BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

Media English 媒体英语

Liquid water 'lake' revealed on Mars

科学家在火星上发现液态水体

研究人员们发现了火星上存在液态水体的证据。这片被科学家认作是湖的水体位于该行星南极冰盖下方，横跨约二十公里（十二英里）。

Since Nasa's Viking Mission tested **Martian** soil samples back in the 1970s, we've known the surface of Mars to be a **desert** – **inhospitable** to life as we know it. But as missions to Mars focussed on what lies beneath the surface, a different picture has started to **emerge.**

自美国航空航天局（Nasa）在 1970 年代检测了由维京号探测器从火星带回的土壤样本以来，火星表面是一片荒芜，而且不适于生命生存这一道理就已为人熟知。但当火星勘探任务的重点转向地表之下的时候，另一番景象就已开始浮出了水面。

This discovery of water beneath the planet's South Pole is the result of **radar echoes** that were picked up by an **instrument** on a spacecraft that's been orbiting Mars for 15 years. To stay liquid beneath the long-frozen surface of Mars, the researchers say this **sub-glacial** lake must have huge amounts of salts dissolved in it.

科学家之所以在该行星南极冰盖下发现了水是因为有一艘宇宙飞船在环行火星十五年后，其舱内仪器检测到了来自该水体的雷达回拨。这些研究人员说，能在长期处于冰冻状态的火星表面下保持液态，这片冰下湖泊内一定溶有大量盐分。

Its extreme cold and saltiness would make it a very **harsh** environment for any living thing. But the lead researcher, Professor Roberto Orosei from the Italian National Institute for Astrophysics, said the existence of **organisms** there, was not impossible.

极度的低温和极高的盐分使任何生命都难以在这片严酷的环境中生存。但来自意大利国家天体物理研究所的首席研究员罗伯托·奥罗赛说，这里存在有机体并非完全不可能的事。

To search for life in this newly discovered lake though, scientists will need to send a **robot** that's able to drill through the mile of ice **encapsulating** it. But at least the teams looking for life on **the Red Planet** will now know where to start their search.

不过，为了在这片新发现的湖泊里寻找生命，科学家们需要派出一个机器人，它要能钻入水体上方厚一英里（1.6 公里）的冰盖。但是对于这些在这颗红色星球上寻找生命的研究团队来说，他们现在已经知道应从哪里开始他们的搜索。

1. 词汇表

Martian	火星的
desert	荒漠
inhospitable	条件恶劣的，不适合生存的
emerge	（真相）显露、浮现
radar echoes	雷达回波
instrument	仪器
sub-glacial	冰川下的
harsh	（环境）严酷的
organisms	有机体

robot	机器人
encapsulating	盖住
the Red Planet	“红色星球”，指火星

2. 阅读理解：请在读完上文后，回答下列问题 。（答案见下页）

1. How have missions to Mars changed over time?

2. How has this newly-discovered underground lake been able to stay liquid for so long?

3. What would a robot need to be able to do in order to see if life exists in the lake?

4. True or false? *It has taken 15 years for a spacecraft to identify this water on Mars.*

3. 答案

1. How have missions to Mars changed over time?

Missions to Mars have started to focus on what lies beneath the surface.

2. How has this newly-discovered underground lake been able to stay liquid for so long?

Researchers believe it must have huge amounts of salt dissolved in it.

3. What would a robot need to be able to do in order to see if life exists in the lake?

A robot would need to drill through a mile of ice encapsulating the lake.

4. True or false? *It has taken 15 years for a spacecraft to identify this water on Mars.*

True. A spacecraft that's been orbiting Mars for 15 years has only just discovered water beneath the planet's South Pole.