

Eta Carinae

Infrared (2MASS)



1

00:00:01,579 --> 00:00:08,189

The Eta Carinae star system does not lack for superlatives. First, it contains one of

2

00:00:08,189 --> 00:00:14,290

the biggest and brightest stars in our galaxy, weighing at least 90 times the mass of the

3

00:00:14,290 --> 00:00:21,290

sun. It is also extremely volatile and astronomers expect it will have at least one supernova

4

00:00:22,820 --> 00:00:29,820

explosion in the future. As one of the first objects observed by NASA's Chandra X-ray Observatory

5

00:00:32,430 --> 00:00:39,430

after its launch some 15 years ago, this double star system continues to reveal new clues

6

00:00:39,970 --> 00:00:46,970

about its nature through the X-rays it generates. New Chandra data are helping astronomers better

7

00:00:47,440 --> 00:00:53,070

understand how the two stars in Eta Carinae interact with one another through powerful

8

00:00:53,070 --> 00:01:00,070

winds blowing off their surfaces. As the two stars travel around each other in their elliptical