



NASA'S KEPLER TELESCOPE HAS LOCATED FIVE NEW JUPITER-SIZED EXOPLANETS — NAMED KEPLER 4B, 5B, 6B, 7B AND 8B — WHICH ORBIT THEIR RESPECTIVE STARS ONCE EVERY 3.2, 3.5, 3.2, 4.9 AND 3.5 EARTH DAYS; ALSO FOUND ARE TWO "HOT COMPANIONS," MYSTERIOUS OBJECTS EACH CIRCLING ITS OWN STAR AND MEASURING TEMPERATURES OF 26,000°F

Kepler identifies new planets by detecting small dips in the brightness of the stars they orbit, registering the planet as it passes between the spacecraft and the star. These planets are much larger and hotter than anything Earth-like — what Kepler is really searching for — but scientists do expect the telescope to find these smaller, cooler planets before its mission ends no earlier than November 2012.

The mysterious "hot companions" are unfamiliar celestial objects, hotter than the stars they orbit and too large to be any kind of regular planet. Theories suggest they could be either newly born planets or dying, shrinking white dwarf stars.

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