

Stargazing Guide: March 2020

What to look out for...

Constellations (star pictures) and interesting stars:

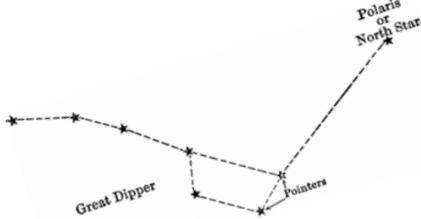
Map shows:

1st Mar at 9pm GMT

15th at 8pm GMT

30th at 8pm BST

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.



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 knees.

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



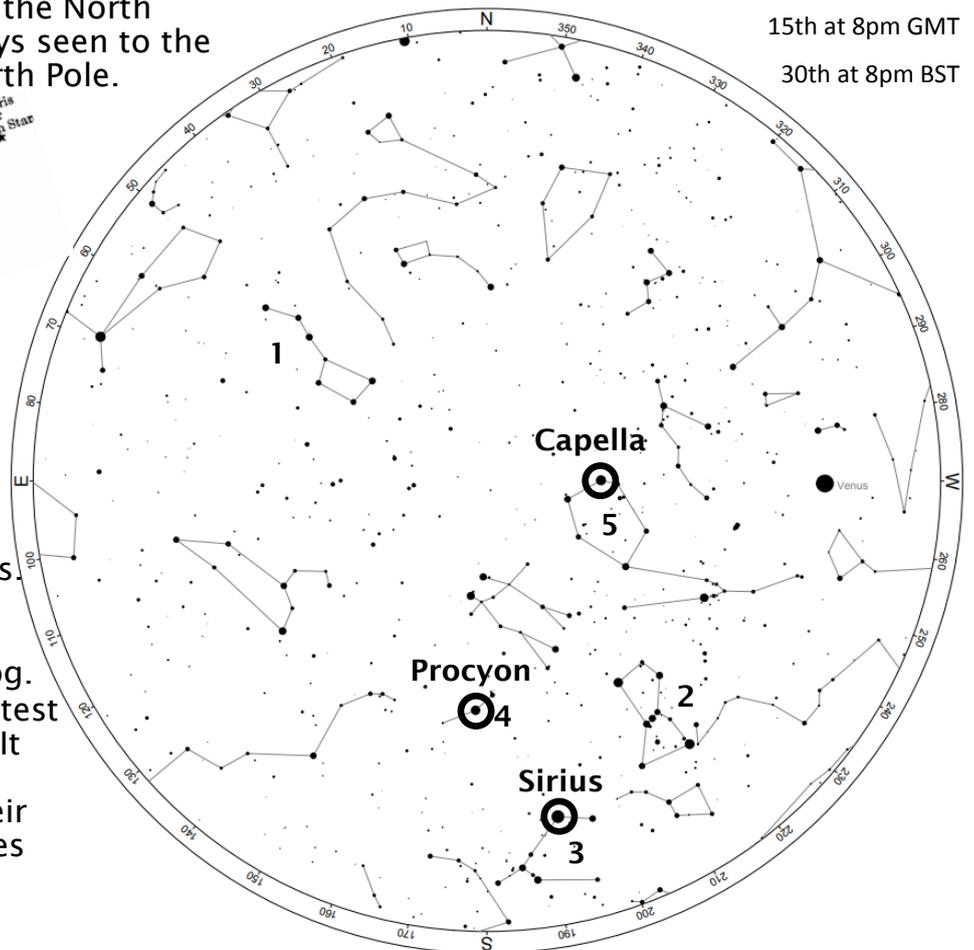
4 Canis Minor, the Small Dog. One of the smallest constellations. You need a lot of imagination to see a dog here as there are only two stars! Look for the bright star **Procyon** which is one of our closer stars, being only about 108,800,000,000,000 km away.



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

Venus is visible each evening and can be seen in the South throughout the month once the sun sets. It will set each night before midnight.

Jupiter, Saturn, and Mars all rise before the Sun in the morning, at the beginning of the month Mars appears in the sky first, followed by Jupiter then Saturn. Mars slowly moves backward towards and past Jupiter and ending the month close to Saturn in the sky. Jupiter and Saturn remain a similar distance from each other throughout the month, as the both rise later each day

Mercury is Visible each morning and can be seen in the South-East before the Sun rises Mercury will appear earlier in the sky each day as the month progresses.

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>