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COVER

Massive star Eta Carinae (center) and its surrounding cloud of dusty gas. The ejection of this gas from the central star was observed about 140 years ago. This is a logarithmic isophote map in red light; the outer contours are fainter than the central spot by a factor of roughly 2000 in surface brightness. The width of the picture is about 0.5 arc minute or 1.3 light years at the 9000-light-year distance of Eta Carinae. Recently it was discovered that the large outer condensation on the right side is nitrogen-rich. See page 243. [Data for image were obtained with a SIT vidicon and 60-inch telescope at Cerro Tololo Inter-American Observatory, La Serena, Chile]