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Astronomers release first ever photo of black hole – 13th April, 2019

Level 4

Astronomers took the first ever image of a black hole. It is in a distant galaxy 500 million trillion km away. That is a five followed by twenty zeroes. The black hole is 40 billion km across and is three million times bigger than Earth. An astronomer said it was larger than our solar system. It is 6.5 billion times bigger than the Sun. He called it, "an absolute monster" and "the heavyweight champion of black holes in the Universe".

A network of eight telescopes captured the image. No single telescope is powerful enough to do this. The telescopes are located on volcanoes, mountains and deserts around the world. One is in Antarctica. A team of 200 scientists used the telescopes to scan the galaxy over 10 days. The data was stored on hundreds of hard drives. The image is now a landmark in space exploration. A professor called it "an extraordinary scientific feat".

Level 5

Astronomers have taken the first ever image of a black hole. It is in a distant galaxy called M87, 500 million trillion km from Earth. That number is a five followed by twenty zeroes. Scientists say the black hole has a diameter of 40 billion km and is three million times larger than Earth. The lead astronomer said: "What we see is larger than the size of our entire Solar System. It has a mass 6.5 billion times that of the Sun....It is an absolute monster - the heavyweight champion of black holes in the Universe." He added that it was one of the heaviest black holes in space.

The image was captured by a network of eight telescopes called the Event Horizon Telescope (EHT). No single telescope is powerful enough to record the image. The EHT telescopes are located on volcanoes in Hawaii and Mexico, mountains in the USA and Spain, a desert in Chile, and in Antarctica. A team of 200 scientists used the telescopes to scan the M87 galaxy over 10 days. The data was stored on hundreds of hard drives and processed to produce the image. It is now a landmark in space exploration. A professor called it "an extraordinary scientific feat".

Level 6

Astronomers have taken the first ever photograph of a black hole. It is located in a far, distant galaxy called M87, which is 500 million trillion km from Earth. That gargantuan number is a five followed by twenty zeroes. Scientists estimate the black hole to have a diameter of 40 billion km and to be three million times larger than our planet. Lead astronomer Professor Heino Falcke spoke to the BBC about the black hole. He said: "What we see is larger than the size of our entire Solar System. It has a mass 6.5 billion times that of the Sun. And it is one of the heaviest black holes that we think exists. It is an absolute monster - the heavyweight champion of black holes in the Universe."

The image of the black hole was captured by an array of eight linked telescopes called the Event Horizon Telescope (EHT). No single telescope exists that is powerful enough to capture the image. Each of the EHT telescopes is located high up on volcanoes in Hawaii and Mexico, mountains in the USA and Spain, a desert in Chile, and in Antarctica. A team of 200 scientists pointed the networked telescopes towards the M87 galaxy and scanned it over a period of 10 days. The data they gathered was stored on hundreds of hard drives. It was then collated and processed to produce the image that is now a landmark in space exploration. Professor Sheperd Doeleman called it "an extraordinary scientific feat".