NGC 6240: A galaxy about 330 million light years from Earth
(Credit: X-ray (NASA/CXC/MIT/C.Canizares, M.Nowak); Optical (NASA/STScI))

**Caption:** NGC 6240 is a system in which two supermassive black holes are a mere 3,000 light years apart. These black holes (the two bright point-like sources in the middle) are in such close proximity, scientists think, because they are in the act of spiraling toward each other—a process that began about 30 million years earlier. It is estimated that the two black holes will eventually drift together and merge into a larger black hole some tens to hundreds of millions of years from now. This image of NGC 6240 contains new X-ray data from Chandra (shown in red, orange, and yellow) that has been combined with an optical image from Hubble.

**Scale:** Image is 124 arcmin across.

*Chandra X-ray Observatory ACIS Image

CXC operated for NASA by the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory*