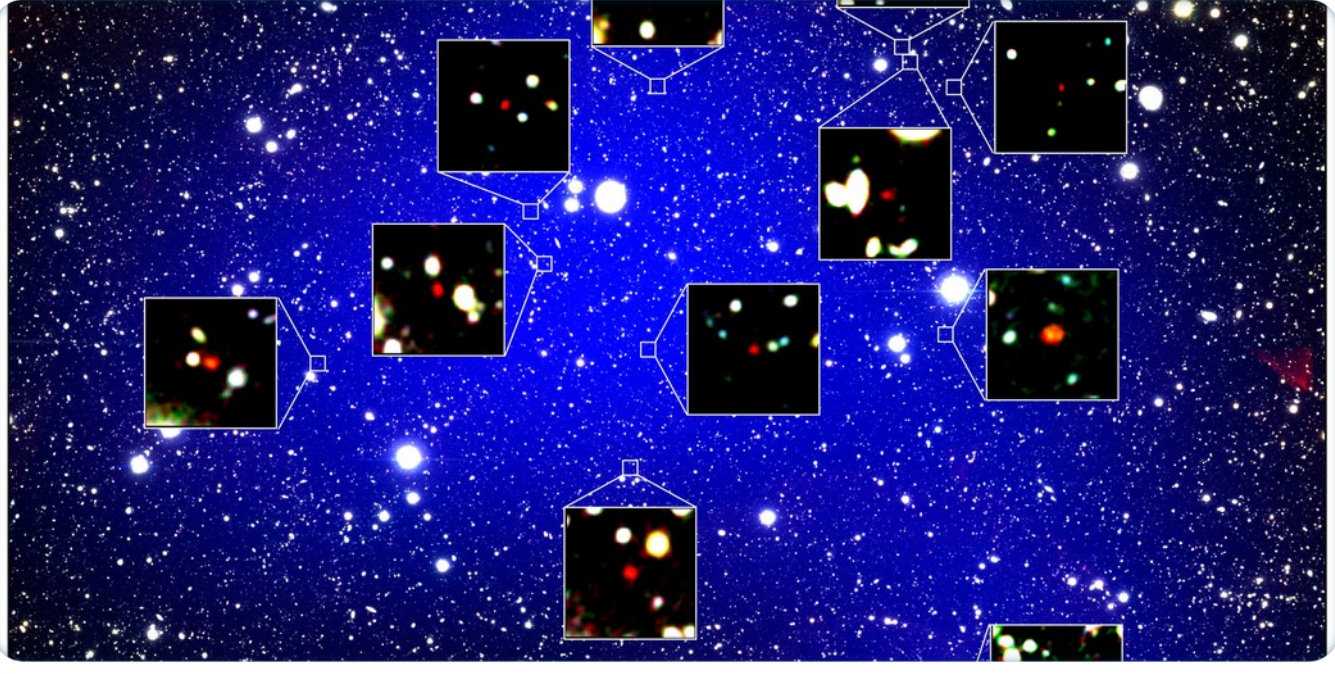




An Ancient Trove of Galaxies



Galaxies are sociable and like to group together, just like people. Scientists have wondered if this was always true or if it was something that happened recently.

Astronomers have found a group of distant galaxies in the early stages of forming in a galaxy cluster. This collection of 12 galaxies are being observed as they existed roughly 13 billion years ago! This is only a short time after the birth of the Universe.

To find this special early distant galaxy cluster in the making, astronomers studied a giant map of the Universe taken by the Subaru Telescope in Hawaii, USA. They noticed an area that was very crowded. This turned out to be a group of very old galaxies that were beginning to group together under the force of gravity.

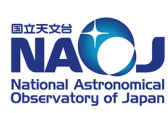
This discovery is exciting for scientists because it means that galaxies were beginning to come together even as the first stars were still forming. There is still much to find out about galaxy clusters and how the universe developed soon after the Big Bang!

Image credit: NAOJ/Harikane et al.

COOL FACT



Galaxy clusters can contain up to one thousand galaxies. That makes for many billions of stars in each galaxy cluster!



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