

EAGLES EYE ON THE SKY – AUGUST 2018

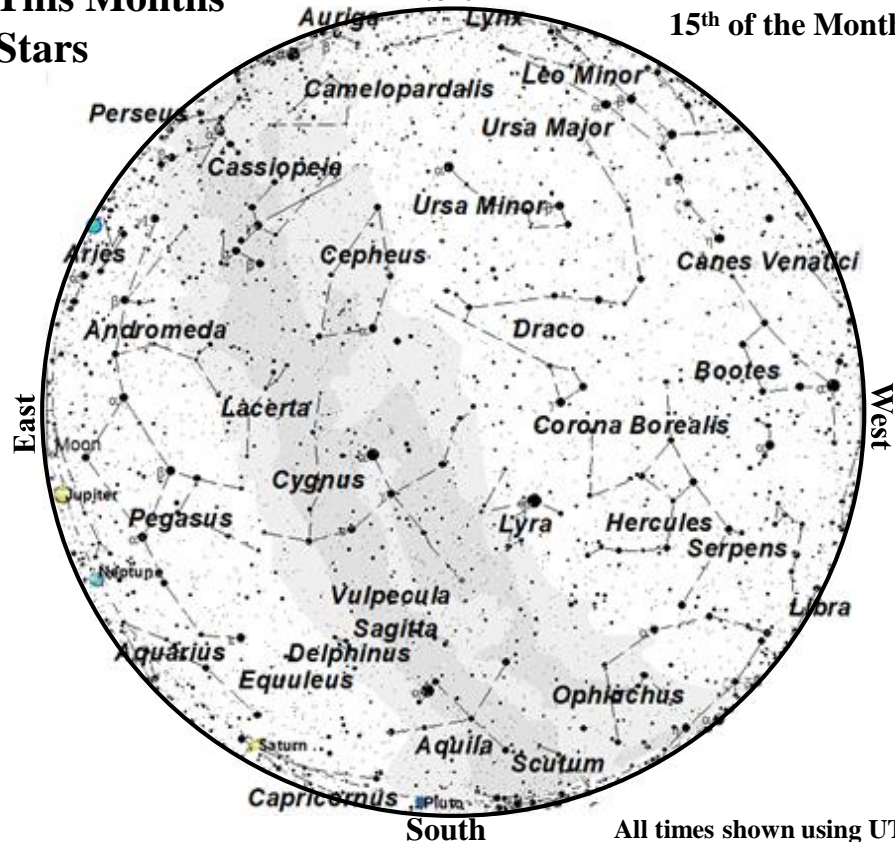
Dave Eagle's monthly sky guide.

This Months Stars

North

22:00 hrs

15th of the Month.



South

All times shown using UT

High overhead lies Vega in Lyra. Its steely white light shining down from above as dark skies slowly return and the nights now starting to draw in. Aquila and Cygnus are high up in the south and south east, bringing with them the splendours of the Summer Milky Way. Their first magnitude stars Deneb and Altair comprising The Summer Triangle with Vega in Lyra. Many open star clusters and nebulae lie nestled within this hazy band of faint stars, so get out and hunt them down. Low in the south the Teapot of Sagittarius is visible. From darker skies, the Milky Way looks like steam coming out of the spout. In the western sky, Virgo has almost set. The bright yellow star Arcturus shines like a beacon a bit higher up in that same direction. In the northern sky, the yellow star Capella in Auriga is now starting to get higher in the sky. Towards the east, Pegasus and Andromeda are now very prominent, with Perseus not too far behind, heralding the darker autumn skies.

THE MOON

Phases:

- 4th – Last Quarter.
- 11th – New.
- 18th – First Quarter.
- 27th – Full Moon.

Thin Crescent Moon will be visible:

- 8th & 9th Eastern morning sky.
- 13th & 14th Western evening sky.

The Moon will be close to:

- 6th & 7th. Hyades & Pleiades.
- 14th. Venus
- 16th & 17th. Jupiter.
- 19th Vesta.
- 20th & 21st. Saturn.
- 22nd & 23rd. Mars.
- 26th & 27th. Neptune.
- 30th. Uranus.

THE SOLAR SYSTEM

MERCURY – Reaches inferior conjunction on the 9th, but quickly moves away from the Sun, reaching greatest western elongation of 18° on the 26th. Despite being a distance from the Sun, it will be quite difficult to spot the -1.2 magnitude planet in Cancer only 9° above the eastern horizon as dawn breaks.

VENUS – Reaches greatest eastern elongation of 46° on the 17th. Although bright at magnitude -4.5, the shallow angle of the ecliptic at this time of the year as the sky darkens. Quickly drops into the encroaching twilight and will soon be gone.

MARS – Just past opposition in Sagittarius, low down in the southern sky. Its apparent size shrinks rapidly as the distance from Earth increases. A global dust storm looks like it may obscure all the surface features during this close apparition.

JUPITER – A very bright magnitude -1.9 in Libra, but getting now getting very low in the south-western sky after sunset. Make the most of any possible observing session as the planet and moons will soon be lost from view as it slips further into the evening twilight.

SATURN – Visible in Sagittarius at +0.28 magnitude in Sagittarius. Now well past its best, but the rings are very well displayed towards the Earth making a spectacular sight. Best time to view will be a little after 20h when the planet will be at its highest in the south. Its brightest satellites are much fainter than Jupiter's. How many others than Titan can you spot?

URANUS – Visible as a +5.8 magnitude object on the borders of Pisces, Cetus and Aries in the eastern morning sky, fairly close to the 5.4 magnitude star 54 Ceti.

NEPTUNE – Very faint at magnitude +7.8 in Aquarius, visible in the southern sky after midnight. Reaches opposition early next month.

Comet 21P (Giacobini-Zinner) – This 6.5 year period comet moves through Cassiopeia, Camelopardus and Perseus this month, so is a circumpolar object. It should be brightening as it gets closer to Earth, and should be about 7th magnitude by the end of the month. Detailed maps are available on my blog. www.star-gazing.co.uk/Blog.html

PERSEID METEORS – The Perseid meteor shower is active between the 23rd July until 20th August. Maximum of 80 or more meteors per hour occurs on the 13th. With the Moon being a very thin crescent and setting quickly that evening, conditions are very favourable.

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