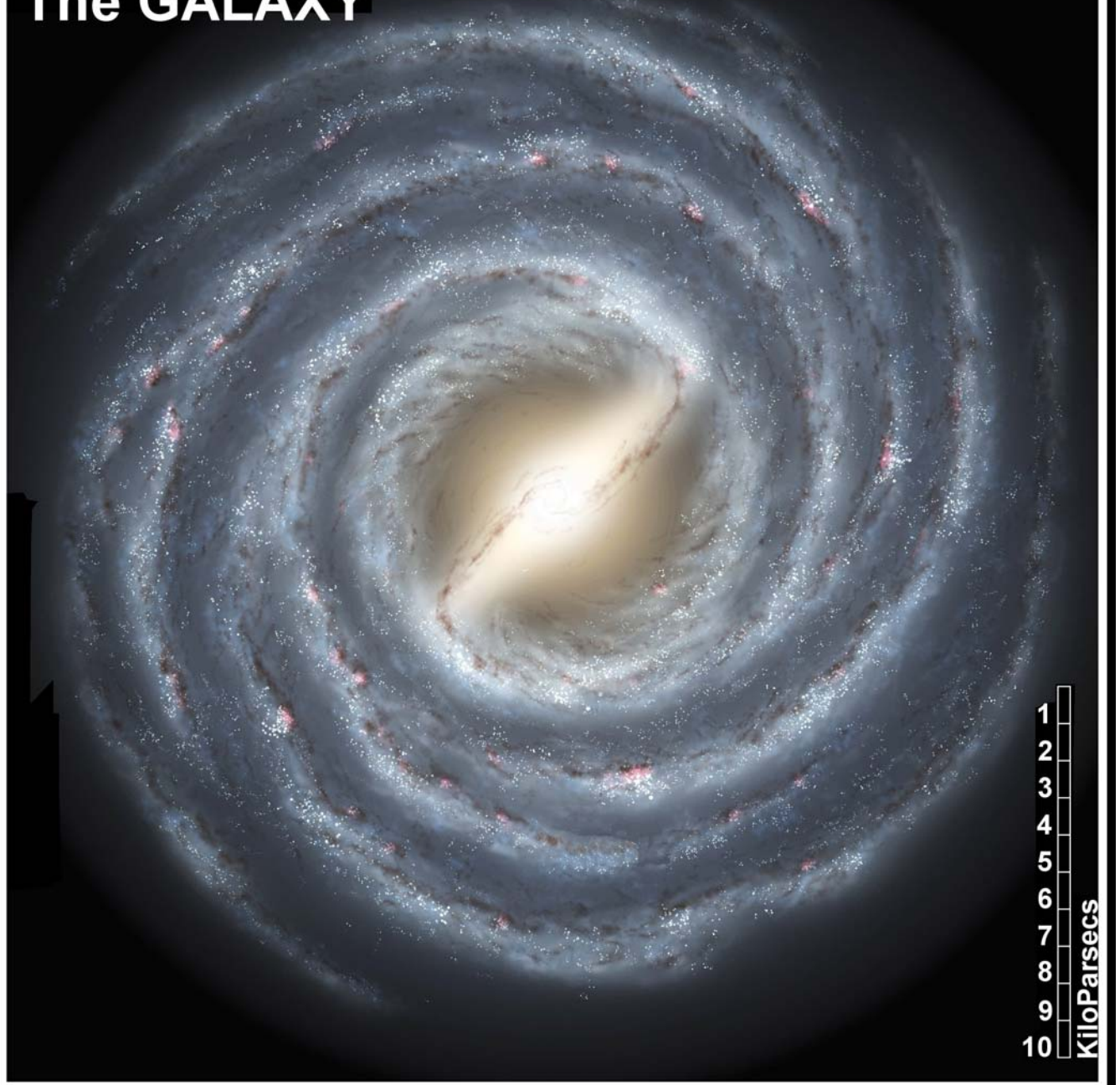


The GALAXY



The Galaxy (also **Our Galaxy**, the **Milky Way Galaxy**, **Galaxias**, or **Dakhaseri**¹) is the barred spiral galaxy which is home to Humanity. It is 30 kiloparsecs in diameter, approximately 3 kiloparsecs thick at its center, and contains an estimated 200 billion to 400 billion star systems.

The Galaxy is almost as old as the universe: its oldest stars date mere millions of years after the beginning of time. The majority of its stars, however, are between 6 and 10 billion years old.

The Galaxy has held life from its earliest moments. There is evidence that even the earliest stars had planets and that those planets generated the primordial soups that breed life. Wherever life can appear, it does appear.

¹ **Dakhaseri**. Literally, Audience of Stars. There is an ancient Vilani story of meritorious souls being allowed to watch the events of the world.