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**M86 (NGC 4406):** A giant elliptical galaxy in the Virgo galaxy cluster about 50 million light years from Earth.

**Credit:** X-ray: NASA/CXC/SAO/C. Jones, W. Forman & S. Murray; Optical: Pal. Obs. DSS

This composite X-ray (blue)/optical (orange) image of M86 shows gas being swept out of the galaxy to form a long tail more than 200,000 light years in length. M86 has been pulled into the Virgo galaxy cluster and accelerated to a speed of about 3 million miles per hour by the enormous combined gravity of dark matter, hot gas, and hundreds of galaxies that comprise the cluster. The supersonic motion of the galaxy through the diffuse hot gas produces pressure that is stripping gas from M86 and forming the spectacular tail.

**Scale:** Image is approx. 15 x 23 arcmin.

*Chandra X-ray Observatory ACIS Image*

*CXC operated for NASA by the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory*

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