

# Stargazing Guide: April 2019

What to look out for...

## Constellations (star pictures) and interesting stars:

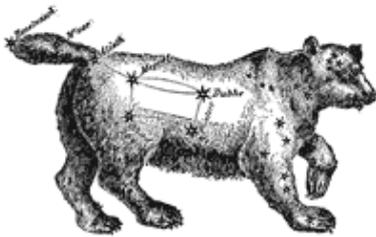
**1 The Great Bear** If you have very good eyes you might see the circled star as two stars... But there are actually six! Four are in the brighter 'star' (called Mizar), and two in the dimmer one (Alcor).

Map shows:

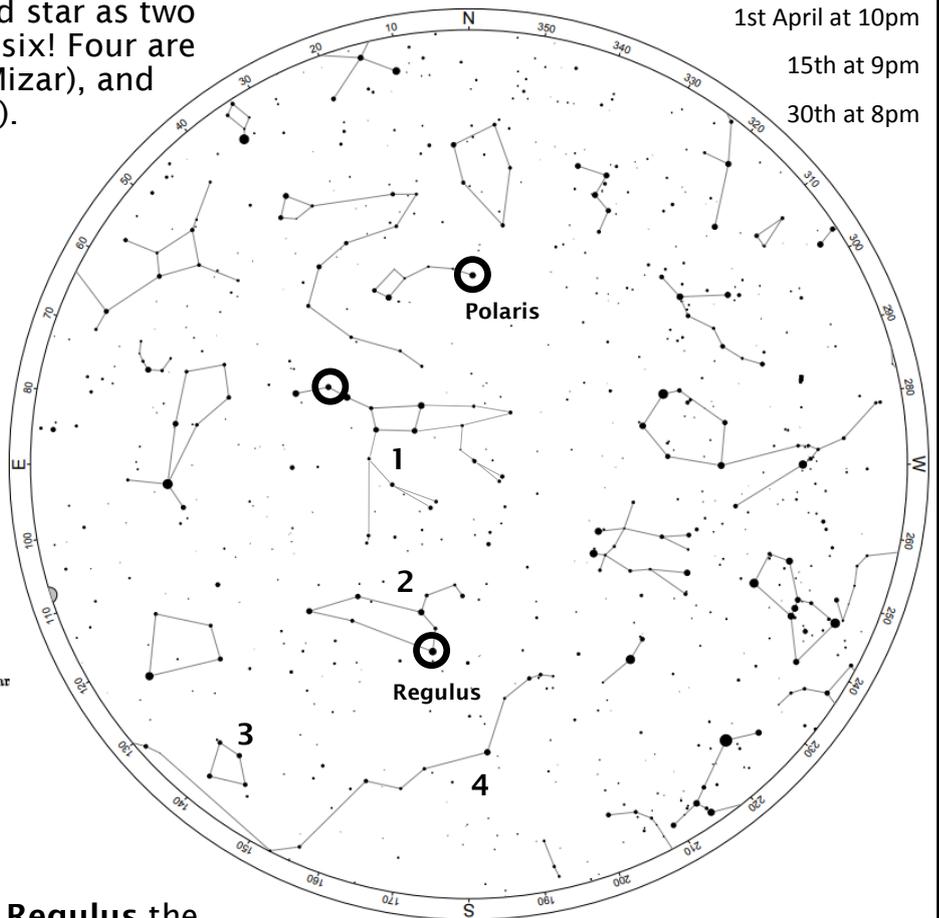
1st April at 10pm

15th at 9pm

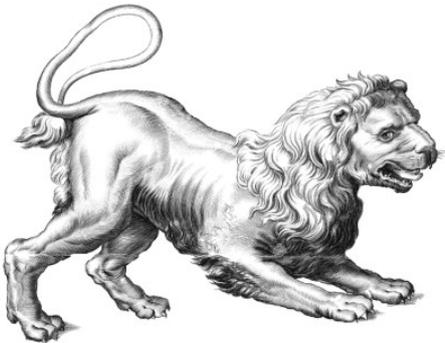
30th at 8pm



The Great Bear contains the well known pattern 'The Plough', the last two stars of which point to the North Star, **Polaris**.



**2 Leo** the lion. Look first for **Regulus** the King Star (the brightest star in this part of the sky), then find the backward question-mark that forms Leo's head and chest.



**3 Corvus** (say cor-vus)  
The crow. A strong kite shape of stars low in the sky.



**4 Hydra** (say Hi-druh) the water snake. It's enormous! Best seen at this time of year. However, it has few bright stars so is a real challenge to find. Give it a try on a dark, clear night, using Leo and Corvus to guide you.

### 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.

# Stargazing Guide: April 2019



## The Moon

The best time to look for the Moon this April is near the start of the month when it will be lit from the side and visible in early evening.

When you see the Moon, compare it to the positions of nearby stars, or note down where it is in the sky and the time of day. By comparing your view on different days, you can get a feeling for its movement in orbit around the Earth.



## 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

**Jupiter, and Saturn** both rise after Mars sets in the early hours of the morning in the East to South-East before sunrise rising earlier each day as the month progresses, they will be visible each night until the Sun rises. Both planets will appear in the same position relative to the stars and each other throughout the month

**Mercury, and Venus** both rise shortly before the Sun and remain close to the horizon the whole time making them tricky to spot. At the start of the month Venus will rise earlier appearing closer to mercury until mid-month when they will both start to rise earlier each day, and appearing closer to the Sun in the sky, making trickier to spot.

## 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.

This added depth of air also explains why sunsets are red. The light from the Sun when it is near the horizon passes a long way through the air, during which time it loses the blue light (this 'lost' blue light is what lights up the daytime sky for people further to your west).

Download this star guide and those for other months from:  
<http://www.winchestersciencecentre.org/starguides>

Winchester Science Centre & Planetarium, Telegraph Way, Winchester SO21 1HZ.  
Tel: 01962 863791, email [info@winchestersciencecentre.org](mailto:info@winchestersciencecentre.org). Registered Charity No. 294582