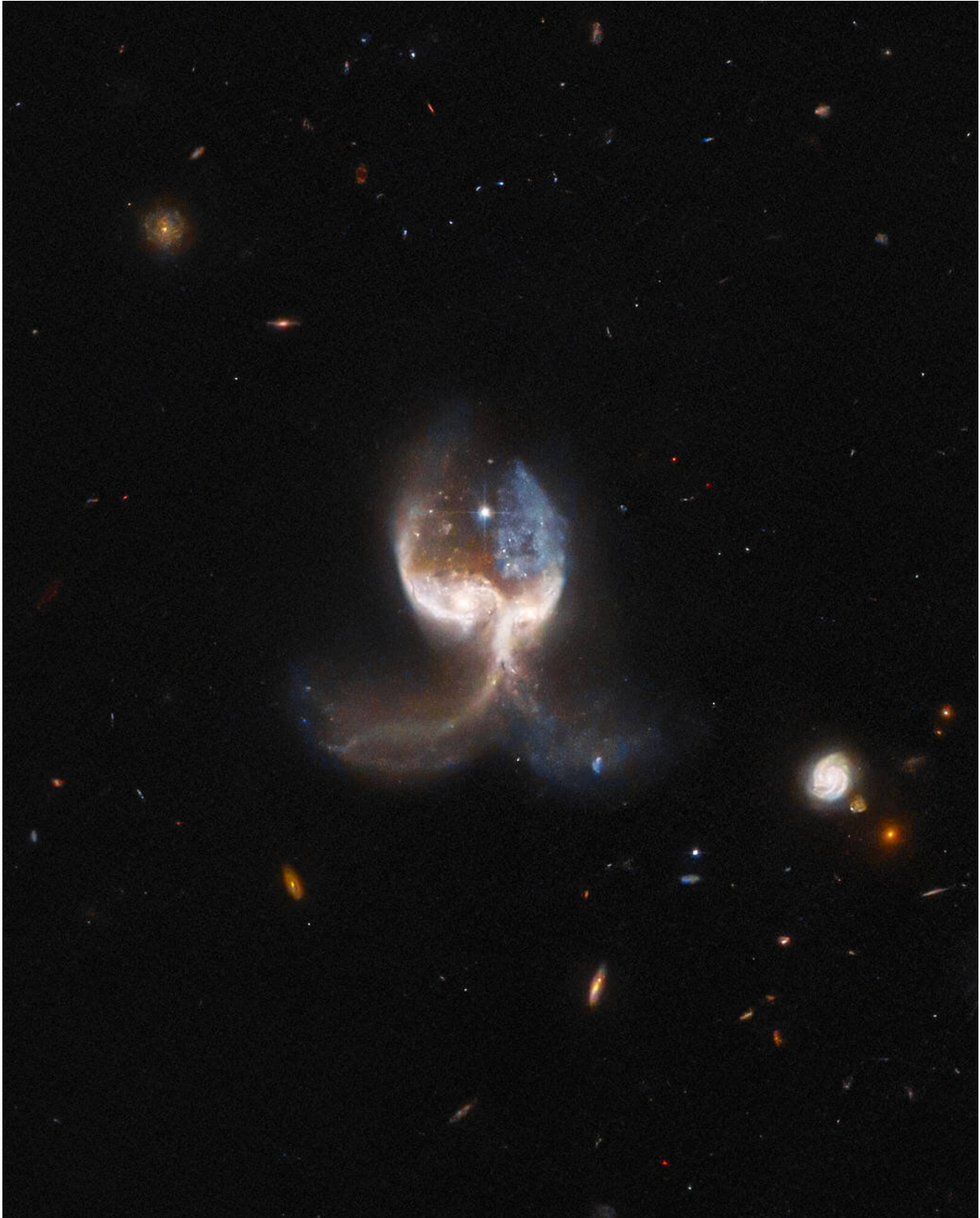


Hubble explores galactic wings

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Two merging galaxies in the VV-689 system. Credit: ESA/Hubble & NASA, W. Keel; Acknowledgment: J. Schmidt

This image from the NASA/ESA Hubble Space Telescope features two merging galaxies in the VV-689 system, nicknamed the Angel Wing. Unlike chance alignments of galaxies, which only appear to overlap when viewed from our vantage point on Earth, the two galaxies in VV-689 are in the midst of a collision. The galactic interaction has left the VV-689 system almost completely symmetrical, giving the impression of a vast set of galactic wings.

The angelic image comes from a set of Hubble observations that took a closer look at "Zoo Gems," interesting [galaxies](#) from the [Galaxy Zoo](#) citizen science project. This crowdsourced program relies on hundreds of thousands of volunteers to classify galaxies and help astronomers wade through a deluge of data from robotic telescopes. In the process, volunteers discovered a gallery of weird and wonderful galaxy types, some not previously studied. A similar, project called [Radio Galaxy Zoo: LOFAR](#) is using the same crowdsourcing approach to locate [supermassive black holes](#) in distant galaxies.

Hubble's [Advanced Camera for Surveys](#) took detailed follow-up observations of noteworthy objects from both projects. In keeping with Galaxy Zoo's crowdsourced nature, the public cast 18,000 votes to choose targets for follow-up Hubble observations. The selected targets include ring-shaped galaxies, unusual spirals, and a striking selection of galaxy mergers such as VV-689.

Provided by NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center

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