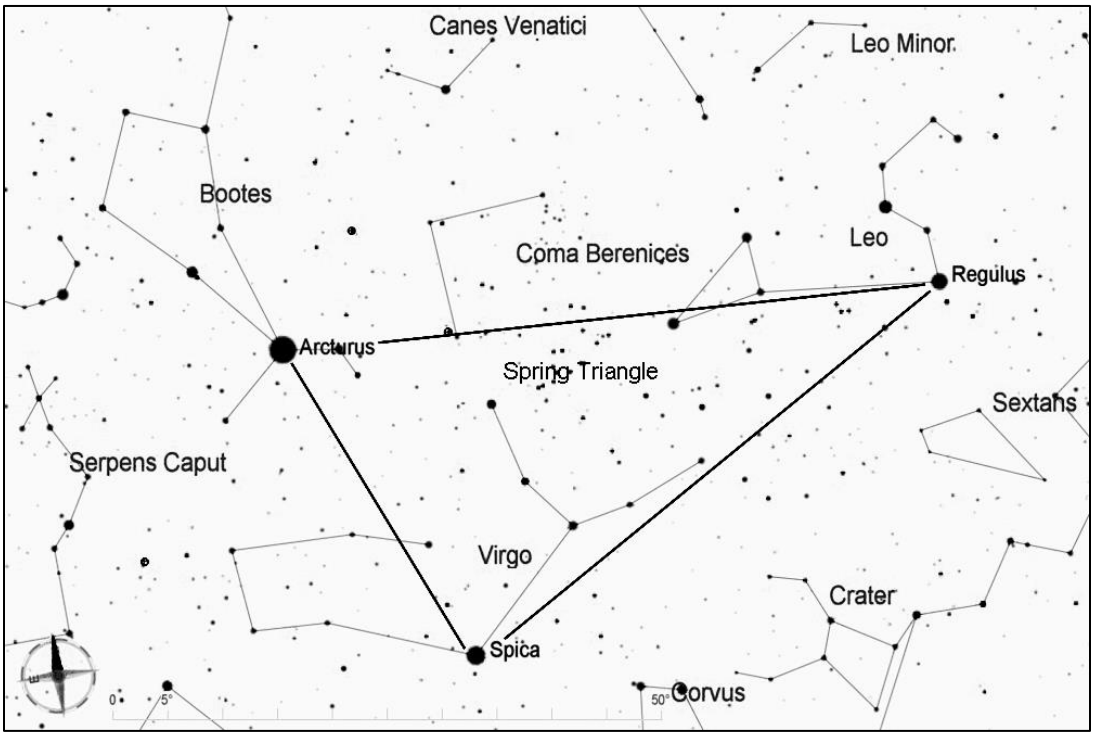
NGC 3626 (Caldwell 40), and NGC 3599, 3605, 3607, 3608, Galaxies in Leo

