



Horsehead Nebula

The Horsehead Nebula, a favorite target among backyard astronomers, is part of a large molecular cloud located 1,500 light-years away in the constellation Orion. The distinctive silhouette of the nebula is almost lost in the abundant details revealed in this infrared image. Strong ultraviolet radiation from young stars embedded in the cloud works to sculpt the region into pillar-like structures that cast huge shadows on other parts of the nebula. Radiation from a nearby star is eroding away part of this well-known figure of hydrogen gas laced with dust. The distinctive Horsehead silhouette will disintegrate in about 5 million years.

Hubble Space Telescope – Wide Field Camera 3
NASA, ESA, and the Hubble Heritage Team (STScI/AURA)