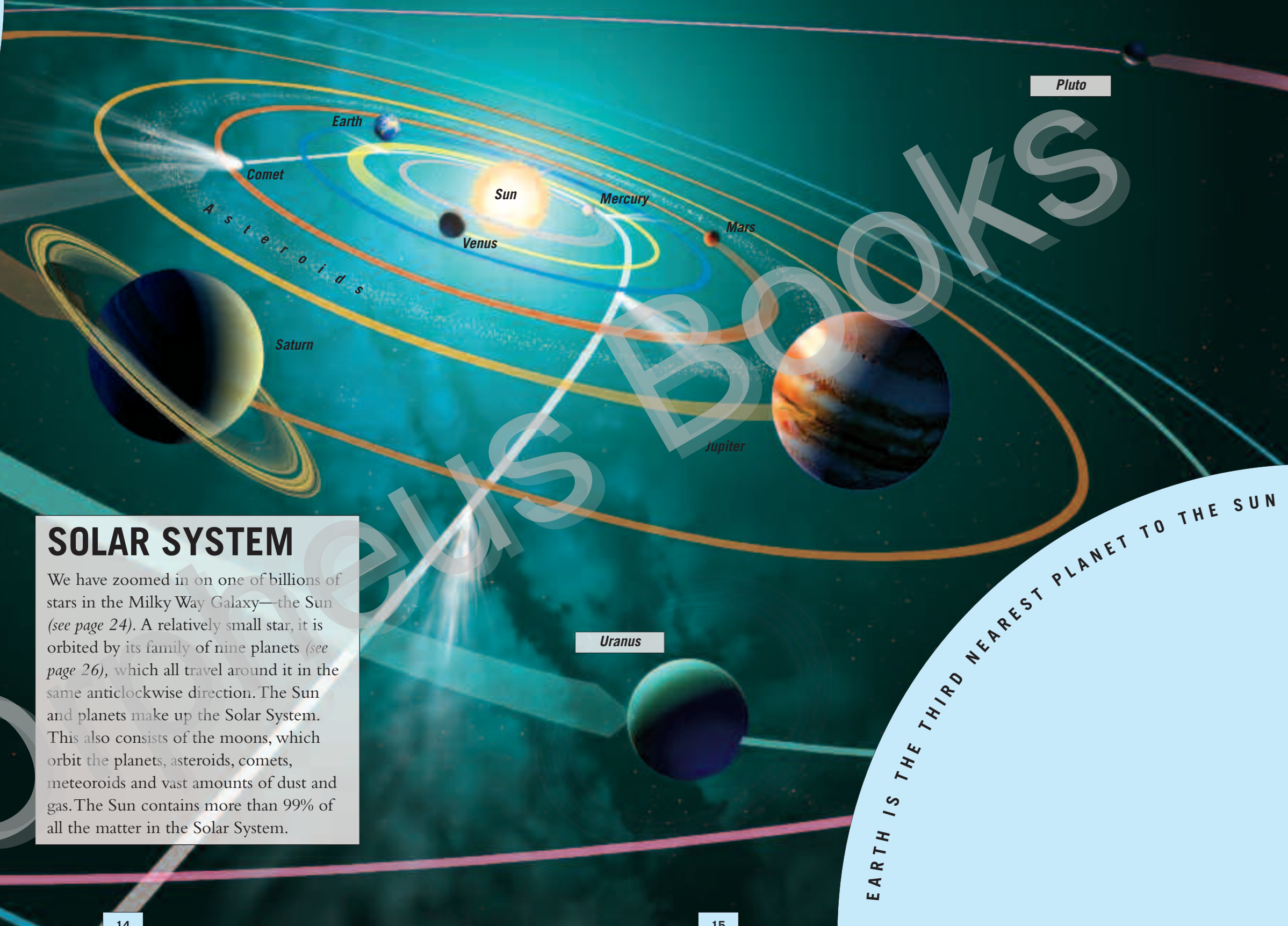


THE SUN IS PROBABLY ONE OF MANY STARS TO HAVE PLANETS

SOLAR SYSTEM

We have zoomed in on one of billions of stars in the Milky Way Galaxy—the Sun (see page 24). A relatively small star, it is orbited by its family of nine planets (see page 26), which all travel around it in the same anticlockwise direction. The Sun and planets make up the Solar System. This also consists of the moons, which orbit the planets, asteroids, comets, meteoroids and vast amounts of dust and gas. The Sun contains more than 99% of all the matter in the Solar System.



Pluto

Uranus

Neptune

EARTH IS THE THIRD NEAREST PLANET TO THE SUN

EARTH

One member of the Solar System is, of course, our own planet Earth. It is the fifth largest planet (although much smaller than the fourth largest, Neptune, *see page 24*). Earth is the only world in the Solar System known to have life, something made possible by the presence of liquid water, which covers more than 71% of its surface. Earth is also neither too close nor too far from the Sun, giving it a favourable temperature. Its atmosphere shields it from the Sun's harmful rays, traps enough heat to avoid extremes of hot or cold and protects it from bombardment by meteorites.

EARTH IS A SMALL PLANET IN THE SOLAR SYSTEM

ZOOM DOWN TO A SMALL PART OF EARTH'S SURFACE