

《NASA新发现100多颗类地行星》

导读:NASA在太阳系外发现100多颗类地行星。



It has also detected nine small planets within so-called habitable zones, where conditions are favourable for liquid water - and potentially life.

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The finds are contained within a catalogue of 1,284 new planets detected by Kepler - which more than doubles the previous tally.

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Nasa said it was the biggest single announcement of new exoplanets.

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Space agency scientists discussed the new findings in a teleconference on Tuesday.

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Statistical analyses of Kepler's expanding sample of worlds help astronomers understand how common planets like our own might be.

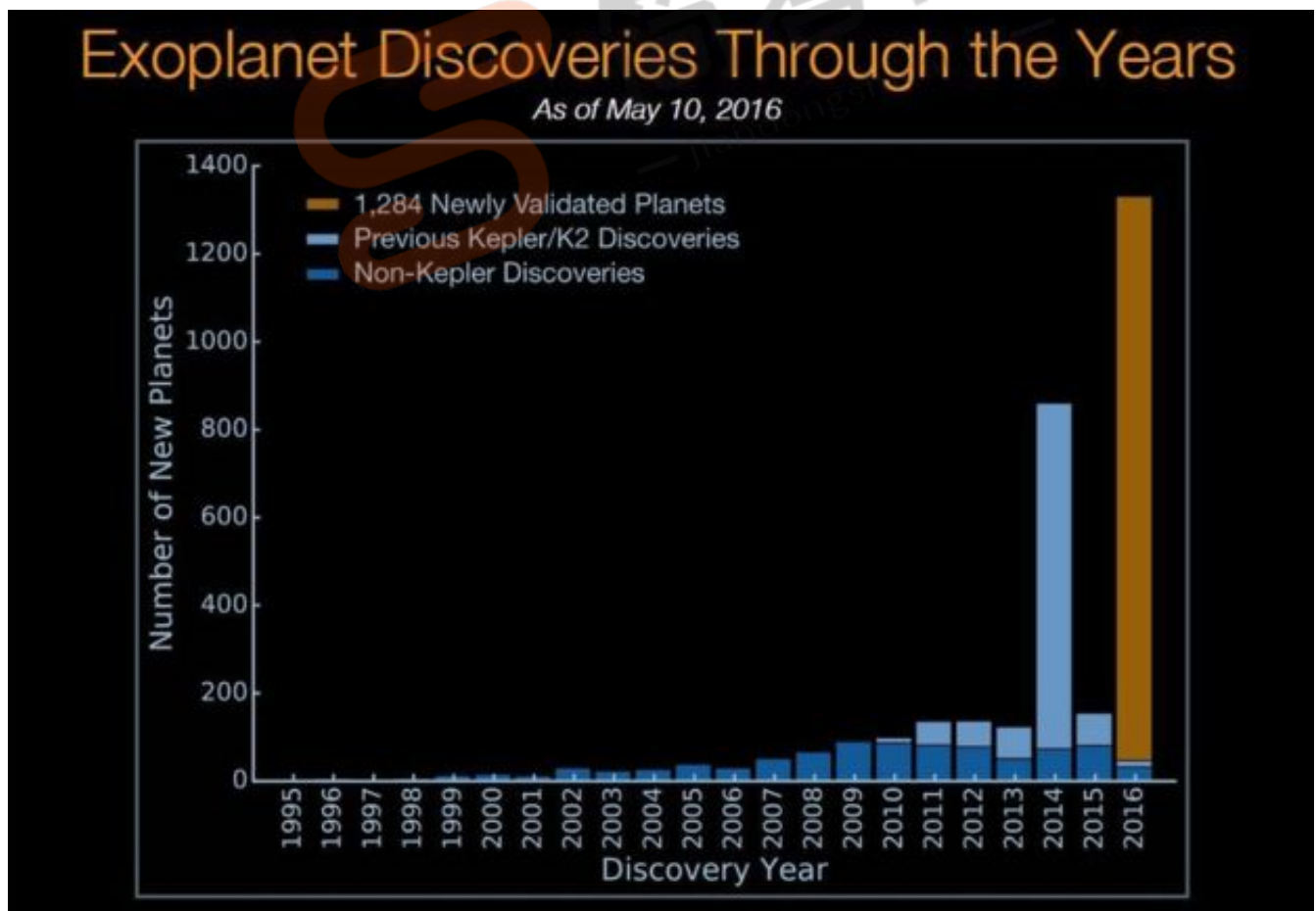
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Dr Natalie Batalha, Kepler mission scientist at Nasa's Ames Research Center in California, said calculations suggested there could be more than 10 billion potentially habitable planets in the Milky Way.

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"about 24% of the stars harbour potentially habitable planets that are smaller than about 1.6 times the size of the Earth. That's a number that we like because it's below that size that we estimate planets are likely to be rocky," said Dr Batalha.

