



**Trio of galaxies mixes it up**

The three pictured galaxies — NGC 7173 (middle left), NGC 7174 (middle right) and NGC 7176 (lower right) — are part of the Hickson Compact Group 90, named after astronomer Paul Hickson, who first catalogued these small clusters of galaxies in the 1980s. NGC 7173 and NGC 7176 appear to be smooth, normal elliptical galaxies without much gas and dust. In stark contrast, NGC 7174 is a mangled spiral galaxy, barely clinging to independent existence as it is ripped apart by its close neighbours. The strong tidal interaction surging through the galaxies has dragged a significant number of stars away from their home galaxies. These stars are now spread out, forming a tenuous luminous component in the galaxy group.

February 2010	01 Mon	02 Tue	03 Wed	04 Thu	05 Fri	06 Sat	07 Sun	08 Mon	09 Tue	10 Wed
11 Thu	12 Fri	13 Sat	14 Sun	15 Mon	16 Tue	17 Wed	18 Thu	19 Fri	20 Sat	21 Sun
22 Mon	23 Tue	24 Wed	25 Thu	26 Fri	27 Sat	28 Sun				