

## News & Comments

# The Pet Rock of Perseverance Rover

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You might think that Perseverance or Percy, NASA's rover travelling across Mars, is alone but not anymore, it picked up a pet rock on the way.

During the last 8.5 km across the Jezero Crater, the rocky hitchhiker has been riding along inside the rover's front left wheel.

Eleni Ravanis, a student collaborator on NASA's Perseverance mission, said the rock isn't damaging the wheel, but it does appear periodically in the left Hazard Avoidance Camera (Hazcam) images throughout its (no doubt bumpy!) trek.

This isn't the first instance of a rock hitchhiking on a rover. Previously, the Spirit rover picked up a rock in 2004, and the Curiosity rover has picked several rocks from time to time.

This pet rock on Perseverance Rover seemed to tumble along for more than 126 days (123 sols).

Perseverance picked this rock while exploring the Máaz formation. This formation of the Jezero crater is expected to be made from ancient lava flows. The rover will shortly be gearing up for an ascent of one of the Jezero crater's steep slopes, which may dislodge its Stoney stowaway. Since the rover has travelled a long distance away from the place it belongs so, it is likely to confuse future scientists, in case they find it (out of place), one mission scientist joked.

These hitchhikes of pet rock are expected to make the newest pebbly passenger record, for staying the longest on the rover.

### KEYWORDS

JPL, Mars, Mars 2020 Perseverance Rover, NASA, Popular, Percy, Perseverance Rover, Pet rock, Hazcam

