

News & Comments

Human Trash Spotted on Mars by Perseverance Rover

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Human trash preceded humanity. Still haven't set a toe on Mars, but our garbage preceded us. Humans are polluting other planets as well with litter. Human trash can have an extensive impact on the environment, as NASA's rover recently discovered trash on Mars. According to an announcement made by Perseverance Mars Rover on its official Twitter account, it encountered a piece of human-generated litter on Mars.

"My team has spotted something unexpected: It's a piece of a thermal blanket that they think may have come from my descent stage, the rocket-powered jet pack that set me down on landing day back in 2021," the rover tweeted.

"It's a surprise finding this here: My descent stage crashed about 2 km away. Did this piece land here after that, or was it blown here by the wind?" read a follow-up post.

Perseverance rover descended on Mars in February 2021 and has been on a mission to find signs of life, for which it is currently exploring the Jezero crater. Instead of findings signs of microbial life, it stumbled upon made-on-Earth garbage.

Thermal blankets are used to control temperatures, and Perseverance was wrapped up in this foil material ahead of its departure. Ingenuity, Mars Helicopter also captured photos of the gear left behind by Perseverance during landed, so this newly spotted trash isn't very new.

As humans explore space, they leave trash behind. The garbage on Mars is one example of this problem. Boots, parachutes, and entire vehicles have been found in debris from previous missions. NASA reports that over 27,000 pieces of "space junk" orbit the Earth through the Department of Defense's global Space Surveillance Network. The space trash poses a threat to the International Space Station and other human-populated space vessels. However, there are not many regulations protecting space from this debris. According to astronomy professor Aparna Venkatesan "for more rules to be enforced, space would have to be defined as humanity's common heritage."

KEYWORDS

space, Mar, Perseverance Rover, debris, trash, garbage, space garbage, ISS, the International Space Station, pollution, Jezero crater, Thermal blanket

