



X-RAY ASTRONOMY 2019

Current Challenges and New Frontiers in the Next Decade

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Formation and growth of the earliest supermassive black holes

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Determining the processes responsible for the initial formation and subsequent growth of the very first supermassive black holes, primarily taking place at very high redshifts ($z > 6$), will be a major challenge for the next decade of X-ray astronomy and beyond. I will review what is currently known about black hole growth during this early period of cosmic time (from both an X-ray and multiwavelength perspective), discuss some of the latest progress in understanding the evolution of AGN populations at lower redshifts, and look ahead to the next generation of X-ray observatories - in particular the potential of the Athena X-ray observatory to identify large samples of moderate-luminosity $z > 6$ AGN.

Topic

The cosmic frontier: first black holes and proto-clusters

Affiliation

University of Leicester

Primary author: AIRD, James (University of Leicester)

Presenter: AIRD, James (University of Leicester)

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