



A Defrosting Mess

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This image is from the high latitudes in the Southern hemisphere, about half-way through southern spring. Just like on the Earth, the frost layer that accumulates over the winter will disappear as summer approaches and Mars heats up. However, most of this frost is not made of water ice and snow -- on Mars, most of the frost/ice is made of carbon dioxide (also known as “dry ice”). This material will not melt, but instead will go directly from solid into vapor (a process called sublimation) as it heats up.



The HiRISE camera onboard the Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter is the most powerful one of its kind ever sent to another planet. Its high resolution allows us to see Mars like never before, and helps other missions choose a safe spot to land for future exploration. Thousands of images are available online at: uahirise.org.