

# Scientists find trawl of 32 new planets

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WASHINGTON (Reuters) - European astronomers announced they had found 32 new planets orbiting stars outside our solar system and said on Monday they believe their find means that 40 percent or more of Sun-like stars have such planets.

**Is there another Earth-like planet out there? Are we alone in the universe? Leave your comments below**

The planets range in size from about five times the size of Earth to about five times the size of Jupiter, they said. More have been discovered, too, they said, promising more announcements later this year.

The latest discoveries bring the total of known exoplanets to about 400, said Stephane Udry of the Geneva Observatory in Switzerland.

"Nature doesn't like a vacuum so if there is space to put a planet it will put a planet there," Udry told reporters in an Internet briefing from a meeting of astronomers in Porto, Portugal.

"More than 40 percent of stars like the sun have low mass planets," Udry added.

The team used the High Accuracy Radial Velocity Planet Searcher or HARPS, a spectrograph attached to the European Southern Observatory's 3.6-meter (11.8-foot) telescope in La Silla, Chile.

The spectrograph does not image the planets directly but scientists can calculate their size and mass by detecting tiny changes in a star's wobbling caused by a planet's small gravitational pull.

Astronomers are keen to find Earthlike planets as these are the most likely to harbor life. HARPS has spotted 75 planets circling 30 different stars. The ESO team did not give details of which stars the 32 new planets were circling.

(Reporting by Maggie Fox, editing by Jackie Frank)