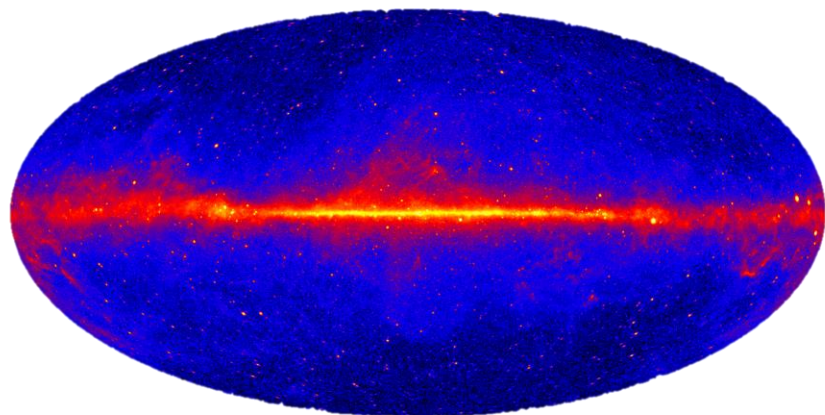
Inverse Compton Bremsstrahlung π^0 decay



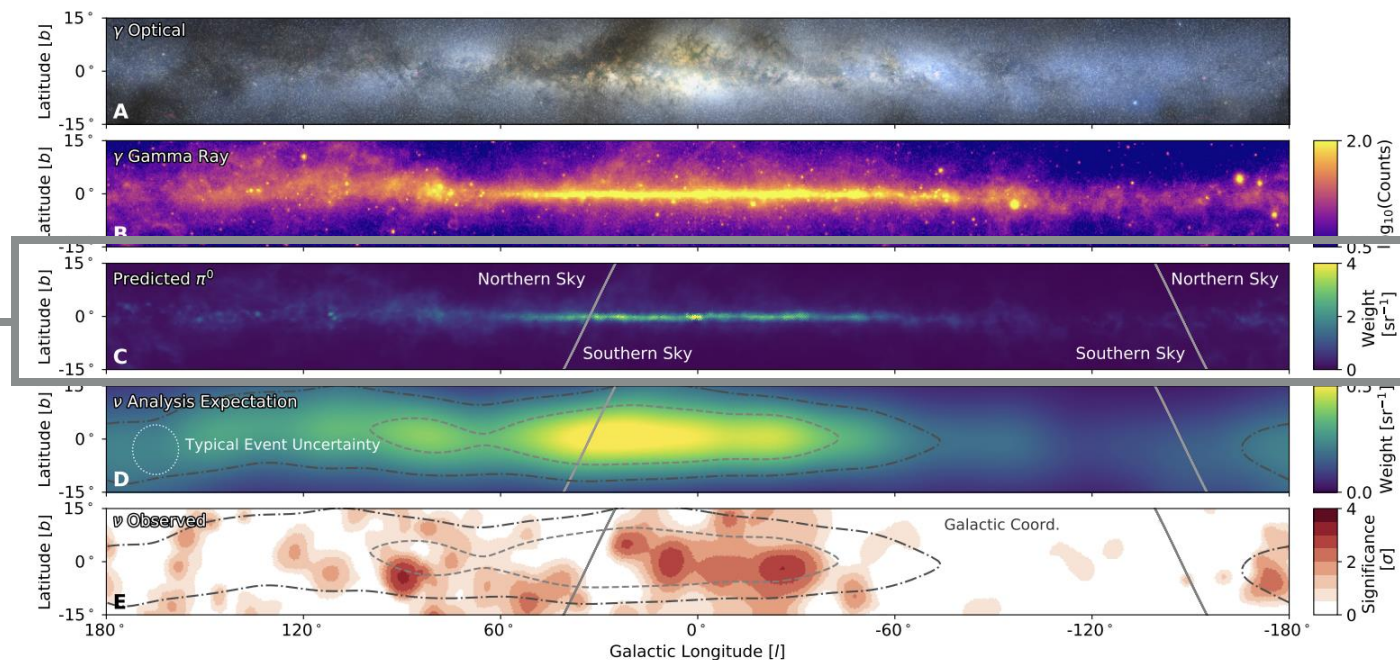
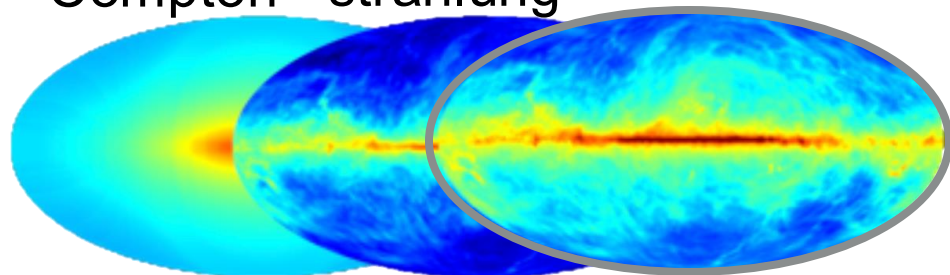
Supernova Remnants

Galactic Plane

GeV gamma-ray sky by Fermi-LAT

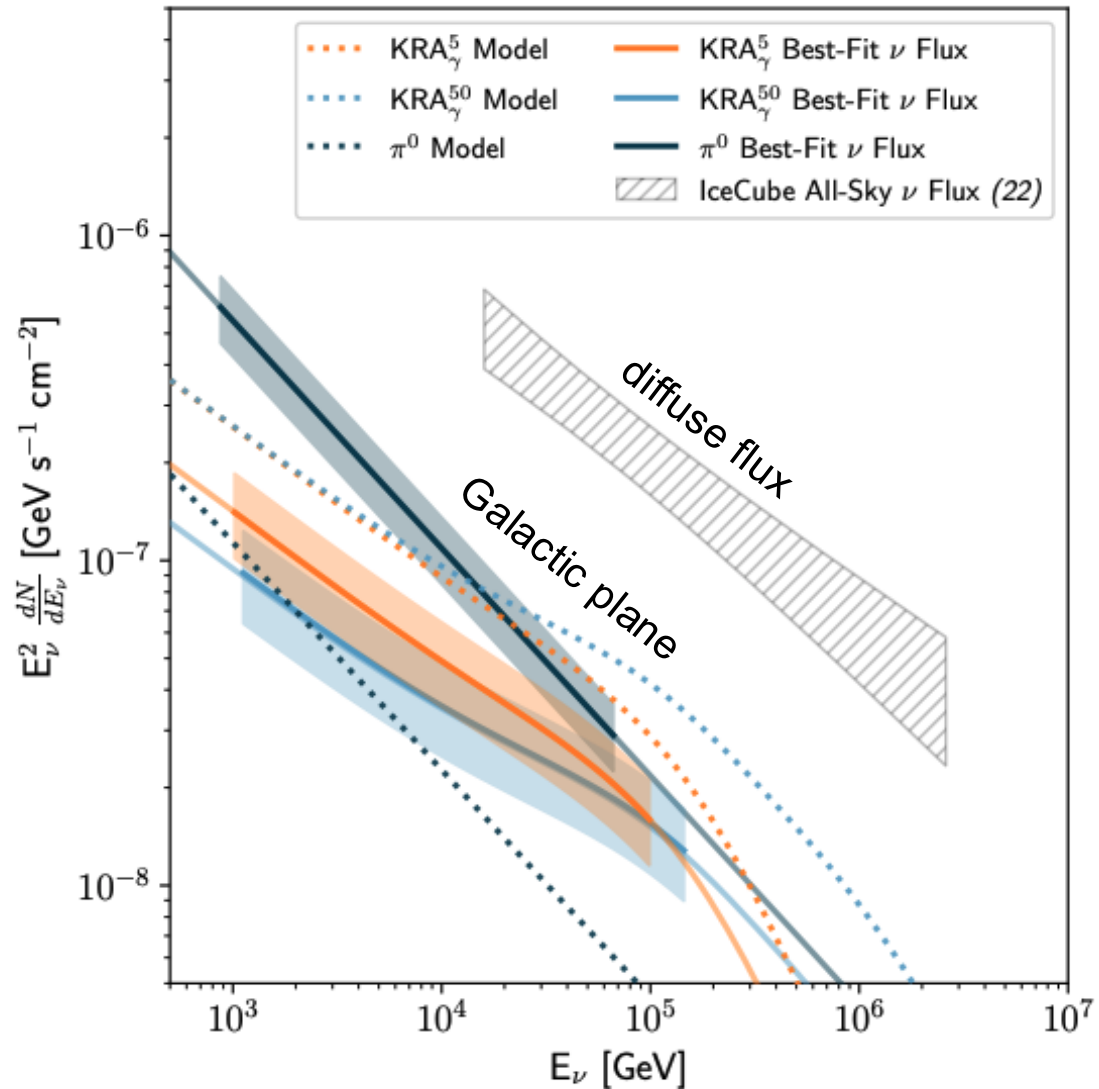


Inverse Compton Bremsstrahlung π^0 decay



First detection of galactic plane neutrino flux
thanks to gamma-ray template fit

Galactic Contribution



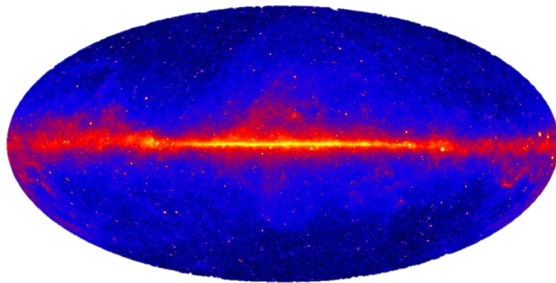
Galactic neutrinos make up ~10% of diffuse neutrinos

Diffuse flux discovered



What are the source?

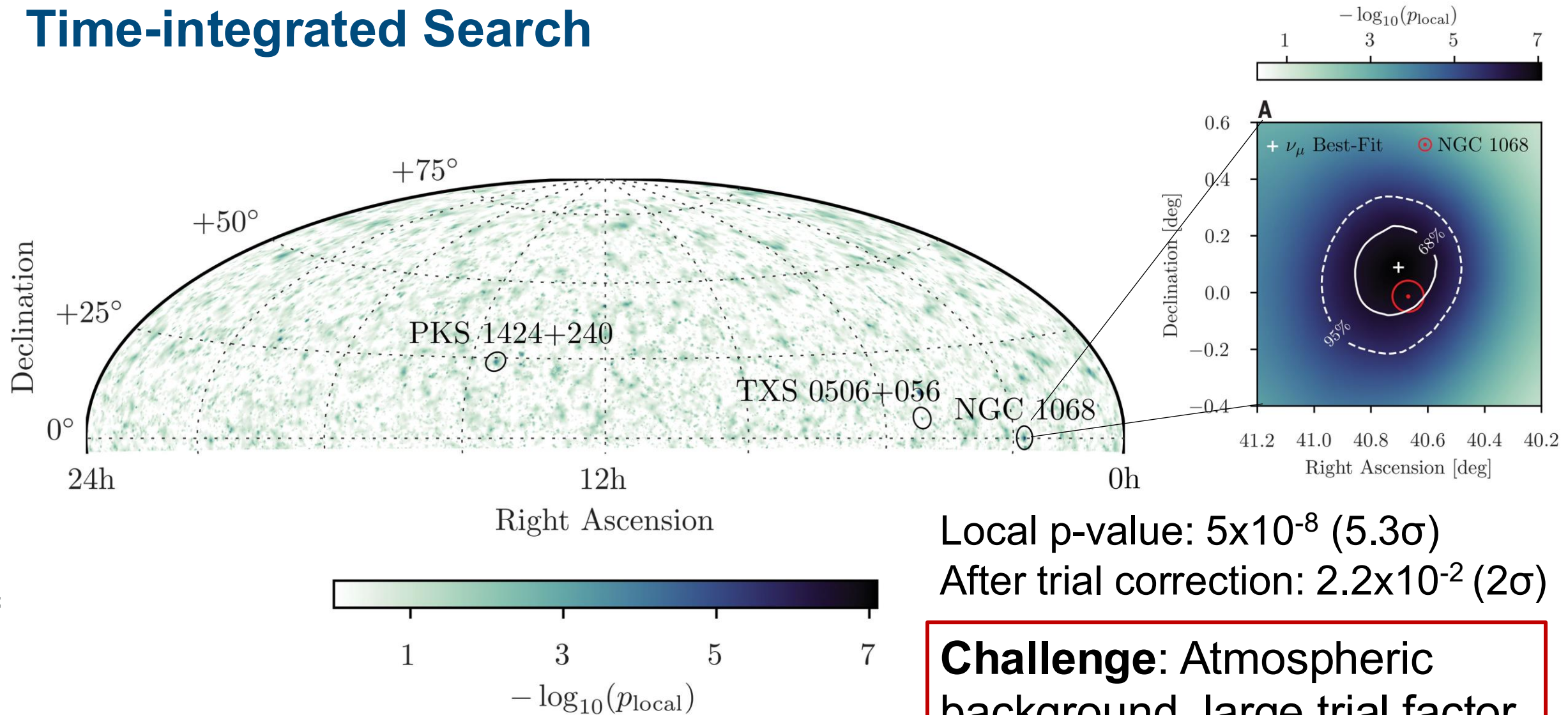
~10%



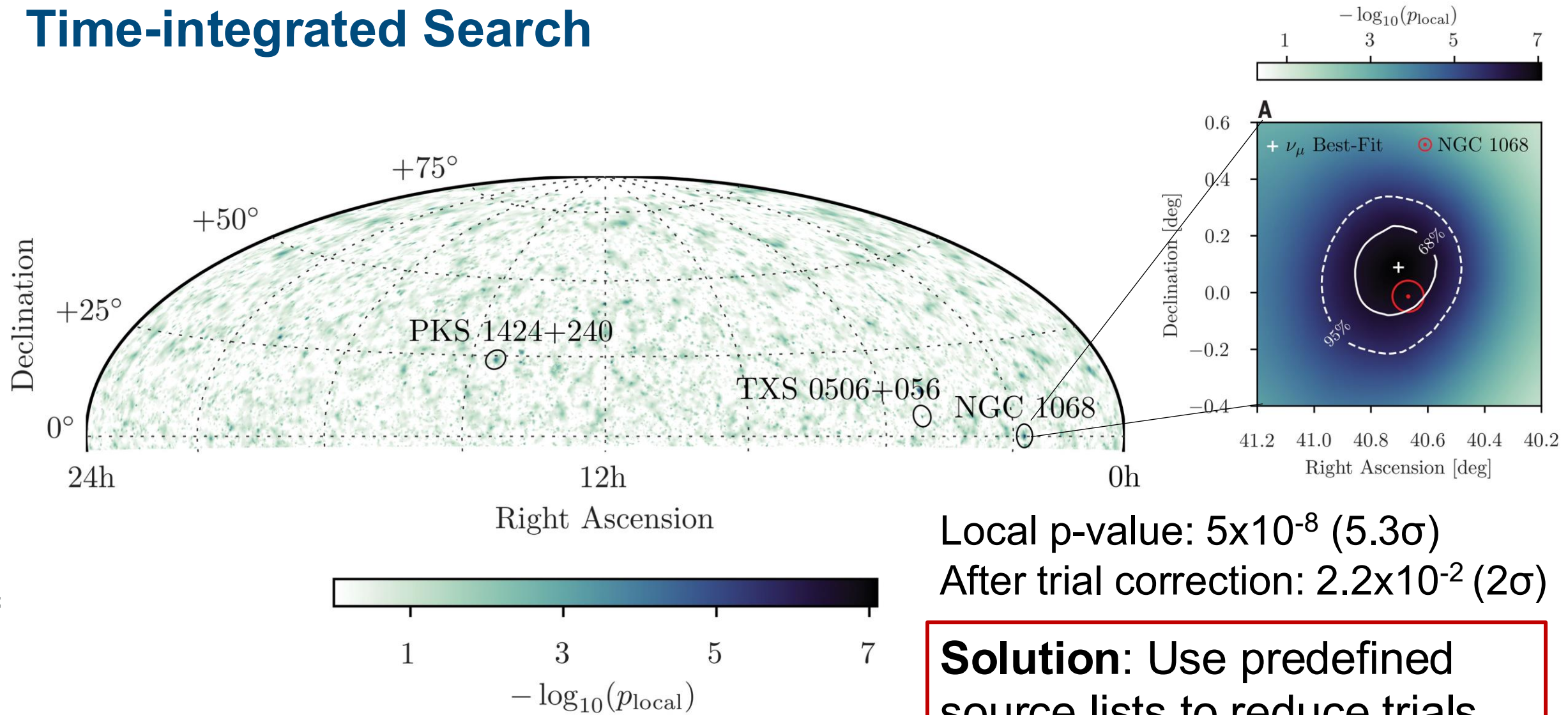
Remaining ~90%



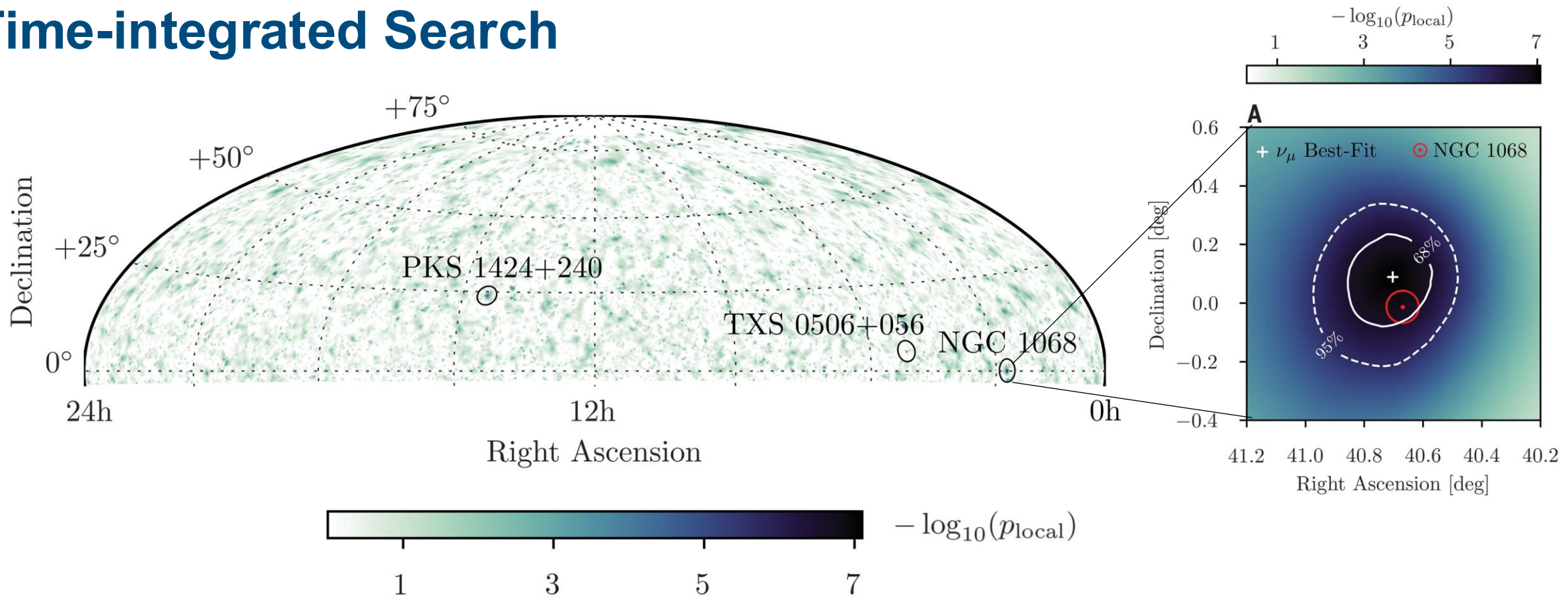
Time-integrated Search



Time-integrated Search



Time-integrated Search

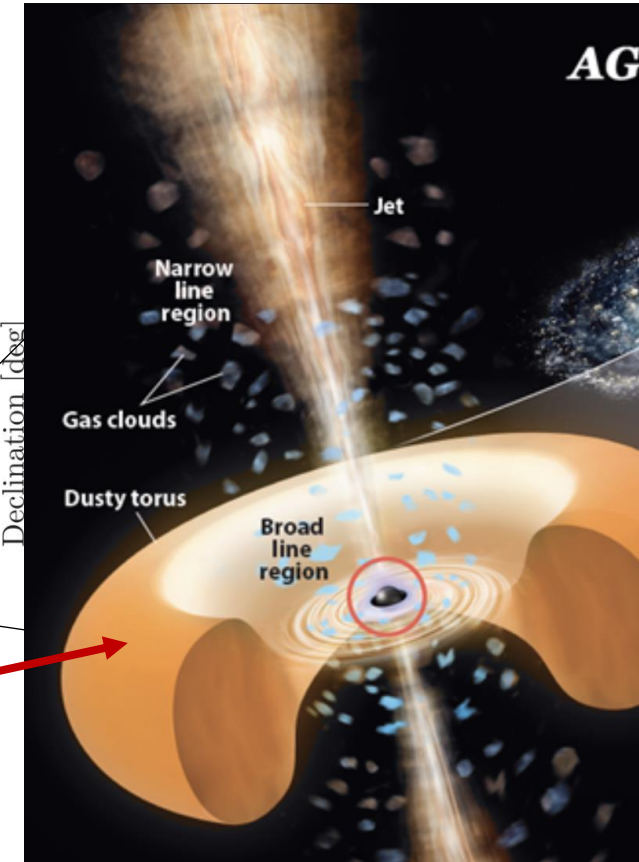
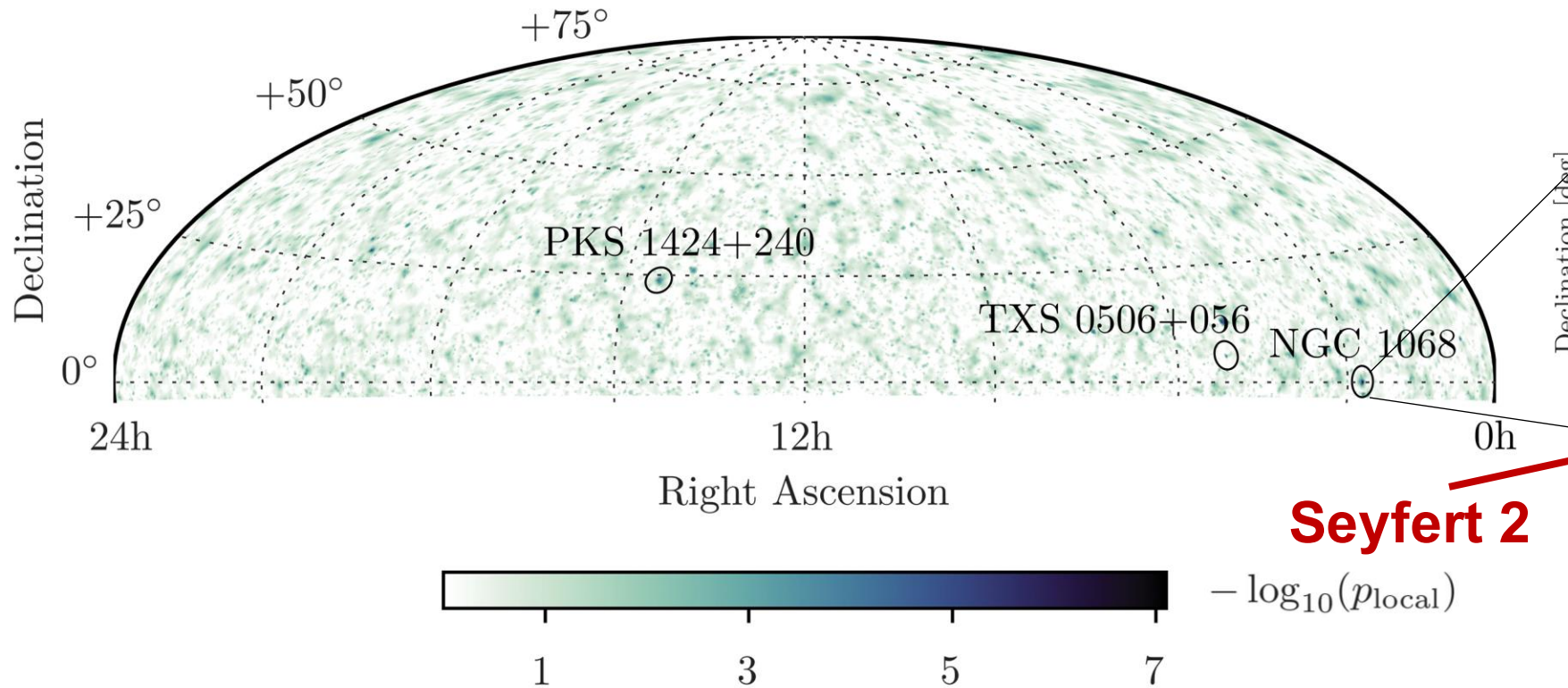


Predefined list of 110 sources → Most significant candidate:

NGC 1068 (M77), ~80 neutrinos (1-10TeV), 4.2σ

- Nearby (M=14Mpc) Seyfert 2 galaxy
- AGN and star-forming activity

Time-integrated Search

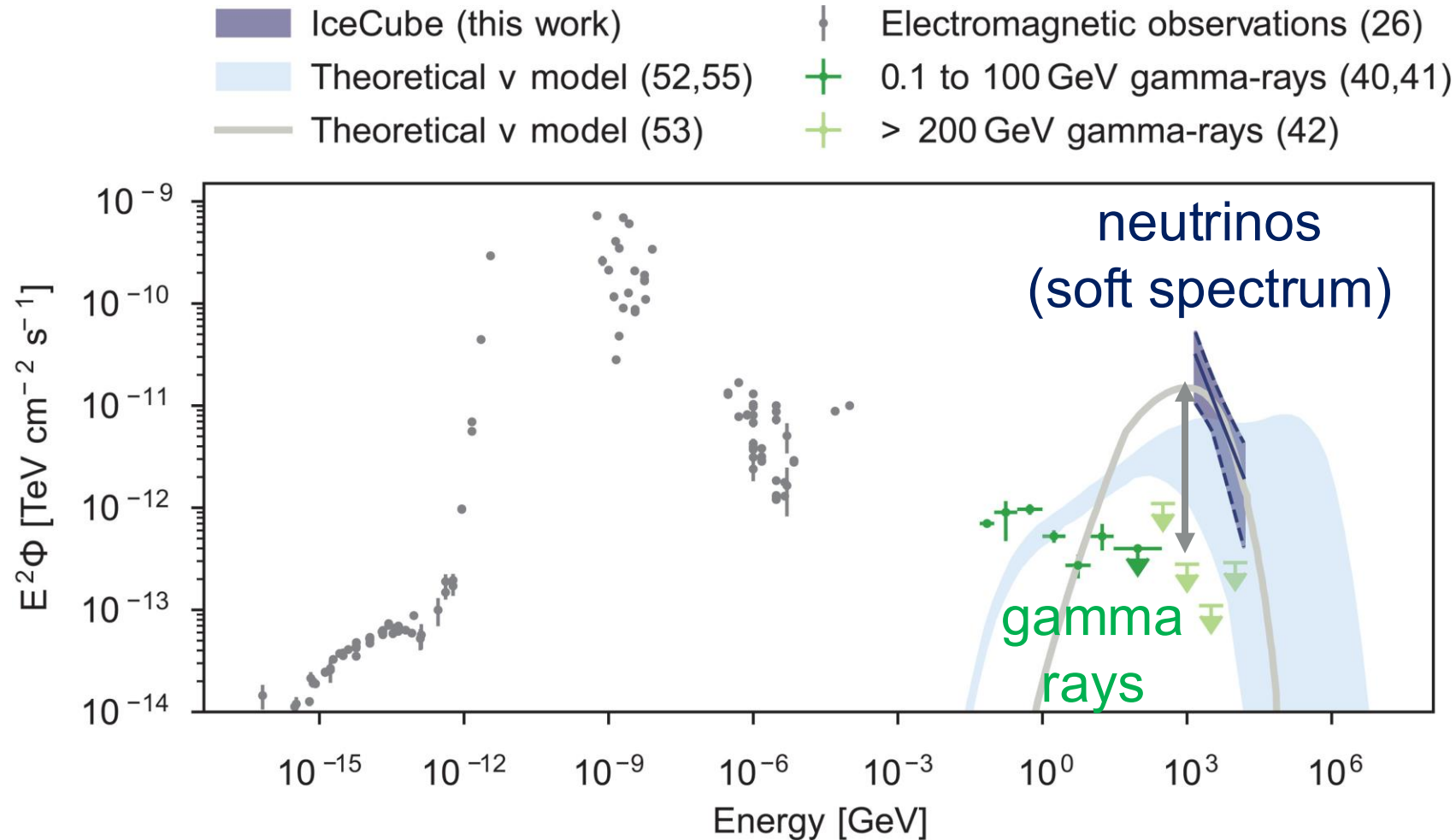


Predefined list of 110 sources → Most significant candidate:

NGC 1068 (M77), ~80 neutrinos (1-10TeV), 4.2σ

- Nearby (M=14Mpc) Seyfert 2 galaxy
- AGN and star-forming activity

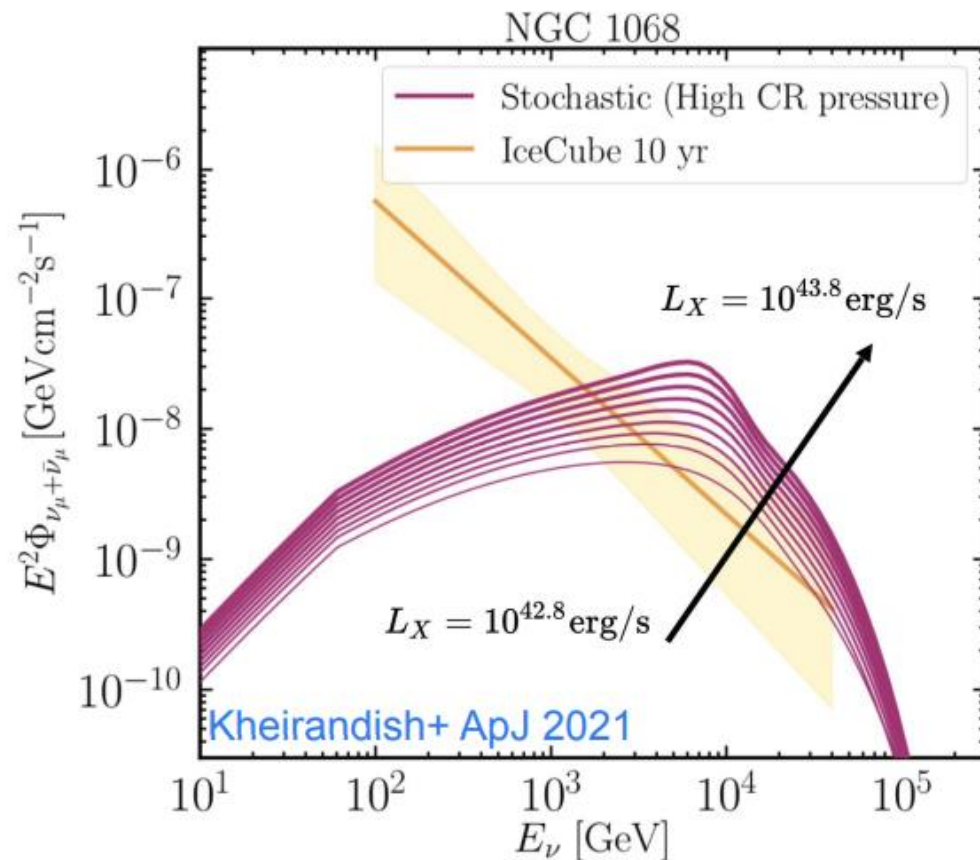
Complete Multi-wavelength data of NGC 1068



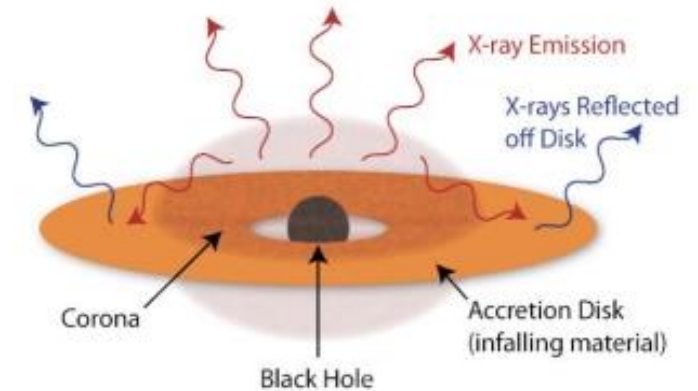
Gamma rays need to
be absorbed
→ neutrino production
site in the heart of the
galaxy

Search for Neutrinos from Population of Seyferts

Assumption: Neutrino production in corona, intrinsic X-ray flux (2–10 keV) as proxy for neutrino emission



credit: D. Wilkins

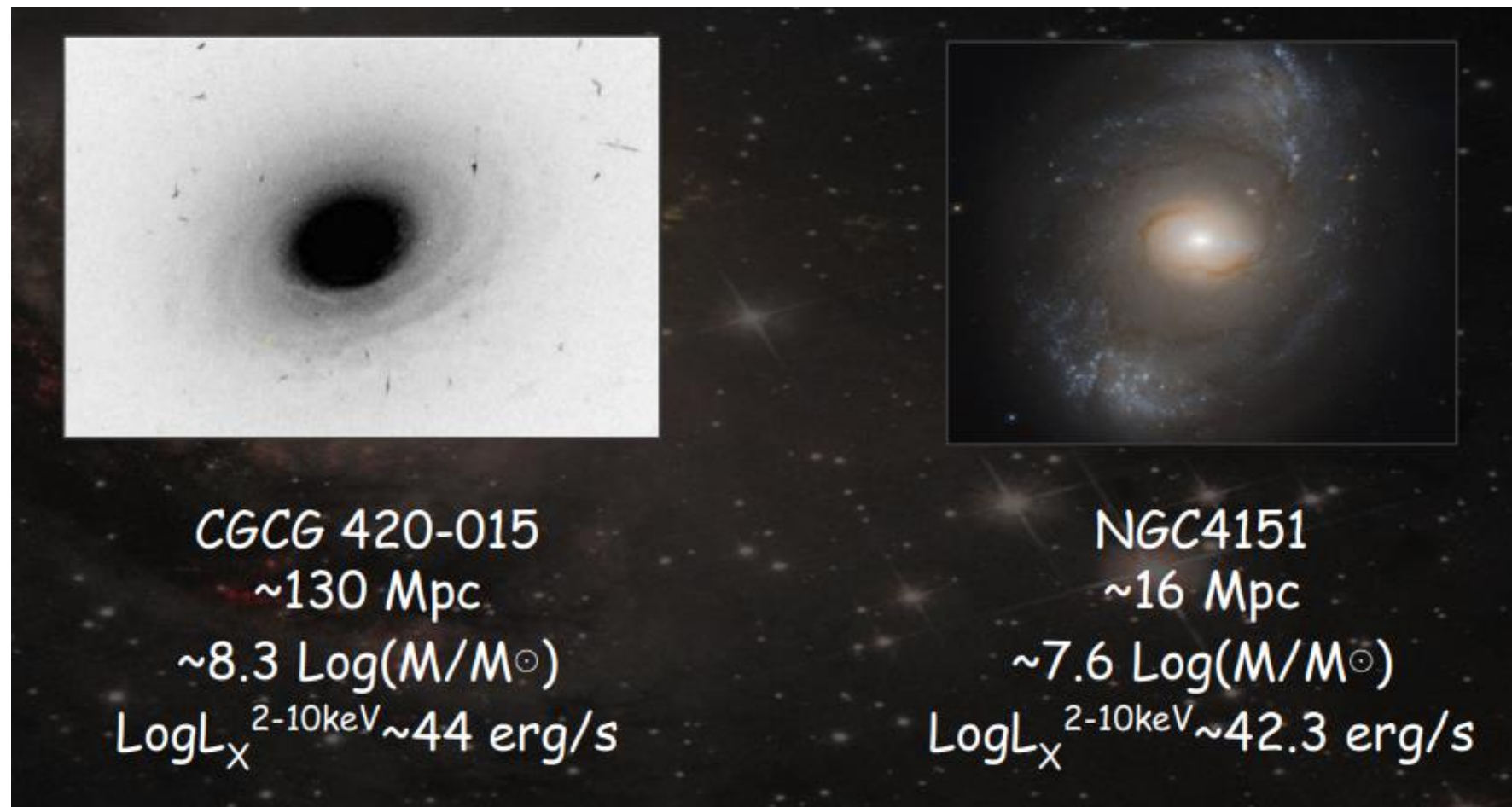


Northern Sky: No significant emission is found in the stacking search excluding NGC 1068.

