



Water traces found on asteroid Bennu

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Water traces found on asteroid Bennu-NASA's OSIRIS-REx probe found hydrogen and oxygen molecules embedded on its rocky surface

- NASA's OSIRIS-REx spacecraft has discovered ingredients for water on a nearby skyscraper-sized asteroid, a rocky acorn-shaped object that may hold clues to the origin of life on the earth, scientists said.
- OSIRIS-REx, which flew last week within a scant 19 km of the asteroid Bennu some 2.25 million km from the earth, found traces of hydrogen and oxygen molecules — part of the recipe for water and thus the potential for life — embedded in the asteroid's rocky surface.
- The probe, on a mission to return samples from the asteroid to earth for study, was launched in 2016.
- Scientists believe asteroids and comets crashing into early earth may have delivered organic compounds and water that seeded the planet for life, and atomic-level analysis of samples from Bennu could provide key evidence to support that hypothesis.
- OSIRIS-REx will pass later this month just 1.9 km from Bennu, entering the asteroid's gravitational pull and analysing its terrain.

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