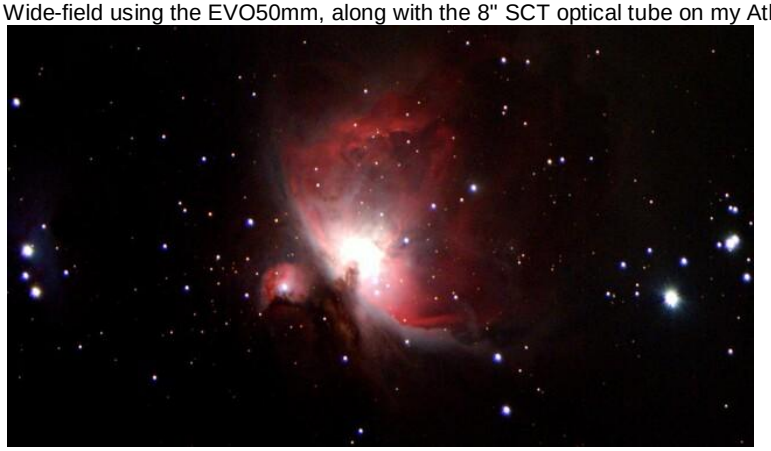
2023 March Observations from Big Woodchuck Observatory

-------- Original Message --------

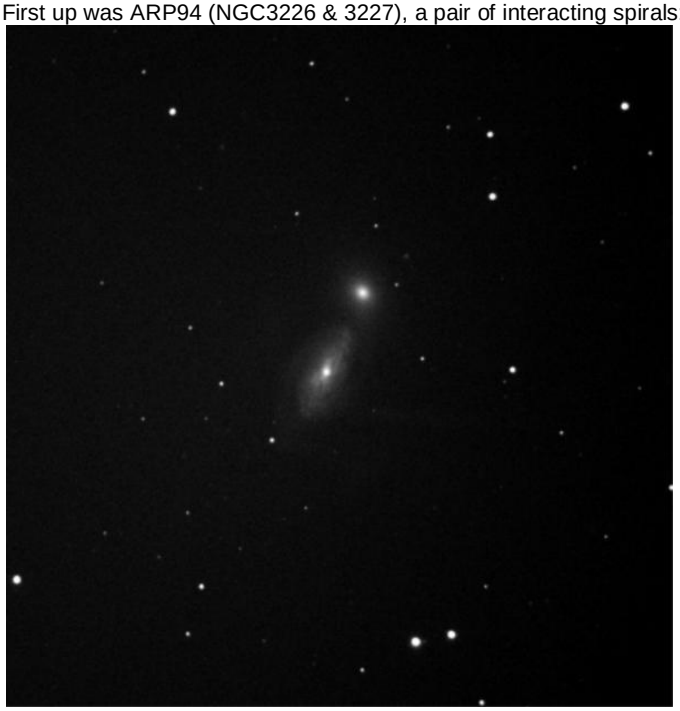
Observing on the Ides of March (03/15/2023)

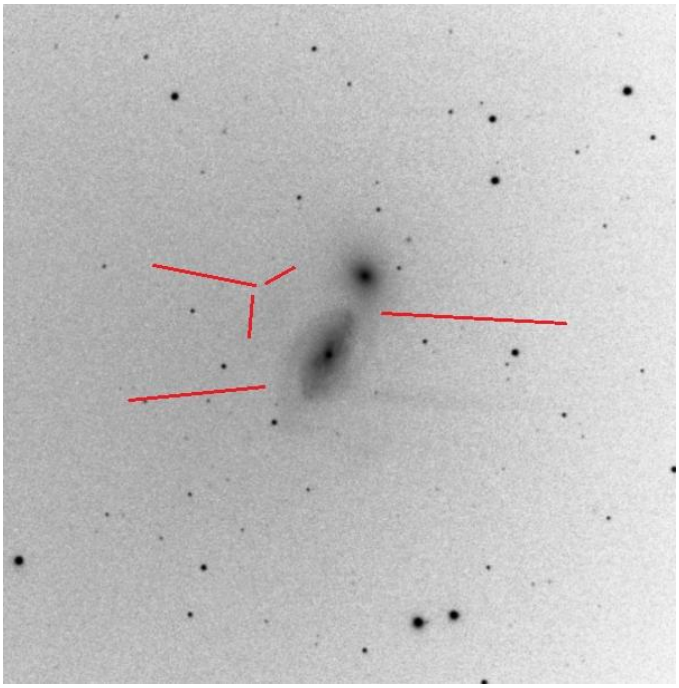
hi all,
Got outback on Wednesday, March 15th - the "Ides of March" for a little observing.
Spent the first hour tweaking the telescope hardware, trying out a different set of rings for the 50mm.
Got everything going by 9:30pm for a final 'Swan Song' view of the Great Orion Nebula, M42 & M43 before it hit the tree tops.
Wide-field using the EVO50mm, along with the 8" SCT optical tube on my Atlas Gem. Livestacked using Sharpcap.



