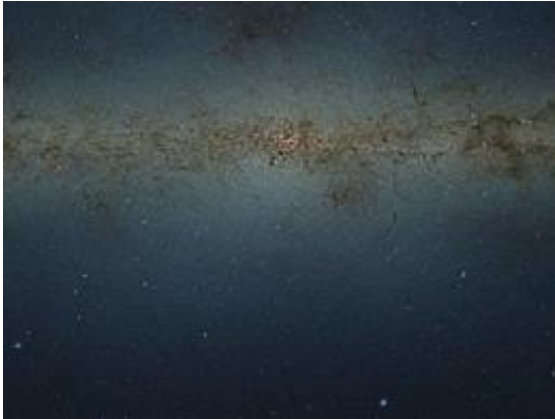


Milky Way stars catalogued in massive new image

24 October 2012



A view of central parts of the Milky Way obtained with the VISTA survey telescope at the European Southern Observatory's (ESO) Paranal Observatory in Chile. The high-resolution photo contains nearly nine billion pixels. It was created by combining thousands of individual images from VISTA, taken through three different infrared filters, into a single monumental mosaic.

Astronomers said Wednesday they have produced an image capturing some 84 million stars at our universe's core in a massive survey of the Milky Way.

The team's achievement at the Paranal observatory in northern Chile has been billed as the largest survey to date of stars in our galaxy—multi-gigapixel.

That makes it a whopping 10 times larger than the biggest earlier images, according to scientists at the [European Southern Observatory](#) (ESO).

It should help them better understand how our universe has changed over time, they said.

"By observing in detail the thousands of stars around the center of the Milky Way, we can learn much more about the formation and evolution, not only of our galaxy, but of spiral galaxies in

general," said lead researcher Roberto Saito.

The ESO, a collaboration involving 15 mainly European countries, operates a number of high-powered telescopes in Chile, including the Very Large [Telescope array](#) (VLT) in Paranal, the world's most advanced telescope.

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