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Stunning Pictures Of Milky Way



These stunning images of star formations in the Milky Way are from a groundbreaking survey which show outer space at its most beautiful.

The pictures, showing the stars in various stages of their lifecycle from birth to final explosion, are part of a survey of the Northern Plane of the Milky Way.

The new research, led by experts from Britain and using the Isaac Newton Telespoe in La Palma on the Canary Islands, will allow scientists to probe parts of

the galaxy that have never been seen before.

This first release from the INT Photometric H-Alpha Survey (IPHAS) study will eventually be extended to cover the entire galactic plane of our galaxy.

Pictures include The Rosette Nebula, a cluster of stars located in the Monoceros region of the Milky Way Galaxy and around 5,200 light years from Earth. The nebula and cluster measure roughly 130 light years in diameter.

The Elephant Trunk Nebula, a concentration of interstellar gas and dust located in the Cepheus constellation about 2,400 light years away from Earth is another beautiful shot to emerge from the study.

They are joined by a beautiful picture of the Pelican Nebula, found in the constellation Cygnus, and named after the animal for its close likeness to it in shape.

Professor Janet Drew of the University of Hertfordshire said: "Using the distinctive Hydrogen marker we are able to look at some of the least understood stars in the Galaxy, those at the early and very late stages of their life cycles.

"These represent less than one in a thousand stars, so the IPHAS data will greatly improve our picture of stellar evolution."

So far boffins have noted 200 million unique objects in the catalogue and it is hoped the "immense resource" will foster in-depth studies into the workings of the Milky Way.

Dr Nic Walton of the University of Cambridge said: "This is a substantial and significant survey, which aims to eventually contain 7-800 million objects."

The data is described in a paper submitted to the Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society.

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