



 Chandra X-Ray
Observatory Center

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NGC 346: A hot gas cloud in a star cluster about 180,000 light years from Earth located in the Small Magellanic Cloud galaxy.

Credit: NASA/CXC/U.Liege/Y.Nazé et al.

Chandra's image of the young star cluster NGC 346 reveals a heart-shaped cloud of 8 million-degree Celsius gas in the central region. Evidence from radio, optical and ultraviolet telescopes suggests that the cloud is a remnant of a supernova explosion. The bright X-ray source at the top center of the image is HD 5980, one of the most massive stars known. This young star is known to have undergone dramatic eruptions in the past. Such eruptions could provide an alternative explanation for the existence of the hot gas cloud.

Scale: Image is approx. 3 arcmin on a side.

Chandra X-ray Observatory ACIS Image

CXC operated for NASA by the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory