



This image depicts a view of the Horsehead Nebula. Click on the image to see an even-more sensational view of the photo.

NASA's Astronomy Picture of the Day (APOD) website tells us [more about this image](#):

One of the most identifiable nebulae in the sky, the Horsehead Nebula in Orion, is part of a large, dark, molecular cloud.

Also known as Barnard 33, the unusual shape was first discovered on a photographic plate in the late 1800s. The red glow originates from hydrogen gas predominantly behind the nebula, ionized by the nearby bright star Sigma Orionis.

The darkness of the Horsehead is caused mostly by thick dust, although the lower part of the Horsehead's neck casts a shadow to the left. Streams of gas leaving the nebula are funneled by a strong magnetic field.

Bright spots in the Horsehead Nebula's base are young stars just in the process of forming. Light takes about 1,500 years to reach us from the Horsehead Nebula.

The above image was taken with the 0.9-meter telescope at Kitt Peak National Observatory.

Click on the image for a better view.

Credits:

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