

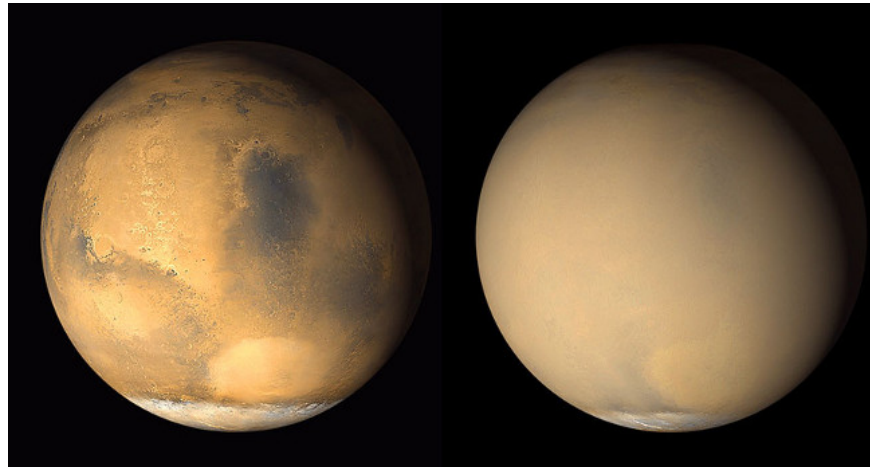
Giant dust storms are taking away water on Mars

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The researchers used image data of NASA's Marsa probe for more than a decade to investigate the composition of dust storms that frequently appear on the Red Planet.

In a giant dust storm in 2006 and 2007, signs of steam were found at an unusually high altitude in the atmosphere, nearly 80 km. The co-author of the study, Nicholas Heavens, an astronomer at Hampton University in Virginia, said surface steam has been swept into dust storms with tremendous velocity, moving vertically - on. Convection lines are similar to storm clouds on earth.



At altitudes above 50km, ultraviolet light from the sun easily penetrates into the thin air of the Red Planet and breaks the chemical bond between hydrogen and oxygen. At this time, hydrogen freely moves into space, associated with oxygen to create water broken completely.

Heavens said: *"Because it is so light, hydrogen will be lost relatively easily on Mars. The loss of hydrogen can also occur on Earth, but we have too much water so this is not a big problem."*

Previous studies have shown that Mars has been covered by an ocean, and it has lost most of its water through hydrogen escape. But this is the first study to identify dust storms as a mechanism to help hydrogen gas escape. Heavens said that the overall effect of all dust storms could account for about 10% of Mars's current hydrogen.

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