

## DESTINATION: NEAR-EARTH ASTEROIDS

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The subset of near-Earth asteroids with rendezvous/roundtrip delta-v's smaller than the Moon's includes ~10,000 objects larger than 100 m and ~100,000 larger than 10 m. These are the easiest, cheapest space targets and the logical next step in human exploration of the solar system. Genetically related to meteorites, main-belt asteroids, and comets, their compositions range from carbonaceous and volatile-rich to stony and metallic. Their shapes and spin states are extraordinarily diverse. As sources of material for shielding, propellant, and life support, these diminutive worlds have tremendous commercial potential, and are the key to a sustained human presence in space.