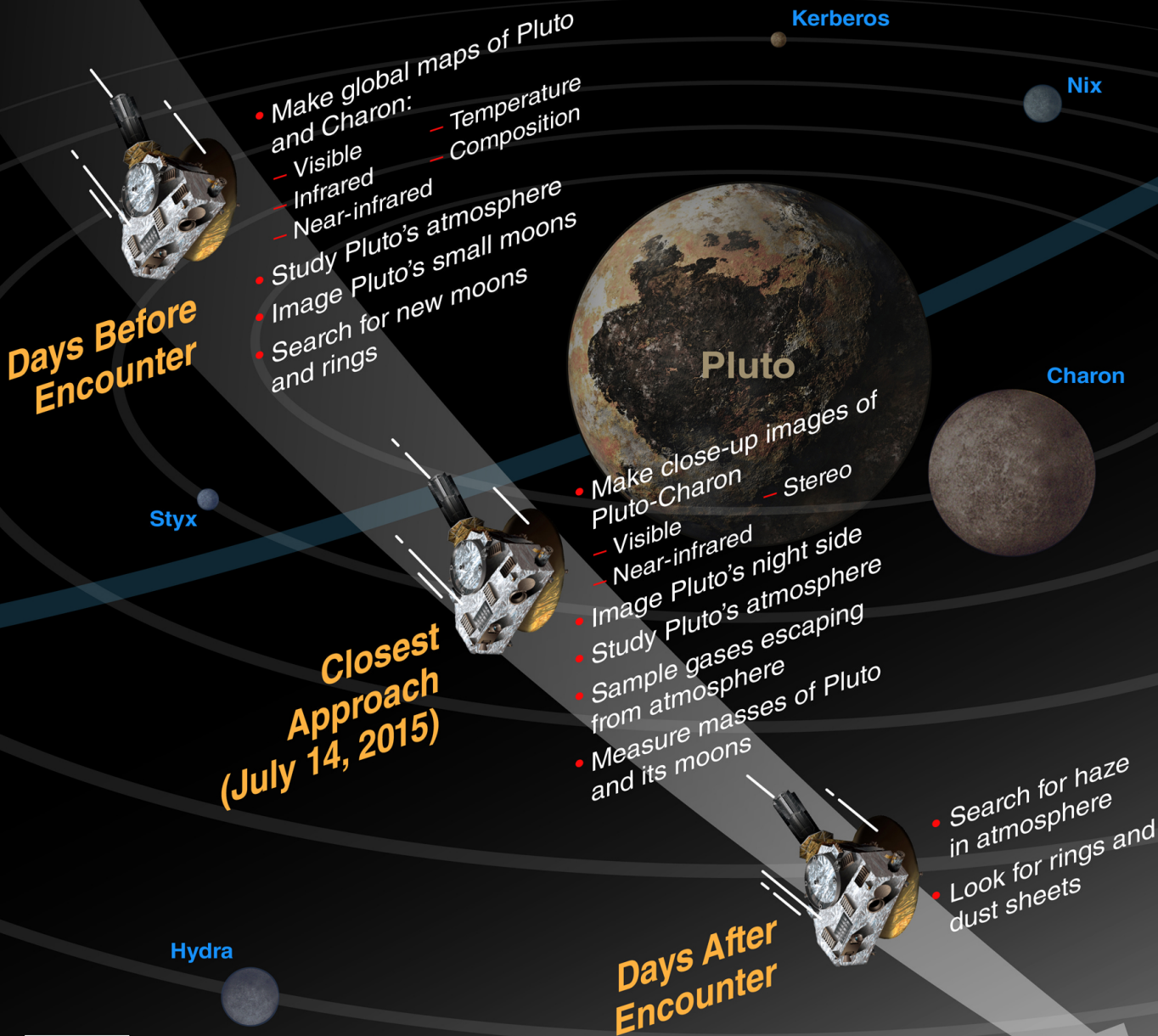




**N**ASA's New Horizons spacecraft will help researchers better understand the Pluto system at the frontier of our solar system for the first time. No spacecraft has ever traveled so far from the Sun to explore a planet.

During its closest approach in July 2015, the spacecraft's encounter sequence will be intricately choreographed and pre-programmed to study surface properties, geology, interior makeup and atmospheres. The spacecraft largely will operate autonomously during closest approach, with only occasional instructions sent from Earth. Some of the science studies are summarized here.

For illustration purposes only (not to scale)



# the Pluto encounter



[www.pluto.jhuapl.edu](http://www.pluto.jhuapl.edu)

[www.nasa.gov](http://www.nasa.gov)