

Image: Hubble sees a "mess of stars"

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ESA/Hubble and NASA and S. Smartt (Queen's University Belfast),
Acknowledgements: Nick Rose and Flickr user penninecloud

Bursts of pink and red, dark lanes of mottled cosmic dust, and a bright scattering of stars—this NASA/ESA Hubble Space Telescope image shows part of a messy barred spiral galaxy known as NGC 428. It lies approximately 48 million light-years away from Earth in the constellation of Cetus (The Sea Monster).

Although a spiral shape is still just about visible in this close-up shot, overall NGC 428's [spiral structure](#) appears to be quite distorted and warped, thought to be a result of a collision between two galaxies. There

also appears to be a substantial amount of [star formation](#) occurring within NGC 428—another telltale sign of a merger. When galaxies collide their clouds of gas can merge, creating intense shocks and hot pockets of gas, and often triggering new waves of star formation.

NGC 428 was discovered by William Herschel in December 1786. More recently a type of supernova designated SN2013ct was discovered within the galaxy by Stuart Parker of the [BOSS \(Backyard Observatory Supernova Search\)](#) project in Australia and New Zealand, although it is unfortunately not visible in this image.

This image was captured by Hubble's Advanced Camera for Surveys (ACS) and Wide Field and Planetary Camera 2 (WFPC2).

Provided by NASA

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