



Science

Kepler finds three Earth-sized exoplanets, but they're too hot to handle

Upside: the kettle will always be ready. Downside: forget living on the surface

By [Richard Chirgwin](#) 13 Jun 2018 at 00:58

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Astro-boffins poring over data from Kepler's K2 mission have spotted two new solar systems, one of them sporting three planets roughly the same size as Earth.

The bad news is that all the latest discoveries are likely too hot for us, with temperatures between 100°C and 327°C.

Announcing the results in a paper in the Monthly Notices of the Astronomical Society (arXiv pre-print [here](#)), the research was led by Spanish astrophysicists Javier de Cos (the University of Oviedo) and Rafael Rebolo of the Instituto de Astrofísica de Canarias.

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The system known as K2-239 had the richest pickings: “three Earth-size transiting planets with radii of 1.1, 1.0 and 1.1 R_{\oplus} ” (the radius of the Earth). You'd accumulate a lot of birthdays quickly, though: their orbital periods are 5.24, 7.78, and 10.1 days respectively.

The group's second discovery was K2-240, which has two super-Earth planets of 1.8 and 2.0 Earth Radii, screaming around their star in 6.03 and 20.5 days respectively.

K-239 was spotted during Kepler's K2 campaign 14 (May to August

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Spectroscopic observations of the stars used the OSIRIS instrument at La Palma.

Even if they weren't far too hot for us, distance would rule out the planets as destinations for rich people leaving “this wretched planet” (as the NewYork Times [put it](#)): K-239 is about 160 light years away, while K-240 is about 228 light years from Earth.

In May, the [low-on-fuel](#) Kepler commenced the 18th campaign in its K2 mission series.

In its [announcement](#), NASA said this campaign will take in a region of sky last captured in 2015. As well as distant objects, there will be a handful of solar system objects beyond Neptune, comets, and one asteroid. ®

Tips and corrections

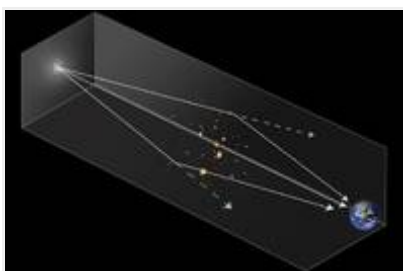
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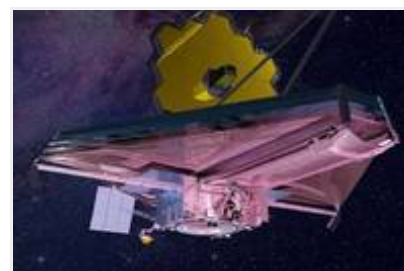
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