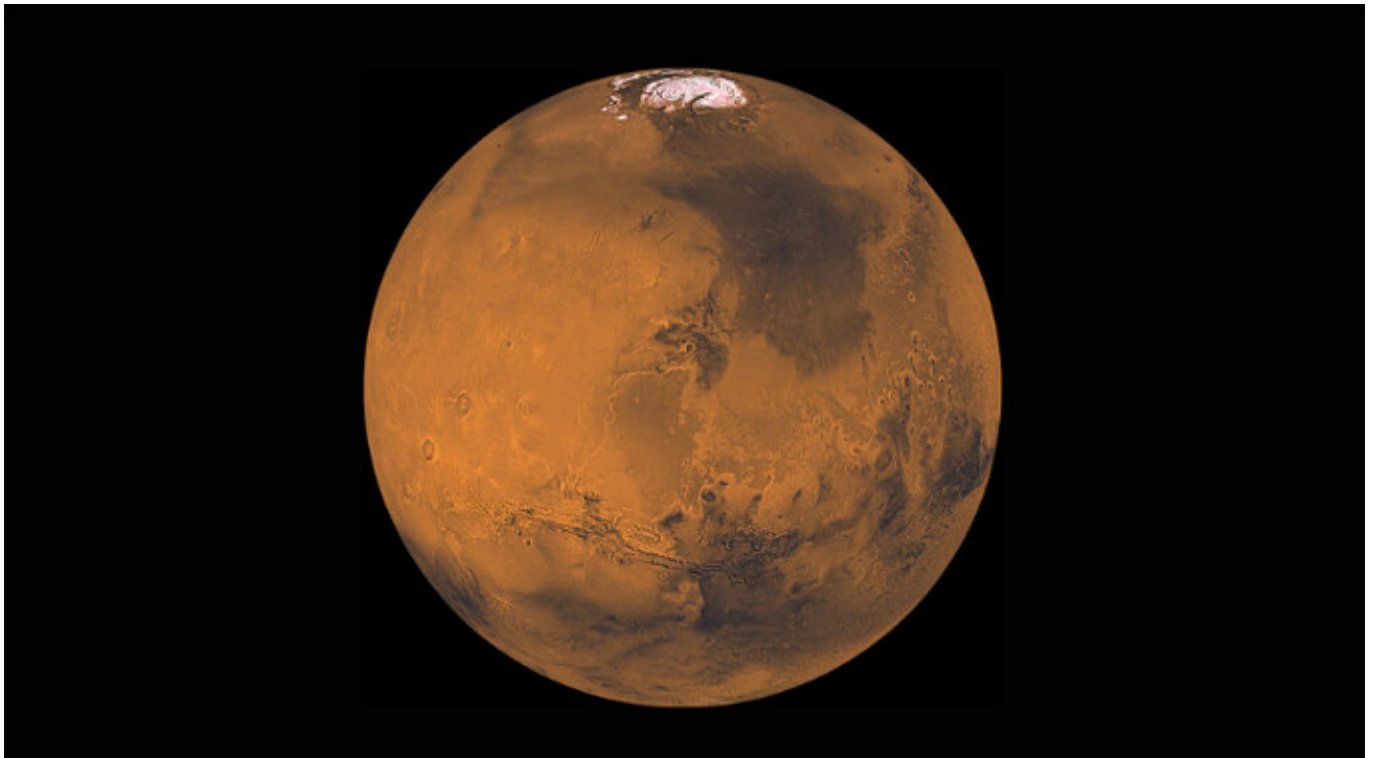


# Scientists Say That NASA Rover May Have Found Evidence of Life on Mars



By [Elias Marat](#) | [Creative Commons](#) | [TheMindUnleashed.com](#)

([TMU](#)) – A team of international researchers believes that they may have found a sign that life once existed on Mars.

The proof comes in the form of special compounds known as thiophenes that were found on Mars by NASA's Curiosity rover, according to a [study](#) published in the journal *Astrobiology*. Thiophenes can also be found here on Earth in coal, crude oil, and even white truffles—the much-coveted gourmet mushroom. And some astrobiologists feel that the compound's presence on the Red Planet could hint at the possibility of ancient life once existing there.

In [a statement](#), Washington State University astrobiologist and lead author Dirk Schulze-Makuch said:

*“We identified several biological pathways for thiophenes that seem more likely than chemical ones, but we still need proof.”*

However, the team isn't jumping to conclusions that Mars once teemed with the complex life forms that exist on present-day Earth, let alone the possibility that it was rife with savory, sublime truffles. Instead, their study suggests that a biological process involving bacteria may be the cause behind the organic compound existing on Martian soil.

Schulze-Makuch added:

*“If you find thiophenes on Earth, then you would think they are biological, but on Mars, of course, the bar to prove that has to be quite a bit higher.”*

Thiophenes are basically comprised of two bio-essential elements: sulfur and carbon. Astrobiologists remain unsure whether the compound was produced by biological processes or a non-biological event, such as a meteor impact that was able to heat sulfates to very high temperatures.

And if the compounds signal the existence of life long ago, they could have resulted from bacteria breaking down the sulfates roughly three billion years ago.

However, scientists are still not at the point where they are willing to make conclusions.

Yet the discovery has excited the researchers who hope that the ongoing exploration of the planet can shed more light on Martian history—and potentially life.

Schulze-Makuch said:

*“As Carl Sagan said ‘extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence.’*

*I think the proof will really require that we actually send people there, and an astronaut looks through a microscope and sees a moving microbe.”*

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