

# Alien life searchers conference SETICon 2 held in Santa Clara

June 25 2012, by Bob Yirka

---



SETI's Alien Telescope Array (ATA) listens day and night for a signal from space. Credit: SETI

SETICon 2, a conference unlike any other, ran this past weekend in Santa Clara, California. In attendance were people from all walks of life whose area of interest intersects on the topic of the search for intelligent life somewhere other than here on planet Earth.

Thus, they were made up of scientists; from [NASA](#) and other groups, artists, and even entertainers. The goal of the conference, which is set up and run by the [Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence Institute \(SETI\)](#) is to share ideas on what has been discovered of late regarding the possibility of [life on other planets](#) and what might lie ahead.

Fueling much of the discussion this time around (the first SETICon was

held in 2010) are findings by NASA's Kepler mission which is dedicated to looking for extraterrestrial life, regardless of form or degree of intelligence. Since 2009, the mission has uncovered the existence of over 2,300 exoplanets that researchers believe hold the possibility of harboring some forms of life. Most notably, due to the existence of that precious resources without which we here on this planet could not survive: water. Some scientists who actually work on the mission (Geoff Marcy, Jon Jenkins, Debra Fischer, etc.) spoke to those in attendance, as did astronauts Tom Jones and Mae Jemison.

This year's conference, those in attendance noted, was much more upbeat than the last, as more information from Kepler becomes available, the numbers of planets that might have life on them keeps going up, making the possibility of detecting its presence more plausible than ever before. As noted by several speakers, the Kepler mission is helping to find planets farther away from their stars, rather than just those that are close enough to cause their star to appear to wobble to us due to planetary gravity effects. The new more sensitive telescopes are better able to discern planets that are not only farther (meaning cooler) from their star, but smaller, some of which may have water and are rocky, making them more Earthlike and thus potentially more likely to possess the conditions necessary for the kind of life we know and understand.

In addition to offerings talks, the conference also held panel discussions, interviews, and even screenings of movies, all aimed at opening the door to the possibility that extraterrestrial life might truly exist, and if it does, highlighting the fact that we are now in a better position than ever before to find evidence of its existence.

© 2012 Phys.Org

Citation: Alien life searchers conference SETICon 2 held in Santa Clara (2012, June 25)

retrieved 25 April 2024 from

<https://phys.org/news/2012-06-alien-life-searchers-conference-seticon.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.