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About the Celestial Objects

Listed on this page are several of the brighter, more interesting celestial objects visible in the evening sky this month (refer to the monthly sky map). The objects are grouped into three categories. Those that can be easily seen with the naked eye (that is, without optical aid), those easily seen with binoculars, and those requiring a telescope to be appreciated. Note, all of the objects (except single stars) will appear more impressive when viewed through a telescope or very large **binoculars.** They are grouped in this way to highlight objects that can be seen using the optical equipment that may be available to the star gazer.

Tips for Observing the Night Sky

When observing the night sky, and in particular deep-sky objects such as star clusters, nebulae, and galaxies, it's always best to observe from a dark location. Avoid direct light from street lights and other sources. If possible observe from a dark location away from the light pollution that surrounds many of today's large cities.

You will see more stars after your eyes adapt to the darkness—usually about 10 to 20 minutes after you go outside. Also, if you need to use a torch to view the sky map, cover the light bulb with red cellophane. This will preserve your dark vision.

Finally, even though the Moon is one of the most stunning objects to view through a telescope, its light is so bright that it brightens the sky and makes many of the fainter objects very difficult to see. So try to observe the evening sky on moonless nights around either New Moon or Last Quarter.

Astronomical Glossarv

Conjunction – An alignment of two celestial bodies such that they present the least angular separation as viewed from Earth.

Constellation – A defined area of the sky containing a star pattern.

Diffuse Nebula – A cloud of gas illuminated by nearby stars.

Double Star – Two stars that appear close to each other in the sky; either linked by gravity so that they orbit each other (binary star) or lying at different distances from Earth (optical double). Apparent separation of stars is given in seconds of arc (").

Ecliptic – The path of the Sun's center on the celestial sphere as seen from Earth.

Elongation – The angular separation of two celestial bodies. For Mercury and Venus the greatest elongation occurs when they are at their most angular distance from the Sun as viewed from Earth.

Galaxy – A mass of up to several billion stars held together by gravity.

Globular Star Cluster – A ball-shaped group of several thousand old stars.

Light Year (ly) - The distance a beam of light travels at 300,000 km/sec in one year.

Magnitude – The brightness of a celestial object as it appears in the sky.

Open Star Cluster – A group of tens or hundreds of relatively young stars.

Opposition – When a celestial body is opposite the Sun in the sky.

Planetary Nebula – The remnants of a shell of gas blown off by a star.

Universal Time (UT) – A time system used by astronomers. Also known as Greenwich Mean Time. USA Eastern Standard Time (for example, New York) is 5 hours behind UT. Variable Star - A star that changes brightness over a period of time.

3 8 09	Easily	Seen	with the Naked Eye
in hemisphere April 2009	Capella Arcturus Sirius Procyon Castor Pollux Regulus Vega	Aur Boo CMa CMi Gem Gem Leo Lvr	 The 6th brightest star. Appears Orange, giant K star. Name mea The brightest star in the sky. A Greek name meaning "before the Multiple star system with 6 con With Castor, the twin sons of Le Brightest star in Leo. A blue-with the 5th brightest star in the sky
NORTHERN	Betelgeuse Algol Aldebaran Polaris Spica	5	 One of the largest red supergia Famous eclipsing binary star. M Brightest star in Taurus. It is n The North Pole Star. A telescop Latin name means "ear of wheat

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Easily Seen with Binoculars M38 Aur Stars appear arranged in "pi" or cross shape. Dist=4,300 ly. M36 Aur About half size of M38. Located in rich Milky Way star field. Dist=4,100 ly. M37 Aur Praespee or Beehive Cluster. Visible to the naked eye. Dist=590,20 ly. M31 CVn Easy to find in binoculars. Might be glimpsed with the naked eye. Mel 111 Com a Berenices. 80 mag 5-6 stars in 5 deg. Dist=283 ly. Age=400 million years. M39 Cyg May be visible to the naked eye under good conditions. Dist=900 ly. V Draconis Gem Fine open cluster located near foot of the twin Castor. Dist=2,800 ly. M33 Her Best globular in norther skites. Discovered by Halley in 1714. Dist=23,000 ly. M34 Hya 12+ stars in 7x binoculars. Triangular asterism near centre. Dist=1,909 ly. R Hydrae Lyr Semi-regular variable. Mag varias between 3.0 & 11.0 over 300 days. Billiant red. R Lyrae Lyr Semi-regular variable. Mag varias between 3.0 & 10.0 over 300 days. Billiant red. R Lyrae Lyr Semi-regular variable. Mag variant Nost Astan. Dist=7,300 ly. M24 Hon A large scattered star cluster of 20 stars. Dist=-1,300 ly. M50 <th>Capella Arcturus Sirius Procyon Castor Pollux Regulus Vega Betelgeuse Algol Aldebaran Polaris Spica</th> <th>Aur Boo CMa CMi Gem Leo Lyr Ori Per Tau UMi Vir</th> <th></th> <th>The 6th brightest star. Appears yellowish in color. Spectroscopic binary. Dist=42 ly. Orange, giant K star. Name means "bear watcher". Dist=36.7 ly. The brightest star in the sky. Also known as the "Dog Star". Dist=8.6 ly. Greek name meaning "before the dog" - rises before Sirius (northern latitudes). Dist=11.4 ly. Multiple star system with 6 components. 3 stars visible in telescope. Dist=52 ly. With Castor, the twin sons of Leda in classical mythology. Dist=34 ly. Brightest star in Leo. A blue-white star with at least 1 companion. Dist=77 ly. The 5th brightest star in the sky. A blue-white star. Dist=25.0 ly. One of the largest red supergiant stars known. Diameter=300 times that of Sun. Dist=430 ly. Famous eclipsing binary star. Magnitude varies between 2.1 & 3.4 over 2.867 days. Brightest star in Taurus. It is not associated with the Hyades star cluster. Dist=6.7 ly. The North Pole Star. A telescope reveals an unrelated mag 8 companion star. Dist = 433 ly. Latin name means "ear of wheat" and shown held in Virgo's left hand. Dist=250 ly.</th>	Capella Arcturus Sirius Procyon Castor Pollux Regulus Vega Betelgeuse Algol Aldebaran Polaris Spica	Aur Boo CMa CMi Gem Leo Lyr Ori Per Tau UMi Vir		The 6th brightest star. Appears yellowish in color. Spectroscopic binary. Dist=42 ly. Orange, giant K star. Name means "bear watcher". Dist=36.7 ly. The brightest star in the sky. Also known as the "Dog Star". Dist=8.6 ly. Greek name meaning "before the dog" - rises before Sirius (northern latitudes). Dist=11.4 ly. Multiple star system with 6 components. 3 stars visible in telescope. Dist=52 ly. With Castor, the twin sons of Leda in classical mythology. Dist=34 ly. Brightest star in Leo. A blue-white star with at least 1 companion. Dist=77 ly. The 5th brightest star in the sky. A blue-white star. Dist=25.0 ly. One of the largest red supergiant stars known. Diameter=300 times that of Sun. Dist=430 ly. Famous eclipsing binary star. Magnitude varies between 2.1 & 3.4 over 2.867 days. Brightest star in Taurus. It is not associated with the Hyades star cluster. Dist=6.7 ly. The North Pole Star. A telescope reveals an unrelated mag 8 companion star. Dist = 433 ly. Latin name means "ear of wheat" and shown held in Virgo's left hand. Dist=250 ly.				
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3132 Vel One of the brightest planetaries. Magnitude 10 central star. Dist=2,600 ly. M104 Vir Sombrero Galaxy. Almost edge-on spiral galaxy. Protruding central core.								
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