

EAGLES EYE ON THE SKY – FEBRUARY 2019

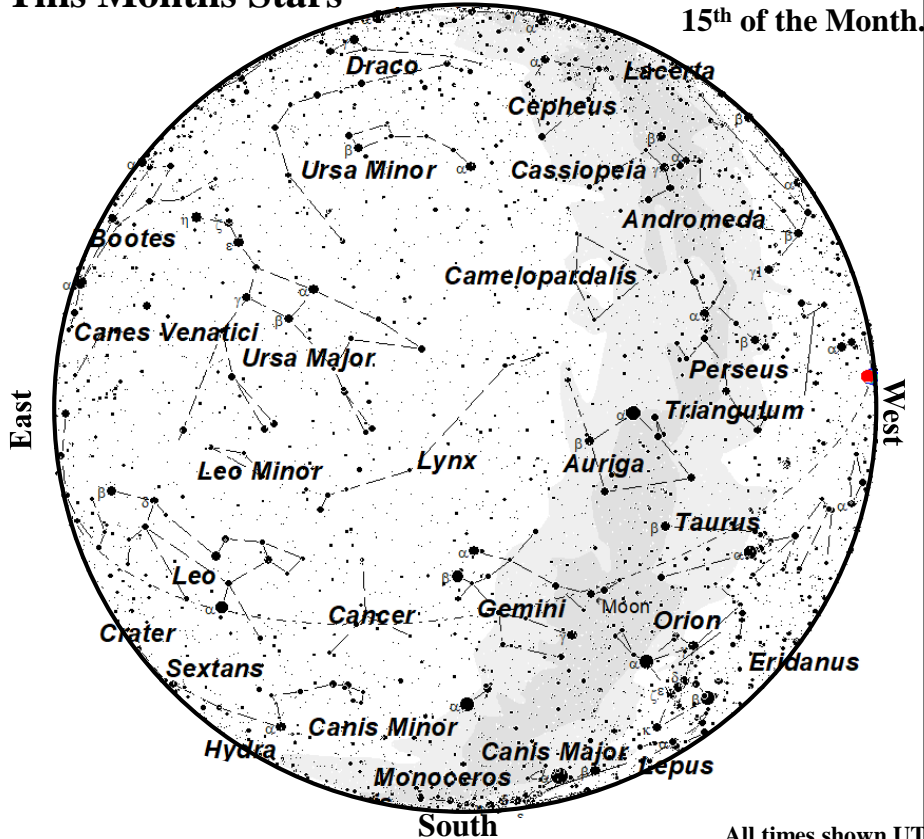
Dave Eagle's monthly sky guide.

This Months Stars

North

22:00 hrs

15th of the Month.



All times shown UT

The winter stars are now starting to get a bit lower in the south western sky. Orion is getting lower each day, and Sirius is very low down, although almost pure white, it flashes lots of different colours as the Earth's atmosphere diffracts the incoming light. Cancer and the open star cluster M44 (Praesepe) is high in the southern sky. High at the zenith is the faint line of stars marking the constellation of Lynx. Towards the north, Extremely low down in the northern horizon, lie the bright first magnitude stars of Deneb & Vega, in Cygnus and Lyra respectively. They are circumpolar (never set) from most of the UK, but only just. In the eastern sky Leo is rearing itself up, below Ursa Major. The spring skies will soon be upon us, bringing with them the wealth of faint galaxies that make great hunting for the dedicated observer / imager. But watch those nights now starting to get shorter.

Algol (Beta Persei) dips from its usual magnitude of +2.1 to +3.4 and visible from the UK at the following times: 7th 02h, 9th 22h,

THE MOON

Phases:

4th – New.
12th – First Quarter.
19th – Full.
26th – Last Quarter

Crescent Moon will be visible:

1st & 2nd – Eastern morning sky.
6th & 7th – Western evening sky.

The Moon will be close to:

Venus 1st & 28th.
Jupiter on the 1st & 27th.
Mars & Uranus on the 10th.
Hyades & Aldebaran on the 14th.
Praesepe on the 18th.
Regulus on the 19th & 20th.
Spica on the 23rd.
Ceres on the 26th.

THE SOLAR SYSTEM – There is a nice alignment of Venus, Saturn, Moon and Jupiter in the pre-dawn eastern sky on the 28th of the month.

MERCURY – Reaches greatest eastern elongation of 18° on the 27th. It will be visible very low in the western evening sky for a week either side of this date. But be quick it soon slips back and will soon be lost in the evening twilight.

VENUS – Very bright in the pre-dawn sky, but now getting very low in the south eastern sky as it approaches The Sun. Passes close to Saturn on the 18th.

MARS – Still very bright in the southern sky as continues out-pacing the Sun. The planet's apparent size is now extremely small making it a real challenge to observe the surface features with any sized telescope. Passes close to Uranus on the 13th.

JUPITER – Visible low down in the south eastern sky in the early hours of the morning, but is very bright, so cannot be missed.

SATURN – Still lurking low down in eastern sky down in the morning twilight, so difficult to view. Venus is close by on morning of the 18th.

URANUS – Now getting low in the south western sky after dark. Visible as a +5.7 magnitude object in Pisces, Mars passes close by on evening of the 13th.

NEPTUNE – Now low down in the south western sky after dark, so virtually lost from view.

Comet 64P (Swift-Gehrels) – Now fading, this comet moves across the northern part of Taurus this month.

COMET 46P (Wirtanen) – Also fading and shrinking considerably, this comet is moving south through the front paws of Ursa Major this month.

COMET C/2018 Y1 (Iwamoto) – Rapidly brightening and heading northwards through Leo, it passes close to the bright galaxy Messier 95 on the 10th and the 3.8 magnitude star Eta Leonis, within The Sickle of Leo, on the 12th. It lies very close to 1st magnitude Castor in Gemini just after midnight on the 18th, and passes M38 in Auriga on the evening of the 27th.

For a much fuller guide, maps, graphics and the latest news
visit my blog: www.star-gazing.co.uk/Blog