Southern Sky: 3.0σ excess

Model Independent Search

No assumption about neutrino emission model



Two more source candidates at 2.5σ and 2.1σ level

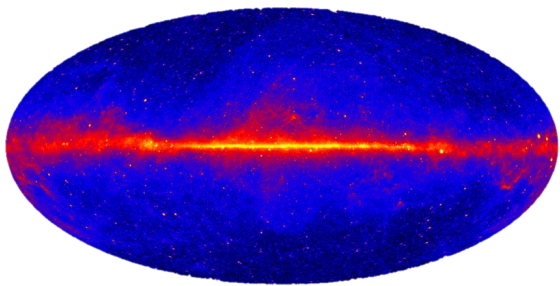
→ Model assumptions in stacking too simplified

Diffuse flux discovered

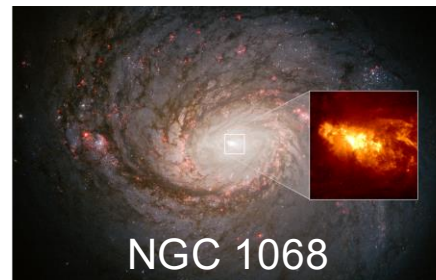


What are the source?

~10%



1%



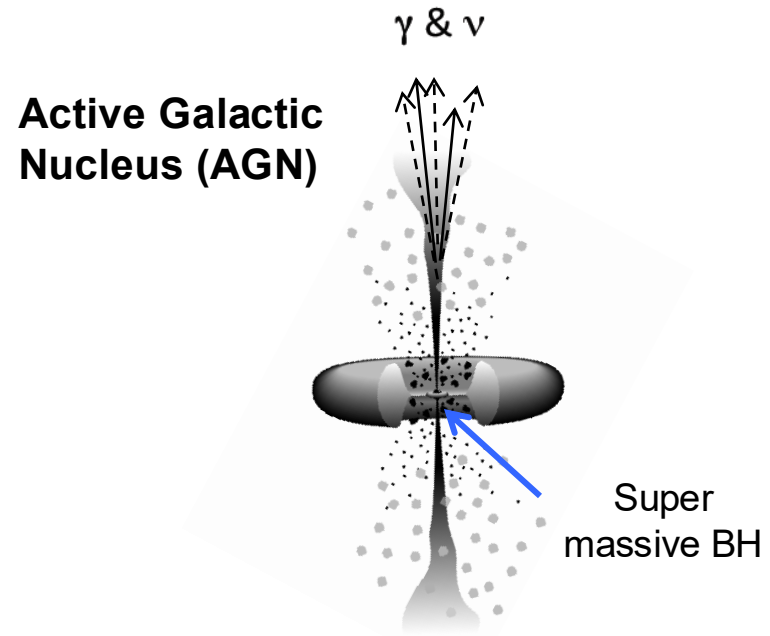
NGC 1068

Remaining ~89%

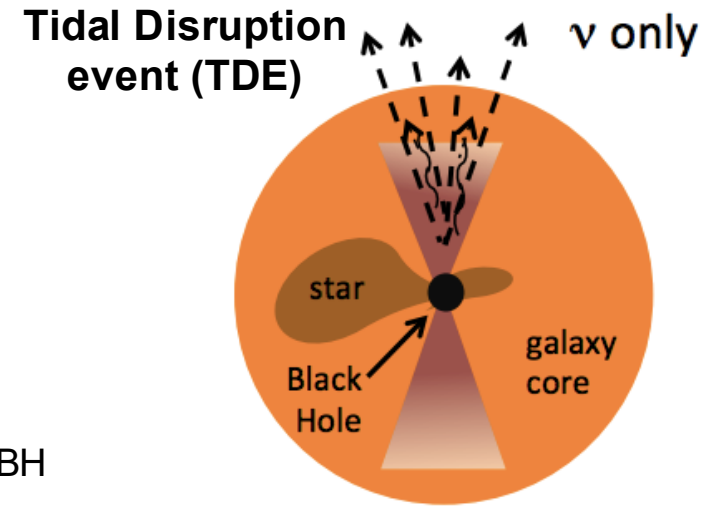
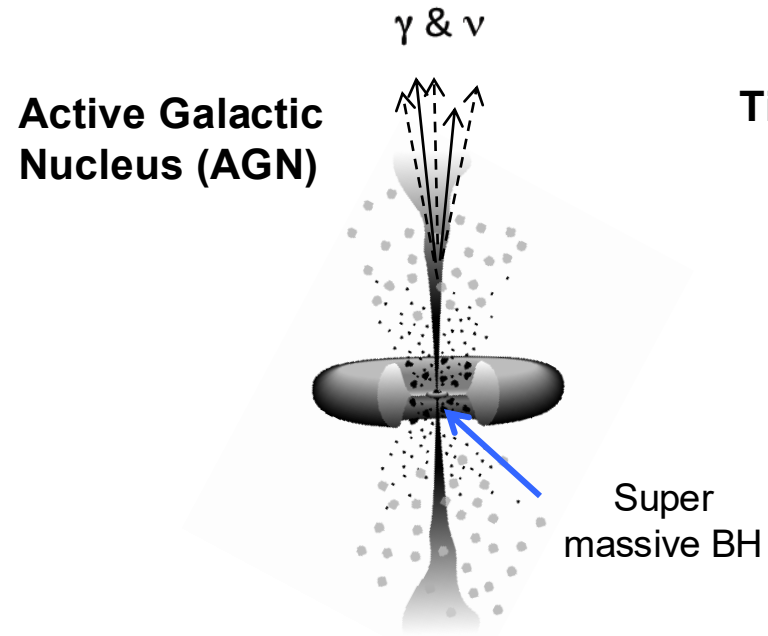


What if sources are variable?

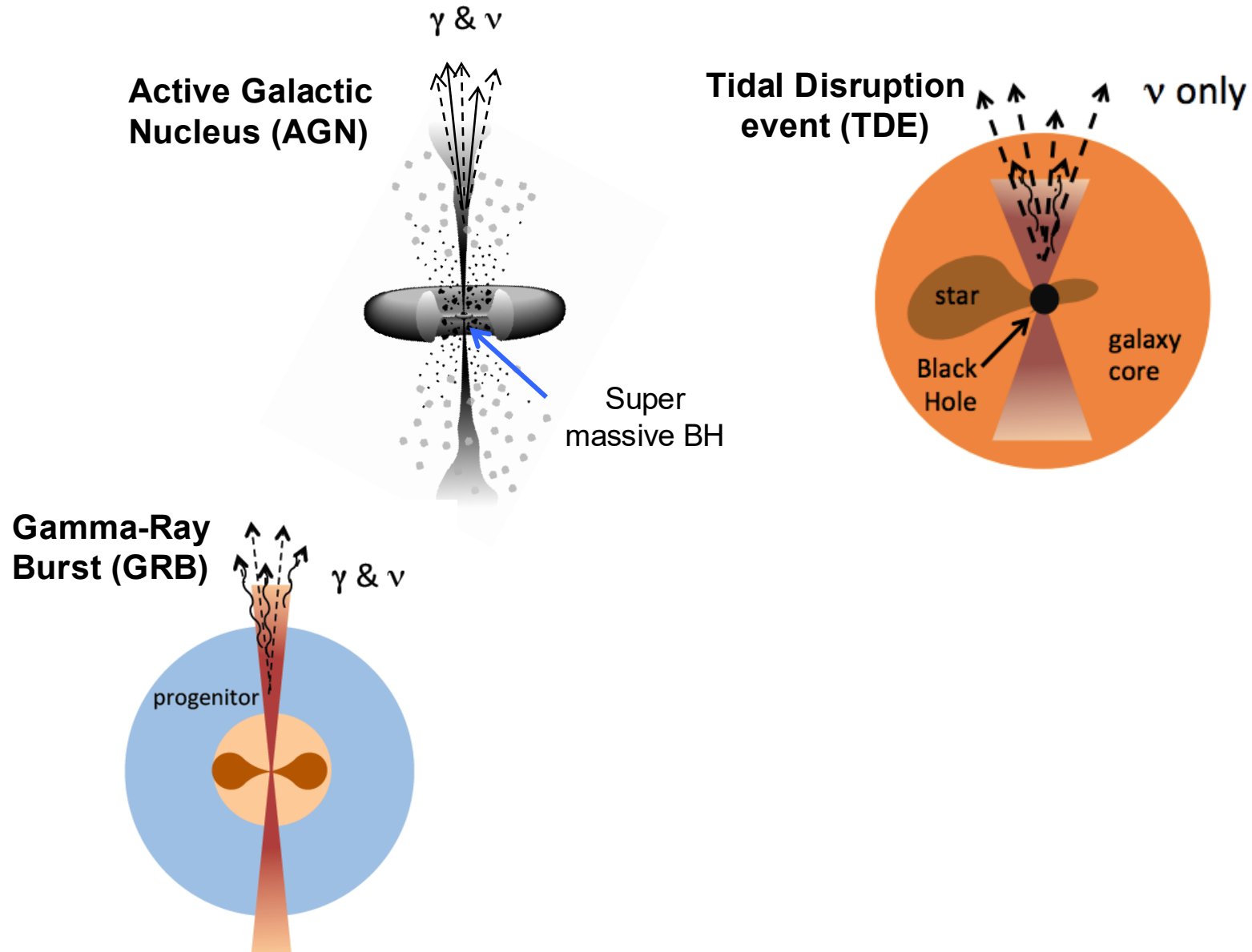
Variable Source Candidates



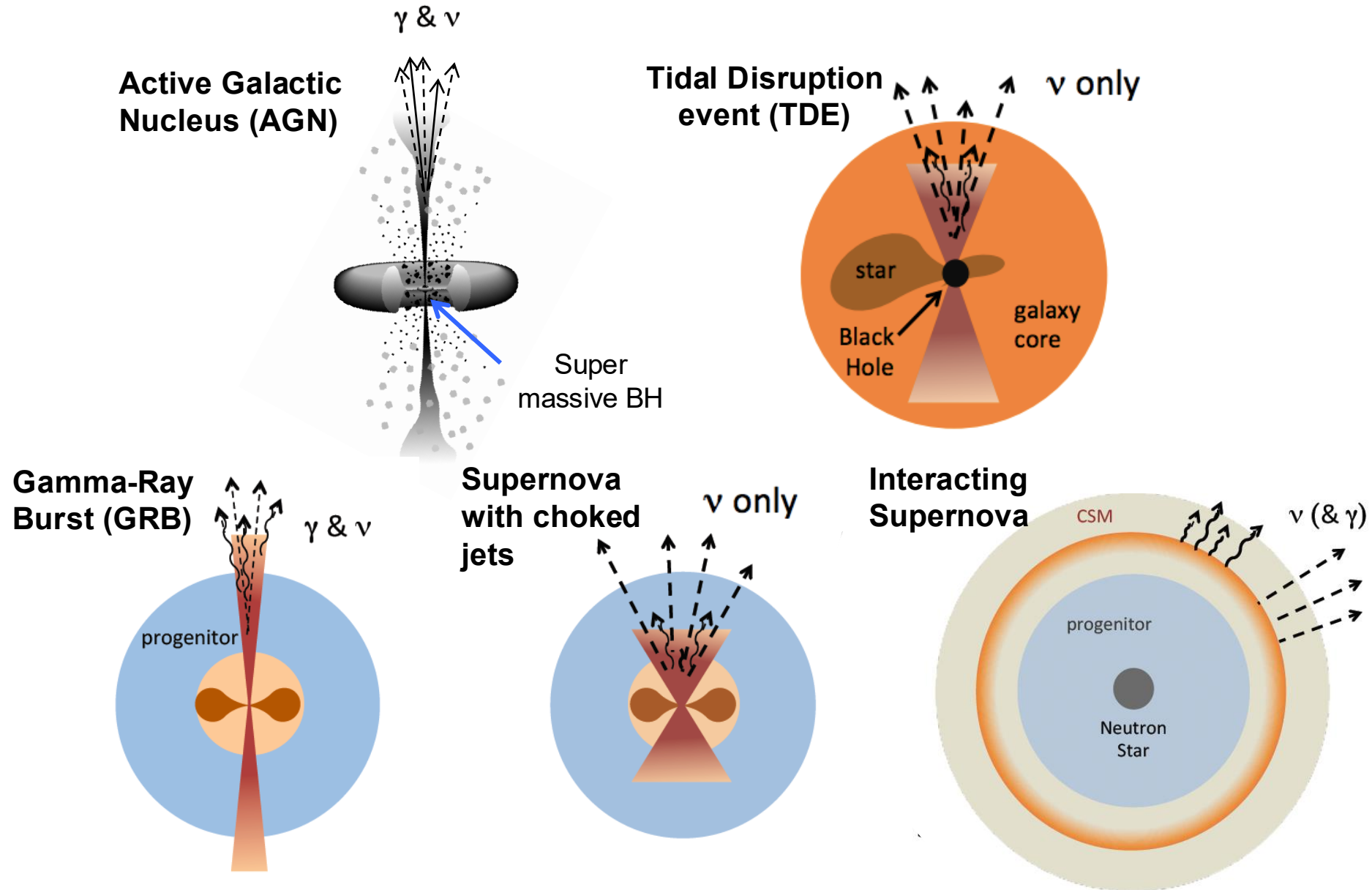
Variable Source Candidates



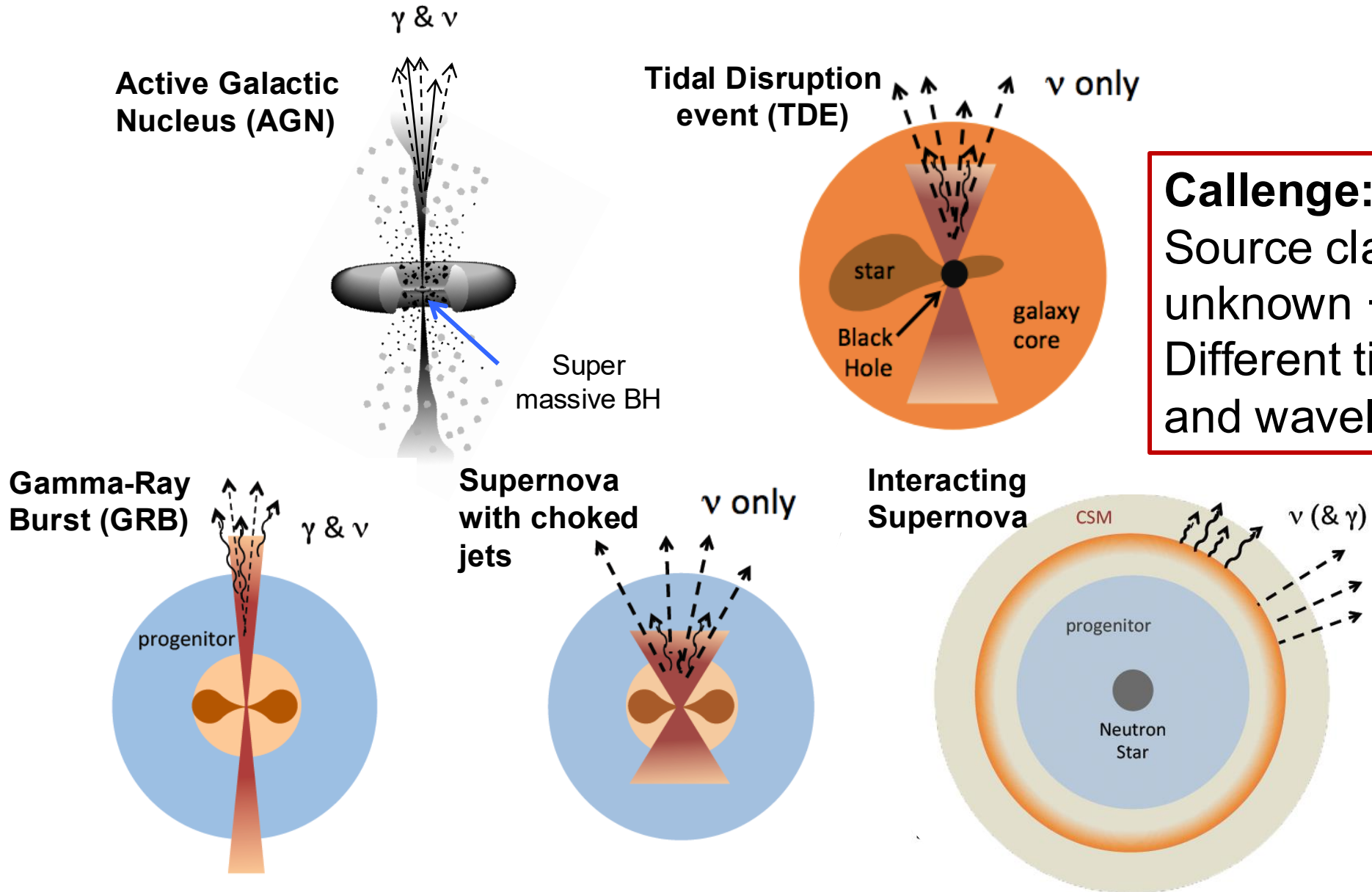
Variable Source Candidates



Variable Source Candidates



Variable Source Candidates



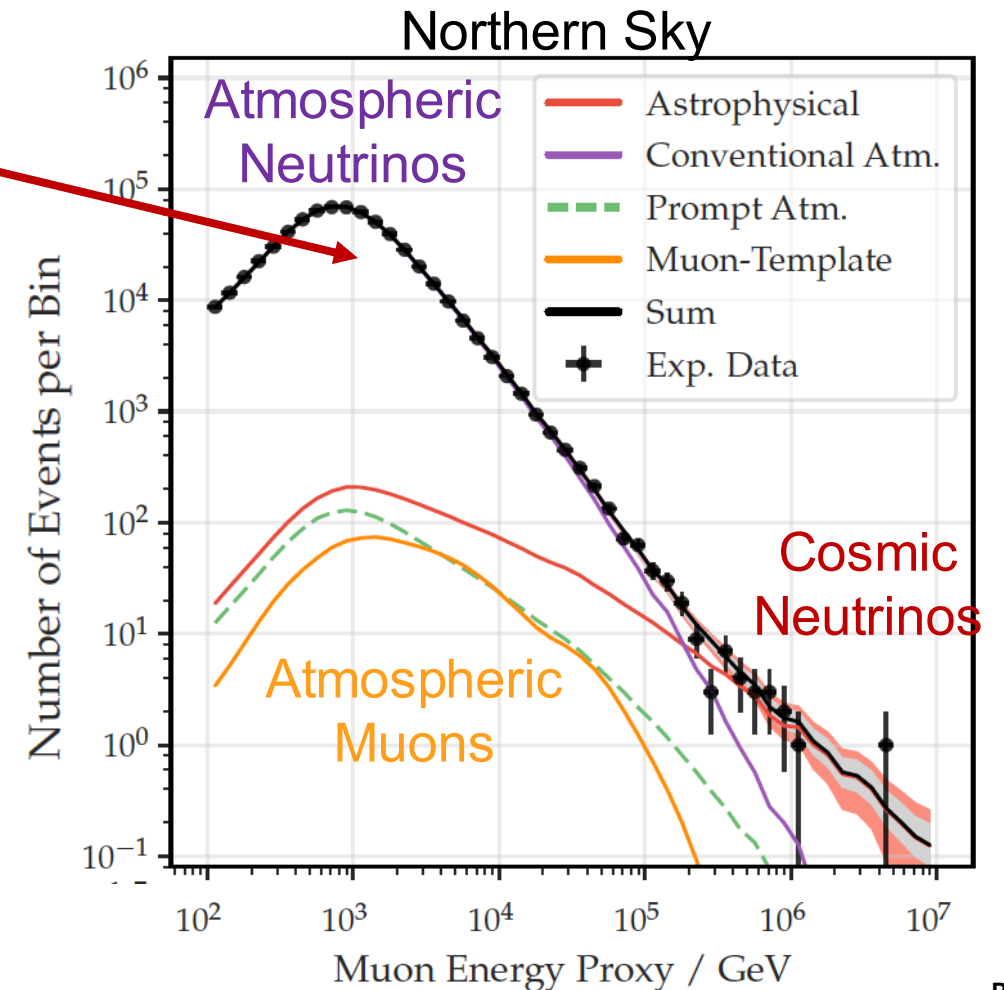
Challenge:
Source class
unknown $\rightarrow$
Different time scales
and wavelength

Detection Strategies

- Monitoring of TeV gamma-ray sources → inform IACTs in case of access

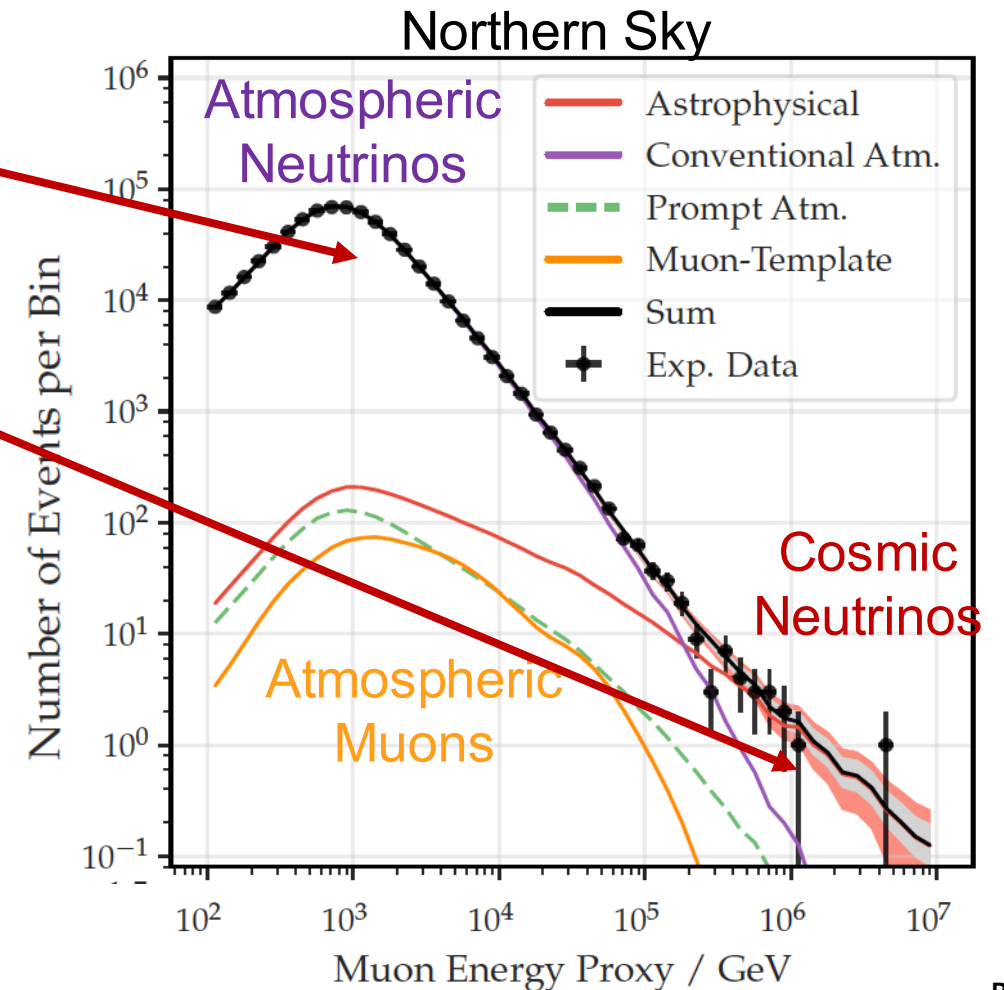
Detection Strategies

- Monitoring of TeV gamma-ray sources → inform IACTs in case of access
- Search for clusters of 1-10 TeV neutrinos



Detection Strategies

- Monitoring of TeV gamma-ray sources → inform IACTs in case of access
- Search for clusters of 1-10 TeV neutrinos
- Search for single ~100 TeV events



Neutrinos as Triggers

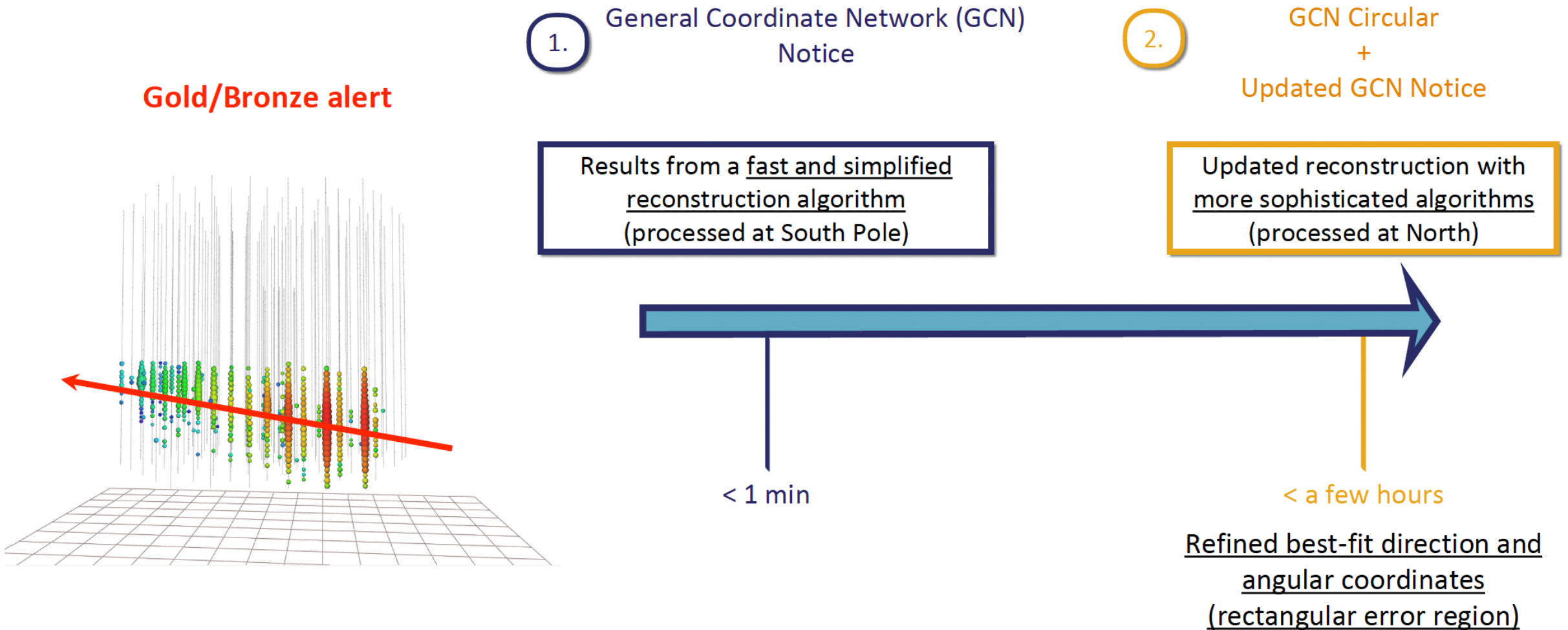
Public alerts since April 2016

- Single high-energy muon track events ($> \sim 100\text{TeV}$)
 - “Gold” alert stream 10 / yr, ~ 5 / yr of cosmic origin
 - “Bronze” alert stream 30 / yr, 10/yr of cosmic origin
- Median latency: 30 sec

