

The Leo Triplet, photo by Knox Worde

This is the Leo Triplet, consisting of three large spiral galaxies centered about 35 million light years distant in constellation Leo. From our point of view, we see the three galaxies from different angles. The Leo Triplet is a popular target for astrophotographers.

The galaxy in the upper right is known as M65; below it is M66, the largest of the three. It's somewhat smaller in size than our own Milky Way galaxy; it's approximately 95,000 LY in diameter. To the lower left, seen edge on, is NGC3628, affectionately known as the Hamburger Galaxy because of the dark lane of dust seen through it. The bright round object to the upper left of center is a star in the foreground located only 155 light years distant within our galaxy.

The three galaxies are somewhat deformed in shape due to gravitational interaction with one another which has triggered numerous new star formations within M66.

This photo is an accumulation of 1.66 hours' worth of exposures.