

SPACE SCOOP

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Fresh Look at a Young Star Cluster

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The Milky Way is the galaxy in which we live, a collection of billions of hot burning stars, planets and cosmic gas.

If you're lucky enough to have enjoyed a really dark sky, far from the light pollution in cities and towns, you might have seen the Milky Way arching majestically across the night sky.

From our spot on Earth, the Milky Way looks like a fuzzy arc of soft yellow light. These clumps of yellow light are actually thousands of stars that our eyes cannot separate into individuals – but our telescopes can!

This photograph shows a patch of our Galaxy that contains a cluster of hundreds of young, close together stars. By studying this cluster and its cousins elsewhere in the Milky Way astronomers can learn more about the Milky Way and how stars form.

We now know that the Milky Way has a spiral. It is made up of four long curving arms of gas, dust and stars. This star cluster lies in the Carina-Sagittarius arm, named after the two constellations we find it in (the Carina constellation and the Sagittarius constellation).

▲ COOL FACT!

During a clear night, we should be able to see over 2500 stars with the naked eye. Unfortunately, light pollution from street lights, cars, shops and houses means that in cities we can only see a dozen or so of these stars. Visit Dark Skies International and find out how you help save our view of the stars!