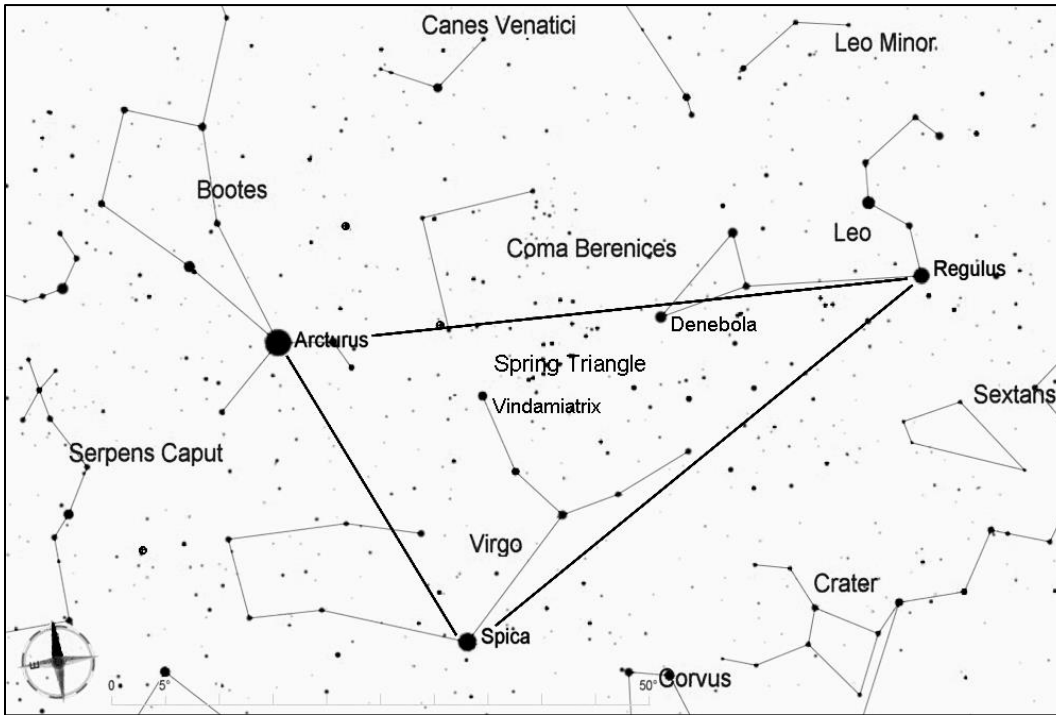


## Messier 88 and 91, Galaxies in Coma Berenices

M88 is a nice spiral galaxy with a bright nucleus surrounded by tightly wound arms. Through large telescopes, some detail in the structure of these arms can be seen. Less than 1 degree to the east is M91, a barred spiral. At magnitude 10.2, it is the dimmest of the galaxies on Messier's list, but it is still easily within the reach of amateur telescopes. It appears as a faint oval with a brighter center. Both galaxies are part of the Coma-Virgo galaxy cluster.



Start by finding the Spring Triangle, which consists of three widely-separated first magnitude stars--Arcturus, Spica, and Regulus. The Spring Triangle is high in the southeast sky in early spring, and in the southwest sky by mid-Summer. (To get oriented, you can use the handle of the Big Dipper and "follow the arc to Arcturus").

For this star hop, look inside the Spring Triangle for Denebola, the star representing the back end of Leo, the lion.

From Denebola, look 7 degrees east with a finderscope or binoculars to find a T-shaped asterism of five stars that includes 6 Virginis. There are several galaxies around this T-shape, but for this star hop, move another 3 degrees to the east to reach M88. Once you have located this galaxy, look less than 1 degree to the east to find M91. They are close enough that they can be seen together in the wide field of view of a low-power eyepiece.

