

NOVA
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ARE WE ALONE?

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While the search for extraterrestrial life is an age-old quest, recent breakthroughs make today like no other in the history of astronomy. From the Kepler mission's astounding discovery of thousands of extrasolar planets, to the exhilarating probing of planetary ecosystems within our own solar system, to the high-tech telescopes under development, the prospects for finding life beyond Earth have never been stronger. Still, there are daunting hurdles to surmount. How can we study small planets light years away? In the vast universe, where should we even start to look? Is the failure of SETI to hear any other voices in the galaxy a warning sign that advanced civilizations don't last long? Have we simply not been looking long enough, or are there perhaps none to discover? *NOVA Wonders* checks in with the explorers now searching the galaxy for life and intelligence on other planets—and asks, if we do find other life in the universe...then what?

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CREDITS

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