



**Chandra X-ray  
Observatory Center**

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**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*

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