(50mm: ASI290MC & IR filter, 15 second exp stacked for 15 minutes. 8" SCT: ASI294MC & L-eNhance filter, 5 second exp stacked for 15 minutes)

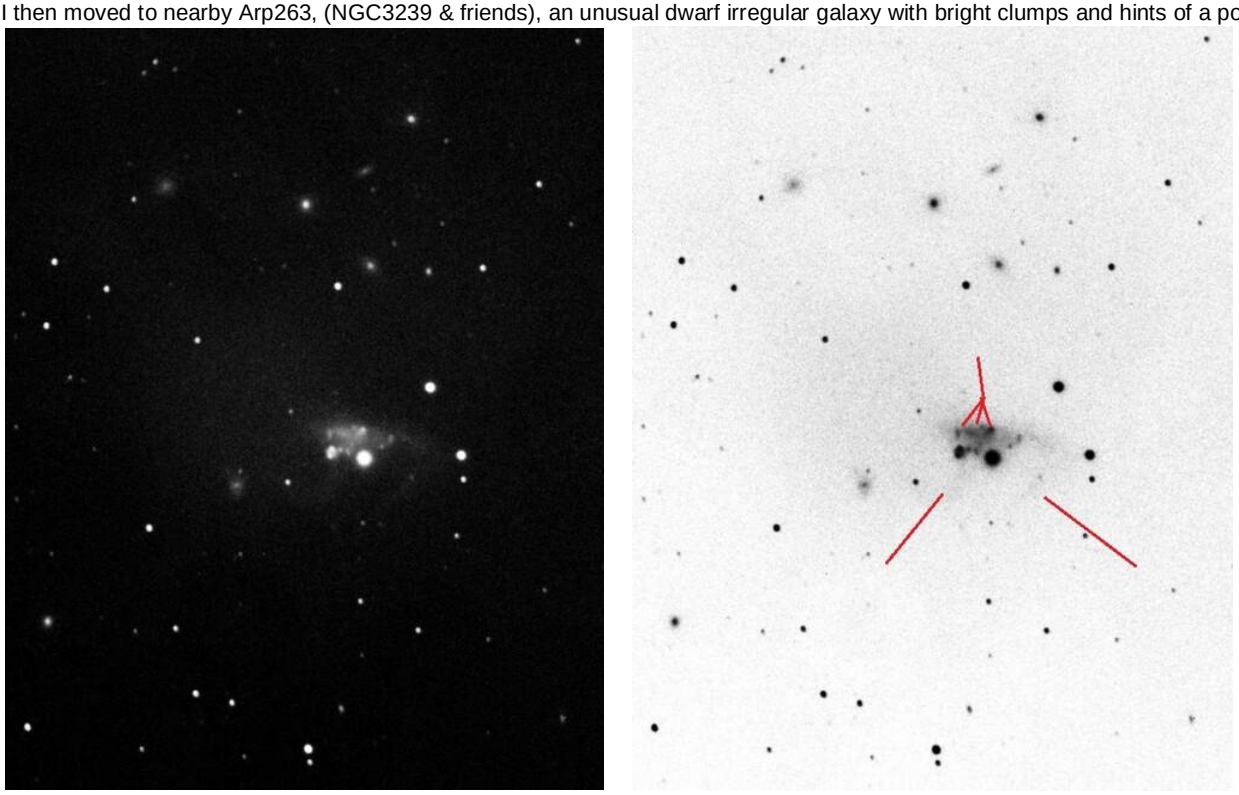
I then moved on to EAA observing Arp Peculiar galaxies in Leo, near Regulus.
First up was ARP94 (NGC3226 & 3227), a pair of interacting spirals:





