

Nasa spacecraft speeds past Pluto 美国宇航局“新视野号”飞掠冥王星

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美国宇航局的“新视野号”探测器与冥王星成功相遇。“新视野号”探测器本周二（7月14日）以每秒十四公里的速度飞过冥王星。科学家称“新视野号”收集的资料信息将改变人类对距离太阳最远的太阳系行星的认识。请听 Jonathan Amos 的报道。

For those of us who grew up with the idea that there were nine planets, this is the moment we get to **complete the set**. **Robotic probes** have been to all the others - even the distant Uranus and Neptune. Pluto is the last of the **familiar** nine to get a visit.

Of course, it was **demoted to dwarf status** in 2006, but this doesn't seem to have **dulled** anyone's enthusiasm. The New Horizons probe will sweep by at high speed, **grabbing** as many pictures and other types of science data as it can. Not just of Pluto but also its five moons: Charon, Styx, Nix, Kerberos and Hydra.

Unfortunately, the **vast** distance from Earth makes for very weak radio signals, and it's going to take many months to get all the images back. Nonetheless, the lead researcher, Alan Stern, says we should be prepared for some **remarkable** discoveries...

Alan Stern, NASA lead researcher

*I like to say that this is **in a sense**, a return to the kind of space exploration in the sixties and seventies, when everything was completely new - first **mission** to Venus, first mission to Mars, first mission to everywhere. And although new missions, for example to the surface of Mars, teach us **tremendous** amounts, where people say we re-write the textbook. This is an example of not re-writing the textbook - we're gonna write the textbook.*

词汇表

complete the set	(此处指) 证明太阳系确实有九大行星
robotic probes	机器探测器
familiar	熟知的
demoted	被降级
dwarf status	矮(星)级别
dulled	使降低、失去兴趣
grabbing	抓取
vast	巨大的
remarkable	不同寻常的, 非凡的
in a sense	从某种程度上, 从某种意义上讲
mission	任务
tremendous	极多的, 惊人的

测验

请听报道并回答下列问题。

1. Before its visit to Pluto, how many planets did the robotic probe visit?
2. Why will the robotic probe send back very weak signals?
3. When did early space exploration take place?
4. True or false? *NASA lead researcher, Alan Stern, says he will be using a textbook to understand what the images mean.*

答案

1. Before its visit to Pluto, how many planets did the robotic probe visit?
Answer: Eight. Pluto is the last of the familiar nine to get a visit.
2. Why will the robotic probe send back very weak signals?
Answer: Because of the vast distance from Earth.
3. When did early space exploration take place?
Answer: In the 1960s and 1970s.
4. True or false? *NASA lead researcher, Alan Stern, says he will be using a textbook to understand what the images mean.*
Answer: False. He said "This is an example of not re-writing the textbook - we're gonna write the textbook."