Goal: Find electromagnetic counterpart



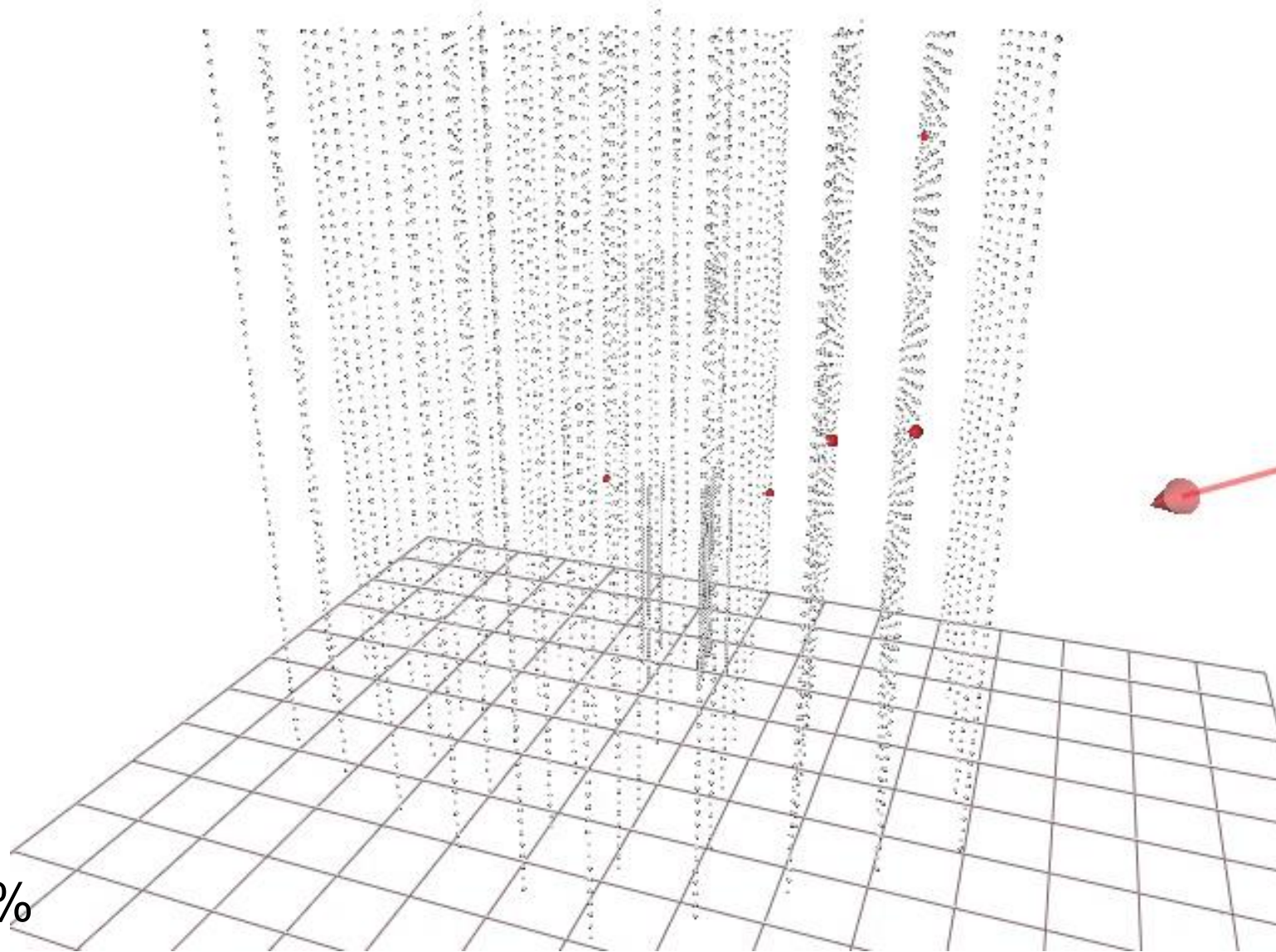
IceCube Realtime Alert Flow



Realtime Result 1:

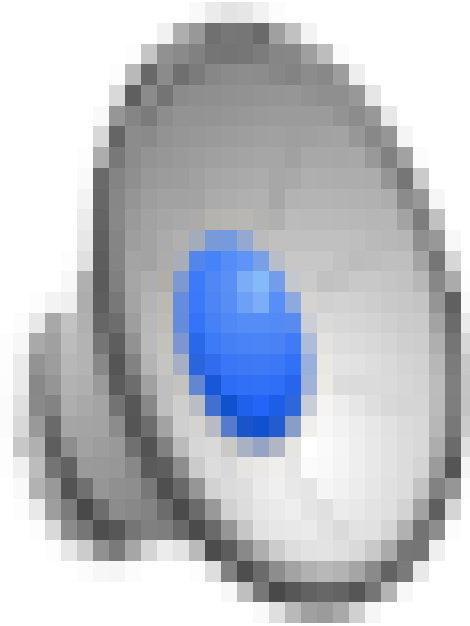
Neutrino from gamma-ray flaring blazar

IC-170922A – a 290 TeV Neutrino

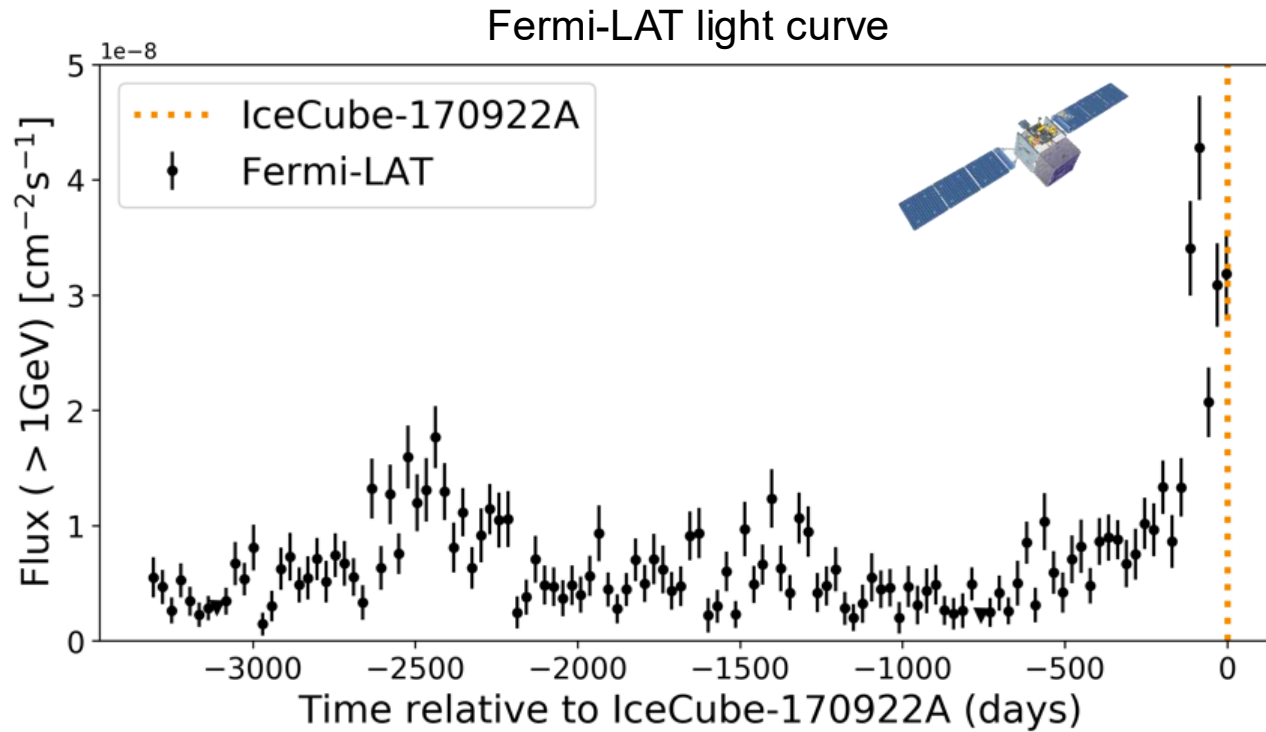


Signalness: 56.5%

Fermi-LAT finds Flaring Source

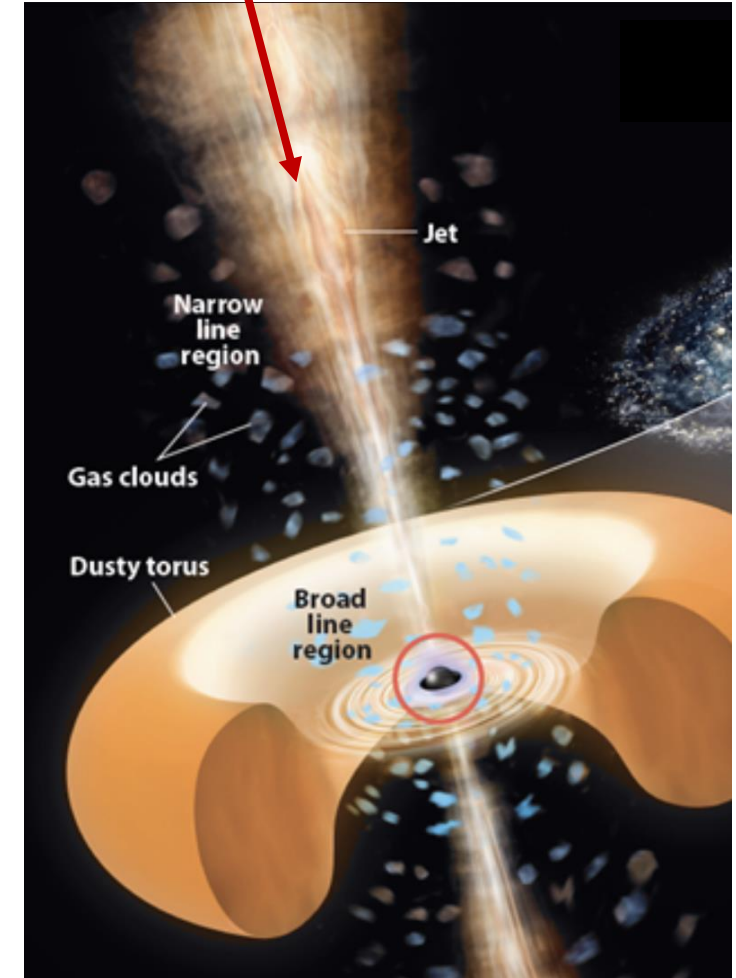


Source Candidates: TXS 0506+056



Coincidence with source location and gamma-ray flare increases significance to 3σ

Blazar

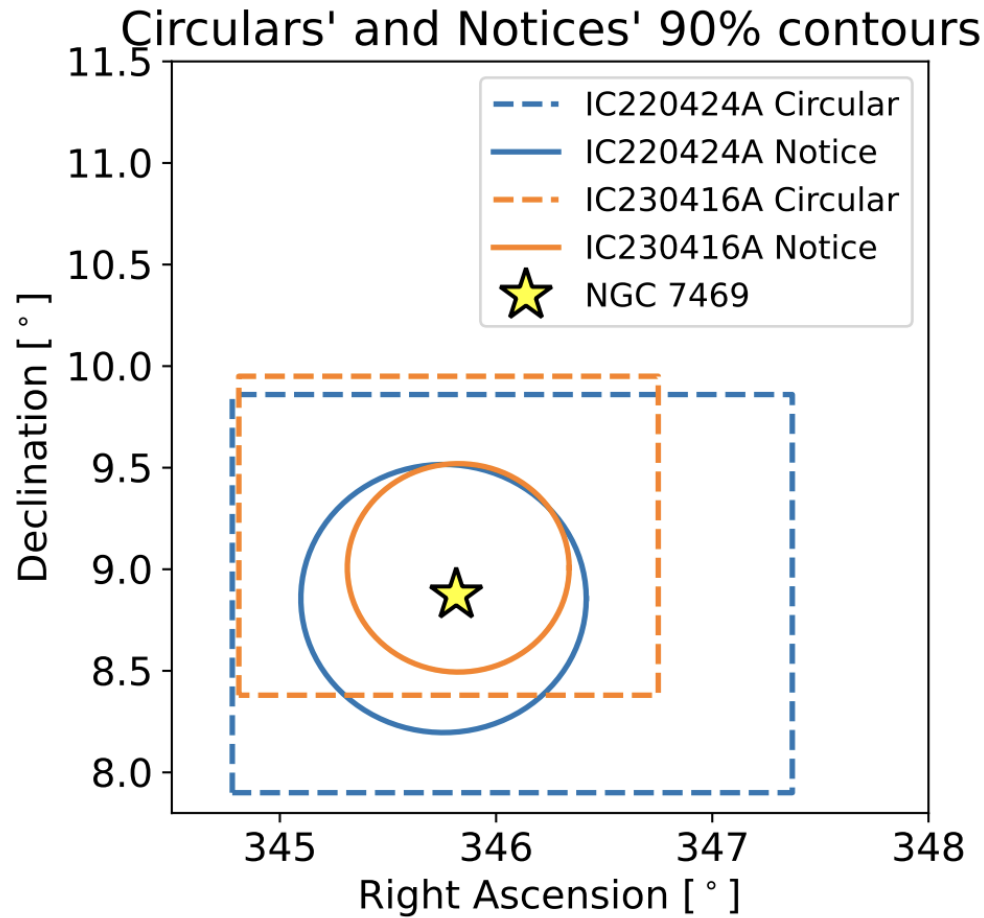


IceCube, Fermi-LAT, MAGIC, AGILE, ASAS-SN, HAWC, H.E.S.S, INTEGRAL, Kapteyn,
Kanata, Kiso, Liverpool, Subaru, Swift, VERITAS, VLA, Science 2018

Realtime Result 2:

Two neutrinos from Seyfert galaxy NGC 7469

Two 100 TeV Neutrinos from NGC 7469



3.2 sigma candidate

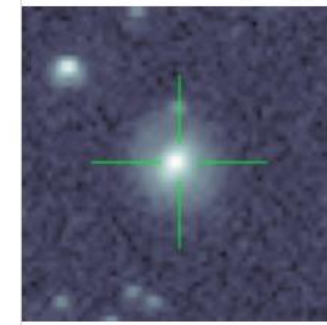
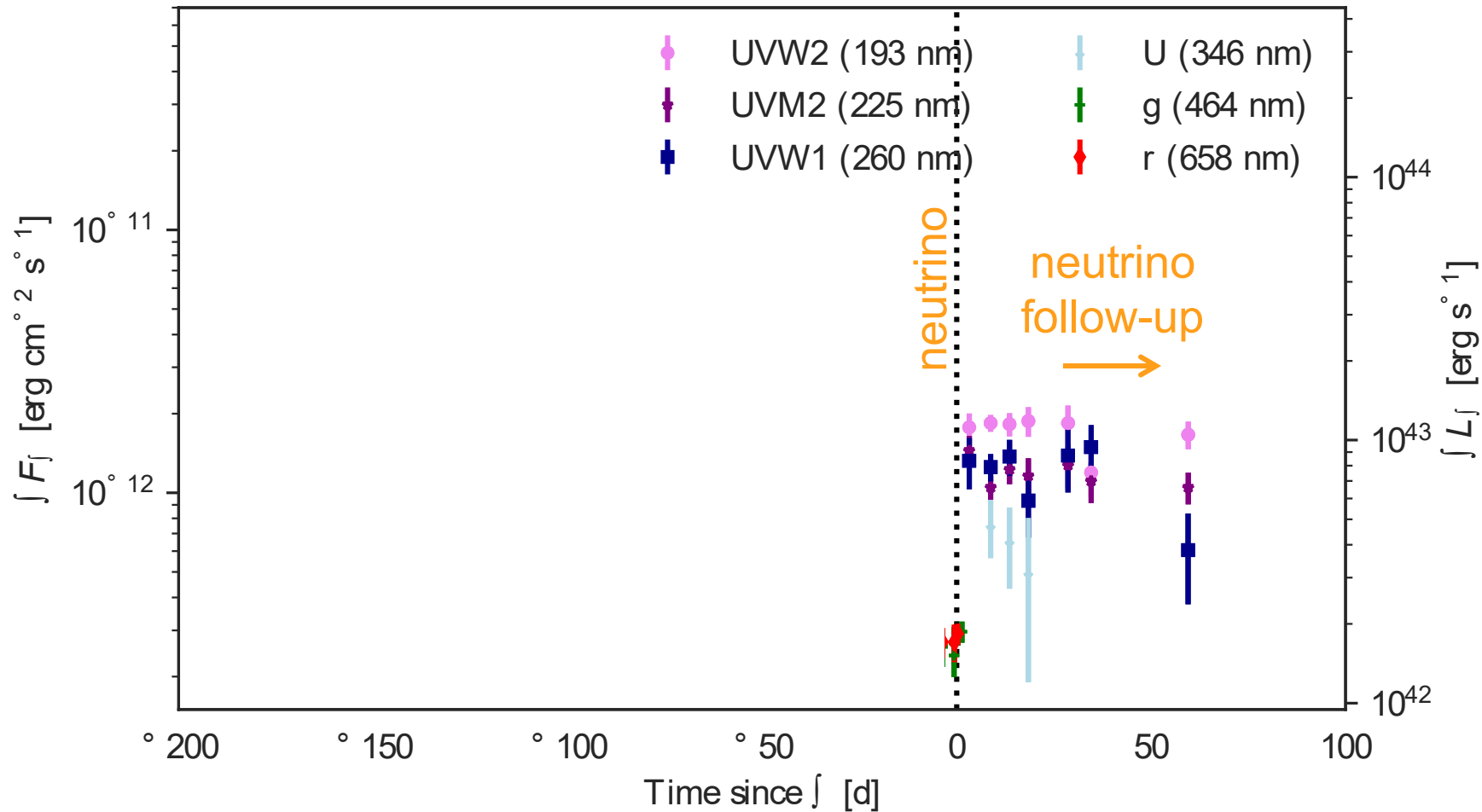


Much harder
neutrino spectrum
than NGC 1068

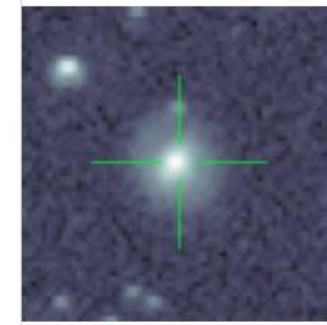
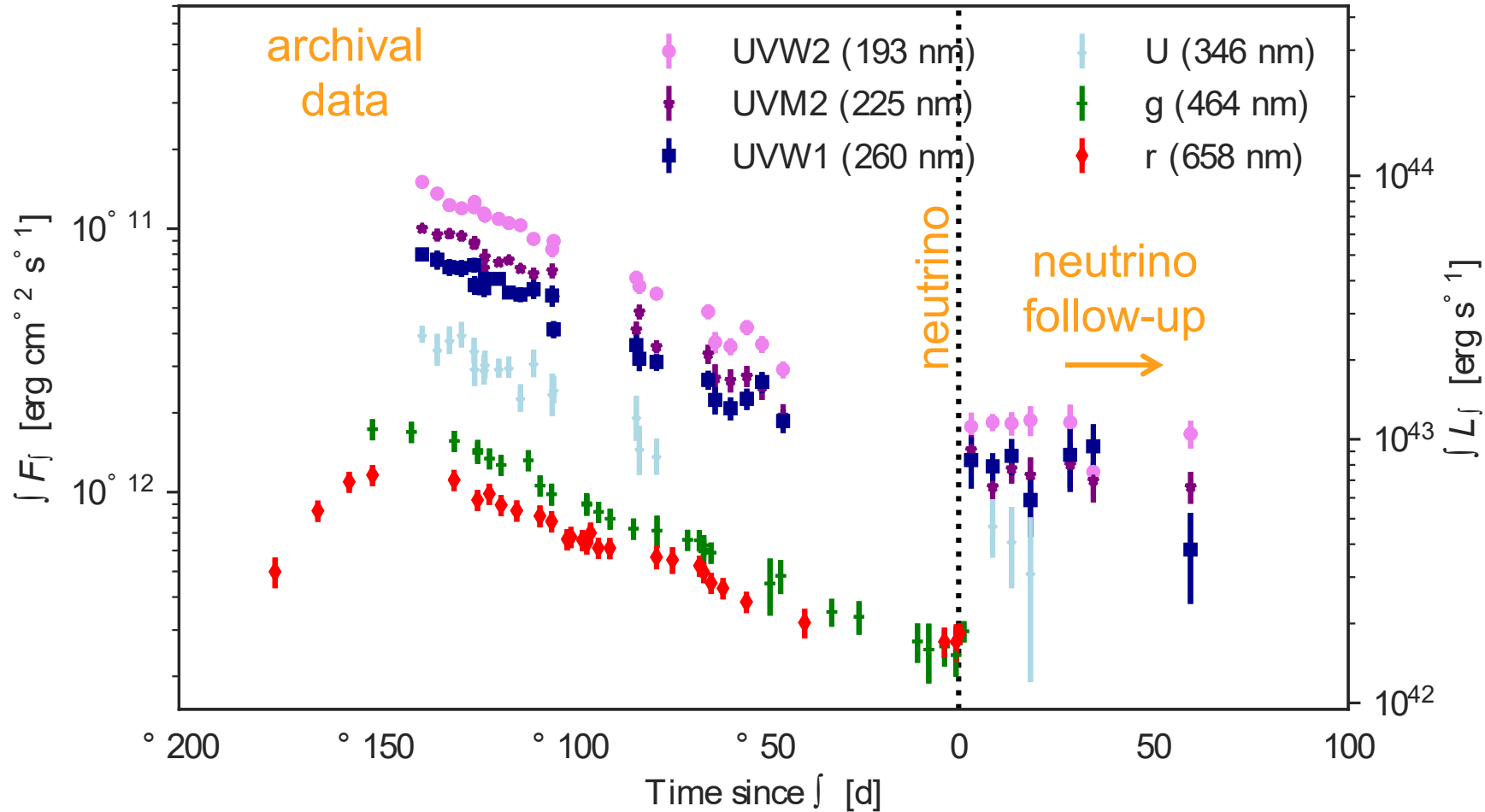
Realtime Result 3:

Neutrino from Tidal Disruption Event

Neutrino IC191001A (200 TeV) coincident with Tidal Disruption Event AT2019dsg

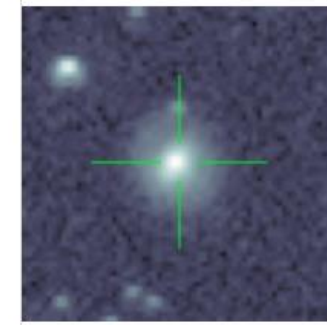
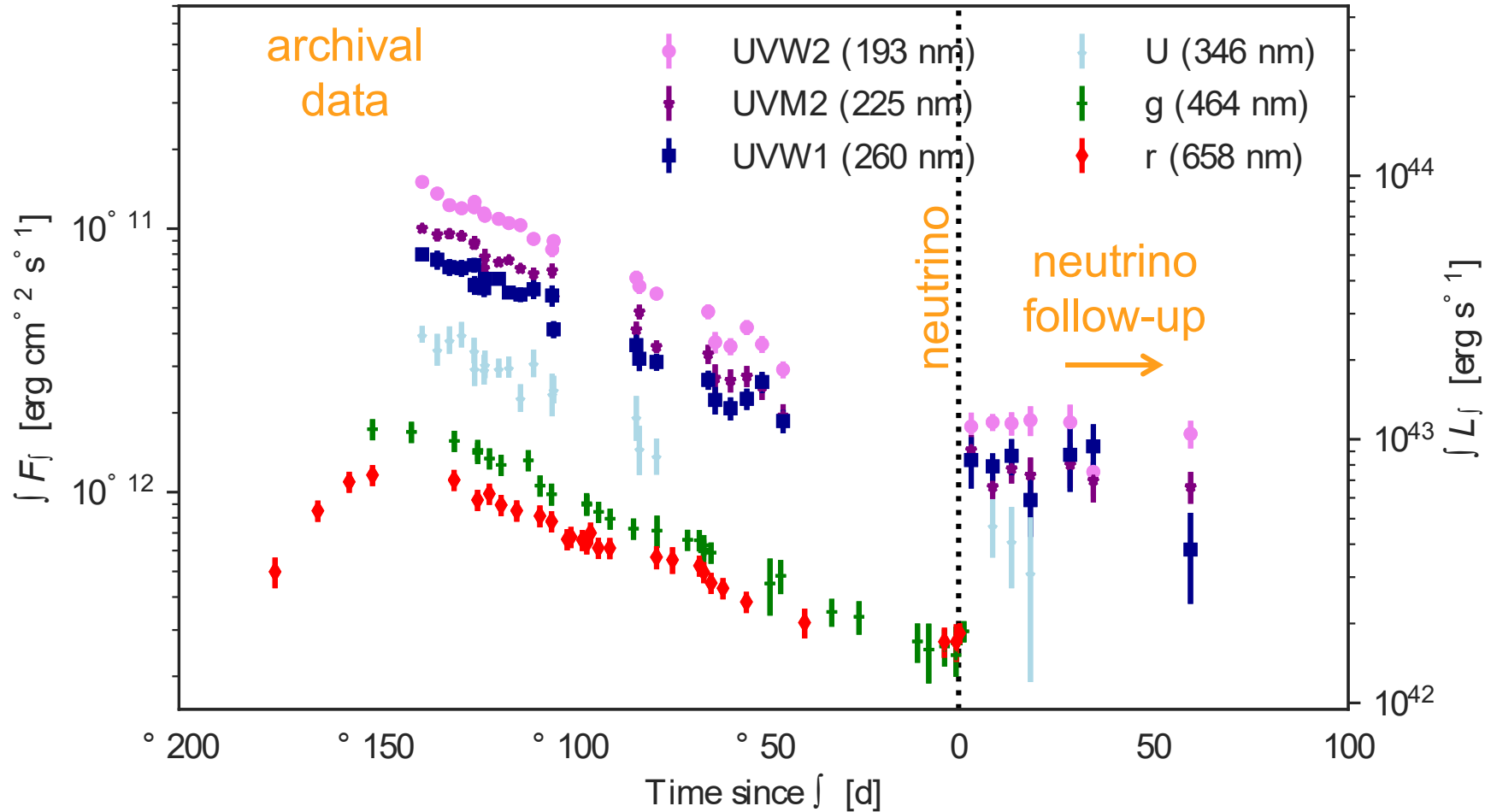


Neutrino IC191001A (200 TeV) coincident with Tidal Disruption Event AT2019dsg



Distance: $z = 0.05$ ($d = 230$ Mpc), thermal X-rays, no gamma rays

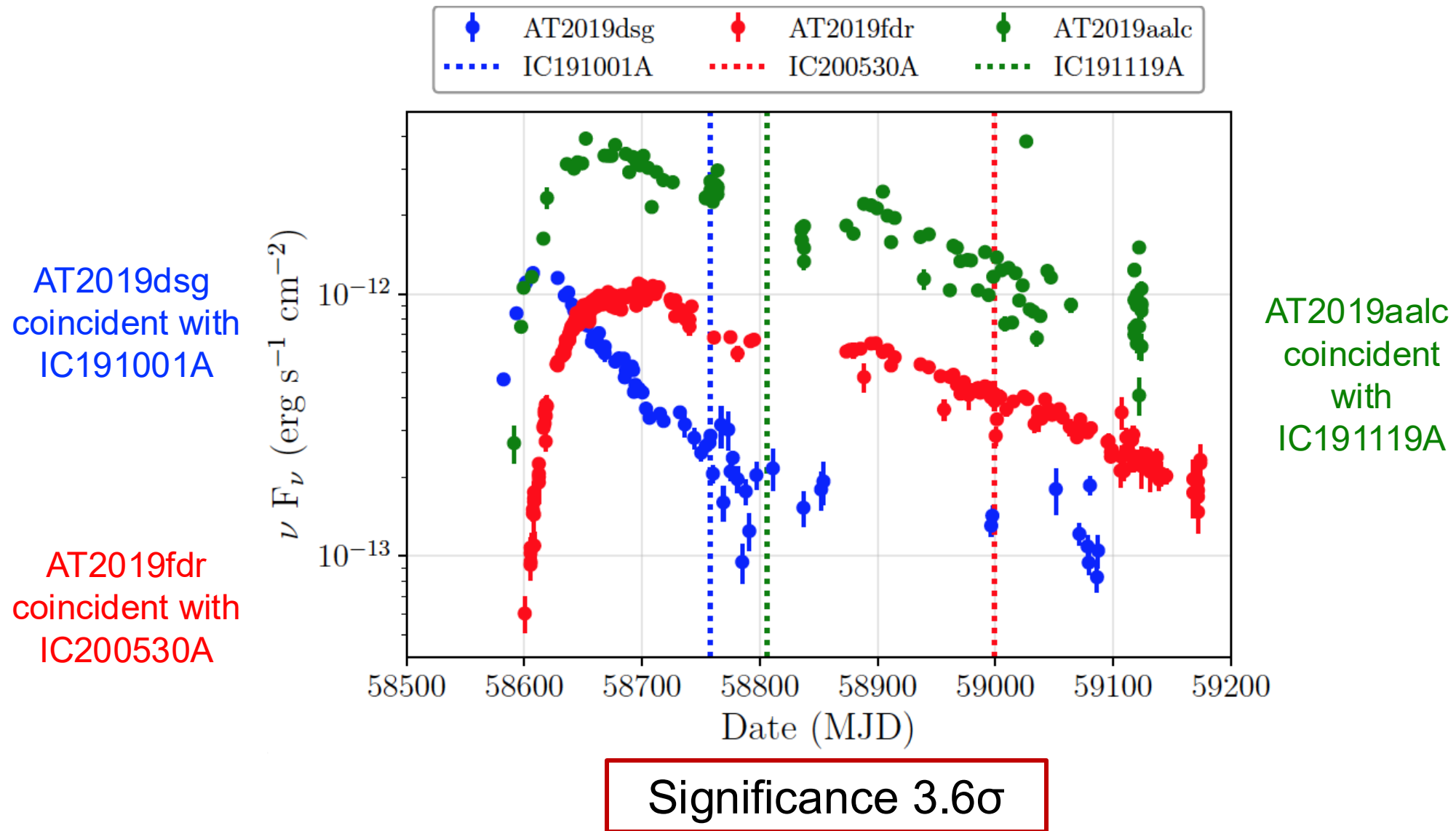
Neutrino IC191001A (200 TeV) coincident with Tidal Disruption Event AT2019dsg



Distance: $z = 0.05$ ($d = 230$ Mpc), thermal X-rays, no gamma rays

Chance coincidence:
0.2% to find a TDE that
bright (including trials)

Three TDE neutrino candidates



Realtime Result 4:

Neutrino from Interacting Supernova

Optical Counterpart to a high-energy neutrino: SN2023uqf

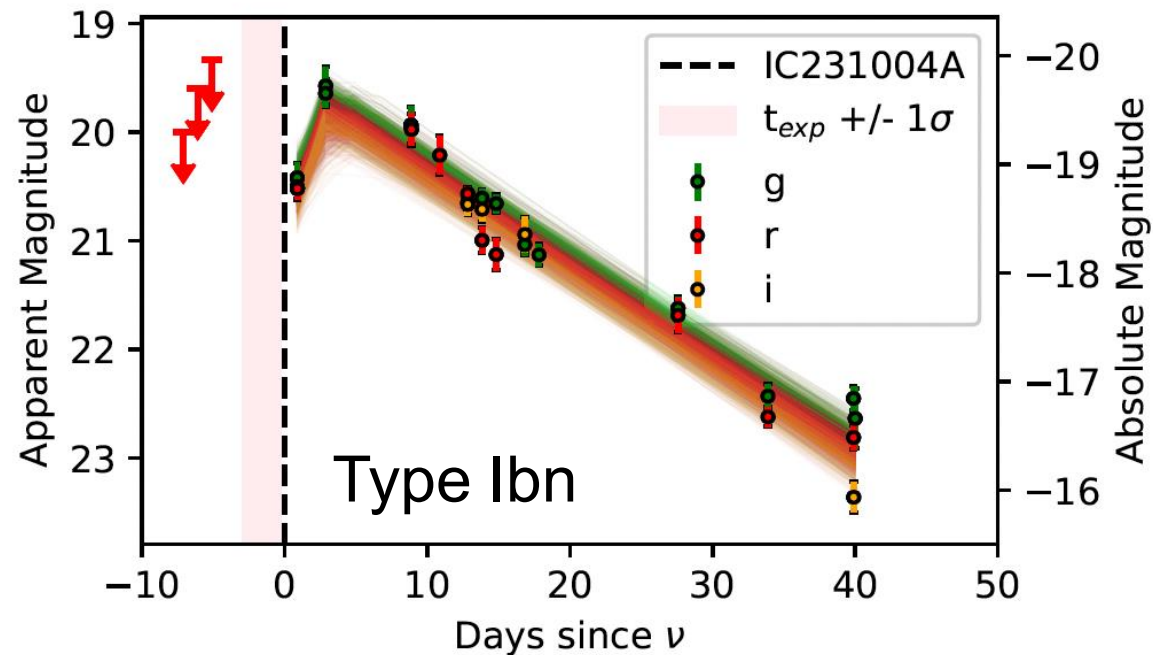
IC-231004A

440 TeV Neutrino

84% signalness

3σ association

Distance: 700 Mpc



Optical Counterpart to a high-energy neutrino: SN2023uqf

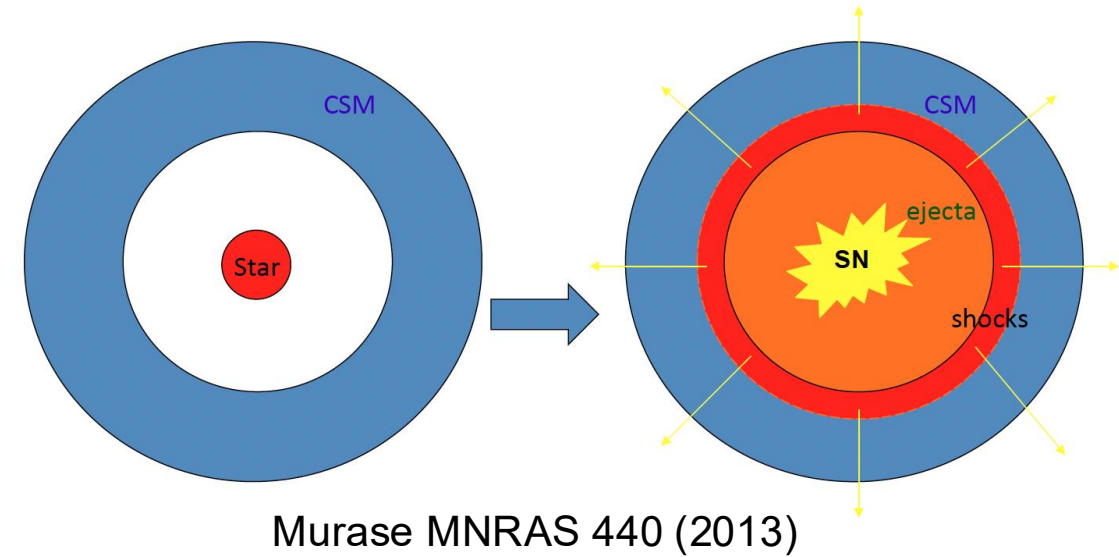
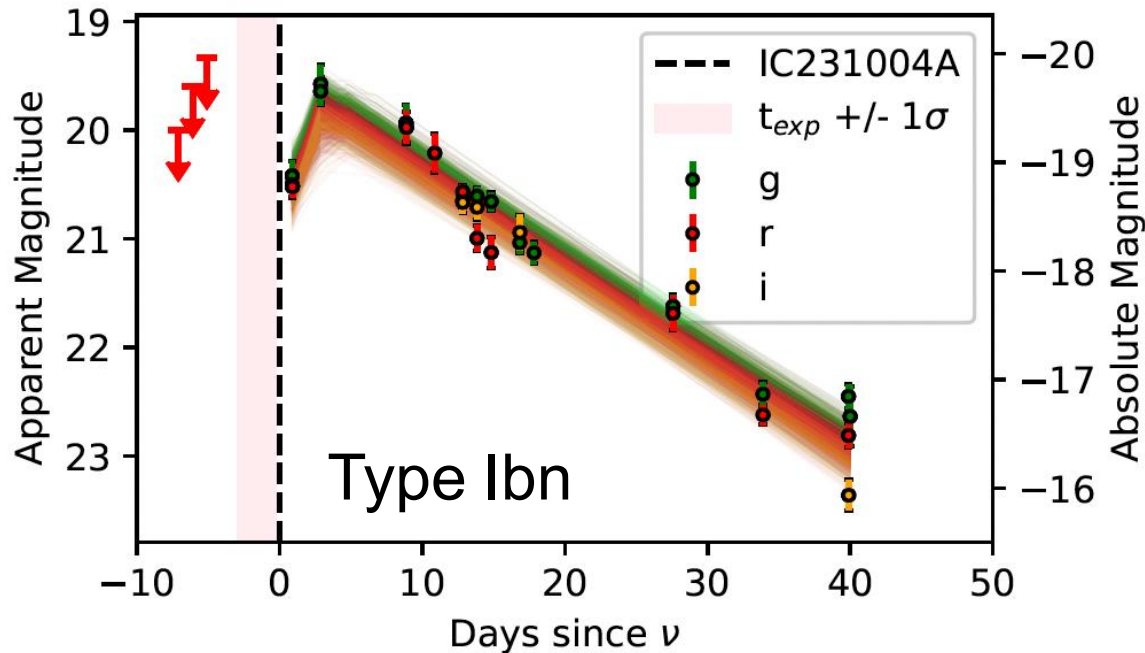
IC-231004A

