



NGC 1866

Globular cluster NGC 1866 hosts hundreds of thousands of glittering stars, all held together by their mutual gravitational attraction. NGC 1866 lives on the edge of the Large Magellanic Cloud, a satellite galaxy of our Milky Way galaxy. The blue stars are younger and burn hotter, while the red stars are older and burn cooler.

Unlike most globular clusters, which formed as long as billions of years ago from giant molecular clouds of gas and dust, NGC 1866 contains multiple generations of stars. Scientists theorize that after the first generation of stars formed from a single cloud of gas, the cluster encountered a second giant gas cloud that sparked an additional generation of star formation. NGC 1866 is roughly 160,000 light-years from Earth. Thanks to its relatively close distance, it is one of the only globular clusters outside of our Milky Way where individual stars can be discerned and studied.

Hubble Space Telescope – Wide Field Camera 3
NASA and ESA