

# Russians Claim To Have Punched Through To Antarctic 'Subglacial Lake'

09:35 am

February 8, 2012

by MARK MEMMOTT

One week [after pausing with about 40 feet to go](#), Russian scientists today announced that they have successfully drilled through two miles of ice to reach Lake Vostok — a body of water the size of New Jersey that hasn't been touched for millions of years.

The Google translation from Russian [on this webpage](#) is a little rough, but you can see that the team says the breakthrough came over the weekend.



[Russia's Federal Service for Hydrometeorology and Environmental Monitoring](#)

In Antarctica, Russian scientists posed at the site where they say they've drilled through to Lake Vostok. The sign indicates that the breakthrough happened on Feb. 5, 2012.

Now, [as \*The New York Times\* reports](#), the Russians say that an initial spurt of water that rose up from the lake has frozen in the drill hole — as expected. It's likely that water has been contaminated with some of the chemicals used during the drilling. The plan is to return next December and only then draw clean water from the lake.

As NPR's Richard Harris [has reported](#), the drilling has been going on for about 50 years. Scientists are eager to see if anything might be living in the lake and might add to evolutionary science.

Lake Vostok is warmed by geothermal energy. [According to \*The Associated Press\*](#), "scientists from other nations hope to follow up this discovery with similar projects. American and British teams are drilling to reach their own subglacial Antarctic lakes."

