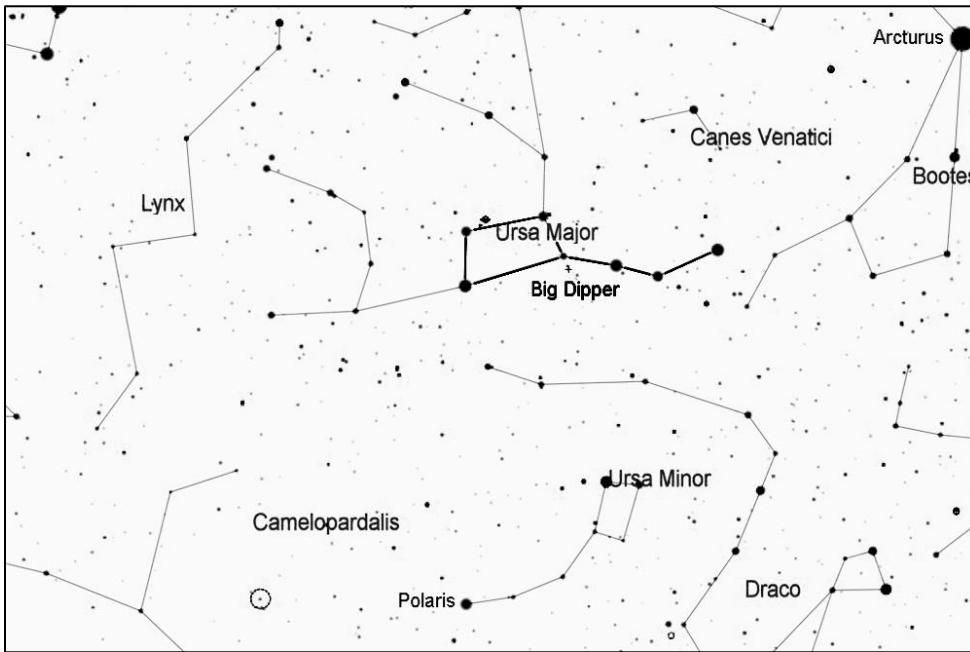


Messier 102 (NGC 5866), Galaxy in Draco

NGC 5866 is sometimes called Messier 102, but historians have shown that the galaxy Messier listed as number 102 is actually a duplicate listing of Messier 101. However, to avoid a gap in the Messier catalog, some people refer NGC 5866 as M102. It is a nice lenticular (lens-shaped) galaxy. Because of its large central bulge and pointy arms, it is sometimes called the Spindle Galaxy. It is about 47 million light years away.



Start by finding the Big Dipper, one of the most recognizable star patterns in the sky. It is part of the constellation Ursa Major, the big bear. It is shown here upside down, high in the sky above Polaris, which is where it can be found during the evenings in spring and summer. For other seasons and times of night, rotate the chart as needed to match what you see in the northern sky.

Note that north is to the bottom in this chart. Look north of the Big Dipper to find a string of stars that represents the tail of Draco, the dragon. Follow this string until you reach ι (iota) Draconis, a 3rd magnitude star that is north of the Big Dipper's handle. Once you reach ι , take a left turn and go 4 degrees to arrive at M102. This small galaxy can be tricky to locate, but note the 5th magnitude star that is circled in the chart below. M102 is just over 1 degree north of this star.

