

Astronauts have read 'The Martian,' now can't wait for movie

8 September 2015, by Marcia Dunn

The book "The Martian" is earning high praise from space, and the astronaut-reviewer can't wait to see the soon-to-be-released movie.

NASA astronaut Kjell Lindgren said Tuesday from the International Space Station that both he and crewmate Scott Kelly have read the novel by Andy Weir. Lindgren told reporters he really enjoyed the book and hopes to get a copy of the film beamed up to orbit on Oct. 2, the day of release, or shortly thereafter.

The astronauts chatted with the star of the film, Matt Damon, last month by phone. They called the actor—who portrays fictional astronaut Mark Watney, who's mistakenly left for dead on Mars—while he was touring Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California.

"That was a neat conversation," Lindgren recalled during a space-to-ground news conference. "It was certainly fun for us."

Kelly—who's almost halfway through a yearlong space station stay—said it's difficult to compare his experience in orbit with a Mars trip.

"For the folks who go to Mars, especially the first time, it's going to be such an incredible destination and event that they're going to be really psyched up for getting there," Kelly said. "I'm not saying I'm not psyched up for the rest of this. But in some ways, almost being halfway through, a lot of what we're going to be doing is very similar to what we've already done."

A Mars crew also won't have people coming and going, as is currently the case at the [space station](#).

Nine men from four countries are aboard the orbiting lab until Friday, when three of them—representing Russia, Kazakhstan and Denmark—will return to Earth.

Kelly and Russian Mikhail Kornienko will remain there until next March. For NASA, it will represent the longest [space](#) mission ever. NASA officials consider the yearlong mission a necessary step as the agency looks ahead to even longer Mars expeditions sometime in the 2030s.

With its sights set on the [red planet](#), NASA is embracing "The Martian"—and vice versa.

Like Kelly, Damon recently signed up to have his name sent to Mars aboard NASA's next lander, named InSight. The spacecraft is due to launch next March and arrive at Mars next September. Posing with his "boarding pass" to the red planet, Kelly noted in a tweet over the weekend that in the time he's already spent in orbit, he'd be almost to Mars. He and Kornienko took off from Kazakhstan in March.

NASA's "boarding passes" to Mars, via the InSight lander, were available online until 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time Tuesday, Sept. 8. As of noon, the sign-up sheet exceeded 765,000.

More information: NASA: mars.nasa.gov/participate/send-your-name/insight/

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