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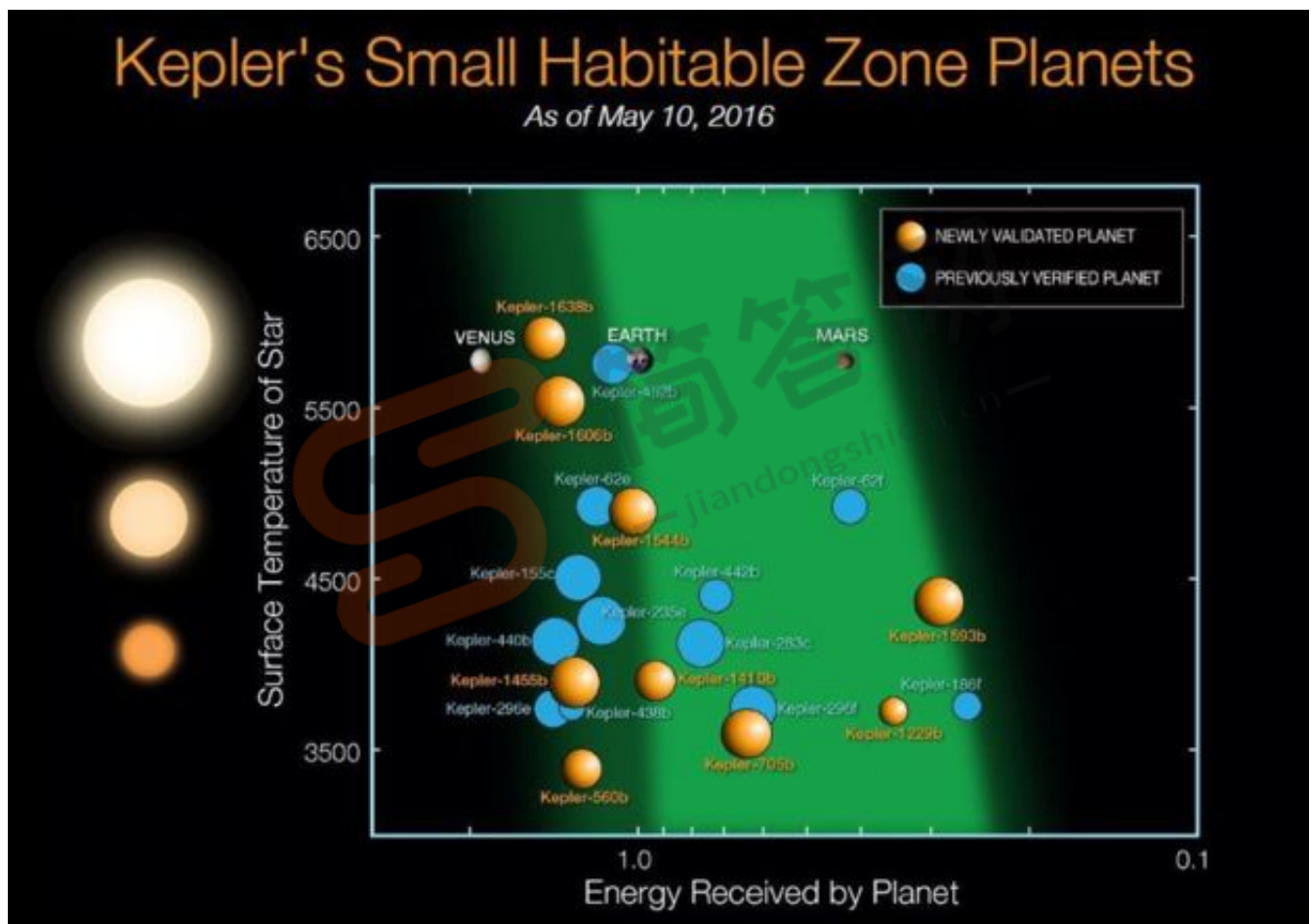


"If you ask yourself where is the next habitable planet likely to be, it's within about 11 light-years, which is very close."

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Future observatories such as the James Webb Space Telescope could examine starlight filtered through the atmospheres of exoplanets for potential markers of biology.

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"The ultimate goal of our search is to detect the light from a habitable exoplanet and analyse that light for gases like water vapour, oxygen, methane and carbon dioxide - gases that might indicate the presence of a biological ecosystem," said Paul Hertz, director of astrophysics at Nasa.

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Of the telescope's finds to date, the planets Kepler-186f and Kepler-452b are arguably the most Earth-like in terms of properties such as their size, the temperature of their host star and the energy received from their star.

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Dr Batalha said the new finds Kepler 1638b and Kepler-1229b were intriguing targets in the search for habitable planets.

????????????-1638b????-1229b????????????????????

The Nasa Ames researcher said the Kepler mission was part of a "larger strategic goal of finding evidence of life beyond Earth: knowing whether we're alone or not, to know... how life manifests itself in the galaxy and what is the diversity".

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She added: "Being able to look up to a point of light and being able to say: 'That star has a living world orbiting it.' I think that's very profound and answers questions about why we're here."

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