



NGC 281

High-mass stars are responsible for much of the energy pumped into a galaxy over its lifetime. Unfortunately, these stars are not well understood because they are often found relatively far away while obscured by gas and dust. NGC 281 is an exception to this rule. At about 9,200 light years from Earth, this star cluster sits a remarkable almost 1,000 light years above the plane of the Galaxy, giving astronomers a comparatively unfettered view of its high-mass stars. This composite image contains X-ray data from Chandra (purple) along with infrared observations from Spitzer (red, green, blue).

January 2012

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