

Space Image: Disappearing Act

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Image Credit: NASA/JPL-Caltech

(PhysOrg.com) -- This swirling landscape of stars is known as the North America Nebula. In visible light, the region resembles North America, but in this new infrared view from NASA's Spitzer Space Telescope, the continent disappears.

Where did the continent go? The reason you don't see it in Spitzer's view

is due, in part, to the fact that [infrared light](#) can penetrate dust whereas visible light cannot. Dusty, dark clouds in the visible image become transparent in Spitzer's view. In addition, Spitzer's infrared detectors pick up the glow of dusty cocoons enveloping baby stars.

Clusters of young stars (about one million years old) can be found throughout the image. Slightly older but still very [young stars](#) (about 3-5 million years) are also liberally scattered across the complex. Some areas of this nebula are still very thick with dust and a

Provided by JPL/NASA

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