The amazing disappearing exoplanet

One nice thing about discovering exoplanets is that, once you work out how long their orbits take, they continue to show up like clockwork. The timing is so regular, in fact, that we can use variations to detect the gravitational influence of additional planets in the same exosolar system. And the precise timing is useful in that we can rely on it to point telescopes at the system when we know some of the light we detect has passed through the planet’s atmosphere.

Except when we can’t.

On Monday, researchers reported on an exoplanet that simply stopped showing up. TOI-2535b is a hot Jupiter-sized planet we’ve been observing as it transits between its host star, TOI-2535, and Earth for about seven years now. But it recently stopped showing up, and researchers suspect that’s due to an unseen companion orbiting in a different plane.

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