Whirlpool Galaxy

Quick Facts:

Distance: 24 Million Light-years.

Size: 60,000 Light-years.

Constellation: Canes Venatici.

Also called M-51. Galaxy and companion galaxy (NGC 5195) are a gravitationally interacting-merging pair.

Find it: from the end star (Alkaid) of the Big Dipper, star hop 2 degrees west to a faint naked-eye star (24 Uma). Then 2 degrees south-southwest to find the galaxy. Or approximately one-quarter of the way from Alkaid to Cor Caroli. GOTO: M (Messier).

Image by NASA/JPL-Caltech/Univ. of Arizona/DSS/SST, Quick reference card by Derek Wallentinsen.