

MARCH 2021

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ETA CARINAE

What will be the next star in our Milky Way galaxy to explode as a supernova? Astronomers aren't certain, but one candidate is in Eta Carinae, a volatile system containing two massive stars that closely orbit each other. This image has three types of light: optical data from Hubble (appearing as white), ultraviolet (cyan) from Hubble, and X-rays from Chandra (appearing as purple emission). The previous eruptions of this star have resulted in a ring of hot, X-ray emitting gas about 2.3 light years in diameter surrounding these two stars.

Credit: X-ray: NASA/CXC; Ultraviolet/Optical: NASA/STScI; Combined Image: NASA/ESA/N. Smith (University of Arizona), J. Morse (BoldlyGo Institute) and A. Pagan