440 TeV Neutrino

84% signalness

3σ association

Distance: 700 Mpc



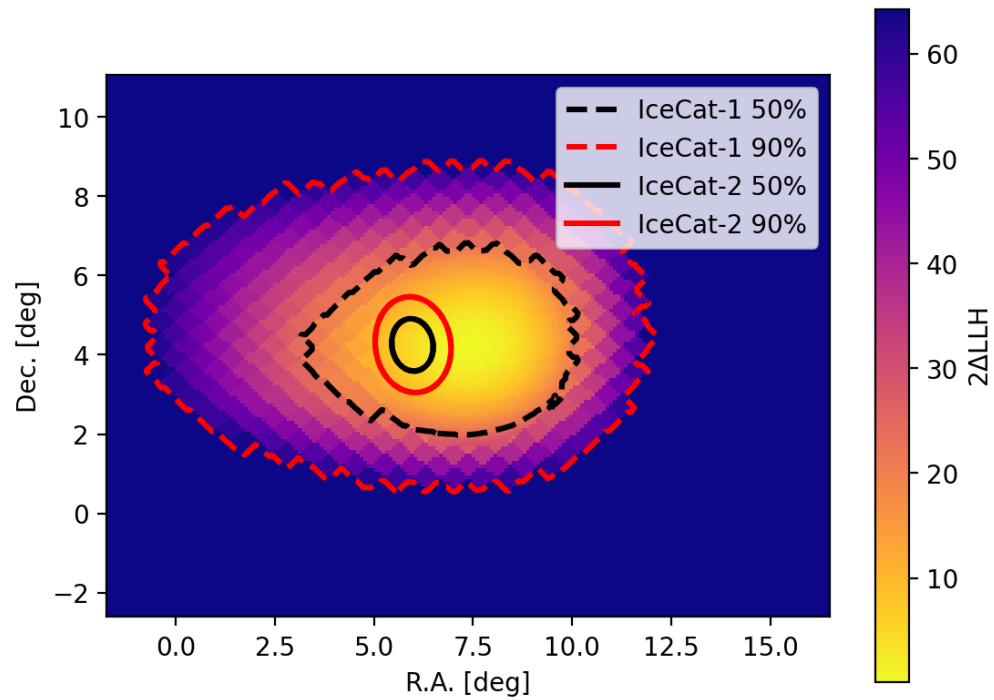
Evidence for hadronic acceleration in core-collapse supernova explosions

**How can we improve our
searches for neutrino
sources?**

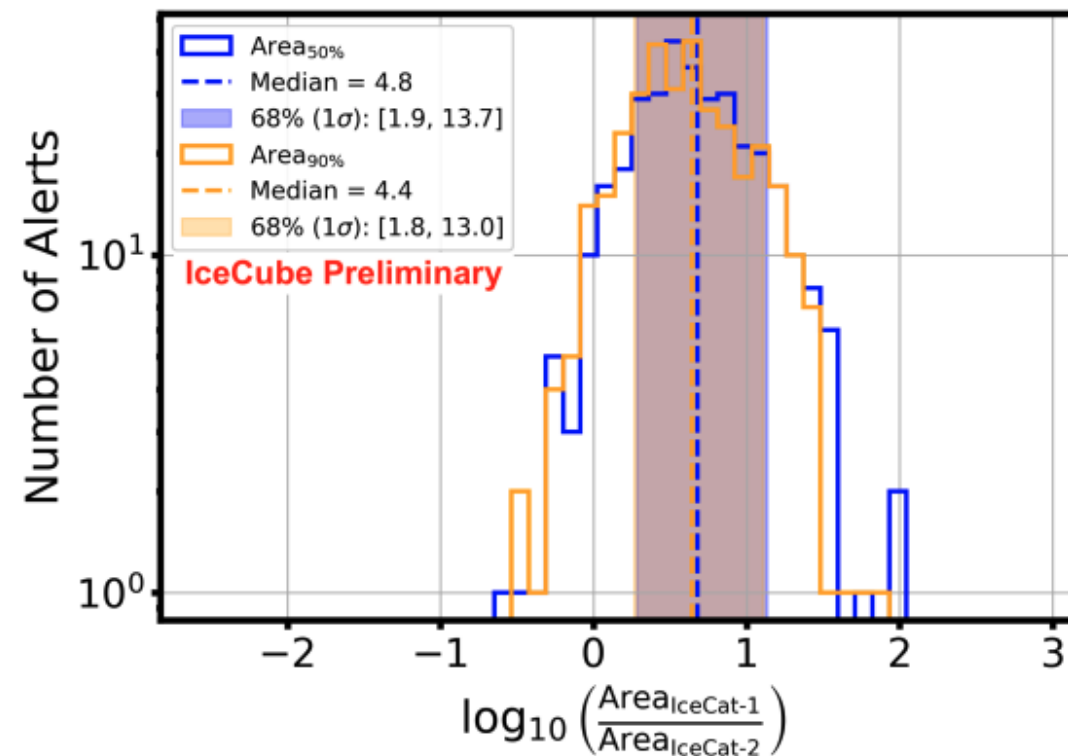
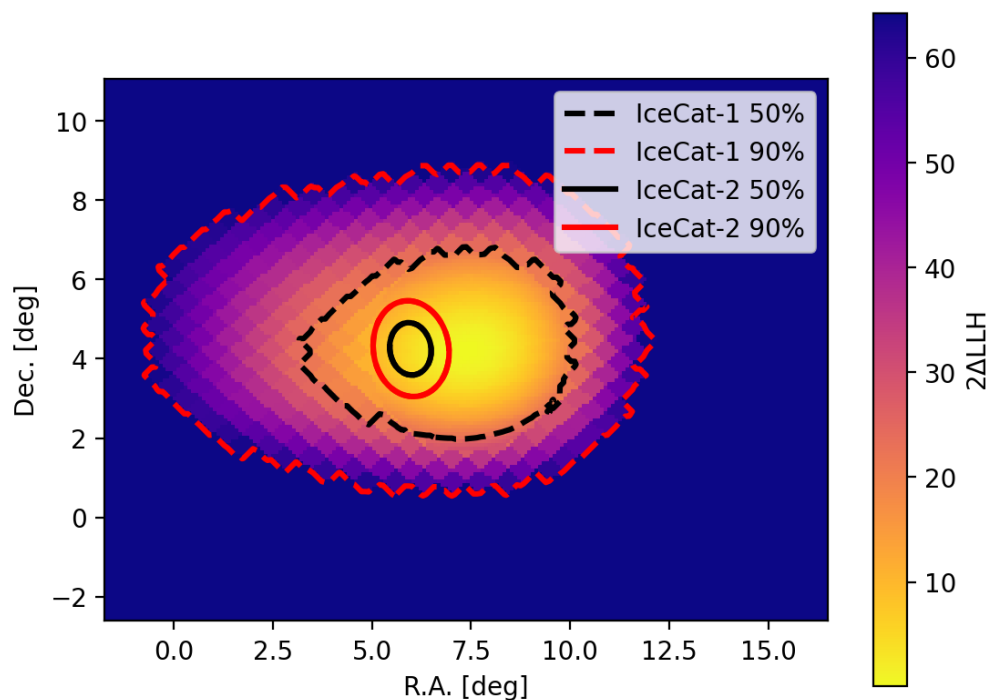
**How can we improve our
searches for neutrino
sources?**

**Improve neutrino angular
uncertainty**

Improved in IceCube Realtime Stream: IceCat-2

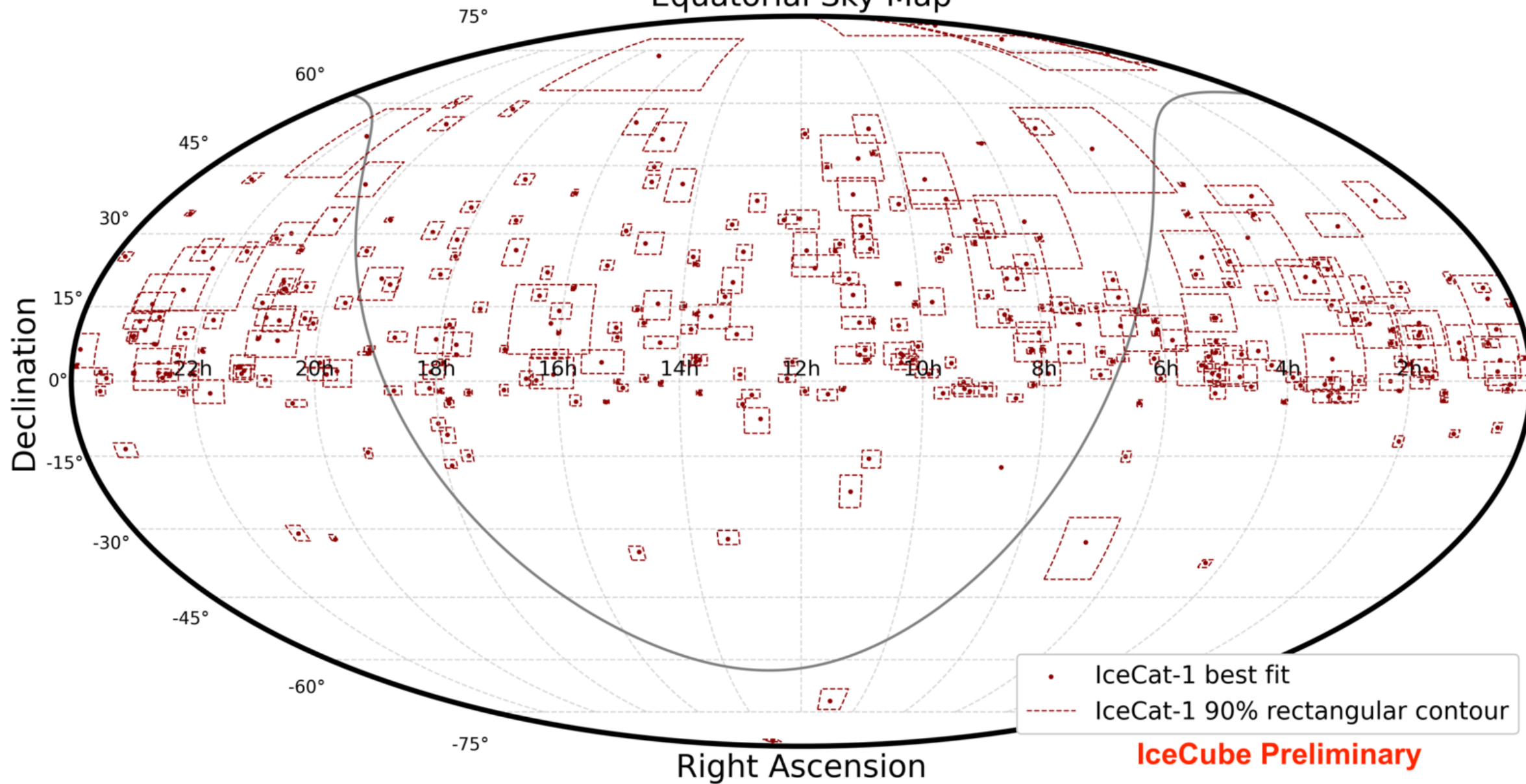


Improved in IceCube Realtime Stream: IceCat-2



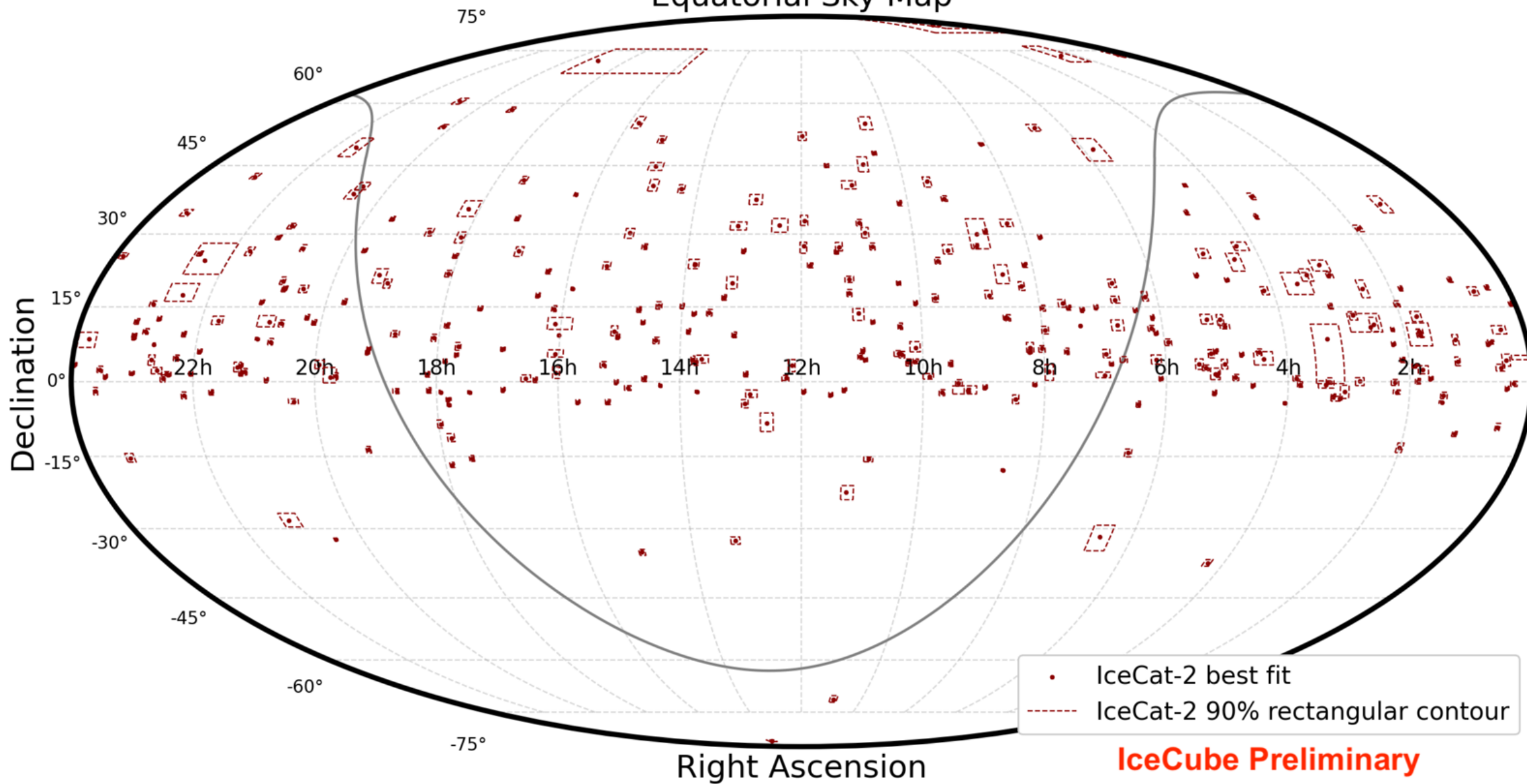
Improvement in 90% uncertainty area of factor 4.4
→ Archival alert catalog (IceCat-2) under development

Equatorial Sky Map

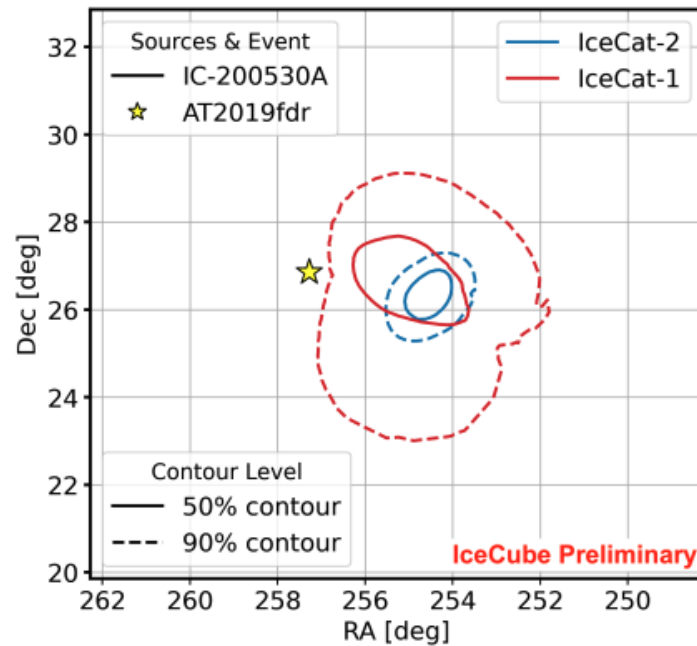


IceCube Preliminary

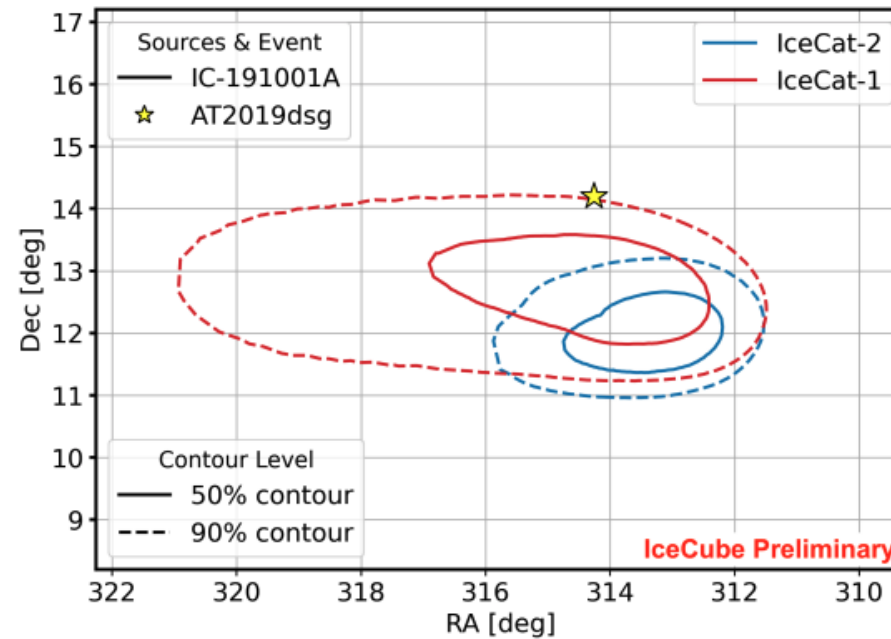
Equatorial Sky Map



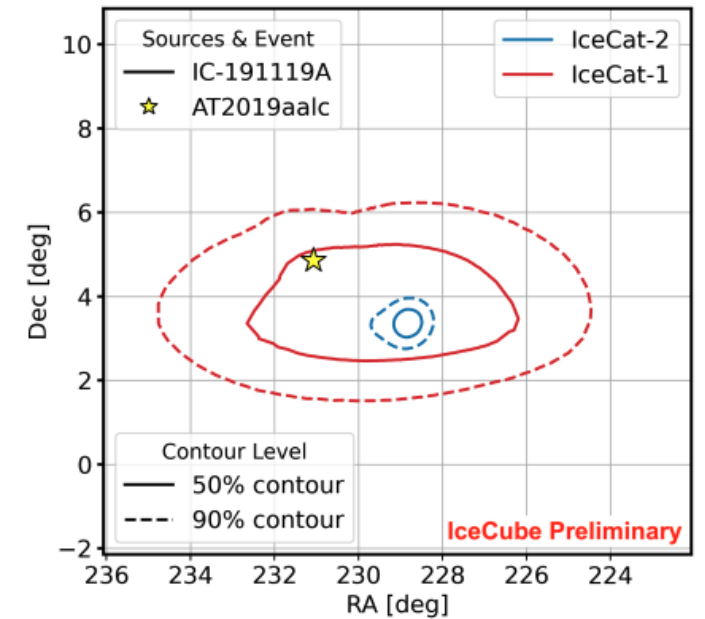
TDEs disfavored by new IceCat-2 Contours



(a) AT2019fdr

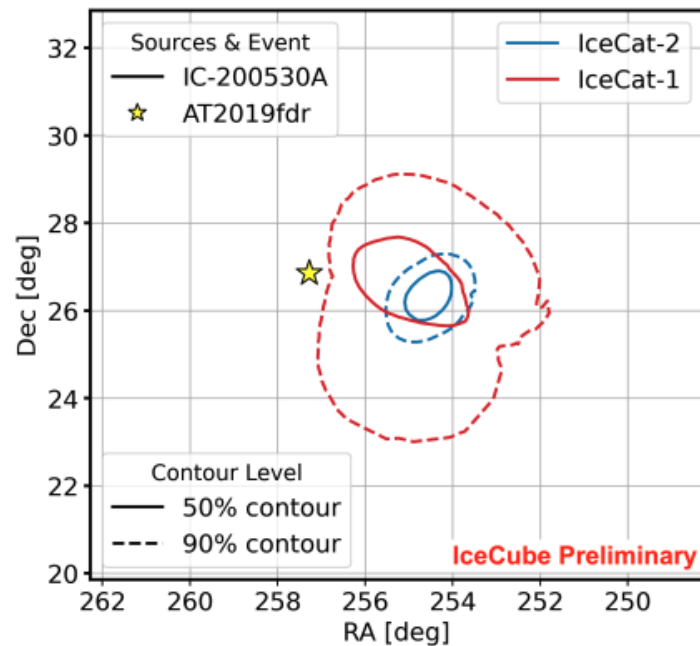


(b) AT2019dsg

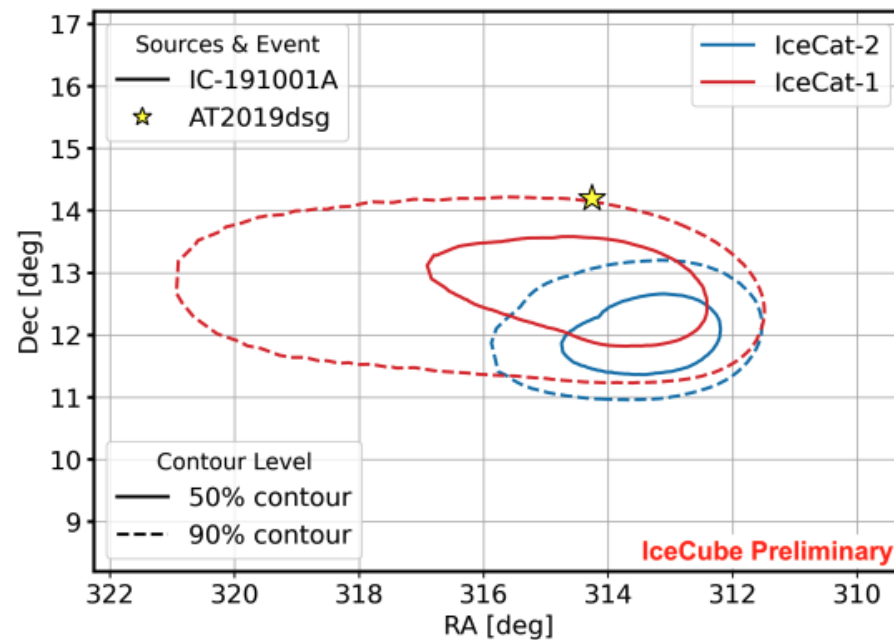


(c) AT2019aalc

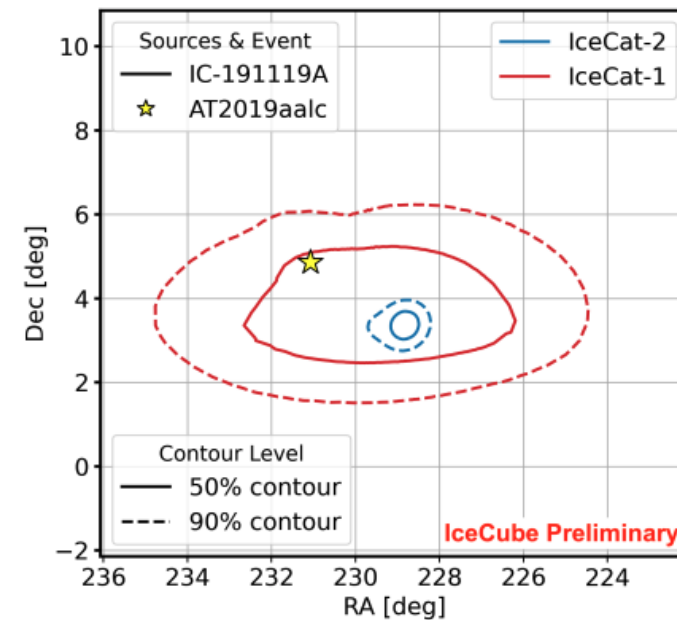
TDEs disfavored by new IceCat-2 Contours



(a) AT2019fdr

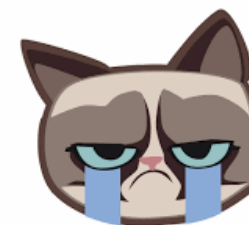


(b) AT2019dsg

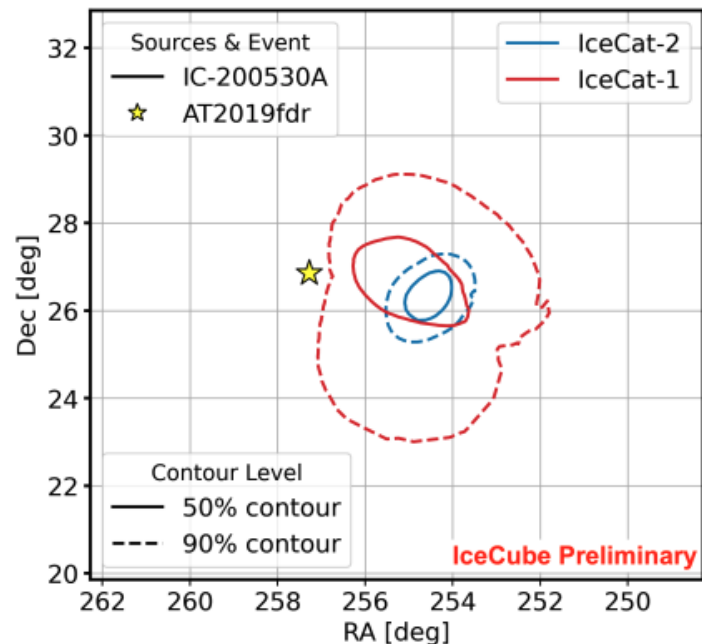


(c) AT2019aalc

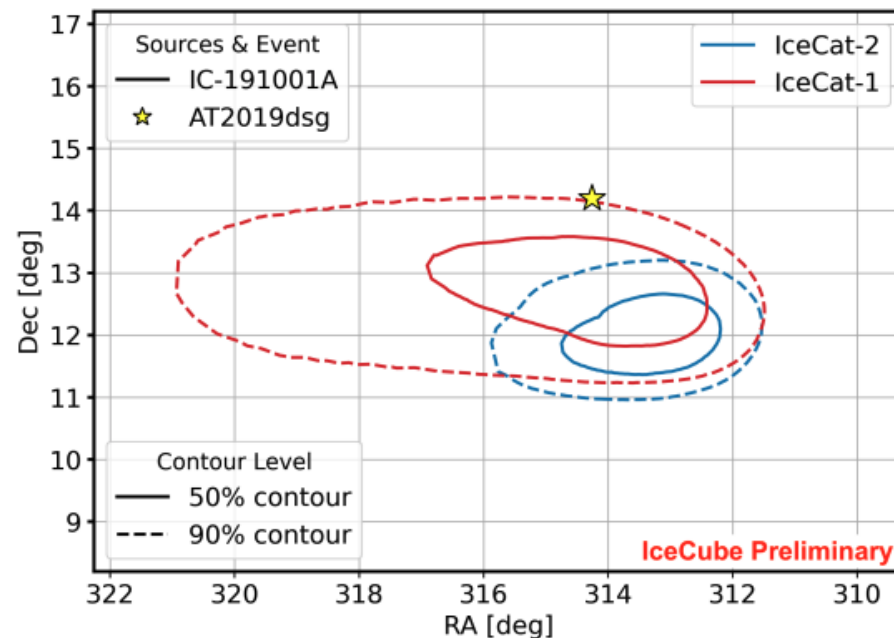
All three TDEs lie outside the
new uncertainty contours



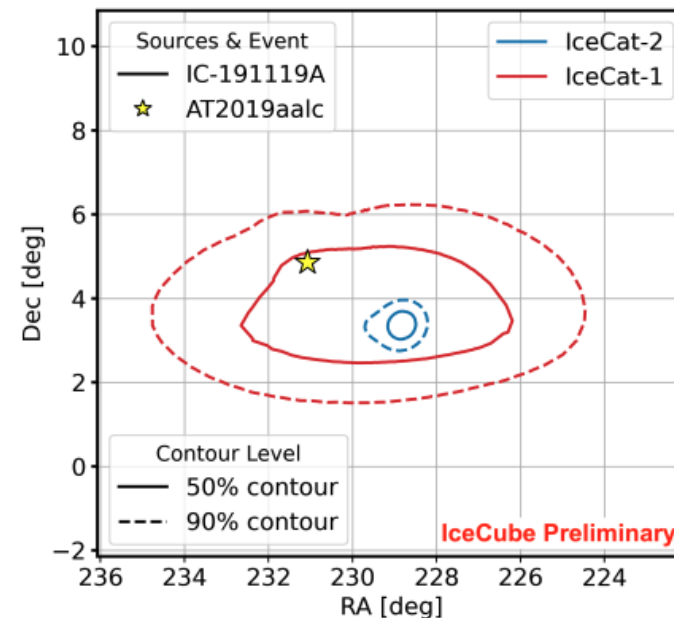
TDEs disfavored by new IceCat-2 Contours