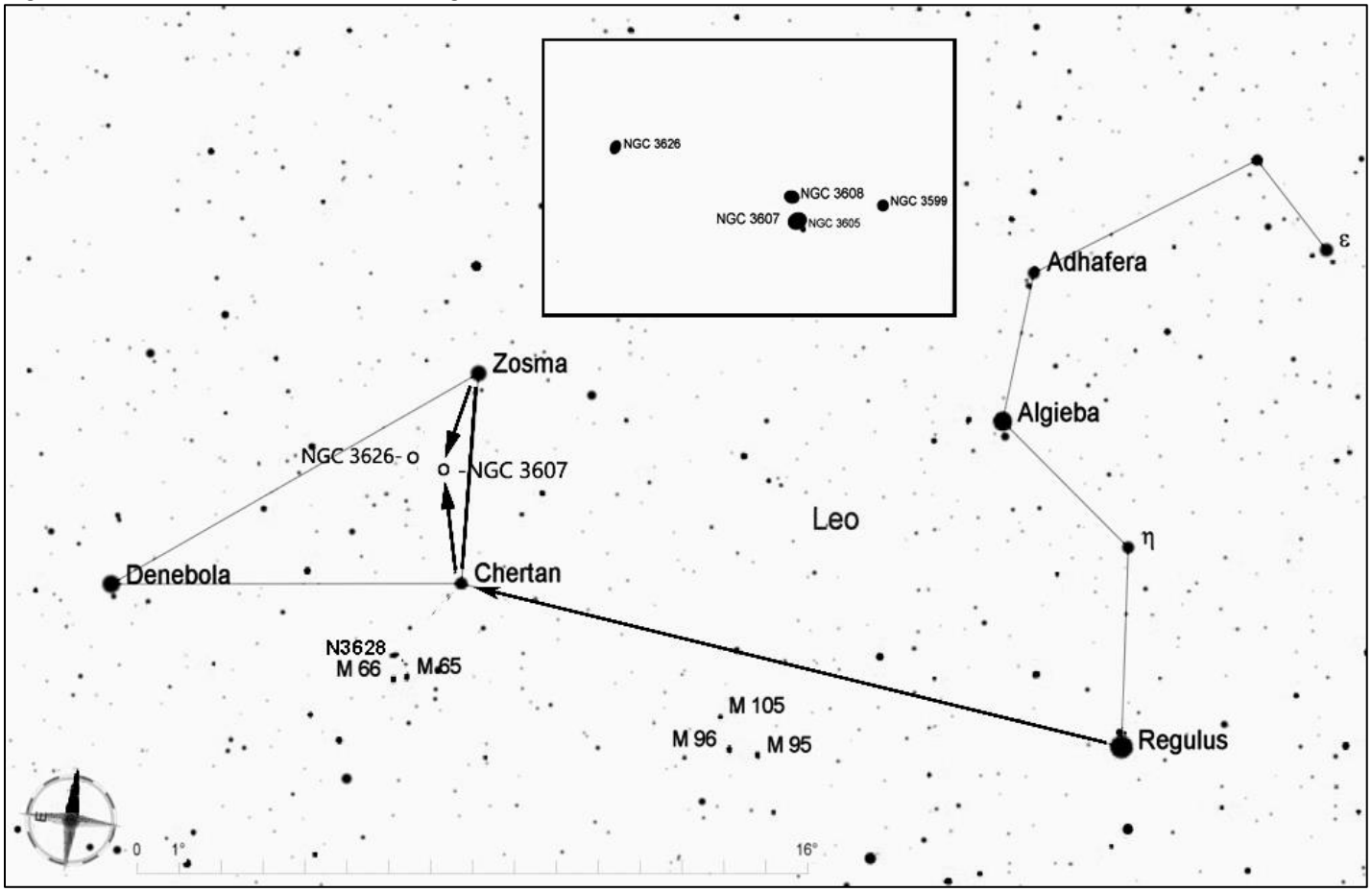
NGC 3626 (Caldwell 40) is a lenticular galaxy that is oblong in the north-south direction and has a small bright center. Just 1 degree to the west are four more galaxies that can fit within a 1/2-degree field of view of a typical medium-power eyepiece. NGC 3507 and 3508 are about magnitude 10 and not difficult to see. NGC 3605 and 3599 are much dimmer. All five of these galaxies are part of the same galaxy cluster, roughly 65 million light years away.



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, begin at Regulus in the constellation Leo, the lion.

The constellation Leo looks like a lion in profile, with its head to the west and its tail to the east. After finding Regulus, look for Chertan and Zosma, two of the three stars that form the back end of the lion. Point your scope about half way between these two stars and just slightly to the east, visualizing a very shallow triangle as shown below. This is where NGC 3605, 3607, and 3608 are located in a tight group. Dim NGC 3599 is about 1/3 degree to the west, and NGC 3626 is about 1 degree to the east-northeast.



Star hop from www.skyledge.net by Jim Mazur. Star charts created with *Cartes du Ciel.*