 [Click to Print](#)[SAVE THIS](#) | [EMAIL THIS](#) | [Close](#)

Much-hyped planet could be too hot to sustain life

Scientists, using new calculations, say another planet in Libra could have right conditions.

 [Click-2-Listen](#)

By Dennis Overbye
THE NEW YORK TIMES
Tuesday, June 12, 2007

Astronomers and ordinary people alike were cheered at the discovery in April of a planet only five times the mass of the Earth, circling a dim star in Libra. The planet, known as Gliese 581c, orbits within the star's so-called habitable zone, where it is neither too hot nor too cold for water to exist on its surface, making it the most promising spot for life yet found outside our solar system.

"Everybody got excited," said Manfred Cuntz, an astronomer at the University of Texas at Arlington.

Now, however, it seems that Gliese 581c is no paradise. A new analysis by German and Texas astronomers, assuming Earthlike characteristics for its geology and atmosphere, has concluded that the planet is probably a stifling greenhouse unsuitable for life as we know it.


"It's just too hot," said Cuntz, who was part of a team of theorists led by Werner von Bloh of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research in Germany. "I would not recommend mankind to move to that planet right now."

However, the astronomers said another planet in the system, Gliese 581d, eight times the mass of Earth and farther from its star, had emerged from the calculations as possibly a pleasant abode.

Other astronomers, while agreeing that there is an emerging consensus that 581c is too hot for life, described the research as speculative, resting on assumptions about how closely the Gliese planets resemble Earth.

Find this article at:

<http://www.statesman.com/news/content/news/stories/world/06/12/12planet.html>

 [Click to Print](#)[SAVE THIS](#) | [EMAIL THIS](#) | [Close](#)

Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.