(a) AT2019fdr



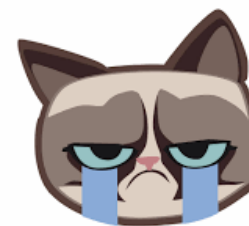
(b) AT2019dsg



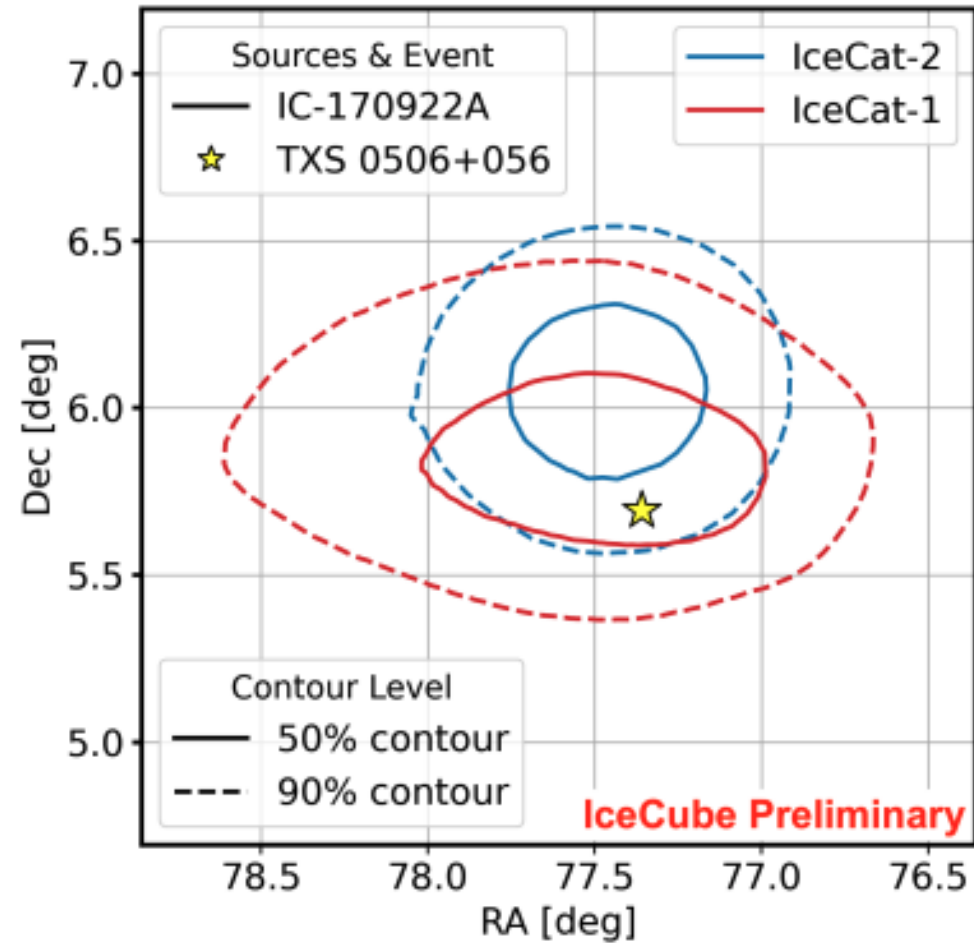
(c) AT2019aalc

Consistent with non-detection of TDE-
neutrino correlation in full IceCube dataset

J. Necker et al. PoS-ICRC2023-1478, T. Pernice @ TeVPA 2025



TXS 0506+056 still within the contour



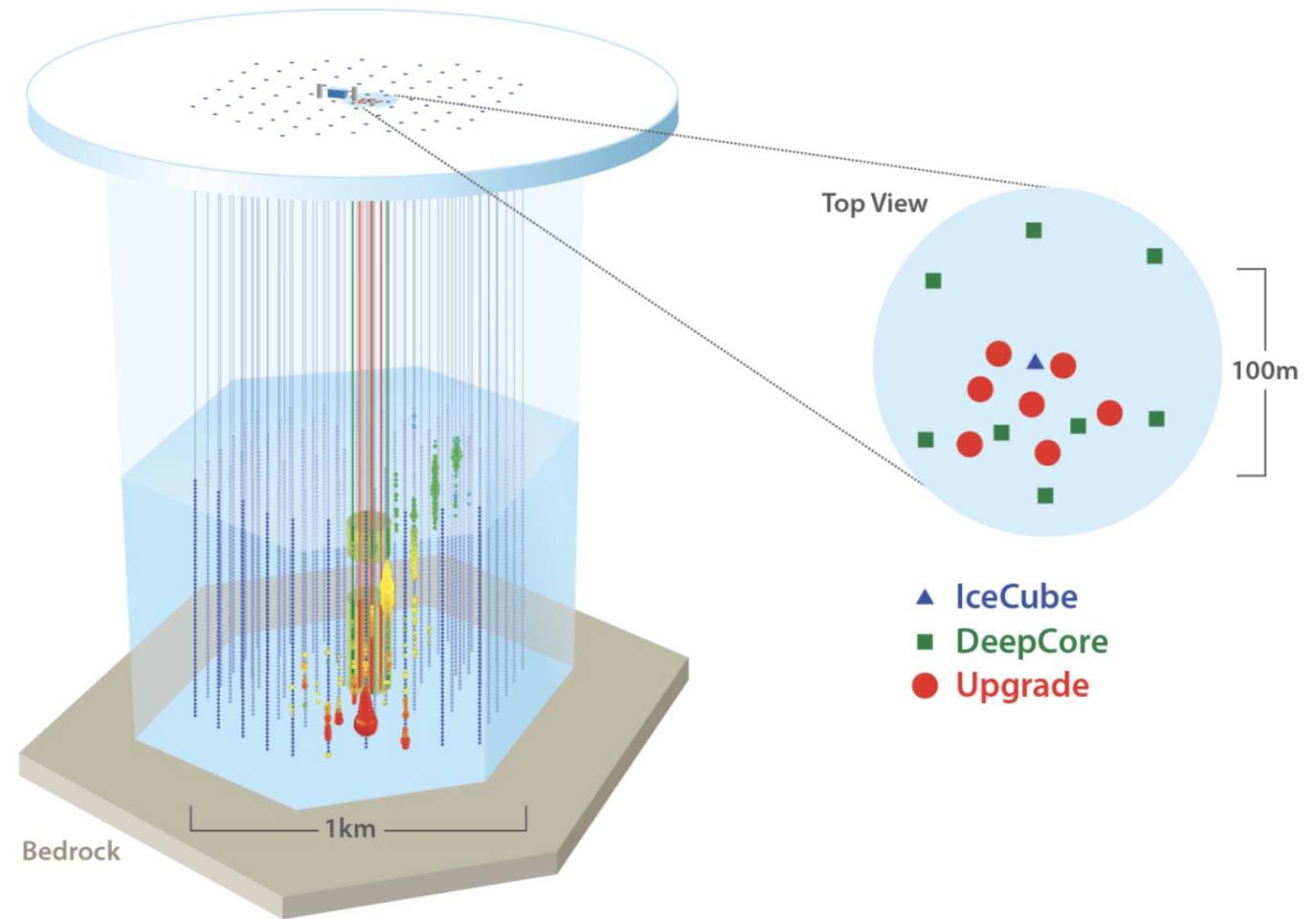
Further improvement expected

New algorithms

- E.g. transformer-encoded normalizing flows

Better understanding of ice with IceCube Upgrade

→ Reduced systematic uncertainties



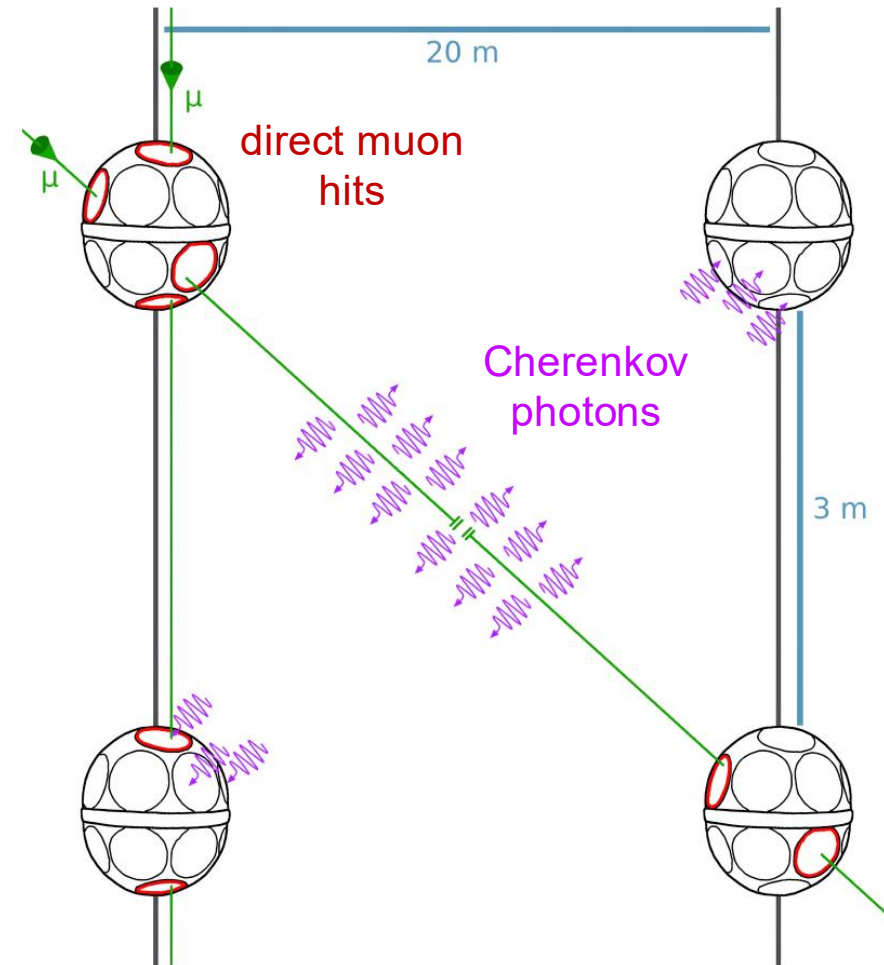
Further improvement expected

New algorithms

- E.g. transformer-encoded normalizing flows

Better understanding of ice with IceCube Upgrade

→ Reduced systematic uncertainties



**How can we improve our
searches for neutrino
sources?**

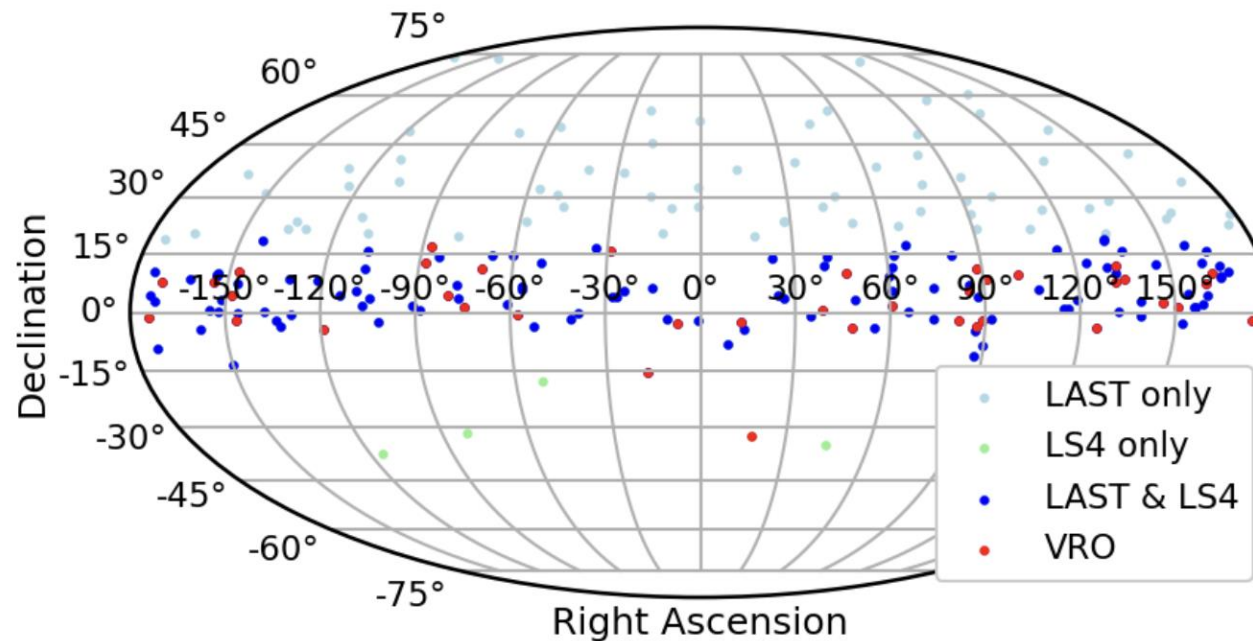
**Improve follow-up sky
coverage and depth**

Improved sky coverage of optical follow-up

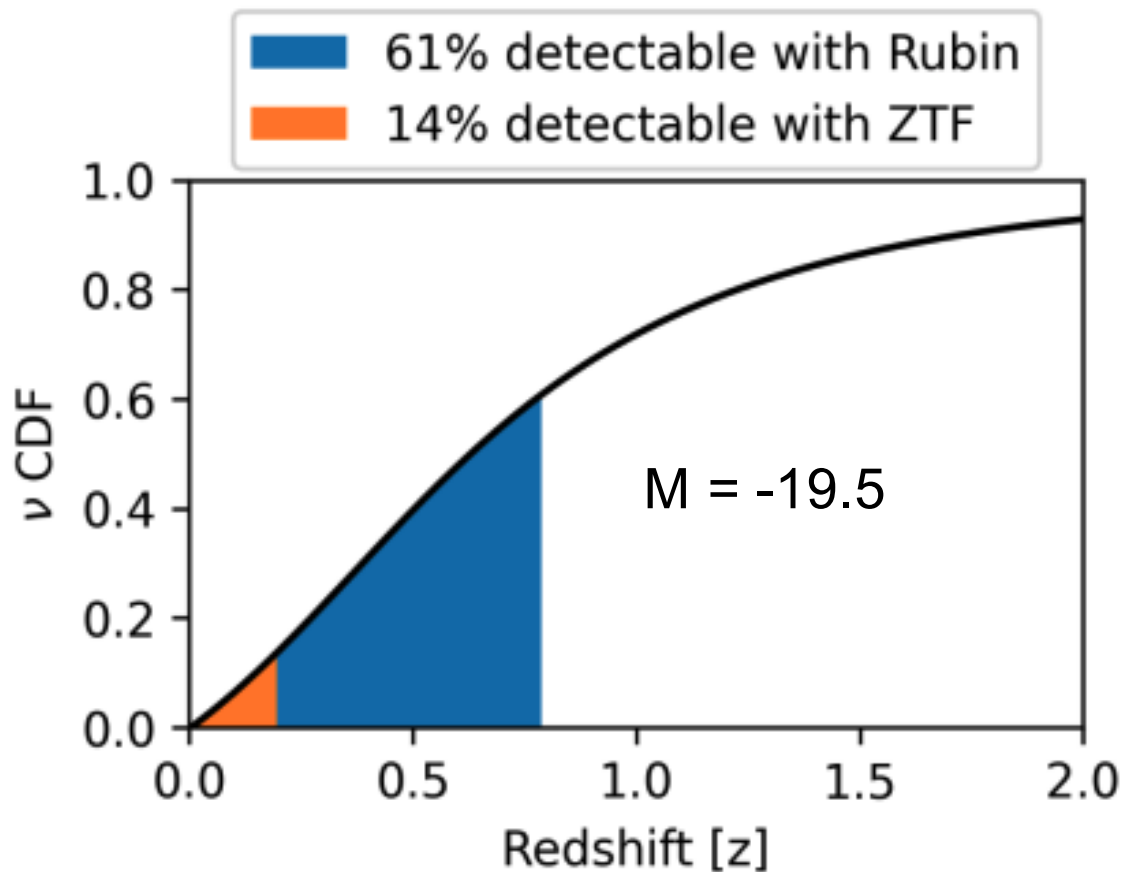
La Silla Schmidt Telescope (LS4): 20 sqr. deg.



Large Array Survey Telescope (LAST)



Improved optical follow-up in depth

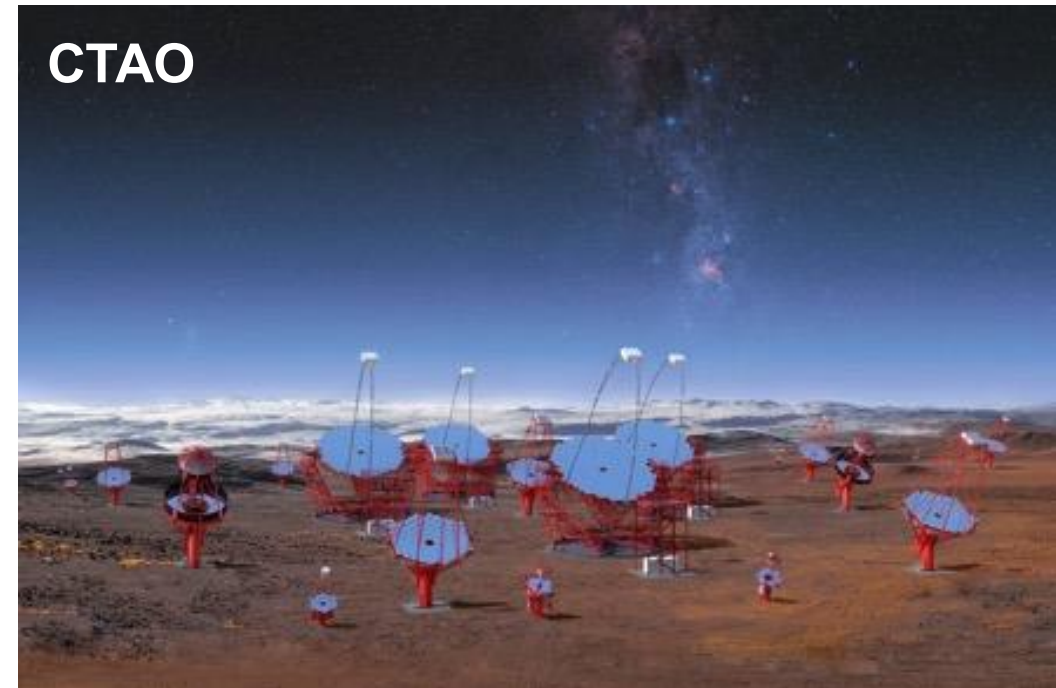


First light: July 2025, Alert stream in preparation
Rubin ToO report: 2-12 triggers/year

**How can we improve our
searches for neutrino
sources?**

Improve wavelength coverage

Improve Wavelength Coverage



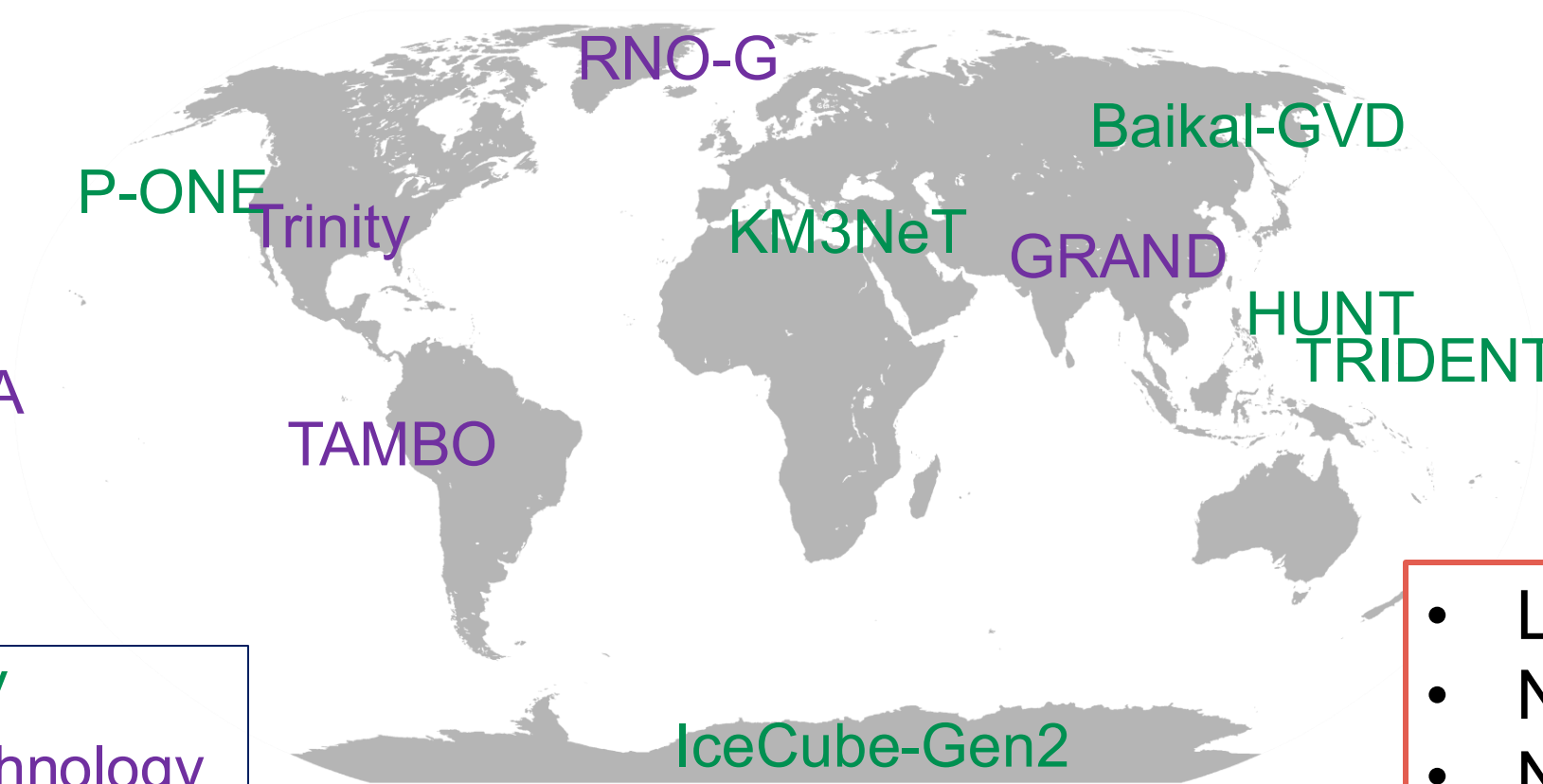
**How can we improve our
searches for neutrino
sources?**

**Include new neutrino
instruments**

New Neutrino Detectors



NuMoon



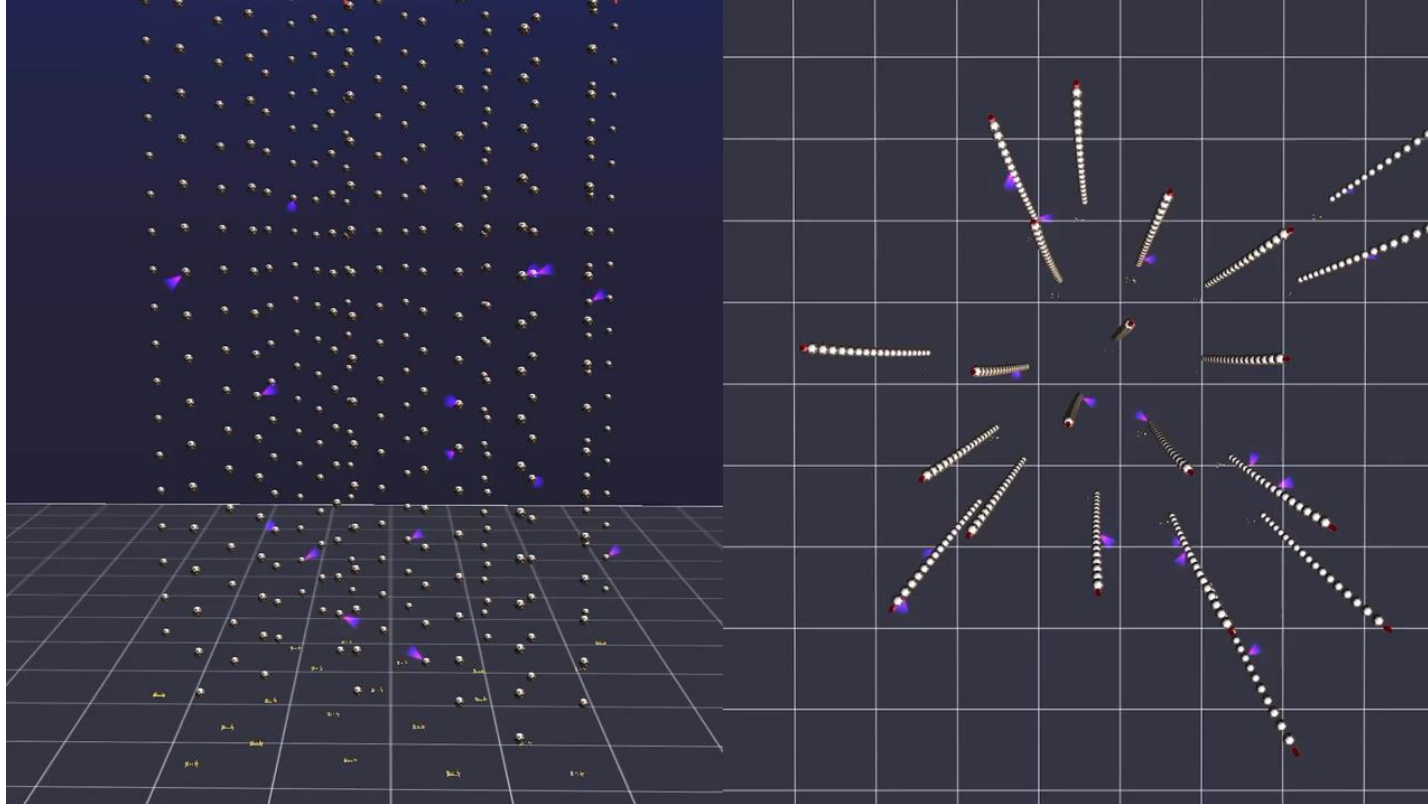
TeV-PeV

New technology

- Larger detectors
- New sites
- New technologies

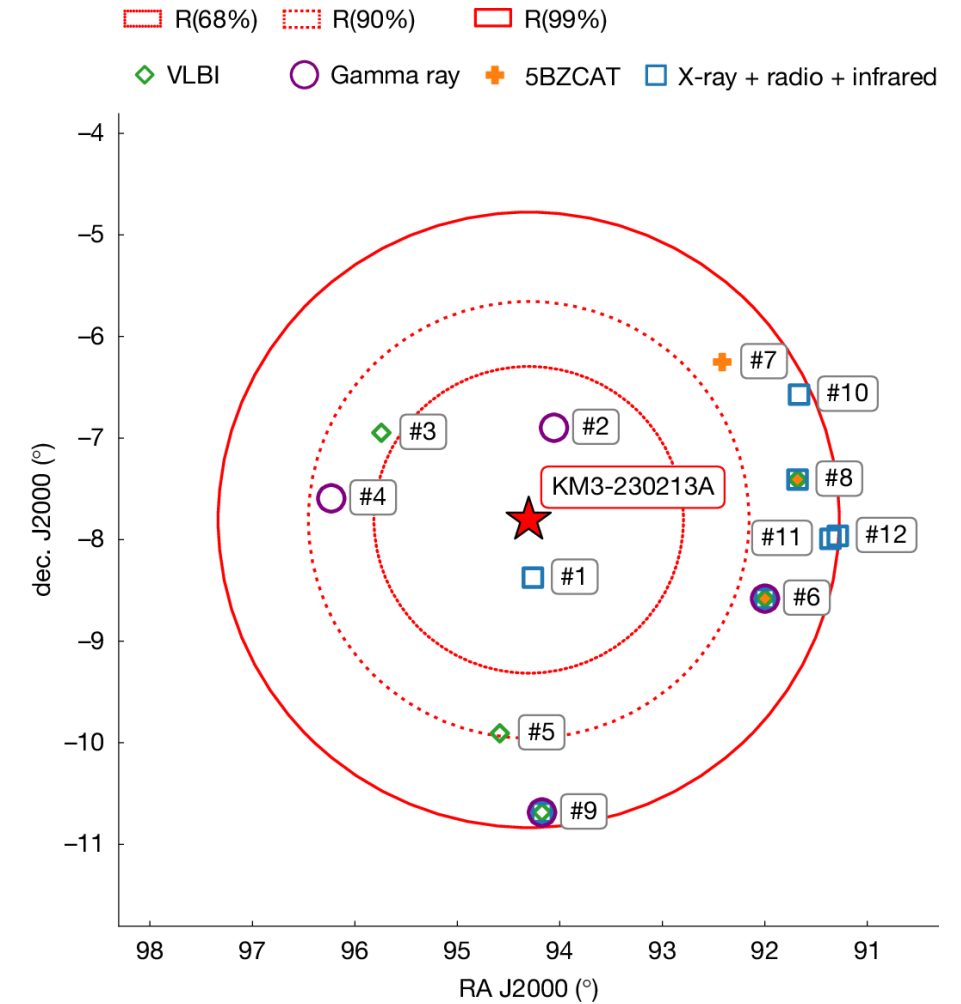
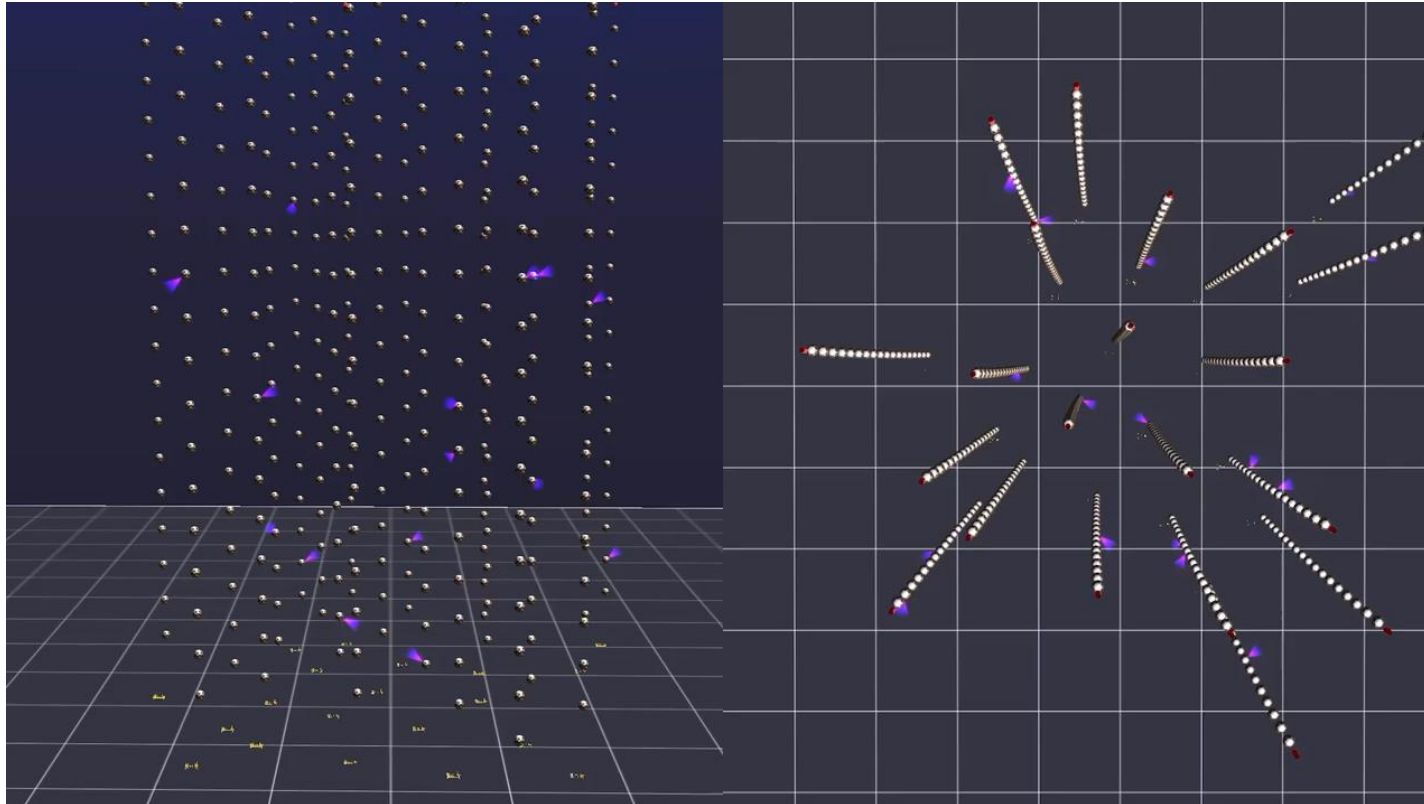
New Instrument enters the game

Highest energy neutrino event (220PeV)
observed by KM3NeT (with partial detector)

