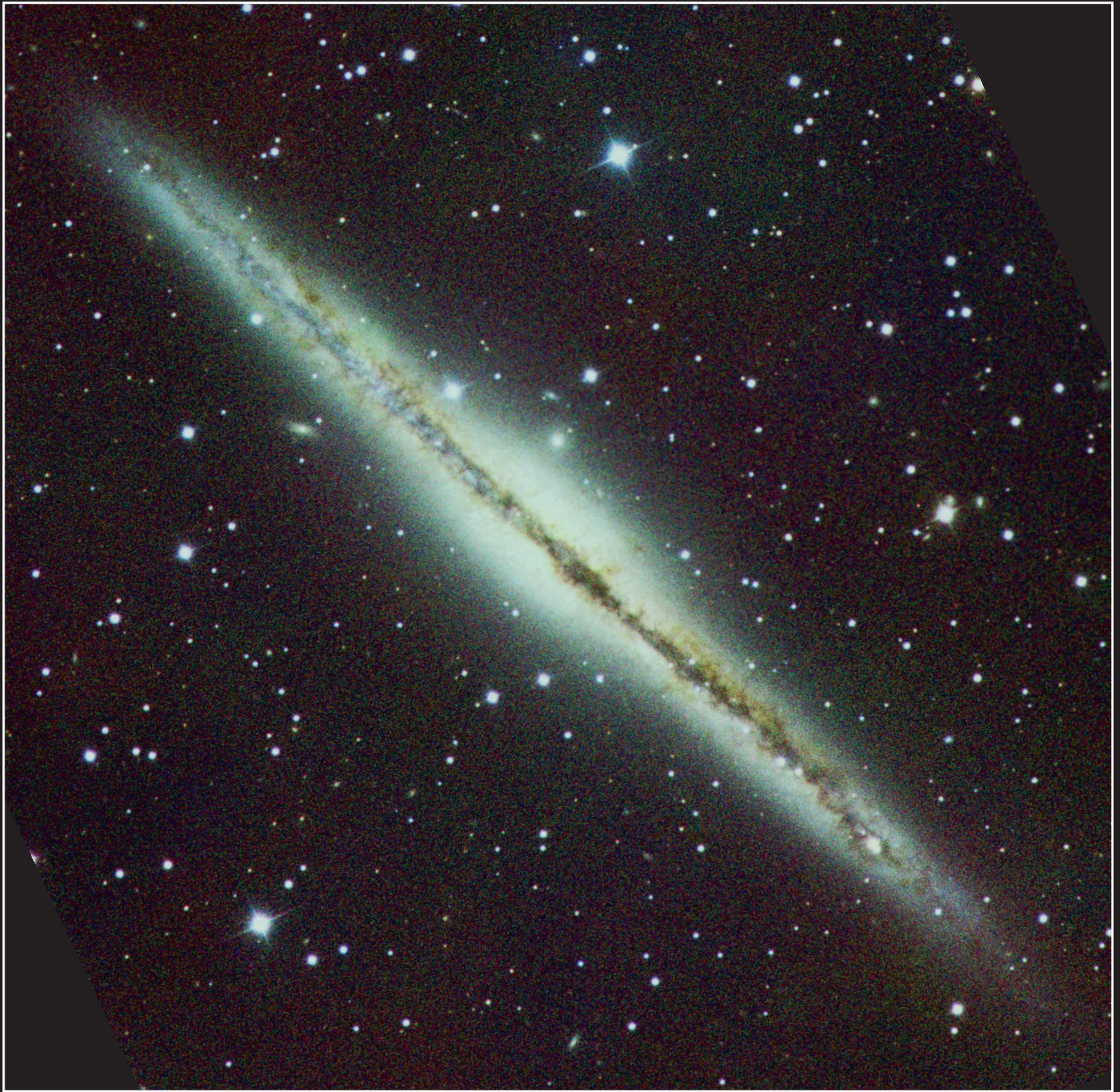


NGC 891, an edge-on spiral galaxy



Isaac Newton Telescope + Photographic Prime Focus Camera



NGC 891, an edge-on spiral galaxy. If we could view the Milky Way from a distance of about 30 million light years it would look something like NGC 891. But galaxies that look like this are quite rare because the chance alignment of the thin disk of a spiral galaxy with our line of sight is unusual. A few degrees either side of its orientation and NGC 891 would be just another highly inclined spiral galaxy. From this unusual vantage point we can see in NGC 891 the surprising narrowness of the obscuring dust lane, a dark slightly irregular band across the galaxy. We also see that it is yellowish, confirming that it is dust, which absorbs blue light, as in the Milky Way. Also similar to the Milky Way is the prominent central "bulge" corresponding to the rich star clouds in Sagittarius.

Photograph by David Malin (AAO).

1992