

Stargazing Guide: March 2019

What to look out for...

Constellations (star pictures) and interesting stars:

1 The Plough A well-known pattern. The last two stars point to the North Star, Polaris, which is always seen to the North as it's above the North Pole.



Map shows:

1st Mar at 9pm

15th at 8pm

30th at 7pm

2 Orion (say "uh-RYE-un") The Hunter. Easy to spot with three bright stars in his belt and a box of bright stars around these for his shoulders and

3 Canis Major, the Big Dog. The star **Sirius** is the brightest of all our night-time stars. It often twinkles wildly. Stars appear to twinkle when their light is distorted as it comes through our atmosphere



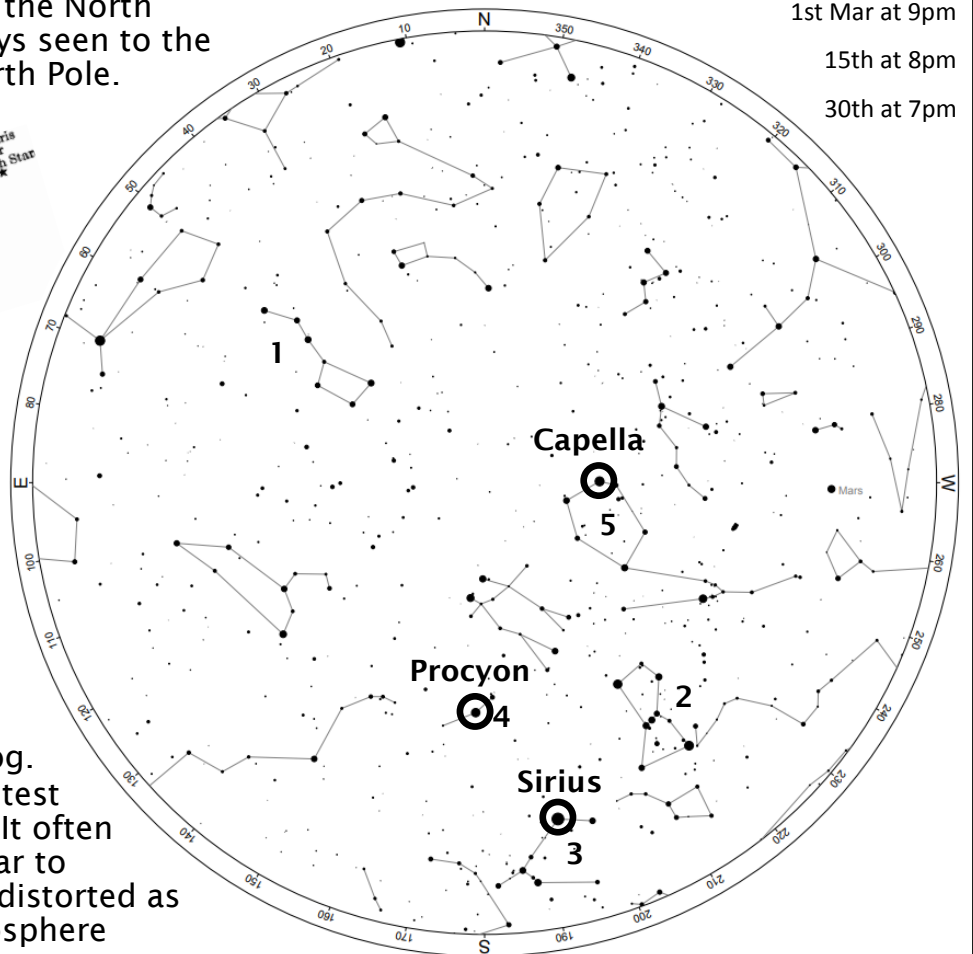
4 Canis Minor, the Small Dog. One of the smallest constellations. You need a lot of imagination to see a dog here as there are only two stars! Look for the bright star **Procyon** which is one of our closer stars, being only about 108,800,000,000,000 km away.



5 Auriga (say "or-REE-ga"). Look first for the very bright star **Capella** ("cap-ELL-a"). What we see as one dot is actually two pairs of stars which orbit around each other. Most of the stars we see at night are actually pairs or larger groups of stars. The Sun is unusual in that it is alone in space.

How to use this chart:

Imagine the chart flat & upside-down above your head. The circle around the outside shows the horizon all around you. Turn the chart to have North (N), South (S), East or West at the front depending on which direction you are looking.



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The Moon

The large, dark areas on the Moon's surface are called mare (say "MAR-ay"). Long ago, these were huge glowing lakes of lava.

This lava has since cooled into the dark rock which can be seen today. Look up during Full Moon and see if you can imagine pictures in the Moon's mare. Here are some ideas:



running rabbit man in the moon bendy rabbit

Planets

Mars remains visible during the month in the sky towards the south once the sun sets. Mars will set each night of the month shortly before midnight

Venus, Jupiter, and Saturn All rise in the early hours of the morning in the East to South-East before sunrise at the start of the month. Venus will be visible until the sun rises each morning throughout the month rising at a similar time each day and appearing a similar distance from the Sun. Jupiter and Saturn will rise earlier each day throughout the month, with Saturn appearing closer to Venus each day until mid-month when it will appear in the sky before Venus.

Mercury is chasing the Sun and can be seen as the Sun sets in the first half of the month. In the middle of the month it appears too close to the Sun to be visible but will appear in the early morning just before the sun rises at the end of the month.

Using Binoculars

When using binoculars, it's good to let them cool down outside before using them (this might take about 15 minutes). When putting them away, leave them inside to warm up and for any moisture to evaporate before putting the lens caps back on

Tip of the Month

You'll get your clearest view looking straight up, because there is less air in this direction to disrupt the light. Light coming from objects seen near the horizon has to travel further through the air, skimming sideways through the atmosphere rather than coming straight down. Starlight can appear to jump and twinkle as it passes through layers of air at different temperatures. Look out for how stars lower in the sky appear to twinkle more.

Download this star guide and those for other months from:

<http://www.winchestersciencecentre.org/starguides>

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