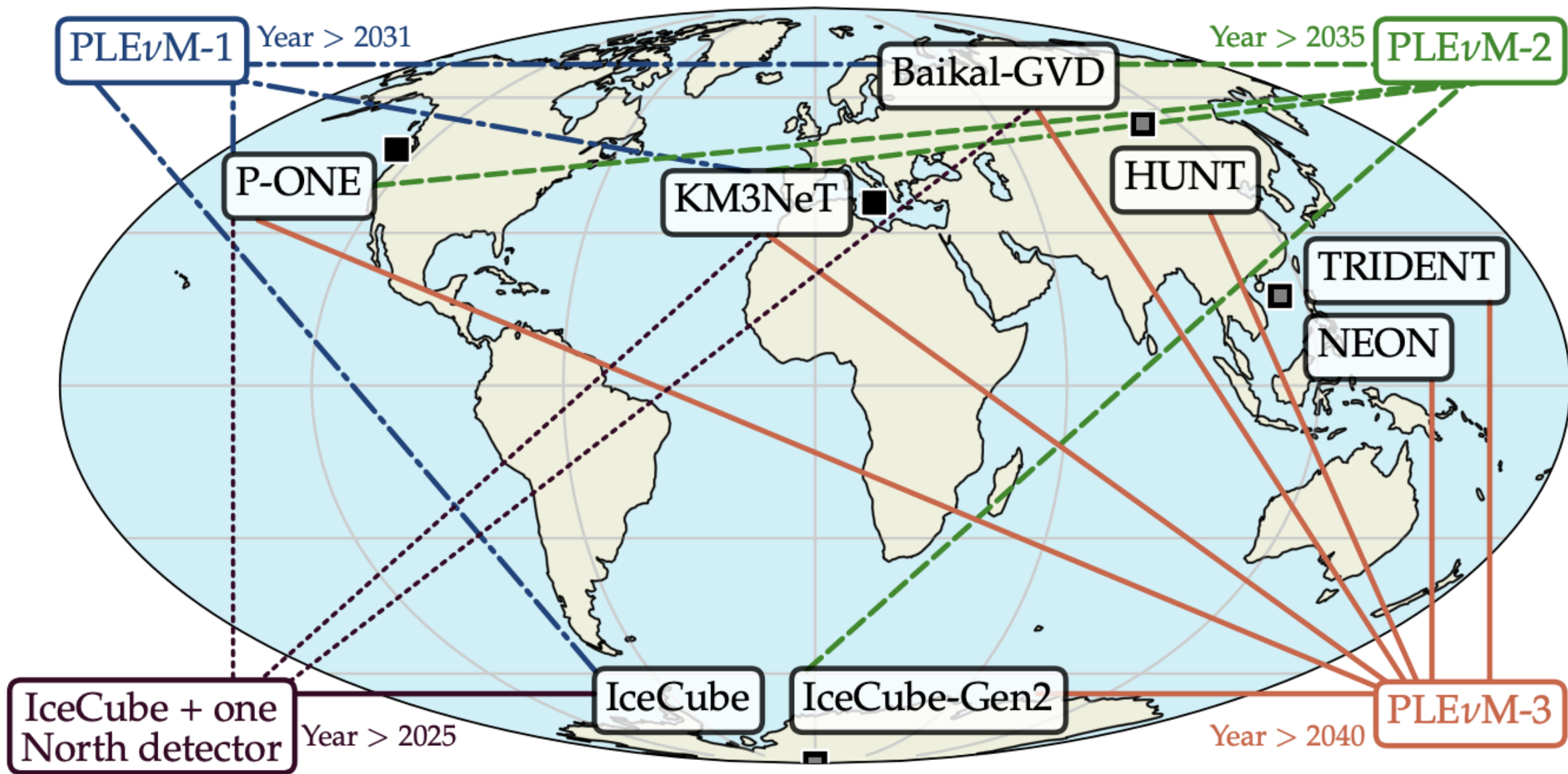


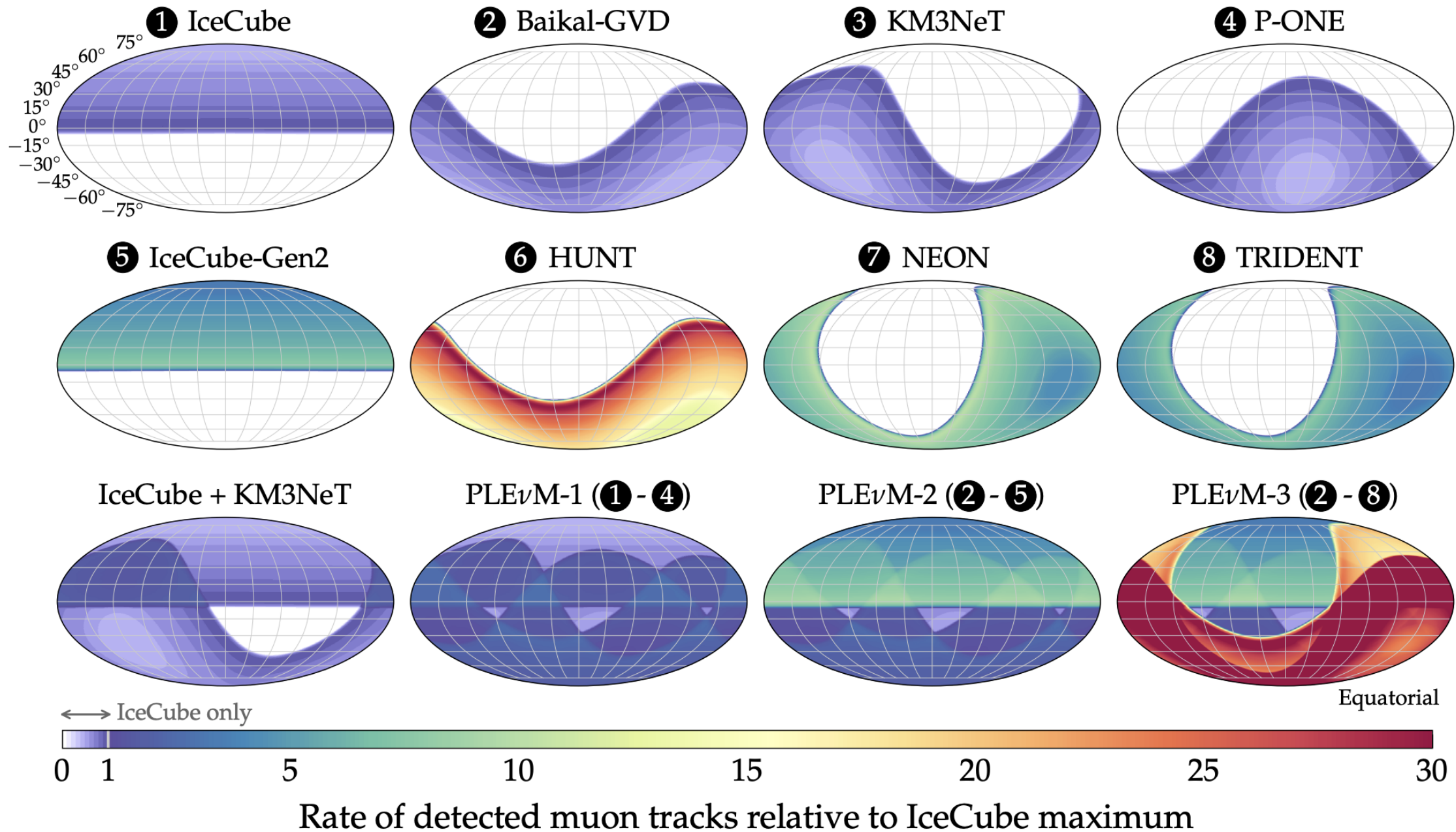
New Instrument enters the game

Highest energy neutrino event (220PeV)
observed by KM3NeT (with partial detector)



No unique blazar counterpart.
Galactic origin unlikely

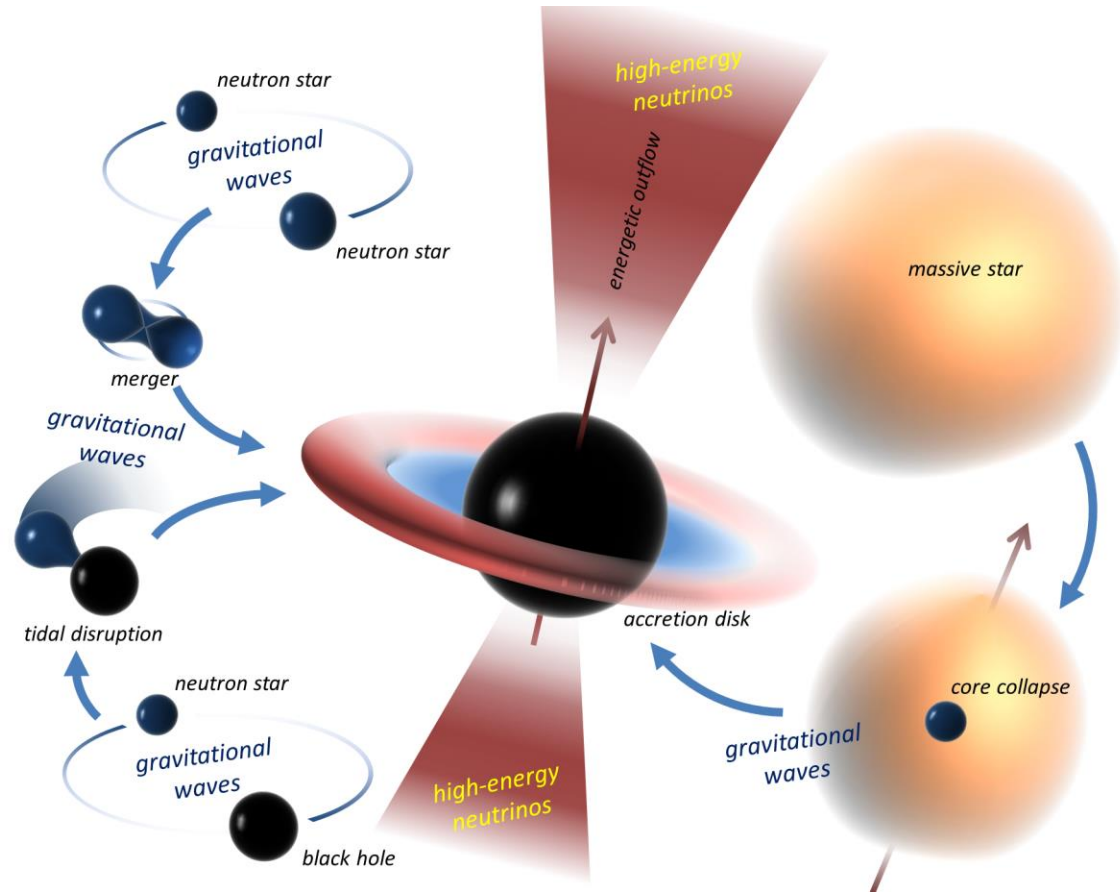




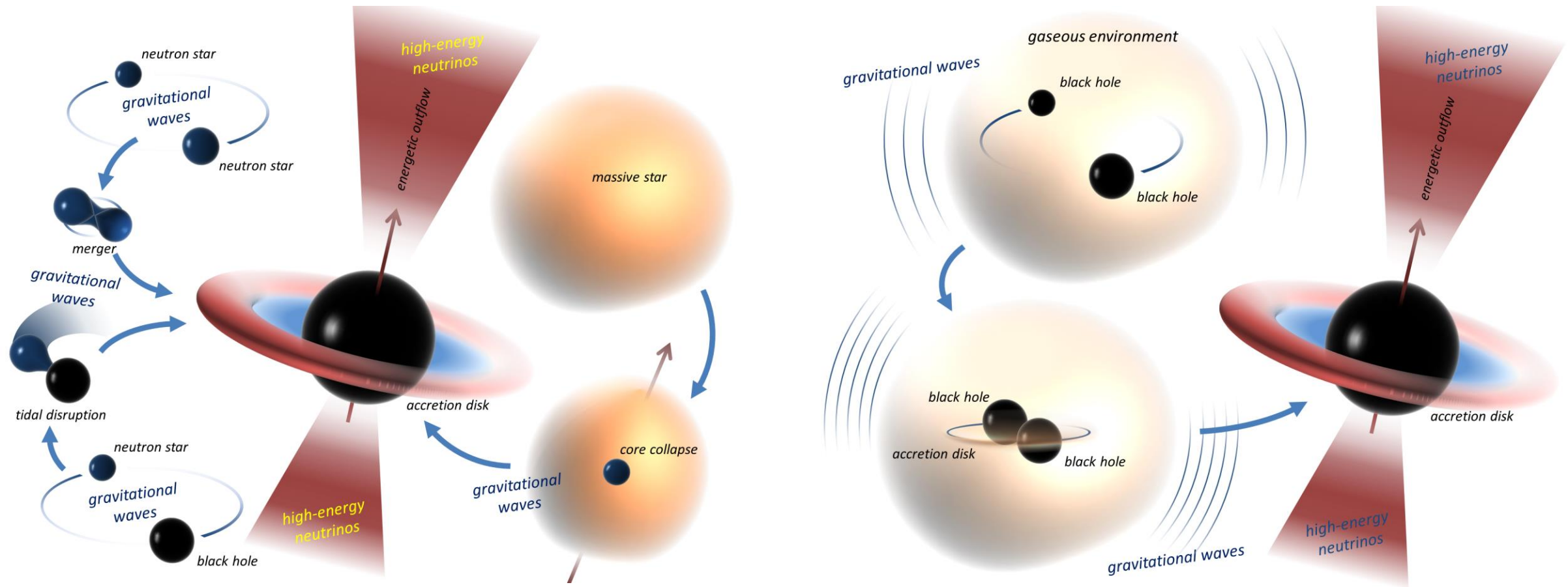
**How can we improve our
searches for neutrino
sources?**

Include new messengers

Neutrinos and Gravitational Waves

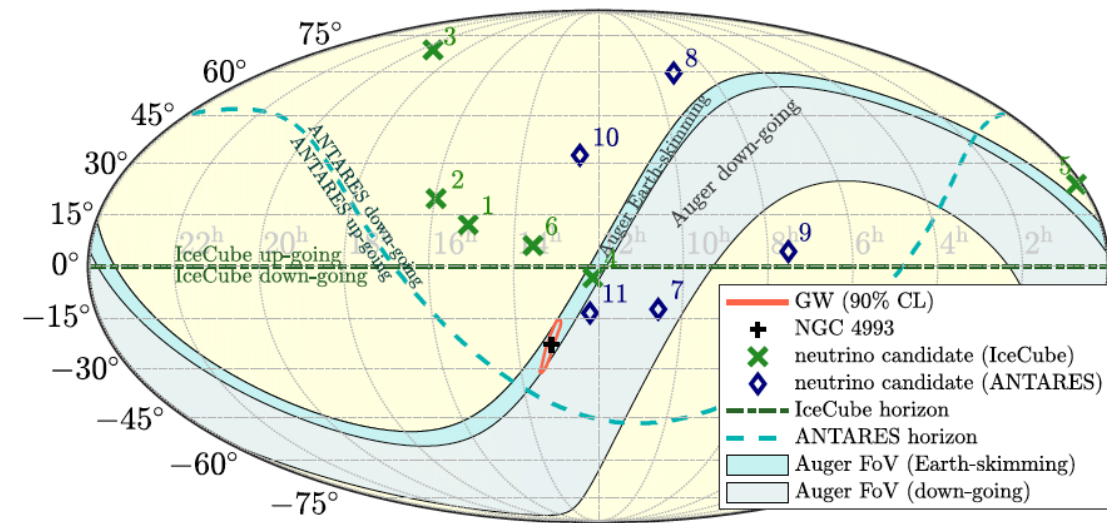
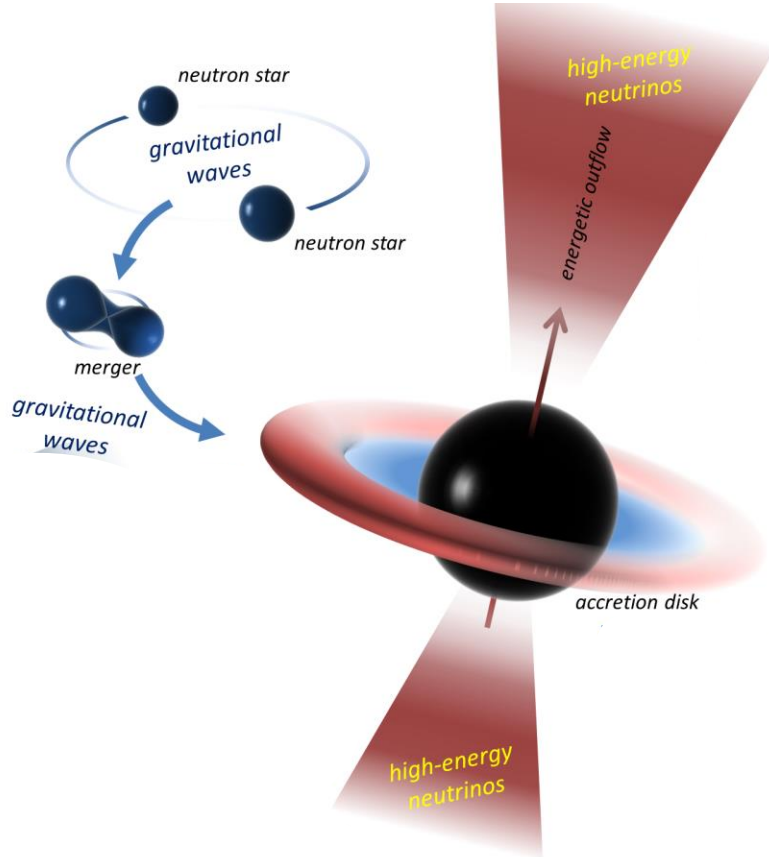


Neutrinos and Gravitational Waves



TeV Neutrinos and Gravitational Waves: BNS merger

GW170817: Search for neutrinos in ANTARES, Auger and IceCube data in ± 500 sec



Neutrino could help to constrain direction and teach us about the GW source environment

Summary

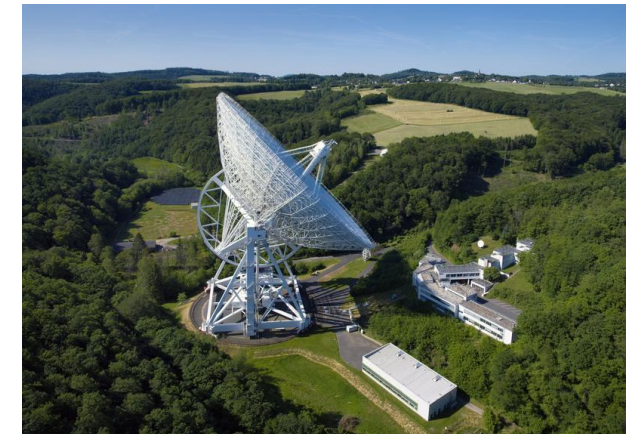
- Diffuse neutrino flux detected
- Sources mostly unknown
- Promising strategy: Identification of sources through electro-magnetic counterpart
- Realtime program enables counterpart searches for transient and variable sources



Graduate School on Astro-Particle Physics, Jan. 18-23, 2026 in Bad Honnef

We have a fantastic program including lectures on:

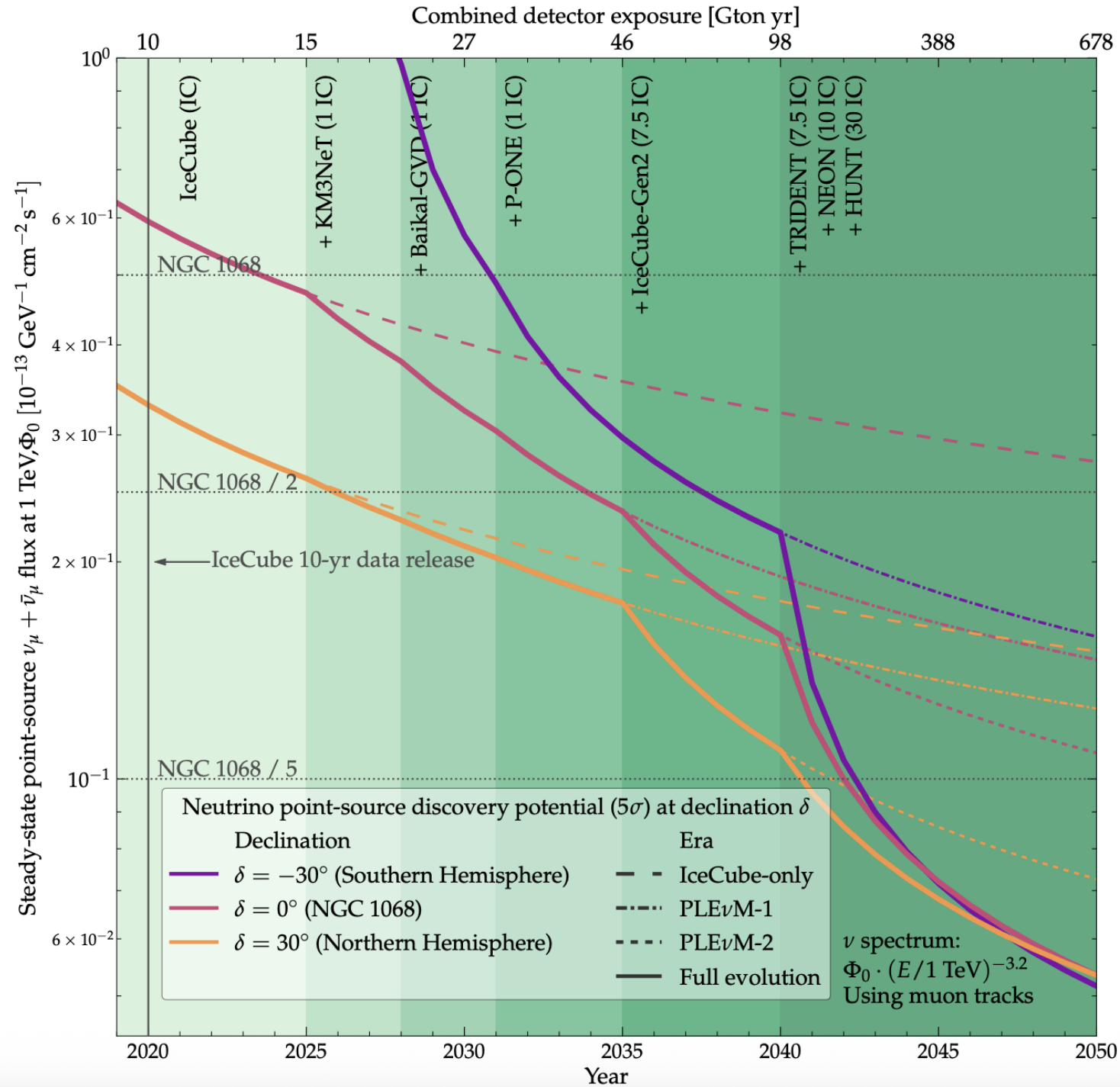
- Introduction to Astroparticle physics (Foteini Oikonomou)
- Astrophysical Plasmas and Cosmic Ray Propagation (Daniel Verscharen)
- Cosmic Ray Flux Calculations and Particle Physics Input (Michael Schmelling)
- Radio Astronomy (Laura Spittler)
- Neutrino Astronomy (Dorothea Samtleben)
- Galactic Magnetic Fields (Marijke Haverkorn)
- Multi-Messenger Astronomy (Marek Kowalski)
- Gravitational Waves (Michela Mapelli)
- Introduction to Machine learning with hands-on session



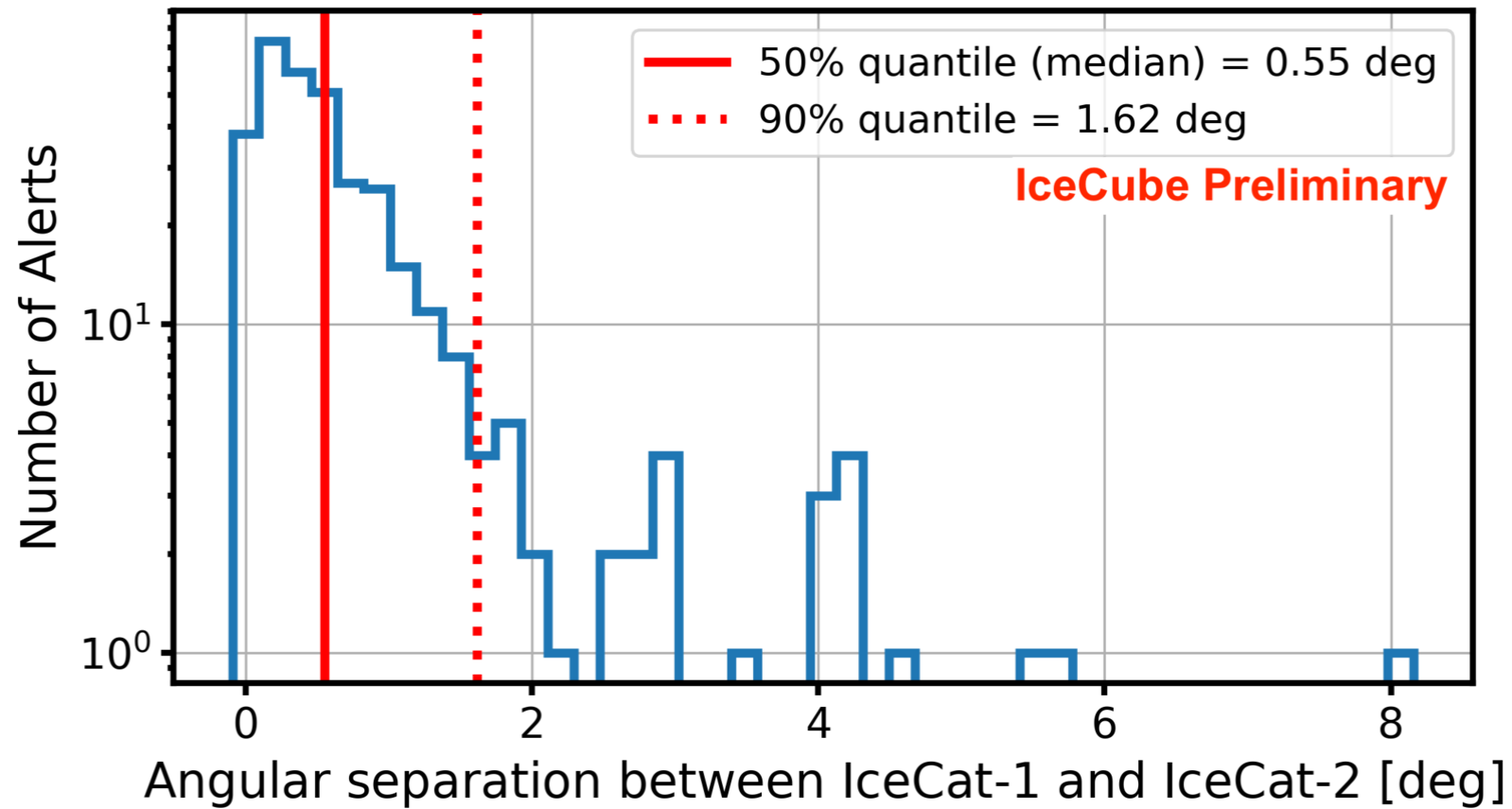
and an **evening lecture by Jocelyn Bell Burnell!**

Costs for one week of full board only 200
Euros (100 Euros for DPG members)

Back up

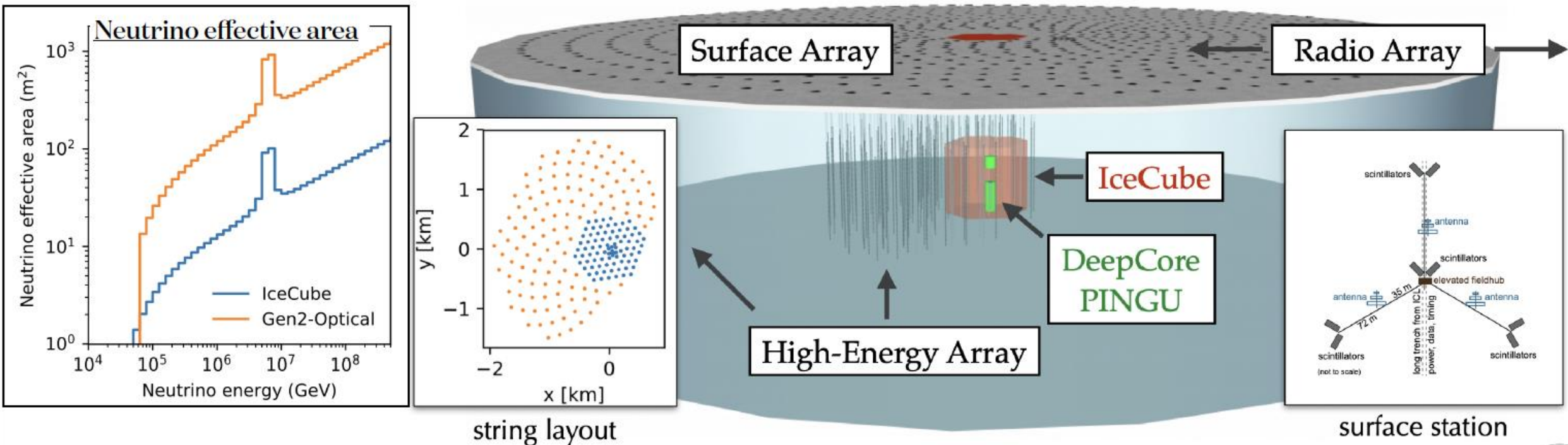


IceCat-1 vs. IceCat-2



IceCube-Gen2

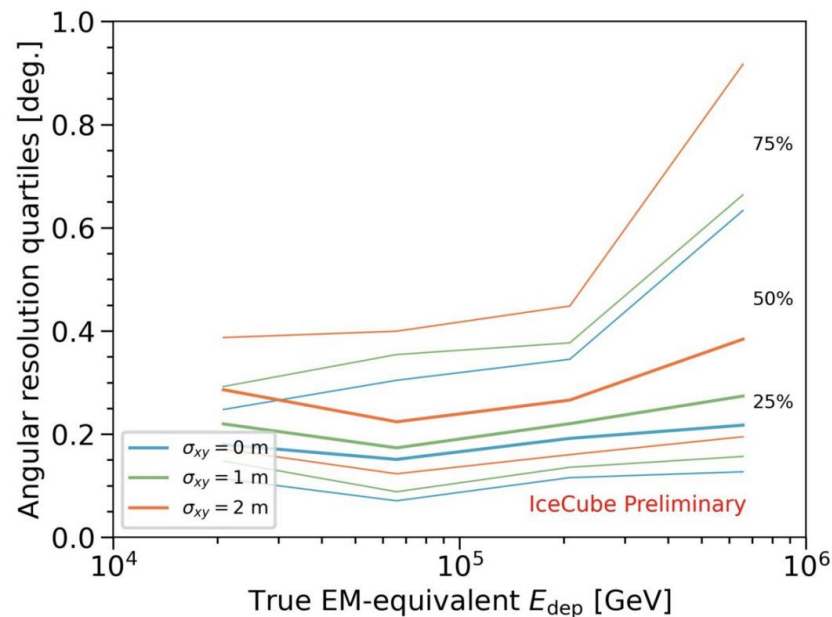
- Multi-component facility (low- and high-energy & multi-messenger)
- In-ice optical Cherenkov array with 120 strings and 240m spacing (~8 cubic-kilometre detector)
- Surface array (scintillators & radio antennas) for PeV-EeV CRs
- Askaryan radio array for $>10\text{PeV}$ neutrino detection



Improved reco algorithms

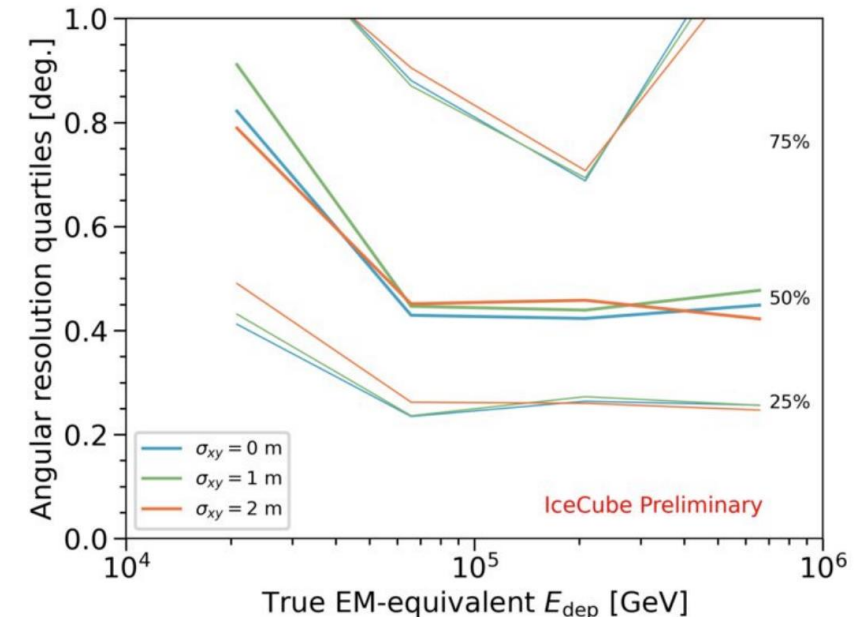
Spline MPE

- Fits continuous light emission along the high-energy muon track → good for the lower muon energies
- Uses only the first-detected photon plus the total number of detected photons per each DOM → simpler method, robust against uncertainties in the ice modeling

