0641

Xmas Tree Cluster

Quick Facts:

Distance: 2700 Light-years.

Size: Approx 15 Light-years.

Constellation: Monoceros.

A complex including this cluster, the Fox Fur, Cone Nebulas and the bright variable star S Monocerotis. A baby at only 2 million years old, it's recent and ongoing star formation, with starlight both energizing glowing gas as well as reflecting off dust Also called NGC 2264.

Find it: Go 10 degrees due east of Betelgeuse and 2 up. A 5th magnitude star there is S Mon. GOTO: NAMED OBJECTS.

Image by ESO. Quick reference card by Derek Wallentinsen.