

THE FATE OF PHOBOS



20 MILLION

The number of years before Martian moon Phobos descends to an altitude where the red planet's gravity begins to rip it apart. The rubble will form a ring around Mars according to a paper published in *Nature Geoscience* in November.

CREDIT: NASA / JPL / UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

100 MILLION

How long, in years, the ring might remain in orbit until it crashes on Mars, bit by bit.

26

Size of Mars' largest moon, Phobos, in kilometres, at its widest point.

9,377

The height of Phobos' orbit in kilometres today.

2-3

The distance, in centimetres, that Phobos' orbit is closing in on Mars each year. Phobos is one of only two moons in the Solar System that is approaching its host planet. The other is Neptune's moon Triton.