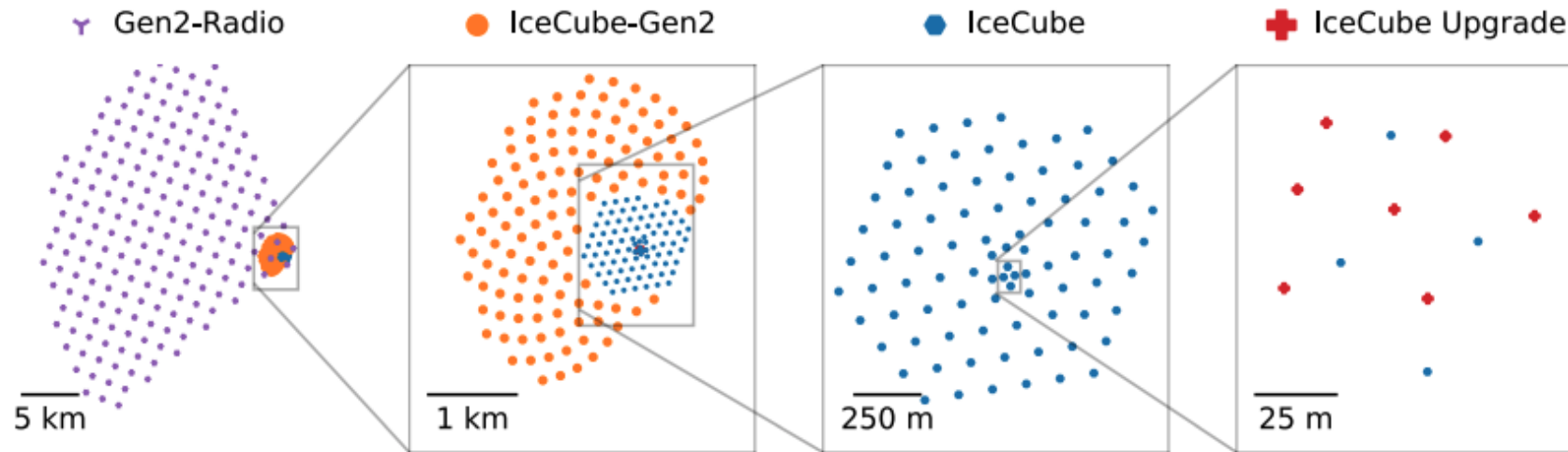
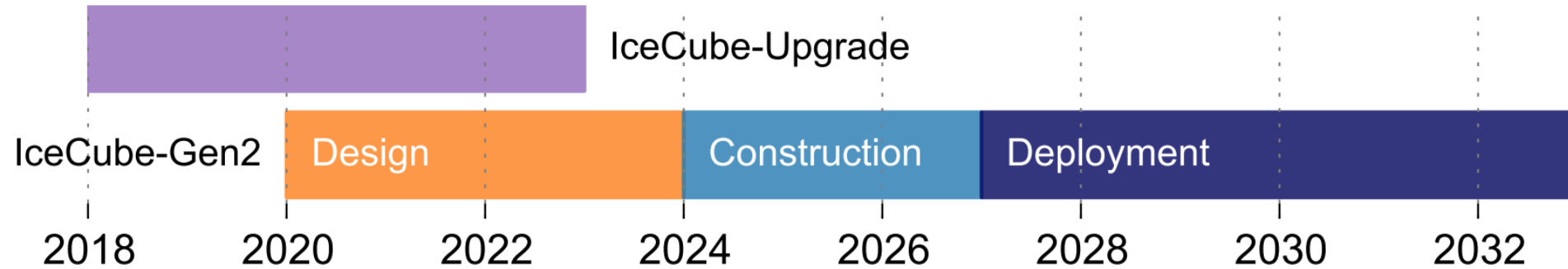


Millipede Wilks

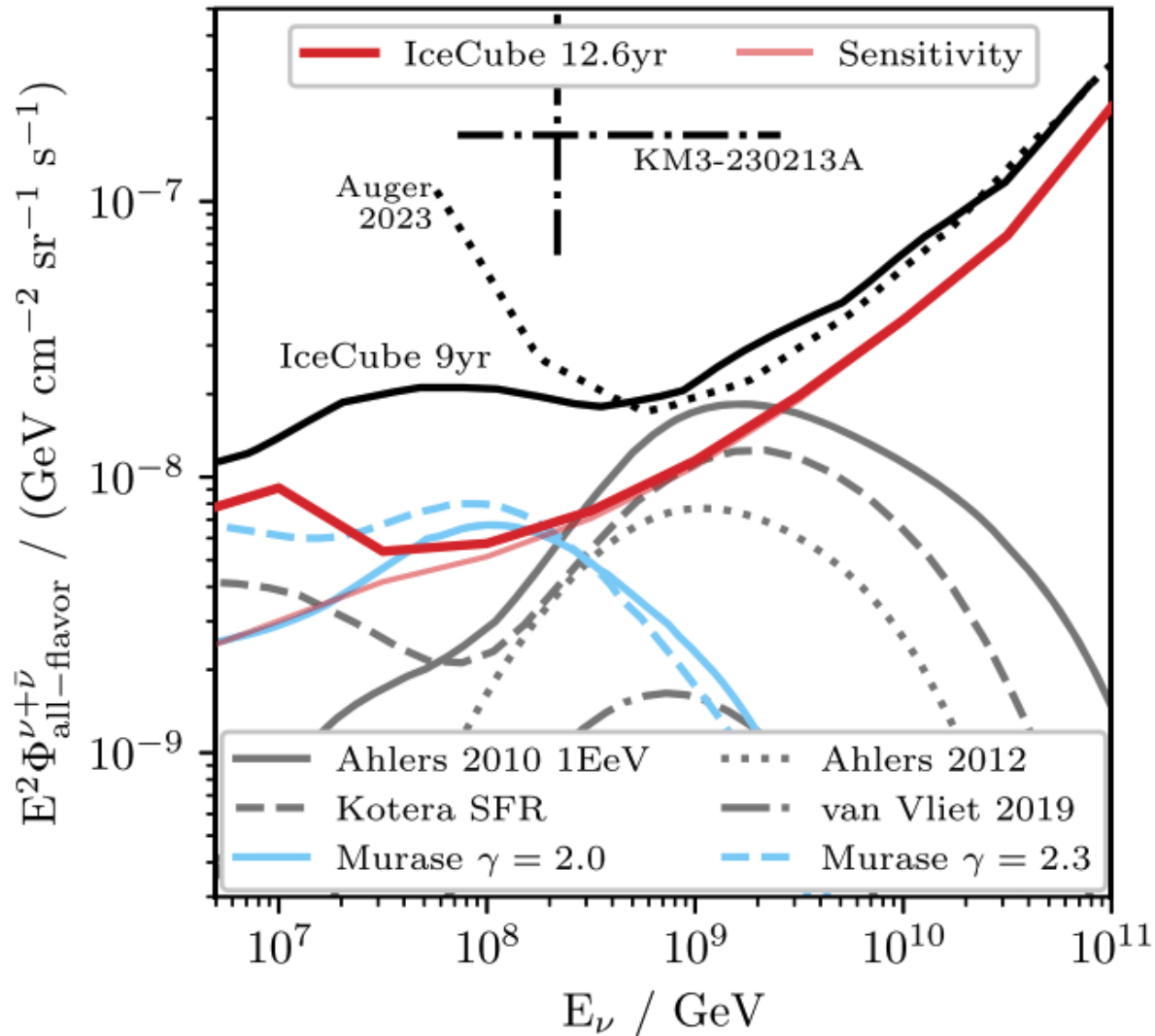
- Fits stochastic energy losses along track → good for the highest muon energies.
- Uses all detected-photons per each digital optical module → very sophisticated, but requires detailed modeling of the ice



IceCube-Gen2 time line



First cosmogenic neutrino?

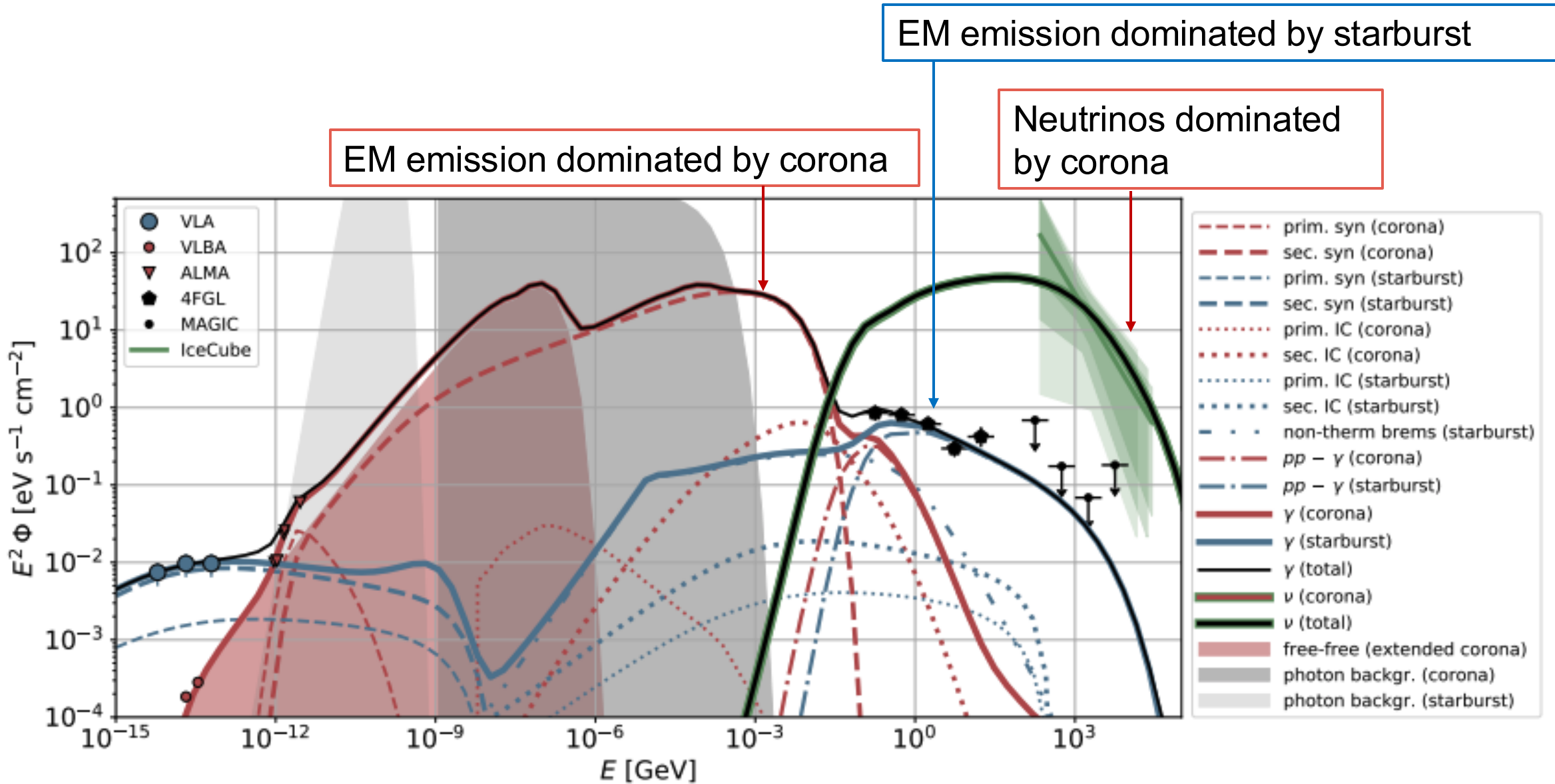


$$p + \gamma_{CMB} \rightarrow \Delta^+ \rightarrow \begin{cases} p + \pi^0 \\ n + \pi^+ \end{cases}$$

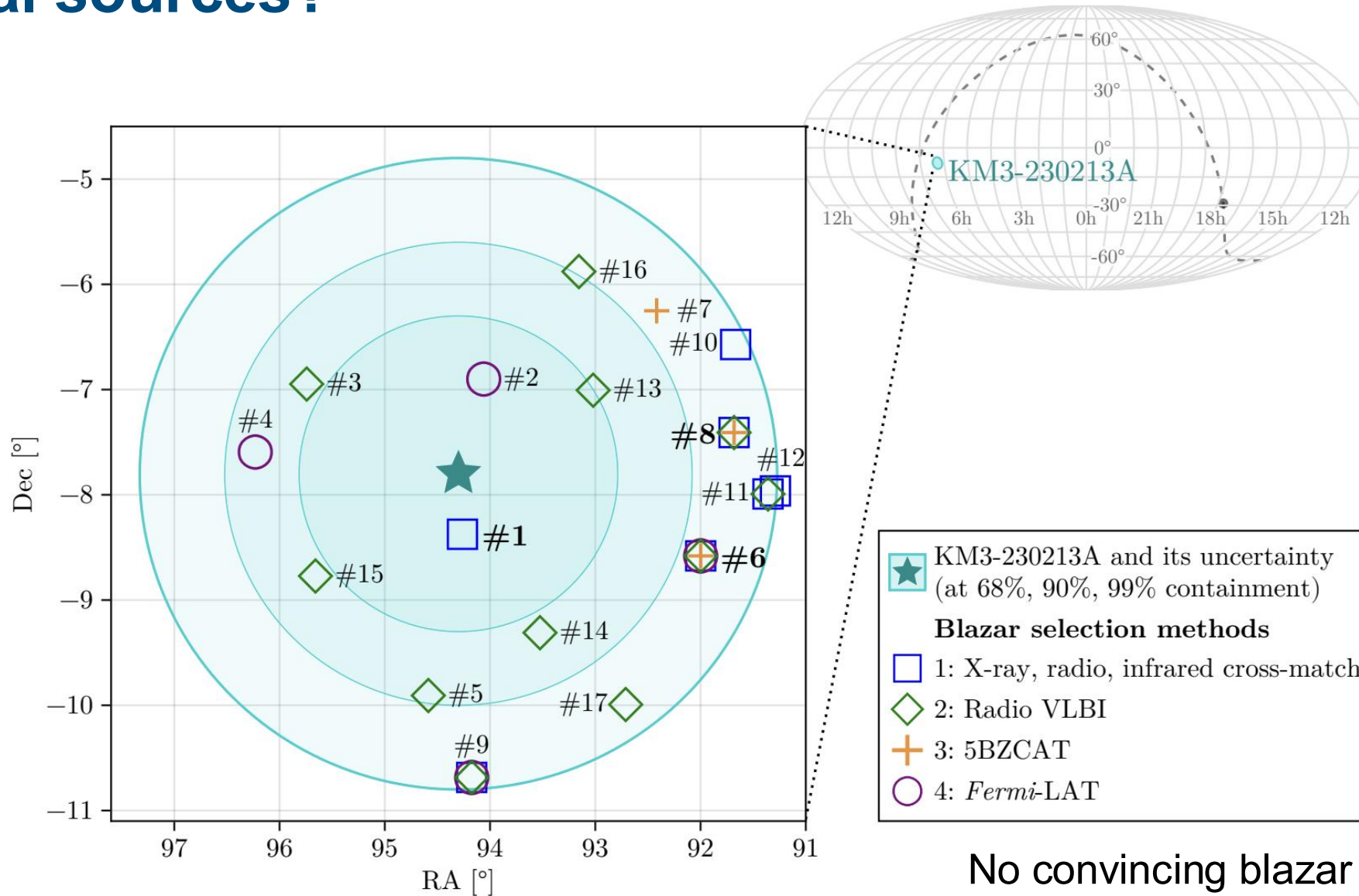
Energy Threshold: $5 \cdot 10^{19} \text{ eV}$

based on a joint-lifetime fit
(Auger, IceCube, KM3NeT)
 $\sim 2.9\sigma$ tension

Detailed Modeling of Starburst-AGN Composite

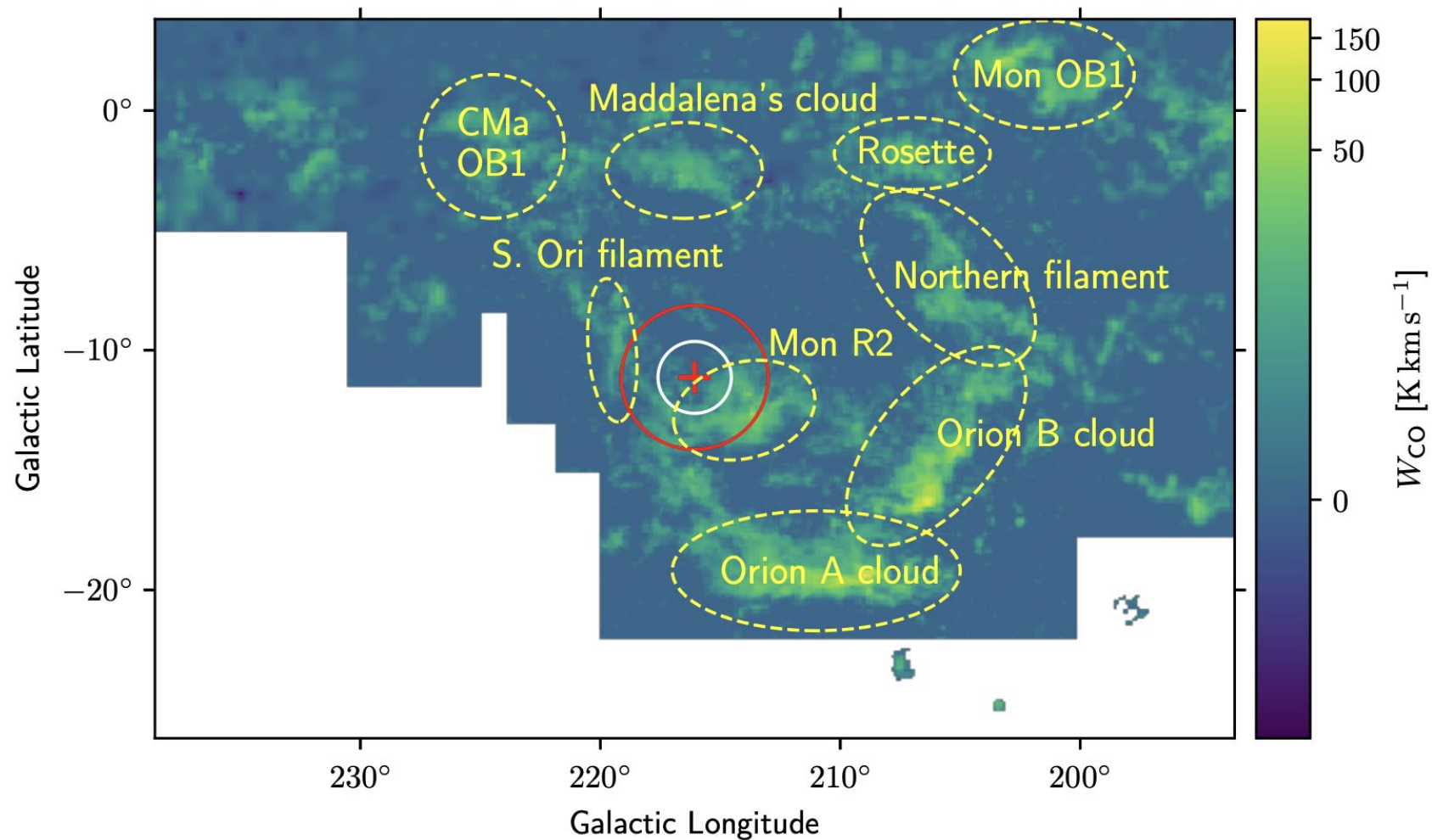


Potential sources?



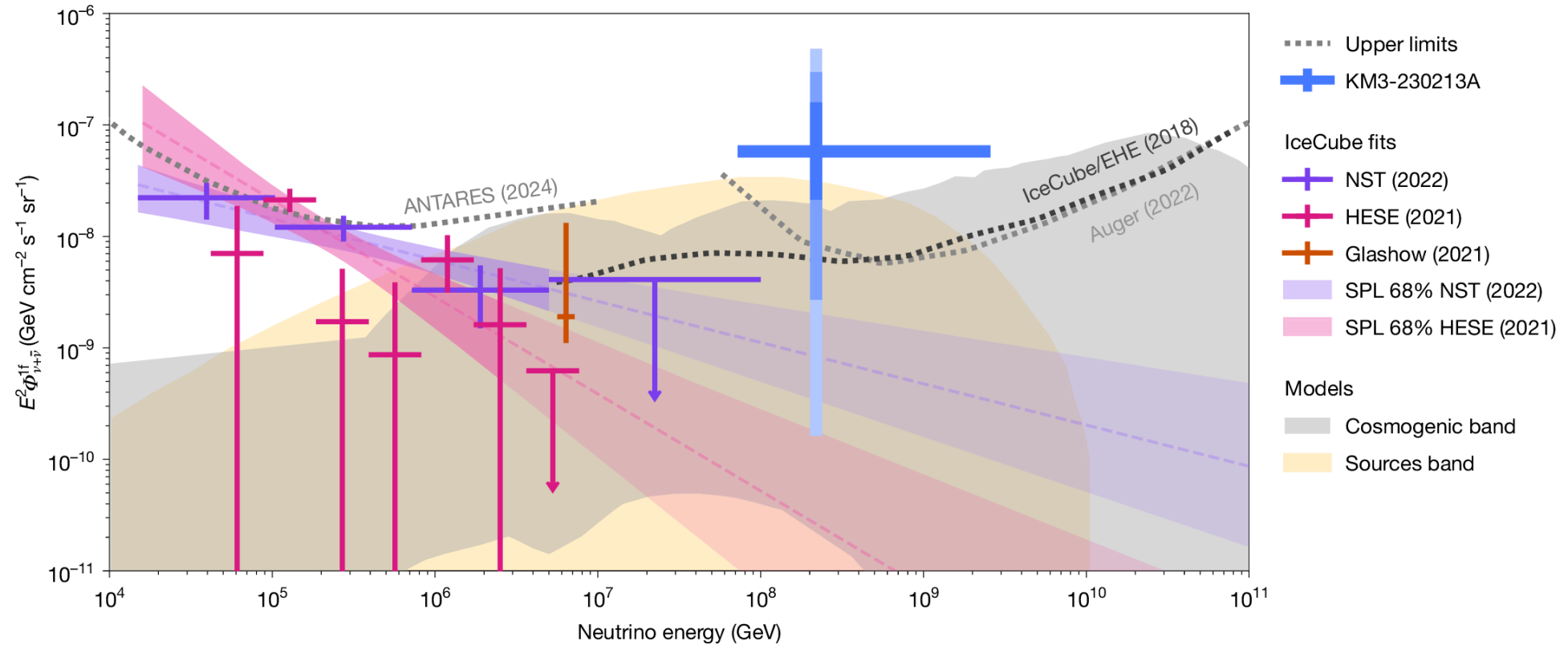
No convincing blazar
counterpart found

Potential sources?

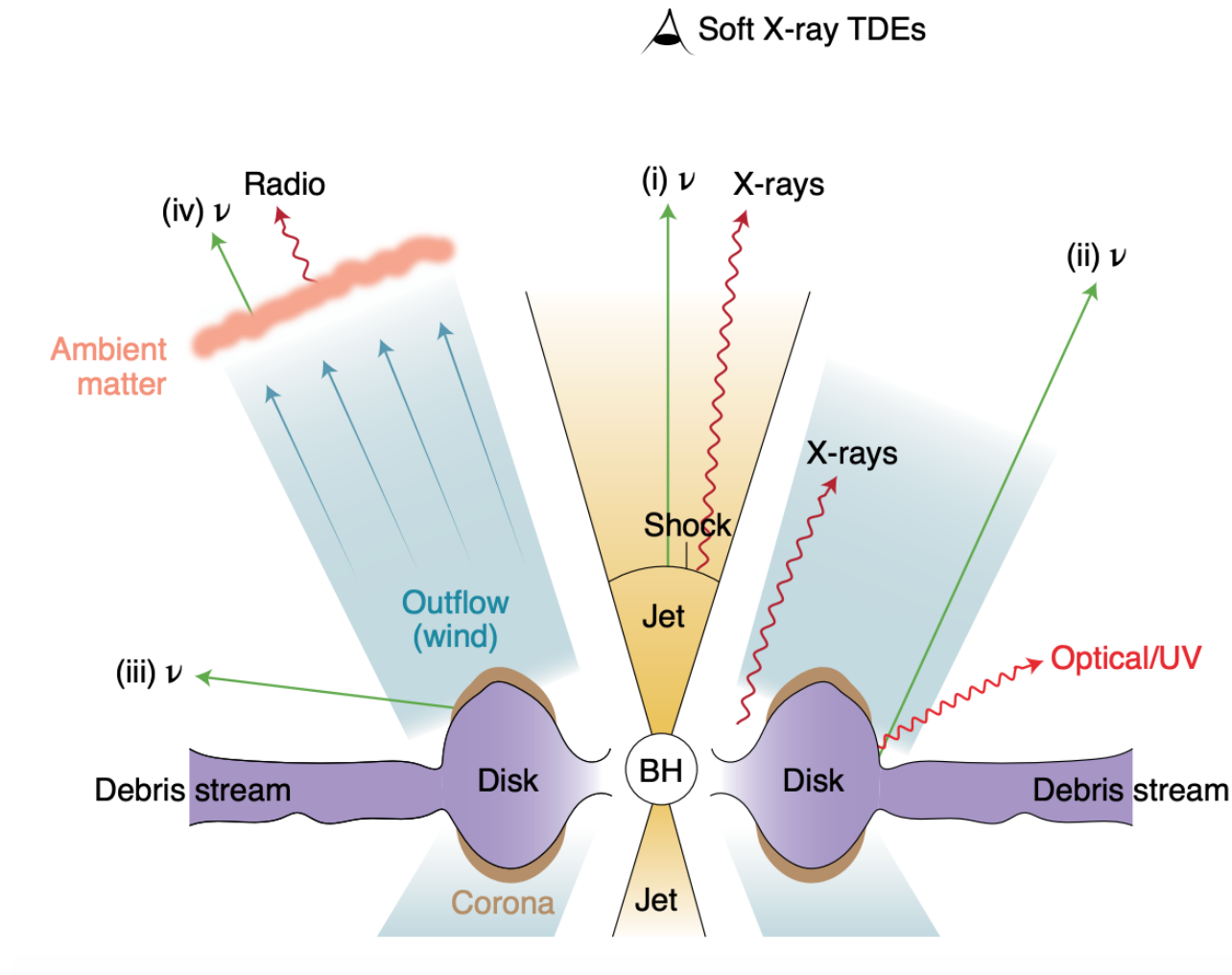


Galactic origin unlikely

Tension with IceCube and Auger upper limits?



Neutrino Production in TDEs



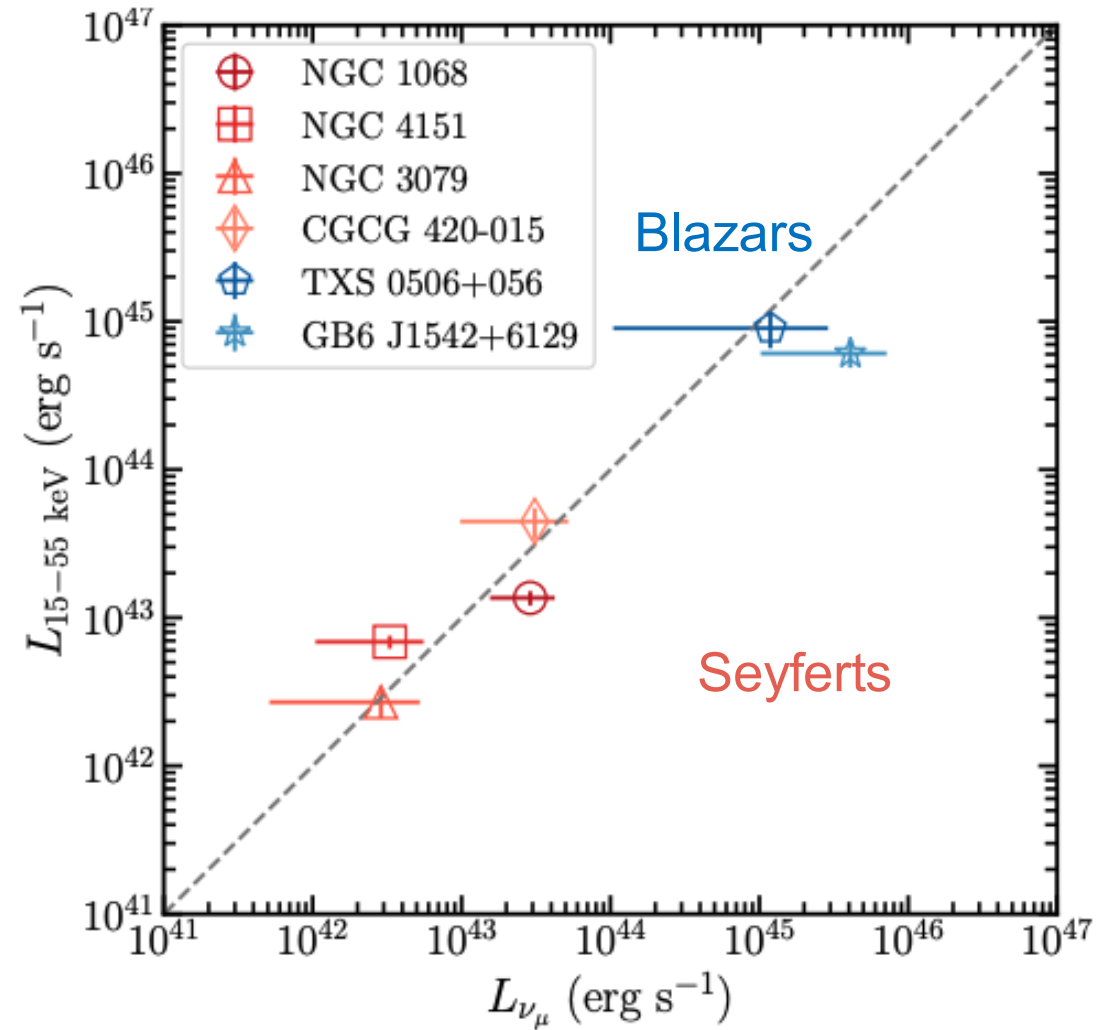
Different scenarios for
neutrino production

