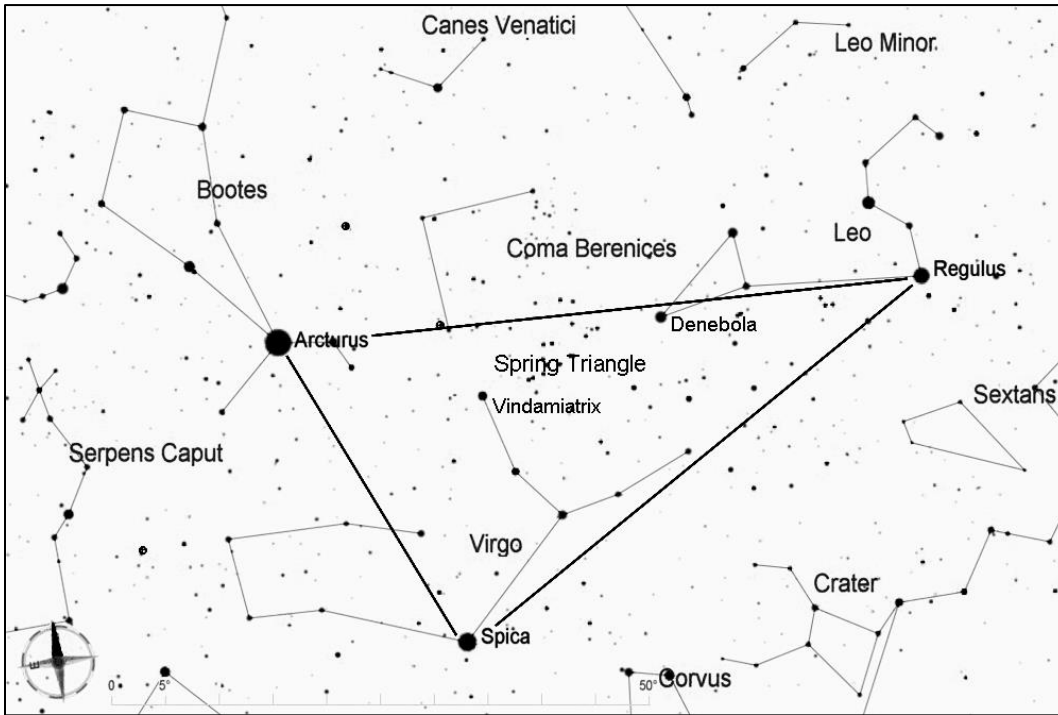


NGC 4435 and 4438 (the Eyes) and Markarian's Chain

Markarian's Chain is a string of galaxies in the heart of the Coma-Virgo galaxy cluster, starting with the bright M84 and M86 to the west and stretching slightly more than 1 degree to NGC 4477. Just to the northeast of M86 is a pair of galaxies called "the Eyes" (NGC 4435 and 4438), and though a medium-sized telescope they do resemble a pair of eyes. Even small scopes can capture several of the galaxies in Markarian's chain, and all of them can be seen with large amateur scopes.



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 in the middle of the Spring Triangle for Denebola, the star representing the back end of Leo, the lion, and Vindemiatrix, a magnitude 2.8 star in Virgo. The galaxies of the Virgo cluster are found in the area between these two stars.

From Denebola, look 7 degrees east with a finderscope or binoculars to find a T-shaped asterism of five stars that includes 6 Virginis. Then move 2 degrees to southeast from the bottom of the T, and you will arrive at M84 and M86, which are just 1/4 degree apart. The Eyes are just 1/4 degree northeast of M86. Use the inset in the chart below to guide you to the rest of the galaxies in Markarian's Chain.

