

Observing Flat Galaxies

Everly fascinating are Flat Galaxies with their Cheshire Cat-like qualities of long, thin wisps suspended in the depths of space: Now you see them, now you don't.



A Spindle/Splinter/Needle Galaxy

NGC 5907, lying 53 million light-years distant, is a prime example of a Flat Galaxy. It is one that is not on the minds of many observers.

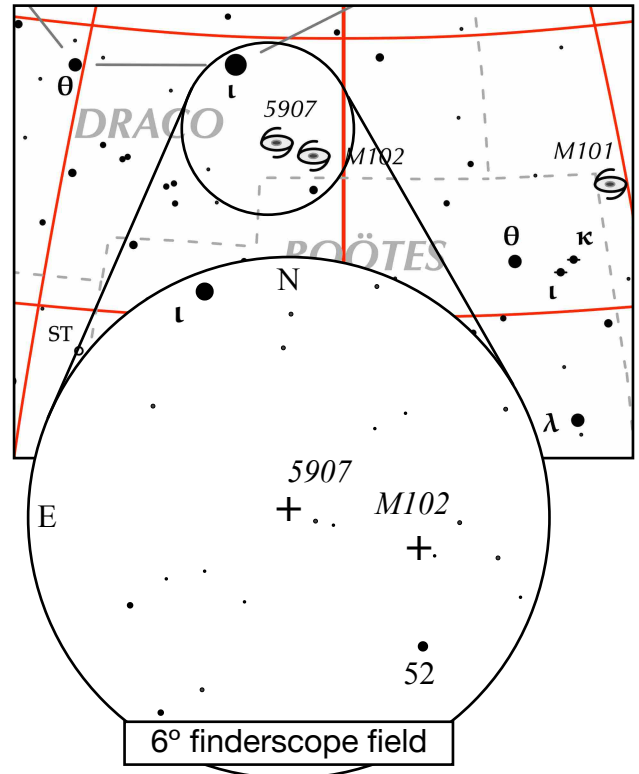
Navigate to NGC 5907:

1. Locate 3rd magnitude Iota Draconis. It lies about 20° east of the Big Dipper.
2. Place it at the nne edge of the finder field.
3. At the sw side of the field is a 5th magnitude star.
4. NGC 5907 lies about midway between the two.
5. Insert a low power, wide field eyepiece and slowly scan the area.
6. Its low surface brightness makes it difficult to spot.

Recommended Aperture:

Not less than 10 inches. The larger, the better.

Dark skies are a must!

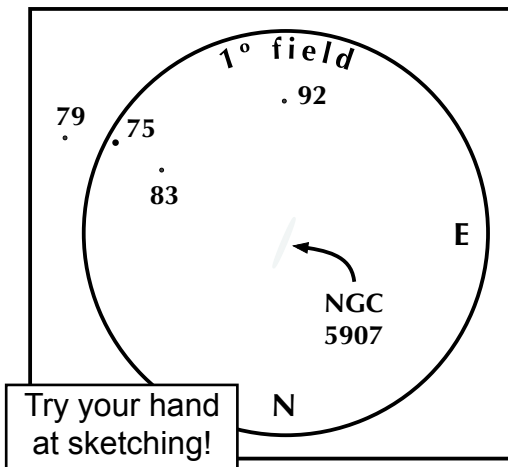


Published Characteristics:

Integrated magnitude: 11.1
 Size: 12.7 min x 1.4 min
 Surface brightness: 16.4 mag./min²,
 25.3 mag./sec²
 Axis ratio: 9.1
 Position Angle: 160° est

Eyepiece Impressions:

- 10 inch Reflector, f/10, 86x: "Quite long and slender. Its length appears longer when using averted vision. No central bulge or brightening noted." AL
- 12.5 inch Reflector, f/5.6, 130x: "Bright, very large, and extremely elongated NNW/SSE at 165°. The edge-on galaxy was at least 9'x1' in size, with a large bright core and bright nucleus. A noticeable knot near the nucleus was NGC 5906. A very faint dust lane on the western side of the elongated core was also glimpsed at times, appearing as a sharp cut-off on that side." JC
- 14.5 inch Reflector, f/5.2, 128x "Large edge-on galaxy, covers almost the FOV. Even brightness with direct vision. With averted vision, there does appear to be some brightening in the galaxy's middle." SG
- 22 inch Reflector, 136x: "Very long and thin with a small, dim core." JF
- 30 inch Reflector, 195x: "A spectacular edge-on jewel. Bright core with a mottled halo. A dust lane on the western edge. In its w-sw portion, is NGC 5906, a faint, elongated knot." TF



Try your hand at sketching!