



## **05 – THE CLOSEST EXOPLANET TO EARTH**

Our home, Earth. A blue paradise for life as we know it. The only planet out of thousands discovered beyond our solar system to host living organisms.

In some ways, Earth is an embarrassment of riches. Abundant with persistent and pervasive lifeforms that can be found in almost every nook and cranny. From the boiling, caustic pools of Yellowstone National Park to the frigid, Dry Valleys of Antarctica.

Earth may well be the rarest place in the universe. And we get the privilege of calling it home.

But out there, beyond Earth, exoplanets have been found that exist within the goldilocks zone. The region around a star where it is warm enough for water to flow. Where the temperature is just right for life as we know it. Not too hot and not too cold. Yet, as it stands, the universe is silent. We still have not found any sign of alien life.

However, when it comes to exoplanet hunting, we have only just scratched the surface, because it is estimated that every star in the Milky Way has on average at least one planet orbiting it. And there are more than 100 billion stars in our galaxy, alone.

The Universe is likely teeming with alien worlds that are waiting to be discovered.

And just a few years ago, scientists made one of the most exciting exoplanet discoveries so far, a rocky planet similar in size to Earth orbiting within the habitable zone of the closest star to the Sun. Proxima Centauri.