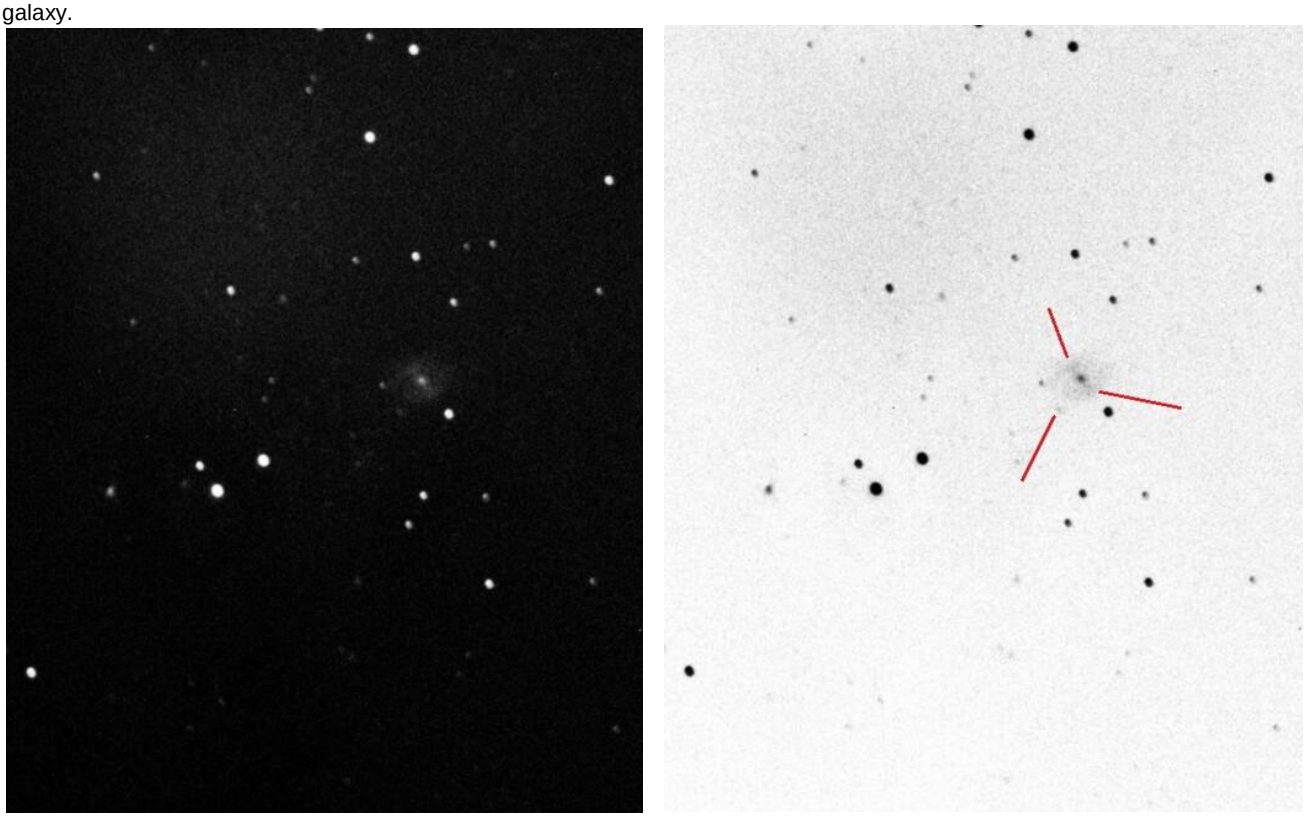
(8" SCT: ASI294MC & L-Pro filter, 180 second exp livestacked for 30 minutes, imaged cropped and rotated)
With observing Arp galaxies, it helps to invert the image in pulling out faint spiral arm details. If you can find it, a great observing reference to have for hunting Arp galaxies is the book: "*The Arp Atlas of Peculiar Galaxies – A Chronicle and Observers Guide*", by Jeff Kanipe & Dennis Webb, 2006 .

I then moved to nearby Arp263, (NGC3239 & friends), an unusual dwarf irregular galaxy with bright clumps and hints of a possible spiral arm.



