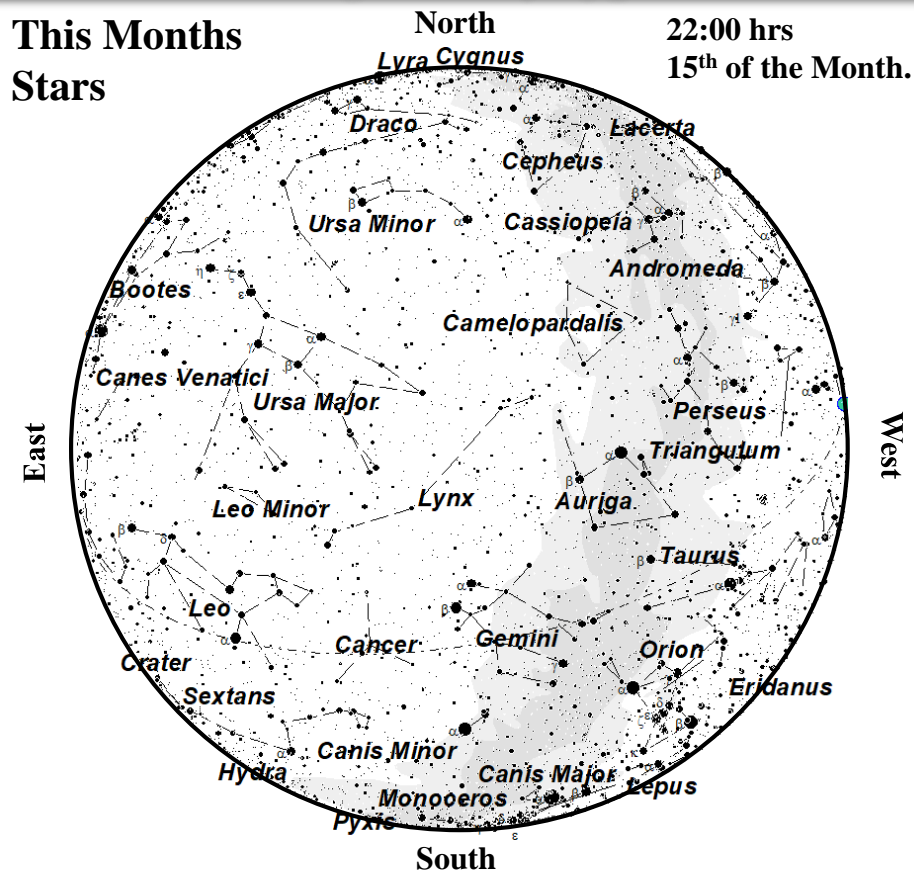


# EAGLES EYE ON THE SKY – FEBRUARY 2018

Dave Eagle's monthly sky guide.

## This Months Stars



High overhead at this time of night the indistinct constellation of Lynx stretches between Auriga and Ursa Major. Low in the southern sky Monoceros and the Milky Way make for great hunting of open star clusters. Sirius also flashes and sparkles as the Earth's atmosphere shakes and rattles it's steely white light. Low to the horizon towards the north are Vega and Deneb at their lowest. In the north western sky Pegasus and Andromeda are close to setting. In the eastern sky the bright yellow star Arcturus is now getting reasonably high. Leo with the bright first magnitude star Regulus is dominating the south eastern sky, with Virgo following close behind, there is a wealth of distant galaxies to be found. So make the most of this month before skies start to brighten as spring approaches.

**Algol (Beta Persei)** - fades from its usual magnitude of 2.1 to 3.4 at the following times: 5<sup>th</sup> 01h, 7<sup>th</sup> 22h, 25<sup>th</sup> 3h, 28<sup>th</sup> 0h.

**Mira (Omicron Ceti)** The "Wonderful Star" is at its brightest at magnitude 3 at the moment, from its usual 5<sup>th</sup> magnitude. It is an easy naked eye object in the south eastern sky after dark.

## THE MOON

### Phases:

7<sup>th</sup> – Last Quarter.

15<sup>th</sup> – New.

23<sup>rd</sup> – First Quarter.

No Full Moon this month.

### Thin Crescent Moon Visible:

11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> – South Eastern Morning Sky.

17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> – Western Evening Sky.

### The Moon will be close to:

Regulus on the 1<sup>st</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup>.

Spica on the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>.

Jupiter on the 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup>.

Mars on the 9<sup>th</sup>.

Saturn on the 11<sup>th</sup>.

Uranus on the 20<sup>th</sup>.

Pleiades on the 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Aldebaran & Hyades on the 23<sup>rd</sup>.

M44 (Praesepe) on the 27<sup>th</sup>.

## THE SOLAR SYSTEM

**MERCURY** – Reaches superior conjunction on the 17<sup>th</sup>, and starts moving into the western evening sky after sunset, but may be spotted in the twilight by month end as it approaches Venus.

**VENUS** – Moves away from the Sun in the western evening sky, but stays fairly low to the horizon.

**MARS** – Now easily visible before dawn in the southern sky. At magnitude +0.8 it is very bright, but still presents a very small disk.

**JUPITER** – Also in the southern sky in Libra before dawn. At magnitude -2.2 it is big, bold and bright making a fantastic object to observe, even in a small telescope. Watch out for the movement of the Galilean moons.

**SATURN** – Visible low in the south western sky before dawn in Sagittarius. At magnitude 0.6 its rings are now very well displayed towards the Earth making a spectacular sight.

**URANUS & NEPTUNE** – Both almost lost in the early evening twilight, so save these two for later in the year.

**Comet C/2016 R2 ( PanSTARRS)** – Putting on a great display as it moves northwards through Taurus. It is not due to reach perihelion until early May. It is expected to reach maximum brightness of +13.7 in late April.

**Comet C/2017 T1 (Heinze)** - This fast-moving comet moves towards perihelion late February. Reaching about 9<sup>th</sup> magnitude it is unlikely to survive, passing extremely close to the Sun.

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