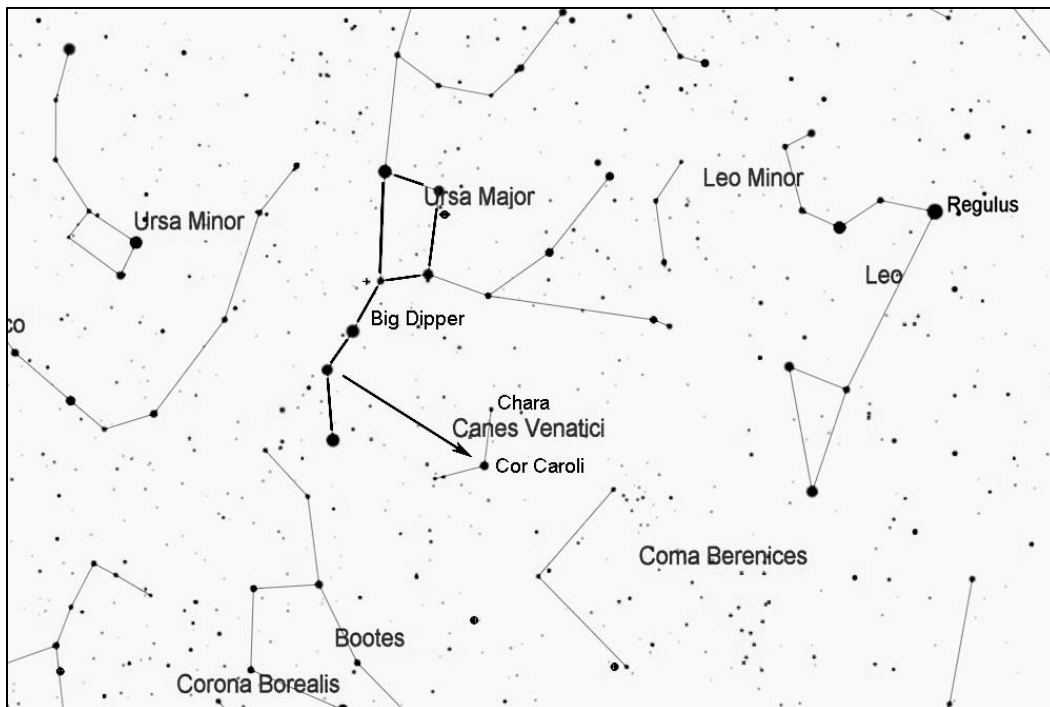


Messier 94, Galaxy in Canes Venatici

M94 is a fine target for any telescope. The central region of this spiral galaxy is very bright, making it easy to find in even a small telescope. The bright central region is surrounded by tightly wound arms, and some of the spiral detail can be seen through the eyepiece of a large scope. The galaxy is relatively close, about 16 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 on its side as it appears on early spring evenings. For other seasons and times of night rotate the chart as needed to match what you see in the northern sky. Then look "underneath" the curved handle of the Big Dipper for Cor Caroli, the brightest star in the small constellation Canes Venatici at magnitude 2.8.

The second-brightest star in Canes Venatici is Chara, magnitude 4. Visualize a shallow triangle with Cor Caroli and Chara forming the base, and M94 can be found at the apex of the triangle, as shown below. M94 is about 3 degrees from each star.

