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Living on Another Planet 生活在另一个星球

智利的科学家说一项新科研显示银河系中有无数恒星有可能成为适宜人类居住的地方。天文学家们是通过高精度徑向速度行星搜索器技术来进行这项研究的。以下是 **BBC** 科技事务记者, *Jason Palmer* 的报道。

Thousands of years of astronomy spent wondering about **potentially habitable planets** in the universe and then **64 billion** come along at once.

The discovery of new planets has in recent years become **commonplace** but most have been **spotted** by looking at changes in the light of their bright stars. Now we have a view into the smaller, darker **red dwarfs** that make up 80 percent of stars in our galaxy.

The HARPS team **peered at** a representative sample of stars estimating that 40% of the 160 billion red dwarfs in our galaxy has a **super-Earth** circling in the **Goldilocks** or habitable zone; that's where the temperature is just right for liquid water.

Astronomers are getting better at spotting smaller planets close to Earth's size and it seems that everywhere they look and in every way they look, planets **abound**. There's still a long

way to go to **determine** whether any of them has conditions suitable for life and a long way again to search for life itself.

But with billions of kitchens in which the ingredients of life might come together, it's ever more difficult to doubt that the recipe has been tried **elsewhere**.

Questions

1. How many planets could be inhabitable in the future?
2. Is the discovery of new planets a rare thing nowadays?
3. True or false: More than half of the 160 billion red dwarfs in our galaxy have a super-Earth in the habitable zone.
4. True or false: Scientists are getting better at spotting smaller planets similar to the size of the Earth's.

GLOSSARY

potentially habitable planets	潜在可居住的星球
commonplace	平常事
spotted	被人看到
red dwarfs	红矮星
peered at	观看，注视
super-Earth	超级地球
Goldilocks	温和地带
abound	(拥有) 大量的
determine	决意
elsewhere	其他地方

Answers to the questions:

1. How many planets could be inhabitable in the future?

Answer: 64 billion.

2. Is the discovery of new planets a rare thing nowadays?

Answer: No it's very commonplace

3. True or false: More than half of the 160 billion red dwarfs in our galaxy have a super-Earth in the habitable zone.

Answer: False. The right answer is 40%.

4. True or false: Scientists are getting better at spotting smaller planets similar to the size of the Earth's.

Answer: True. Astronomers are getting better at spotting smaller planets close to Earth's size.