

Image: Hubble sees a bizarre cosmic rarity: NGC 660

December 11 2013



Credit: Hubble/NASA/European Space Agency

This new Hubble image shows a peculiar galaxy known as NGC 660, located around 45 million light-years away from us.

NGC 660 is classified as a "polar ring galaxy," meaning that it has a belt of gas and stars around its center that it ripped from a near neighbor

during a clash about one billion years ago. The first polar ring galaxy was observed in 1978 and only around a dozen more have been discovered since then, making them something of a cosmic rarity.

Unfortunately, NGC 660's polar ring cannot be seen in this image, but the image has plenty of other features that make it of interest to astronomers – its central bulge is strangely off-kilter and, perhaps more intriguingly, it is thought to harbor exceptionally large amounts of [dark matter](#). In addition, in late 2012 astronomers observed a massive outburst emanating from NGC 660 that was around ten times as bright as a [supernova explosion](#).

This burst was thought to be caused by a massive jet shooting out of the [supermassive black hole](#) at the center of the galaxy.

Provided by NASA

Citation: Image: Hubble sees a bizarre cosmic rarity: NGC 660 (2013, December 11) retrieved 28 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2013-12-image-hubble-bizarre-cosmic-rarity.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--