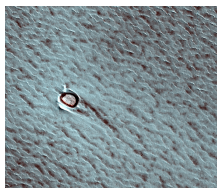


26 November 2008

By: Dan Talpalariu, Science Editor



Mars' icy crater spotted by MRO's HiRISE camera
NASA / JPL / University of Arizona

[Mars Has Loads of Weird Craters](#)

MRO's HiRISE camera is always on the lookout for them

The number of scientific devices studying the red planet is continuously on the rise. This adds to the constant discovery of unusual features sported by Mars, eventually providing more insight on its formation, evolution and structure. More recent images captured by the Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter (MRO)'s High Resolution Imaging Science Experiment (HiRISE) camera are proof to the oddity of the Martian landscape.

Some of the craters found on the surface of the planet are nothing like those on Earth. For instance, the one in the first image resides on the northern cap of Mars, close to the place where the Phoenix Lander now lies dormant. The crater formed in the region dominated by water ice due to an asteroid impact. The faintly elliptical shape of the 66 meters (215 feet) diameter formation leads experts to conclude that it formed as a result of an oblique collision. The other crater presented here courtesy of the [University of Arizona](#) may appear even weirder, as if it was upside-down, although it is believed to be a buried impact formation. "The mound may be the remnant of a buried impact crater, which is now being exhumed," said Shane Byrne, a member of the HiRISE team, from the University of Arizona, quoted by [Universe Today](#). It was generated as the icy layers of the northern pole sedimented and filled it with ice. In time, erosion exposed it for view, as it dug troughs over and around it, as "For reasons that are poorly understood right now, the ice beneath the site of the crater is more resistant to this erosion, so that as the trough is formed, ice beneath the old impact site remained, forming this isolated hill," explained Byrne. Among the other weird-looking craters of our red neighbor is one that looks like a dark H letter in a brightly lit region and another (actually, two concentric ones) that has a brain-like texture in the Dueteronilus Mensae area.