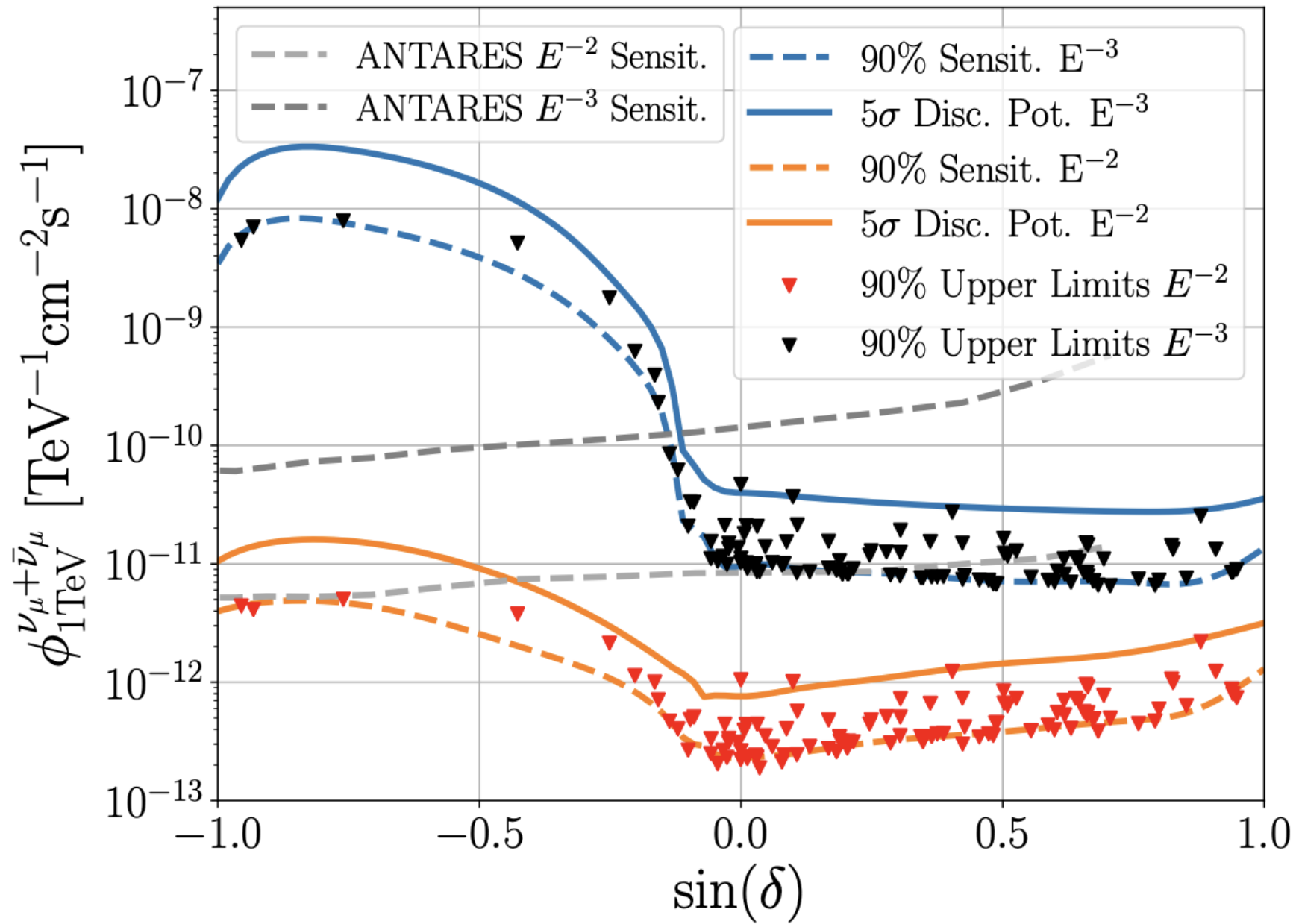
Winter & Lunardini, Nature Astronomy 2021
Liu et al. PRD, 102 (2020) Murase et al.
ApJ 902 (2020)

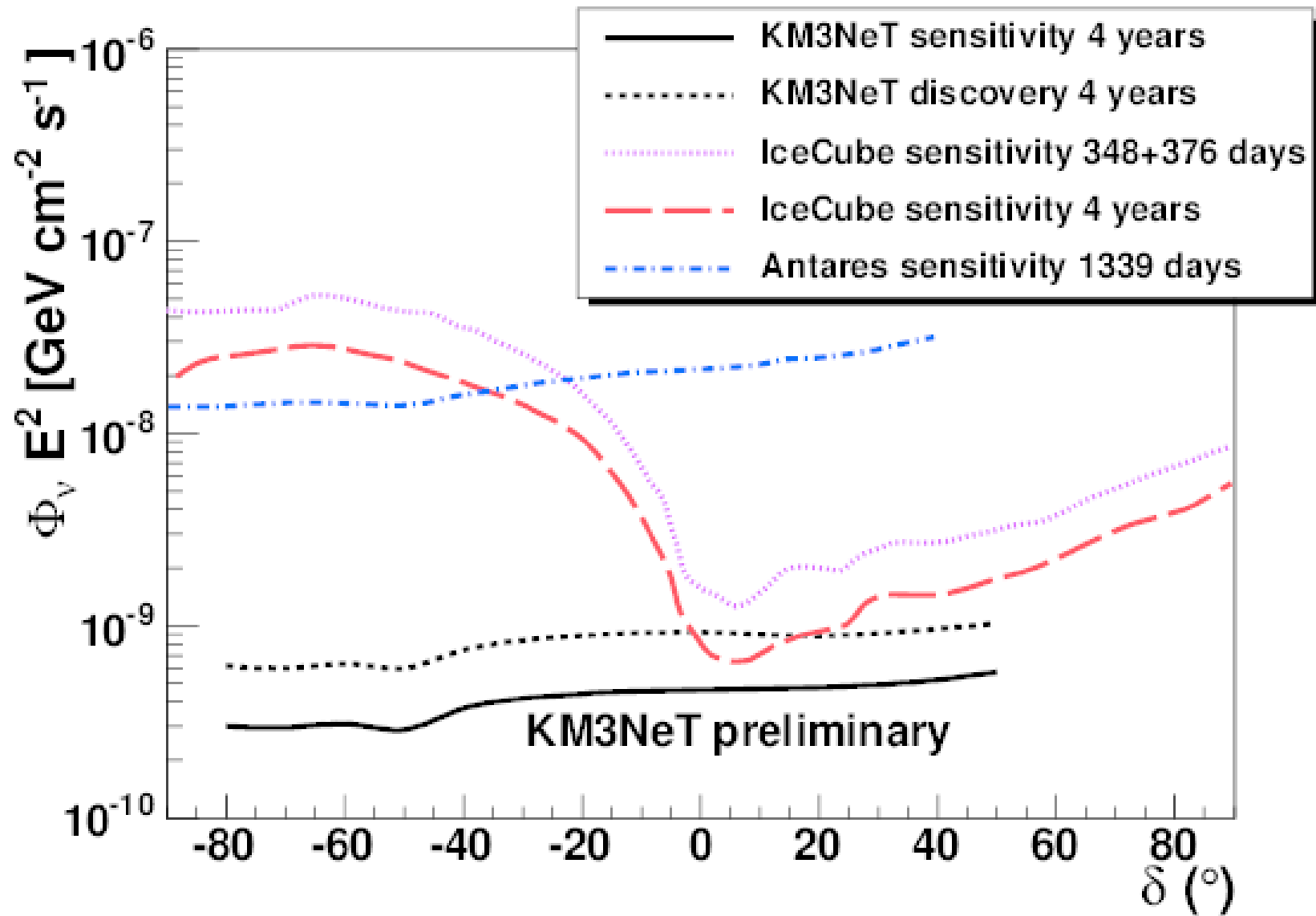
► Optical/UV TDEs

Connection of Seyferts and Blazar neutrino candidates?

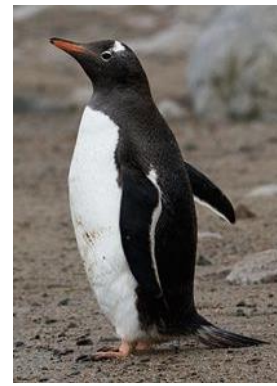
Scaling between neutrinos and intrinsic hard X-ray flux for Seyfert and blazar neutrino source candidates?



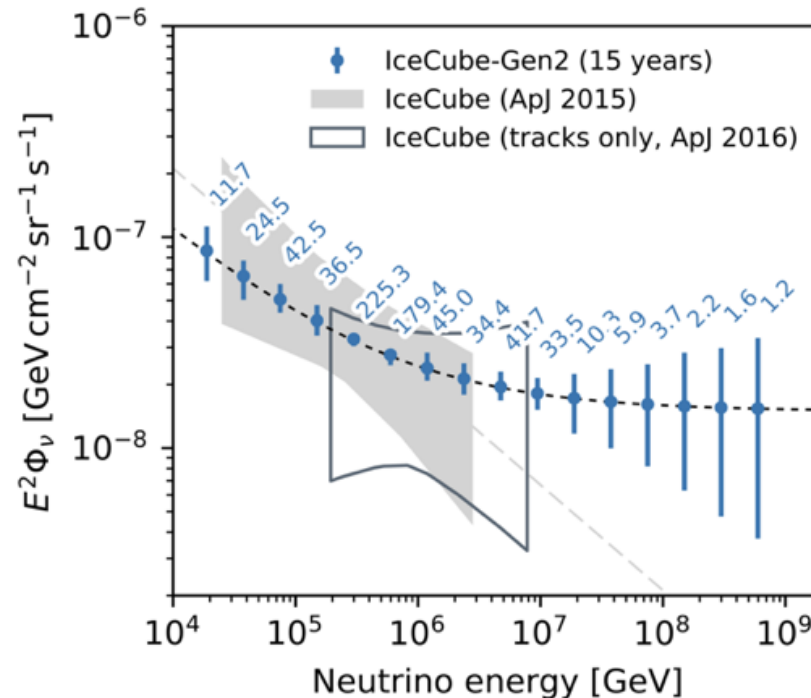




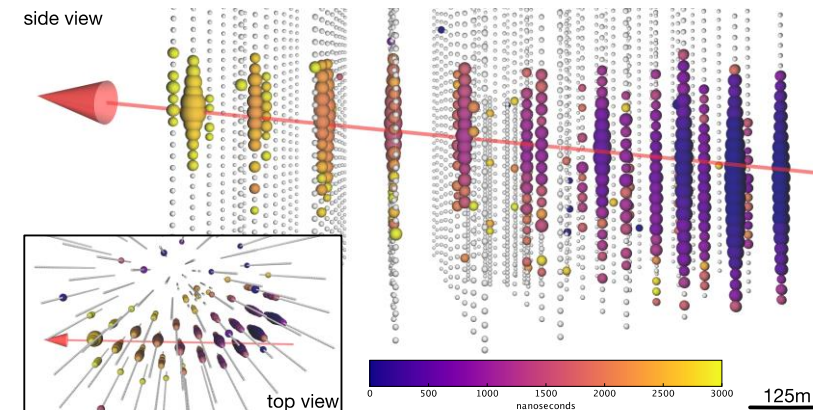
Neutrino Astronomy with IceCube Gen2



Precision measurement of the spectrum
from 10 TeV - 100 PeV
(up to 10 EeV with Gen2 Radio)



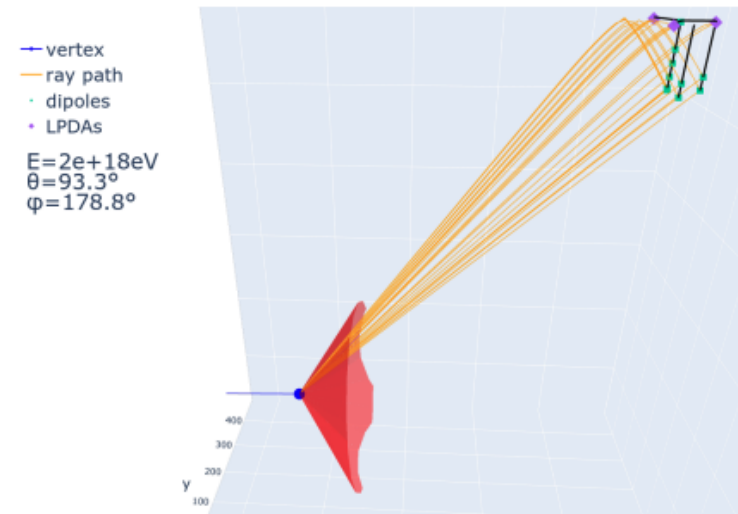
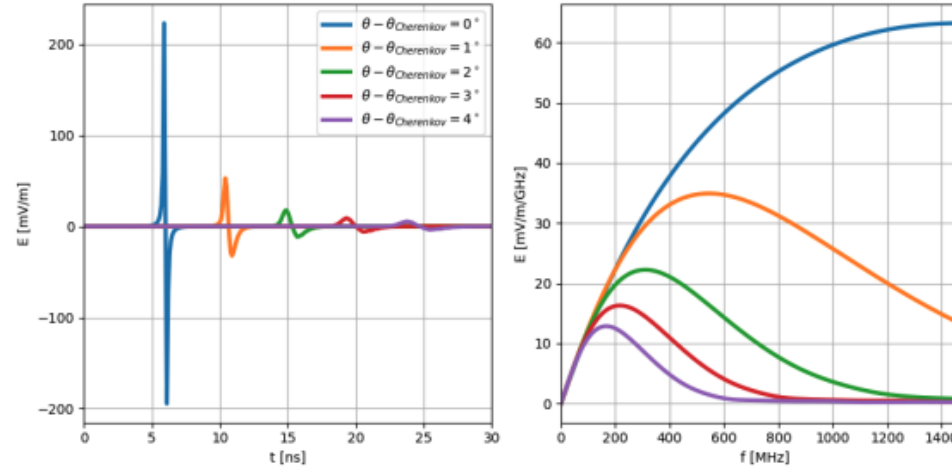
>1 high-energy neutrino / year
from gamma-ray blazars



Radio emission of showers in dense media

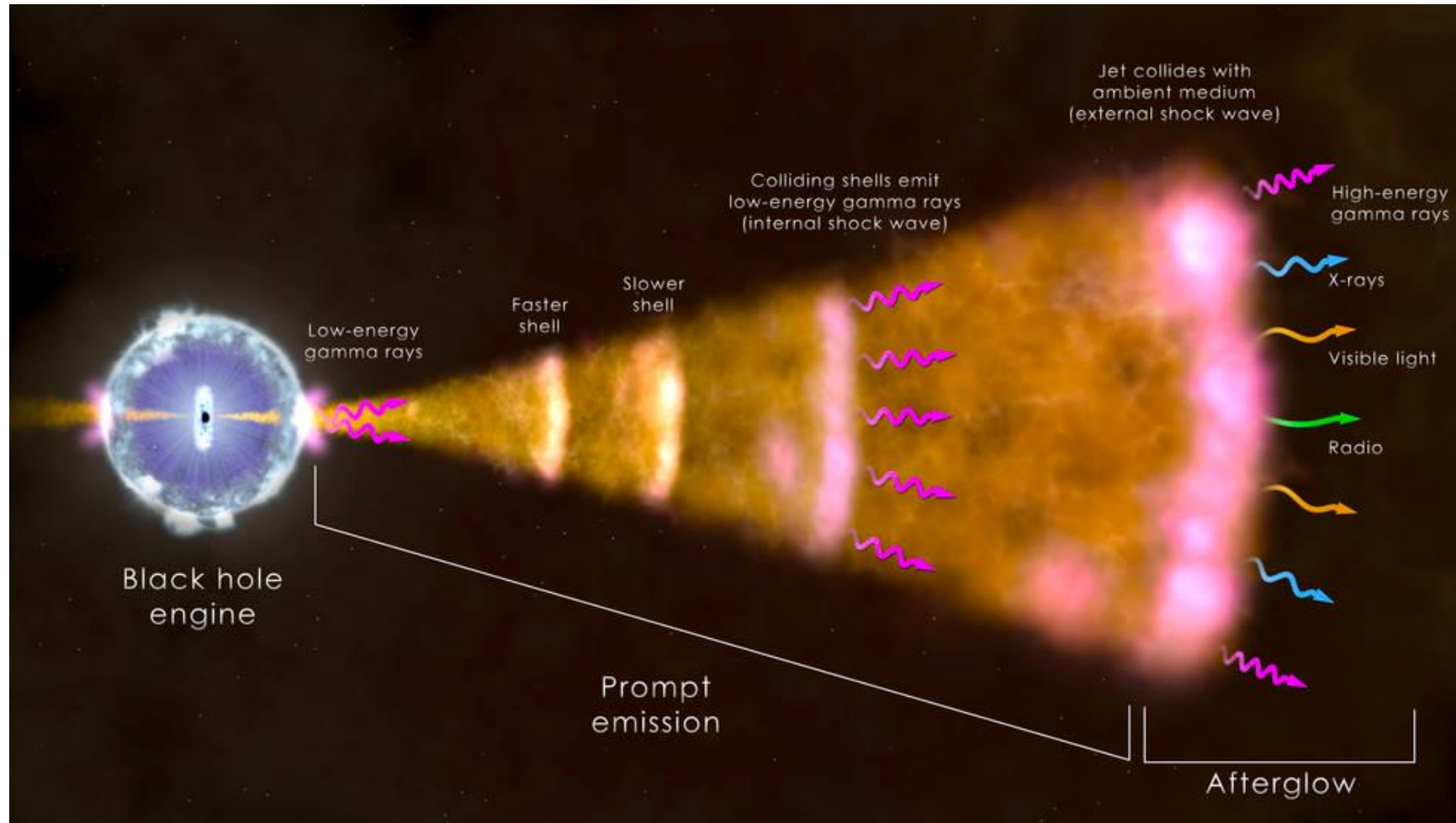
What are we looking for?

- **Askaryan effect:** Charge accumulation in the shower front gives rise to a changing current, which gives rise to radio emission
- Emission is coherent at frequencies corresponding to the size of the shower
- Index of refraction $\gg 1$, emission strong on the Cherenkov cone, travel on non-straight lines with changing n
- Signals contain information in amplitude, frequency and polarisation



Gamma-Ray Bursts (GRBs)

Extremely large energy release on the time-scale of 0.1-100 seconds

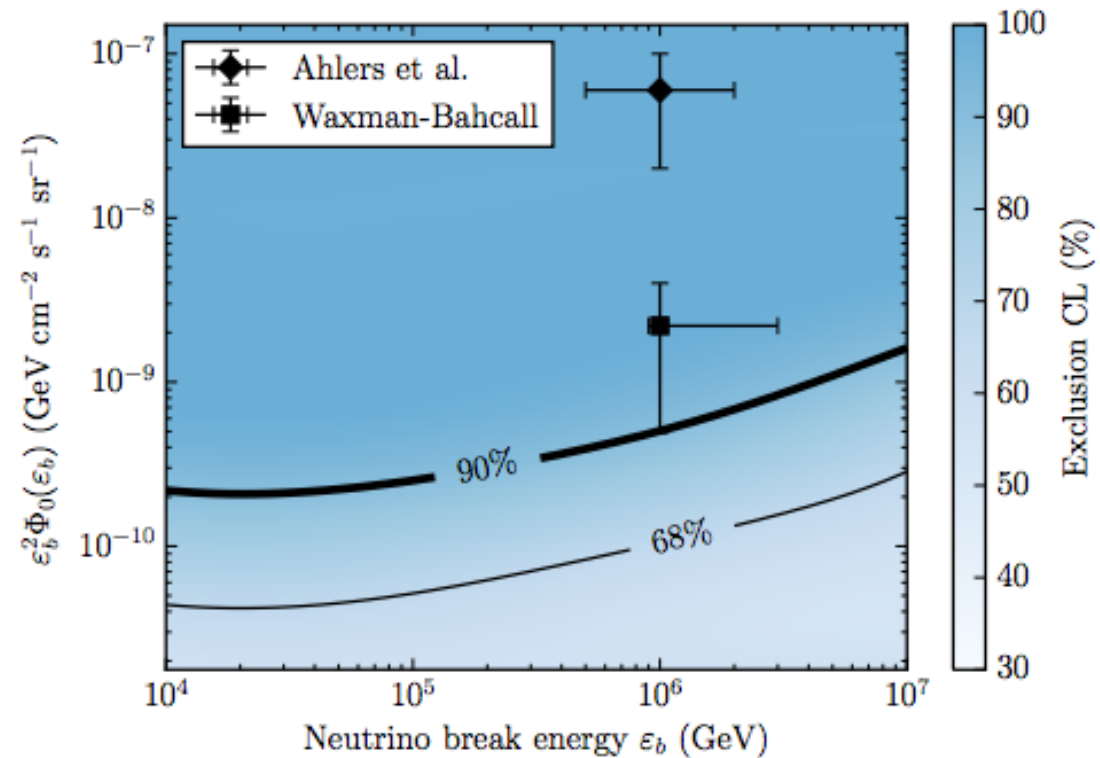


Gamma-Ray Bursts (GRBs)

Gamma rays and X-rays tell us **where** and **when** to look for neutrinos

Prompt emission of
> 800 GRBs correlated
with IceCube data
→ **no excess found**

Precursor and
afterglow searches in
preparation



GRBs contribute less than 1% to observed diffuse neutrino flux. Potential large population of nearby low-luminosity GRBs not constrained

1.7 GHz Map

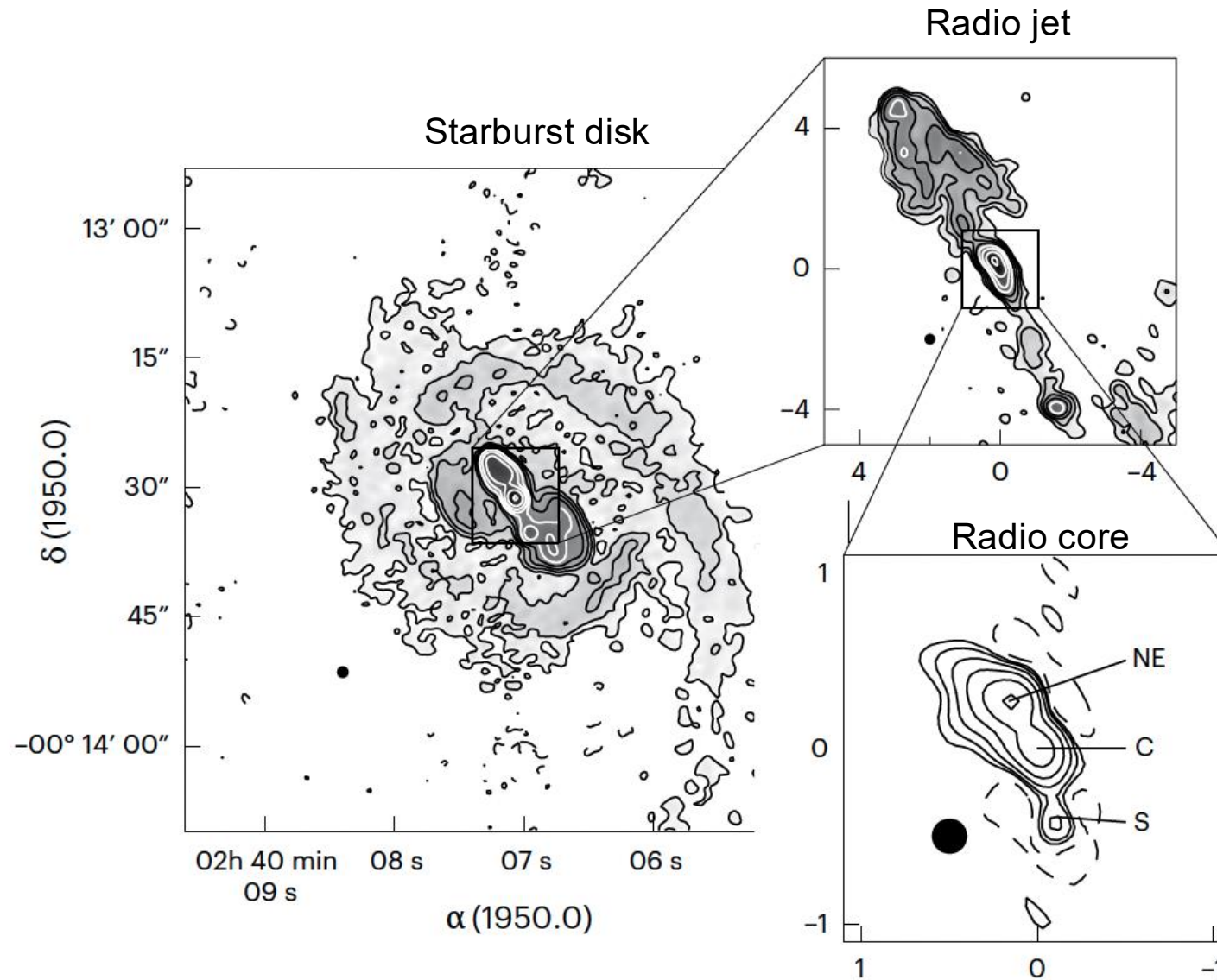


Table 1 | Measured powers

L_{radio} (1.4 GHz) (erg s ⁻¹)	L_{FIR} (8–100 μm) (erg s ⁻¹)	L_{x} (2–10 keV) (erg s ⁻¹)	$L_{\text{γ}}$ (0.1–100 GeV) (erg s ⁻¹)	$L_{\text{ν}}$ (1.5–15 TeV) (erg s ⁻¹)	L_{Edd} (erg s ⁻¹)
$10^{38.9}$	$10^{44.6 \pm 0.1}$	$10^{43.4 \pm 0.3}$	$10^{40.92 \pm 0.03}$	$10^{42.1 \pm 0.2}$	$10^{44.9 \pm 0.3a}$

^aA factor of 2 uncertainty was assumed on M_{BH} .

Table 2 | Derived powers

L_{kin} (erg s ⁻¹)	L_{jet} (erg s ⁻¹)	L_{bol} (erg s ⁻¹)	$L_{\text{bol}}/L_{\text{Edd}}$
$10^{41.6 \pm 1.0}$	$10^{42.9 \pm 1.0}$	$10^{44.7 \pm 0.5}$	$10^{-0.3 \pm 0.6}$

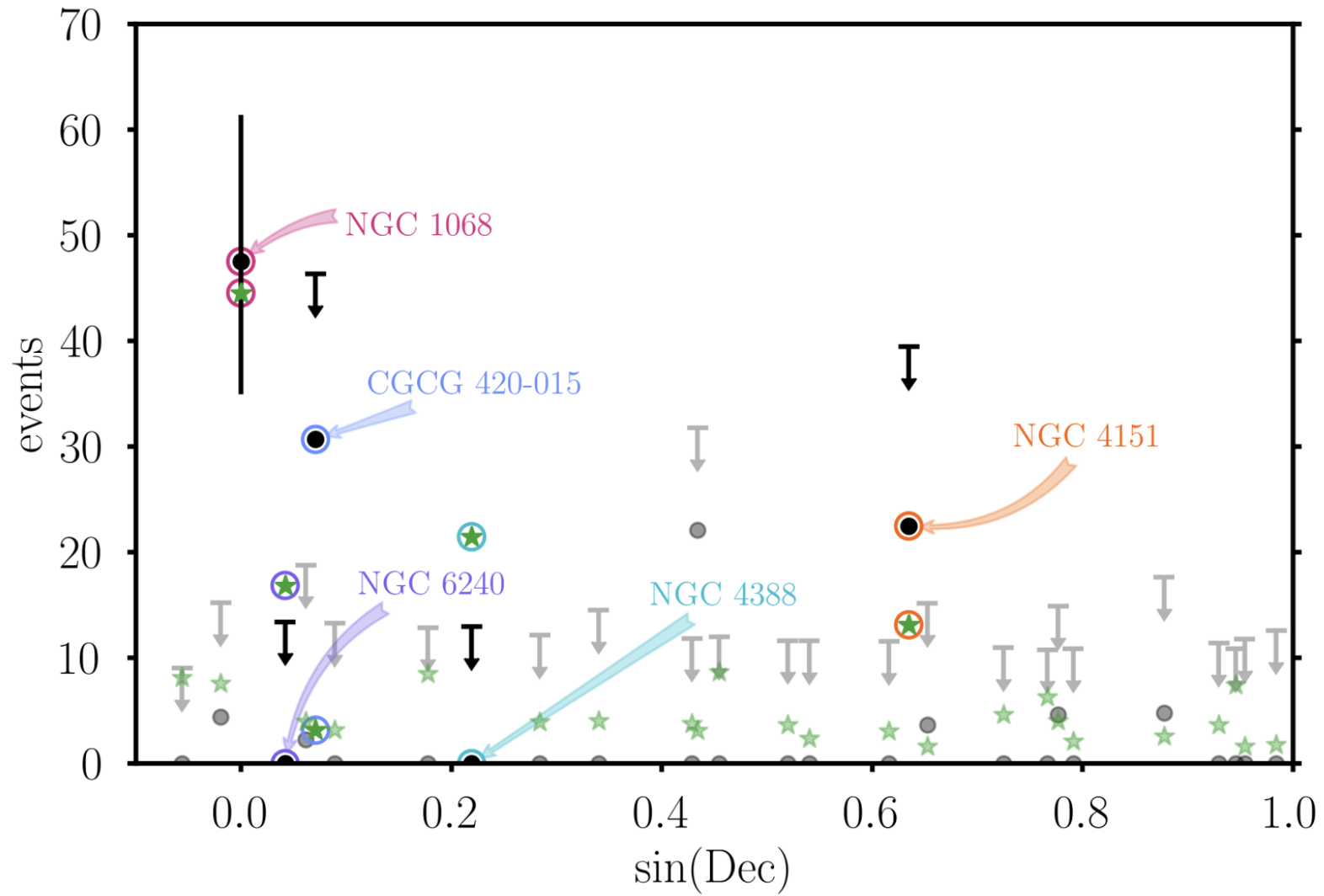
Note that the Eddington ratio is unitless.

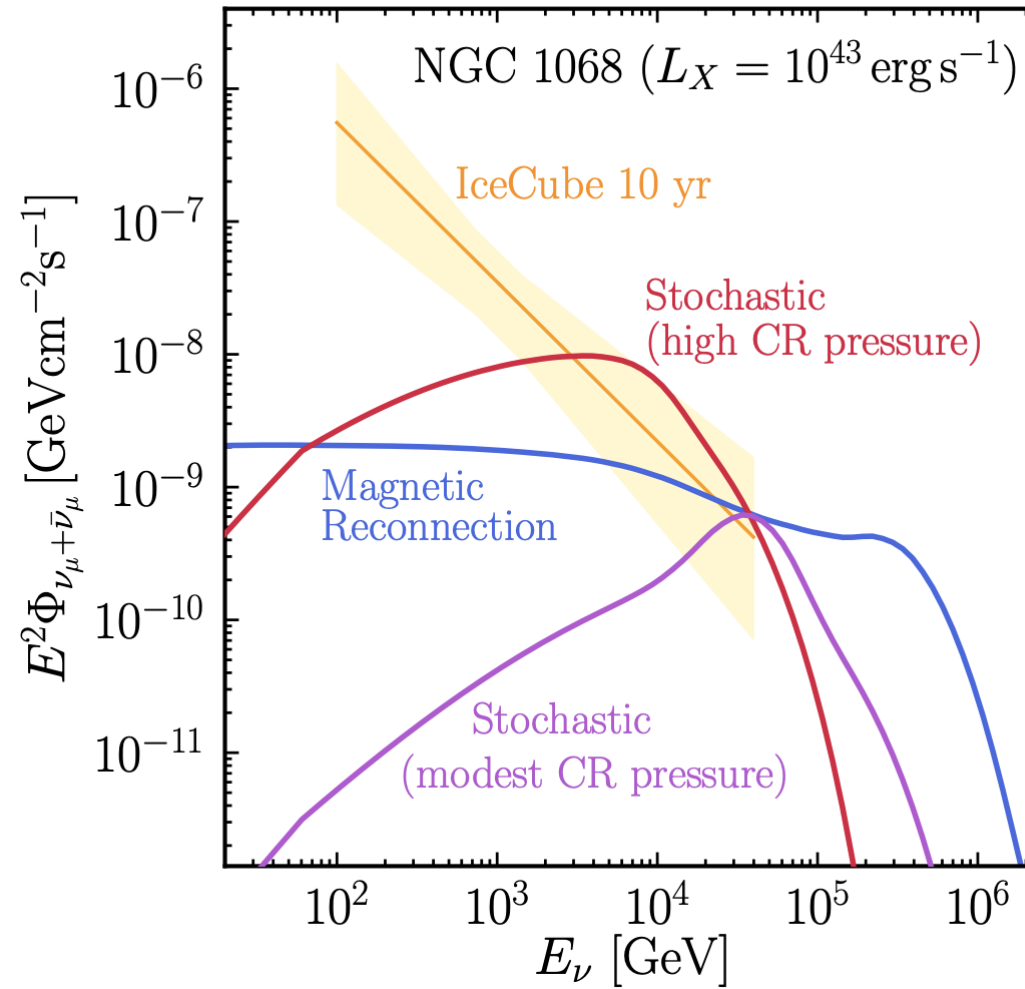
Table 3 | Estimated γ -ray and neutrino powers

Component	Scale	$L_\gamma(0.1\text{--}100\text{ GeV})$ (erg s ⁻¹)	$L_\nu(1.5\text{--}15\text{ TeV})$ (erg s ⁻¹)
Star formation	>kiloparsec	$\sim 10^{40.9}$	$\lesssim 10^{40.1}$
Jet	$\sim$ kiloparsec	$< 10^{41.7}$ (M87-like)	$< 10^{40.9}$
Outflow (UFO)	$\sim$ parsec	$< 10^{41.2}$	$< 10^{40.4}$
Black hole vicinity	$\sim 0.03\text{ mpc}$ ($\sim 50 R_s$)	?	?
Total		$\lesssim 10^{41.9}$	$\ll 10^{41.1}$
Observed		$10^{40.92 \pm 0.03}$	$10^{42.1 \pm 0.2}$

R_s is the Schwarzschild radius. ‘?’ denote unknown values.

★ model expectation ● analysis result





Model	$P_{\text{CR}}/P_{\text{th}} (\epsilon_{\text{CR}})$	q	η_{tur}	s	η_{acc}	E_p^{rec}
Stochastic acceleration with high CR pressure	0.5 (0.03)	5/3	50	-	-	-
Stochastic acceleration with modest CR pressure	0.008 (0.0009)	5/3	10	-	-	-
Magnetic Reconnection	0.5 (0.01)	-	-	2.0	300	5 PeV

For high energies Earth becomes opaque to neutrinos
→ this can be used to infer the neutrino cross section

