

NASA'S OSIRIS-REX

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In news

OSIRIS-REx mission of NASA successfully picks samples from asteroid Bennu

About OSIRIS REx mission

- **The Origins, Spectral Interpretation, Resource Identification, Security-Regolith Explorer (OSIRIS-REx)** spacecraft is intended to travel to a near-Earth asteroid called Bennu and bring a small sample back to Earth for study.
- The mission launched Sept. 8, 2016, from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station.
- As planned, the spacecraft will reach Bennu in 2018 and return a sample to Earth in 2023.
- The mission will help scientists investigate how planets formed and how life began, as well as improve our understanding of asteroids that could impact Earth.

Asteroid Bennu

- It was first discovered by a team from the NASA-funded Lincoln Near-Earth Asteroid Research team in 1999.
- It was named after an Egyptian deity by a nine-year-old boy from North Carolina in 2013 who won NASA's "Name that Asteroid" competition.
- It is located around 200 million miles away from Earth
- Asteroid Bennu is around the size of the Empire State Building in New York.
- Significantly, Bennu hasn't undergone drastic changes since its formation over billions of years ago and, therefore, it contains chemicals and rocks dating back to the birth of the solar system.
- It is also relatively close to the Earth.