(8" SCT: ASI294MC & L-Pro filter, 180 second exp livestacked for 30 minutes, imaged cropped and rotated)

Shortly after midnight, I began seeing clouds showing on the ORAS AllSky camera, and before much longer they were visible along my western horizon. So I hurried to get in one more galaxy observation.
Here's the final Arp galaxy for the evening, Arp43 (IC607), with a small, low surface brightness companion on one of its arms distorting the SB galaxy.



(8" SCT: ASI294MC & L-Pro filter, 180 second exp livestacked for 24 minutes, imaged cropped and rotated)

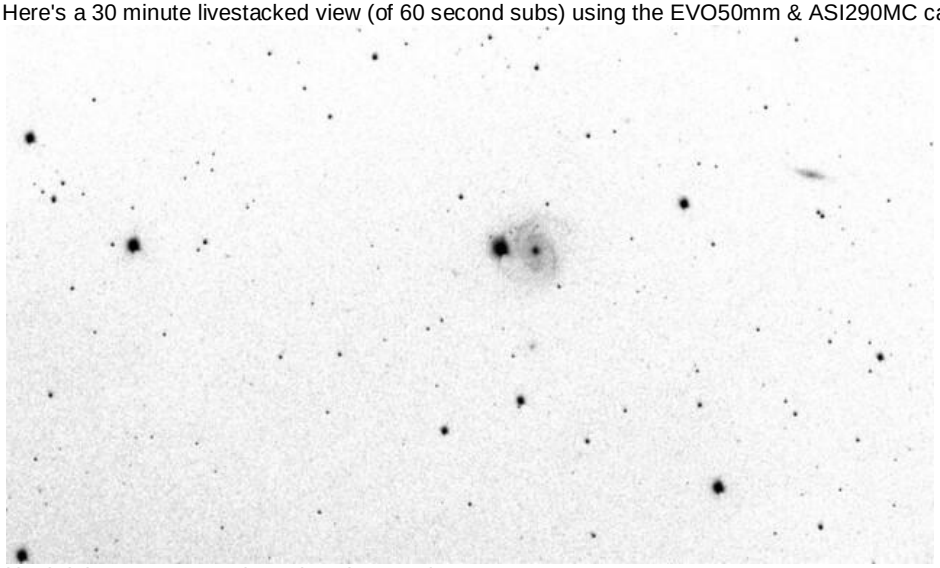
With hazy clouds now drifting thru the final minutes of Arp43's observation, I had to cut short the time.
That brings me up to having observed 215 of 338 Arp objects. Still a ways to go! So while I thought I was going to have a much longer evening of clear skies, I did get in a few good galaxy observations before the Ides got me!
Larry

-------- Original Message --------

Successful observation of the Ceres / M100 transit (03/27/2023)

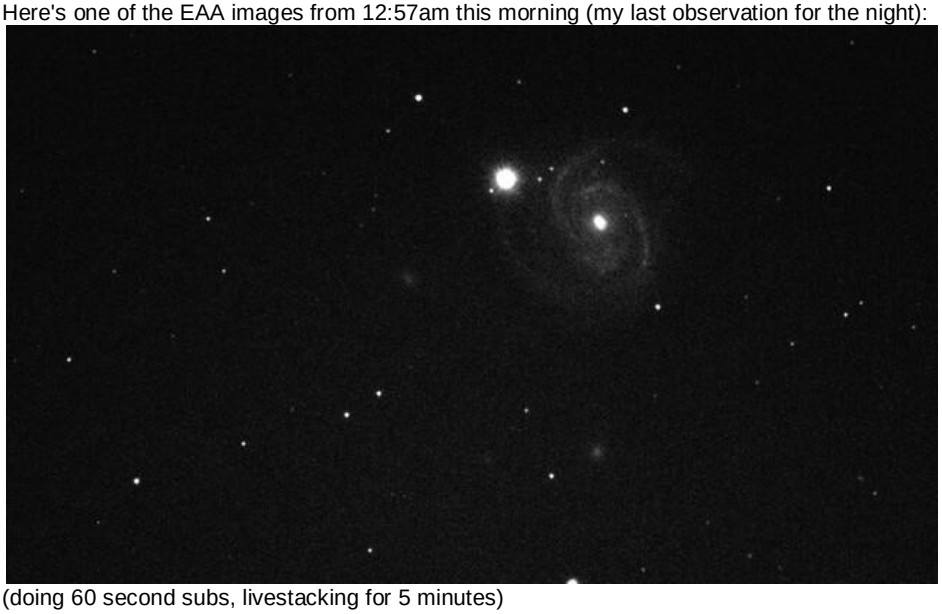
hi all,
I was able to successfully EAA observe the Ceres/M100 transit/conjunction last evening.
The +6.9 magnitude bright asteroid really stood out against the dimmer +9.3 mag galaxy. I was delayed from getting a good view of the pair by a group of pine trees to my east. Here's the view thru the limbs using the 50mm. Arghhhhh!!! □

