



SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Turkish Lake Helps Scientists' Search for Ancient Life on Mars

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The American space agency NASA recently landed its robotic explorer Perseverance on the surface of Mars. Now, scientists are using information gathered at a lake in southwest Turkey to help them search for signs of ancient life on the distant planet.

NASA says the minerals and rock **sediments** at Lake Salda are the closest match on Earth to those around Jezero Crater on Mars. The spacecraft landed in Jezero Crater and it is believed to have once been flooded with water.

Information gathered from Lake Salda may help the scientists as they search for signs of ancient microorganisms in sediment around the crater.

A team of American and Turkish scientists carried out research in 2019 around the edges of the lake. Scientists believe that the sediments around the lake came from large **deposits** formed with the help of microorganisms known as microbialites.

The team supporting the Perseverance spacecraft wants to find out whether there are microbialites in Jezero Crater.

They will compare the sediments from Lake Salda with carbonate minerals discovered on the edges of Jezero Crater. Carbonate minerals are made from carbon dioxide and water, two important elements of life.

Thomas Zurbuchen is the associate administrator of NASA. He told Reuters, “When we find something at Perseverance we can go back to look at Lake Salda to really look at both processes, (looking at) similarities but equally importantly differences that are really between Perseverance and Lake Salda.”

“So we are really glad we have that lake, just because I think it will be with us for a long time,” he added.

I’m Jonathan Evans.

Yesim Dikmen reported on this story for the Reuters news service. Jonathan Evans adapted this story for Learning English. Mario Ritter, Jr. was the editor.

Words in This Story

sediment *-n.* material that sinks to the bottom of water

deposit *-n.* an amount of a material that builds up over time on a surface such as the earth