



In the night Sky: Galaxies

Galaxies gone wild

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While actual collisions between stars are rare, because so much of a galaxy is empty space, collisions between galaxies take hundreds of millions of years to complete.

So there is plenty of time to observe them when they do happen.

These images show that interacting galaxies are found throughout the Universe.

Sometimes these dramatic collisions trigger bursts of star formation.

On other occasions gradual mergers result in new galaxies.

Despite being 369 million light-years from the earth this pair of galaxies, NGC 6670, was discovered by the American astronomer Lewis A. Swift in 1886.

NGC 17 has a single nucleus, with a blue central disk and delicate tidal tails that indicate a merger of two disk galaxies of unequal mass.

It looks like these galaxies have completed their merger.

Arp 256 is two spiral galaxies in an early stage of merging

Eventually LEDA 62867 will probably be swallowed by the larger spiral galaxy NGC 6786

UGC 8335 is a strongly interacting pair of spiral galaxies that look like two ice skaters.

NGC 6050 is part of the Great Wall of super-clusters, the largest known structure in the universe.

Despite being 450 million light-years from the earth this pair of galaxies, NGC 5331, was discovered by the German-British astronomer William Herschel in 1793.