But finally around 10:30pm, the asteroid/galaxy cleared the last tree, and I was able to settle-in for several hours of transit.
Here's a 30 minute livestacked view (of 60 second subs) using the EVO50mm & ASI290MC camera & IR filter:



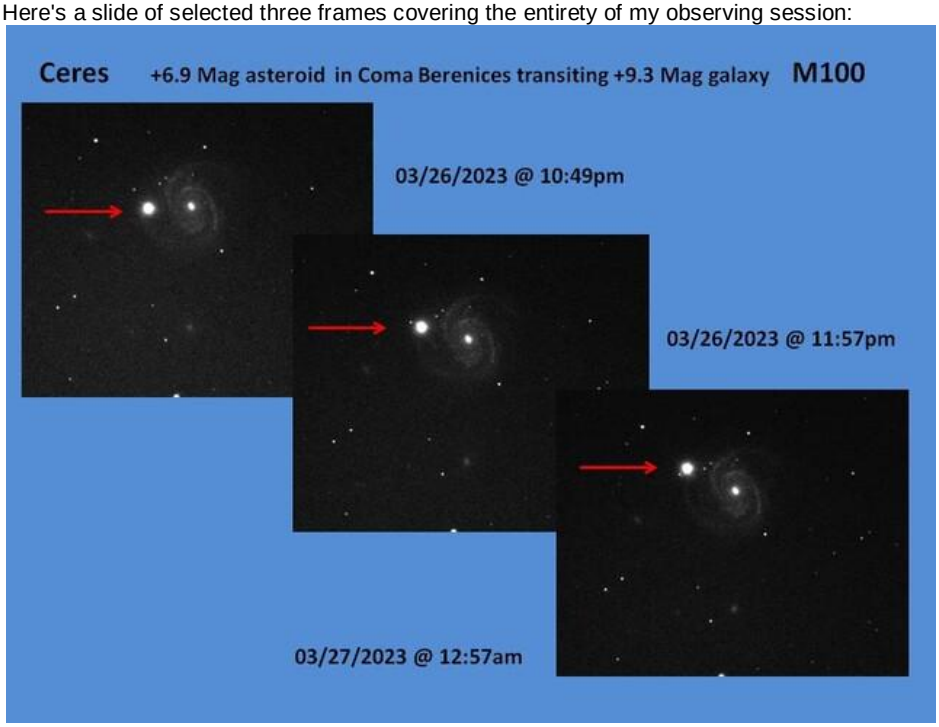
(the bright 'star' next to the galaxy is Ceres)

The main scope, 8" SCT optical tube on the Atlas mount with the ZWO ASI294MC camera and L-Pro broadband filter gave an even better display.
Here's one of the EAA images from 12:57am this morning (my last observation for the night):



(doing 60 second subs, livestacking for 5 minutes)

Here's a slide of selected three frames covering the entirety of my observing session:



And finally, here's a link to a time-lapse video that I put together:
https://youtu.be/FzW6kqK0PZ4
(60 second exposure livestacked for 5 minutes then saved. AVI created using 25 of the 5 minute stacks, 1 frame per second)

It was neat to watch the event, realizing that you are looking at two objects with a vast difference in distance - an asteroid that's only 149,170,080 miles away in the asteroid belt (or about 13.5 light **Minutes**), and a galaxy that's 55 million light **Years** away from our Milky-Way galaxy!

Hope other club members were able to observe Ceres and M100.
Larry
http://www.stellar-journeys.org/