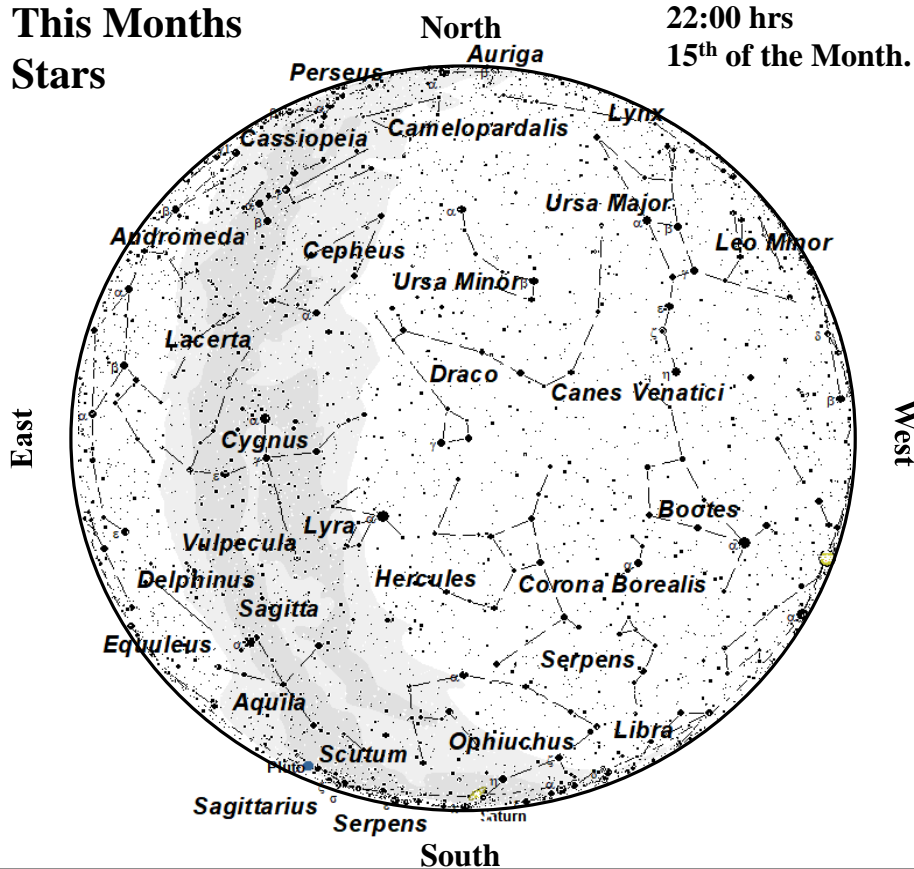


EAGLES EYE ON THE SKY – JULY 2017

Dave Eagle's monthly sky guide.

This Months Stars



High above at the zenith, Draco sprawls between Ursa Minor and Hercules. The distinct asterism of “The Lozenge” marks the dragons head. In the south below Hercules lies another giant, Ophiuchus. This area is swarming with bright globular clusters. Even lower in the south, the head of Scorpius is at its highest, just poking up from the southern hemisphere with Saturn close by. Towards the north the bright yellow star Capella can be seen just skirting the horizon. In the western sky, Leo is now just about to disappear, as is Virgo. The Summer Triangle of Vega, Deneb and Altair, in the constellations of Lyra, Cygnus and Aquila respectively, is now visible, bringing a fabulous region of the bright Milky Way into view. This area abounds with nebulae and clusters. With the nights now starting to draw in, lets look forward to some clearer and darker skies this coming autumn.

THE MOON

First Qtr. – 1st.

Full – 9th.

Last Qtr. – 16th.

New – 23rd.

Crescent Moon visible:

21st & 22nd. - Eastern morning sky.

25th & 26th - Western evening sky.

The Moon will be close to:

Jupiter & Spica on the
1st, 28th & 29th.

Antares on the 5th.

Saturn on the 6th.

Venus & Aldebaran on the 20th.

THE SOLAR SYSTEM

MERCURY – Starts the month very low down in the western sky after sunset, but will be very difficult to spot in the bright twilight.

VENUS – Visible in the eastern morning sky before sunrise. Very bright at magnitude -3.6, it passes close to Aldebaran in Taurus on the 14th.

MARS – Reaches conjunction on the 27th, so will not be seen this month.

JUPITER – Still big, bright in Virgo in the south western sky after sunset. Watch for the constant jostling of the four Galilean Moons, Io, Europa, Ganymede and Callisto and great red spot transits.

SATURN – Now up the whole night and at its highest late evening. It will stay low in the sky for the next few years. With the rings almost at their widest, they still make for a beautiful sight through even a small telescope. See how many of its many moons can you spot.

URANUS – Rising a little before midnight in Pisces. At magnitude 6.1 it is very faint but can easily be observed now as a small blue disk.

NEPTUNE – A bit higher in the southern early morning sky in Aquarius. At magnitude 7.7 it is a very small blue-green disk, but some imagers have recently shown a large storm in its atmosphere.

PLUTO – Reaches opposition on the 10th, so at its highest around midnight. But it is very faint at magnitude 14.1, so difficult to pick out amongst the many stars within the Sagittarius star clouds.

COMET C/2015 V2 (JOHNSON) – Just past perihelion, this comet is moving southwards, so catch it as soon as possible as it heads south through Virgo.

NOCTILUCENT CLOUDS – The next couple of months is the season for spotting these pearly-white clouds. They have recently been visible. Look in the northwest just after it gets dark, towards the north around midnight, or in the northeast just before dawn breaks. Get out there and have a look.

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