

THE SUNSPOT CYCLE

“For about eighteen months, I have been watching with the telescope some fairly dark spots in the body of the sun, when it was near its setting”.

Galileo Galilei, 1612 translated by Andrew T. Young

- 1) Looking at your calculations, how precise is the sunspot cycle?
- 2) You should notice that solar maximum does not always reach the same peak. How much variety is there in the peaks? Explain with evidence.
- 3) Based on the data, when do YOU think the next solar maximum should be? WHY?
- 4) During the late 1600's, very few sunspots were seen, even during solar maximum. This period is now known as the Maunder Minimum. Climatologists have estimated that during this time, the overall temperature of the Earth dropped by as much as 1 degree C. List below some specific consequences people on Earth might have experienced during this time. (graph from NASA)

