



**Chandra X-ray  
Observatory Center**

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**Sagittarius A\*:** The supermassive black hole at the center of the Milky Way galaxy, about 26,000 light years from Earth.

(Credit: X-ray: NASA/CXC/MIT/F. Baganoff et al.; Illustrations: NASA/CXC/M.Weiss)

**Caption:** A new study provides a possible explanation of mysterious X-ray flares detected by Chandra over the period of several years. It suggests that there is a cloud around Sgr A\* containing trillions of asteroids and comets, stripped from their parent stars. The flares occur when asteroids of six miles or larger in radius are consumed by the black hole. The panel on the left shows a very long Chandra observation of the region around the Sgr A\*, while the three panels on the right are artist's impressions of the path that a doomed asteroid would take on its way to the black hole.

**Scale:** Image is 15 arcmin across (20 light years)

*Chandra X-ray Observatory ACIS Image*

*CXC operated for NASA by the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory*