LITTLE ASTRONOMY PRINTABLE

The 88 Constellations

Every constellation with a star chart and the meaning of its name



The International Astronomical Union recognizes 88 constellations. Together they cover the whole sky, and every star belongs to exactly one of them. This list runs from Andromeda to Vulpecula in alphabetical order.

How to read each entry

- **Chart:** real star positions, north up and east to the left, the way the sky looks when you face it. Bigger dots are brighter stars. The dashed line is the official IAU boundary.
- **Meaning:** what the Latin or Greek name means in English.
- **Genitive:** the Latin form used in star names, as in Alpha *Centauri*.
- **Size:** rank by area, from #1 Hydra (largest) to #88 Crux (smallest).
- **Best month:** the month the constellation is highest in the south (north for southern viewers) at about 9 pm.

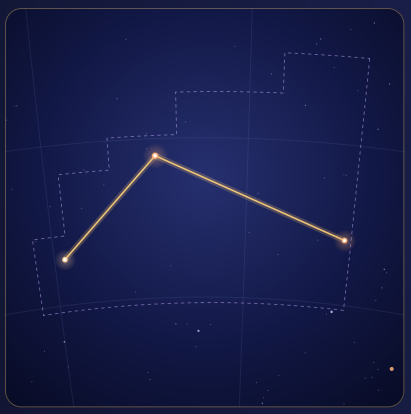


Andromeda *an-DROM-eh-duh*

The Chained Princess

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
And	**Andromedae**	**#19 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
November	**Northern**	**Alpheratz**

Andromeda was the daughter of King Cepheus and Queen Cassiopeia, chained to a rock as a sacrifice to the sea monster Cetus until Perseus rescued her. It holds the Andromeda Galaxy, the most distant object most people can see without a telescope.

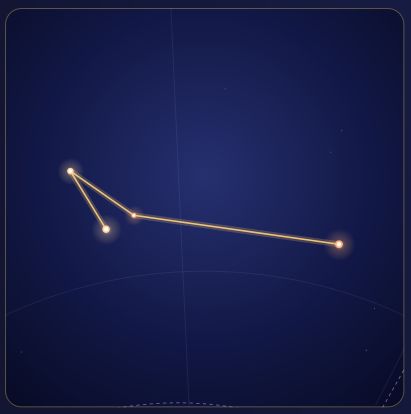


Antlia *ANT-lee-uh*

The Air Pump

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
Ant	**Antliae**	**#62 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
April	**Southern**	**Alpha Antliae**

Lacaille named it after the vacuum pump invented by Denis Papin and improved by Robert Boyle. It is one of several southern constellations he named after scientific instruments.



Apus *AY-pus*

The Bird of Paradise

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
Aps	**Apodis**	**#67 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
July	**Southern**	**Alpha Apodis**

The name comes from the Greek for "footless", because early European traders believed birds of paradise had no feet. Dutch navigators saw the birds' skins in the East Indies, where the feet had been removed.

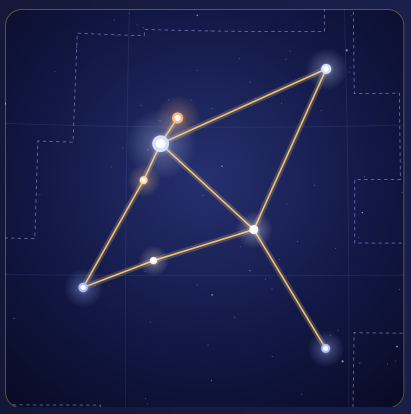


Aquarius *uh-KWAIR-ee-us*

The Water Bearer ZODIAC

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
Aqr	**Aquarii**	**#10 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
October	**Equatorial**	**Sadalsuud**

Aquarius pours water from a jar. The Greeks linked him to Ganymede, the young cup-bearer of the gods, and the Babylonians to a god of water and the annual floods.

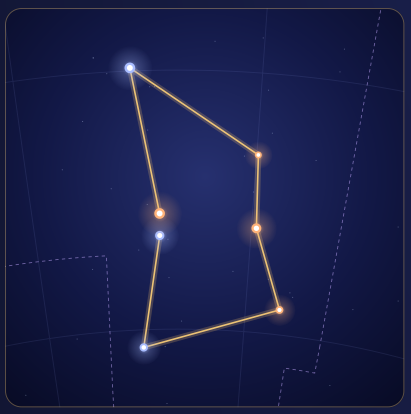


Aquila *AK-will-uh*

The Eagle

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
Aql	**Aquilae**	**#22 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
August	**Equatorial**	**Altair**

Aquila is the eagle that carried Zeus's thunderbolts and flew Ganymede up to Mount Olympus. Its brightest star, Altair, is one corner of the Summer Triangle.

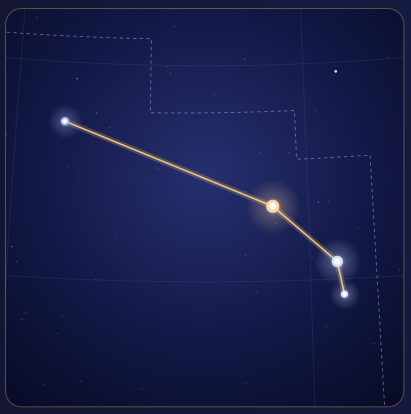


Ara *AIR-uh*

The Altar

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
Ara	**Arae**	**#63 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
July	**Southern**	**Beta Arae**

Ara is the altar where the Greek gods swore an oath of loyalty before their war against the Titans. The Milky Way rising above it was said to be the smoke from the altar fire.



Aries *AIR-eez*

The Ram ZODIAC

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
Ari	**Arietis**	**#39 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
December	**Northern**	**Hamal**

Aries is the ram with the Golden Fleece that Jason and the Argonauts later sailed to find. About 2,000 years ago the Sun stood in Aries at the March equinox, which is why that point is still called the First Point of Aries.



Auriga *oh-RYE-guh*

The Charioteer

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
Aur	**Aurigae**	**#21 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
January	**Northern**	**Capella**

Auriga is usually linked to Erichthonius, a king of Athens said to have invented the four-horse chariot. The charioteer carries a she-goat, marked by the bright star Capella, whose name means "little goat".

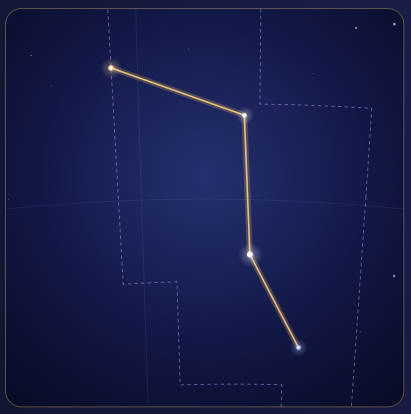


Boötes *bo-OH-teez*

The Herdsman

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
Boo	**Bootis**	**#13 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
June	**Northern**	**Arcturus**

Boötes follows the Great Bear around the pole, so he was seen as a herdsman driving the bear or the oxen of the Big Dipper. Its star Arcturus, "guardian of the bear", is the brightest star in the northern half of the sky.



Caelum *SEE-lum*

The Chisel

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
Cae	**Caeli**	**#81 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
January	**Southern**	**Alpha Caeli**

Lacaille named it after an engraver's chisel. It is one of the faintest constellations, with no star brighter than magnitude 4.

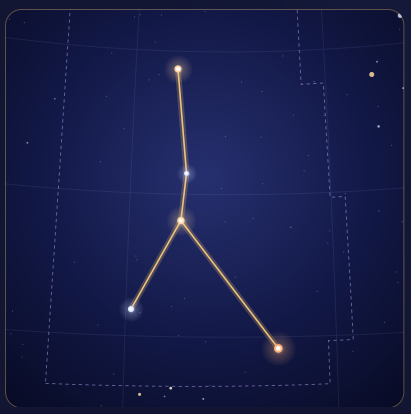


Camelopardalis *kuh-MEL-oh-PAR-duh-lis*

The Giraffe

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
Cam	**Camelopardalis**	**#18 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
January	**Northern**	**Beta Camelopardalis**

The name is Greek for giraffe, an animal Europeans described as a "camel with leopard spots". Plancius drew it in 1612 to fill a large dim area between the Big Dipper and Perseus.

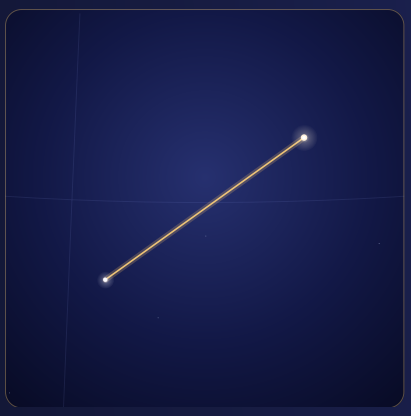


Cancer *KAN-sur*

The Crab ZODIAC

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
Cnc	**Cancri**	**#31 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
March	**Northern**	**Tarf**

Cancer is the crab that Hera sent to pinch Hercules while he fought the Hydra. He crushed it, and Hera placed it among the stars. It holds the Beehive Cluster, a star cluster visible without a telescope from dark sites.

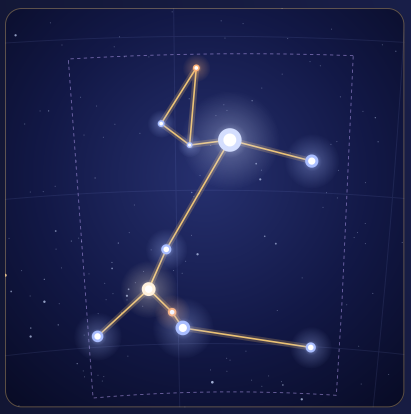


Canes Venatici *KAY-neez veh-NAT-ih-sy*

The Hunting Dogs

ABBREVIATION **CVn**	GENITIVE **Canum Venaticorum**	SIZE **#38 of 88**
BEST MONTH **May**	SKY **Northern**	BRIGHTEST STAR **Cor Caroli**

Hevelius drew two hunting dogs held on a leash by Boötes as he chases the Great Bear. Its brightest star, Cor Caroli, means "heart of Charles", in honor of King Charles I of England.

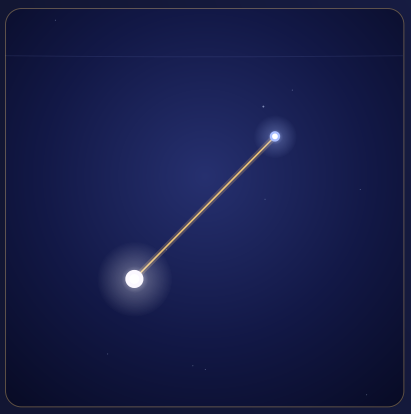


Canis Major *KAY-nis MAY-jur*

The Great Dog

ABBREVIATION **CMa**	GENITIVE **Canis Majoris**	SIZE **#43 of 88**
BEST MONTH **February**	SKY **Southern**	BRIGHTEST STAR **Sirius**

Canis Major is one of Orion's two hunting dogs. Its star Sirius, the Dog Star, is the brightest star in the night sky.

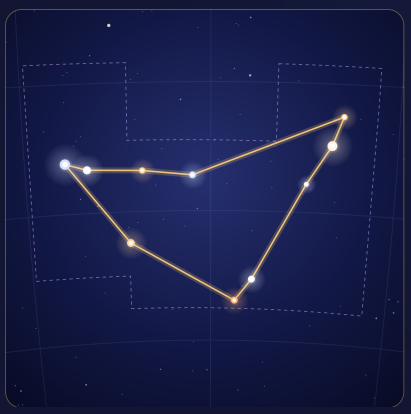


Canis Minor *KAY-nis MY-nur*

The Little Dog

ABBREVIATION **CMi**	GENITIVE **Canis Minoris**	SIZE **#71 of 88**
BEST MONTH **February**	SKY **Equatorial**	BRIGHTEST STAR **Procyon**

Canis Minor is Orion's smaller hunting dog. It has only two bright stars, Procyon and Gomeisa. Procyon means "before the dog" because it rises shortly before Sirius.



Capricornus *kap-rih-KOR-nus*

The Sea Goat ZODIAC

ABBREVIATION **Cap**	GENITIVE **Capricorni**	SIZE **#40 of 88**
BEST MONTH **September**	SKY **Southern**	BRIGHTEST STAR **Deneb Algedi**

Capricornus is a goat with the tail of a fish. The Greeks linked it to the god Pan, who turned partly into a fish to escape the monster Typhon. The image itself goes back to the Babylonian god Ea.

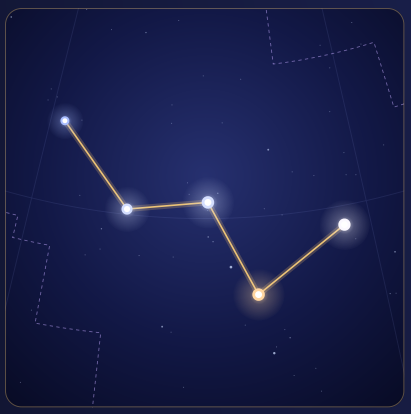


Carina *kuh-RYE-nuh*

The Keel

ABBREVIATION **Car**	GENITIVE **Carinae**	SIZE **#34 of 88**
BEST MONTH **March**	SKY **Southern**	BRIGHTEST STAR **Canopus**

Carina is the keel of the Argo, the ship of Jason and the Argonauts. Lacaille split the huge ancient constellation Argo Navis into three parts. Canopus, the second brightest star in the night sky, sits here.



Cassiopeia *kas-ee-oh-PEE-uh*

The Seated Queen

ABBREVIATION **Cas**	GENITIVE **Cassiopeiae**	SIZE **#25 of 88**
BEST MONTH **November**	SKY **Northern**	BRIGHTEST STAR **Schedar**

Queen Cassiopeia boasted that she was more beautiful than the sea nymphs, and Poseidon sent the monster Cetus as punishment. She sits on her throne near the North Star, and her five main stars form a W.



Centaurus *sen-TAR-us*

The Centaur

ABBREVIATION **Cen**	GENITIVE **Centauri**	SIZE **#9 of 88**
BEST MONTH **May**	SKY **Southern**	BRIGHTEST STAR **Rigil Kentaurus**

Centaurus is usually identified with Chiron, the wise centaur who taught Achilles, Jason and Asclepius. It holds Alpha Centauri, the closest star system to the Sun, and Omega Centauri, the largest globular cluster in our galaxy.



Cepheus *SEE-fee-us*

The King

ABBREVIATION **Cep**	GENITIVE **Cephei**	SIZE **#27 of 88**
BEST MONTH **October**	SKY **Northern**	BRIGHTEST STAR **Alderamin**

Cepheus was the king of Aethiopia, husband of Cassiopeia and father of Andromeda. His stars form a shape like a simple house. Delta Cephei gave its name to Cepheid variable stars, which astronomers use to measure distances to galaxies.

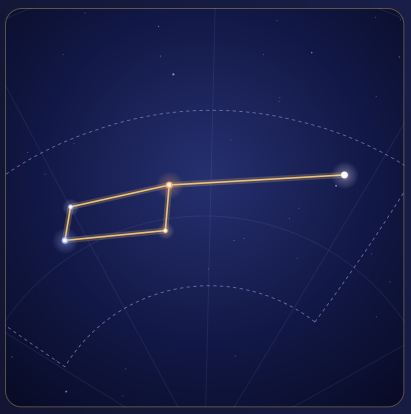


Cetus *SEE-tus*

The Sea Monster

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
Cet	**Ceti**	**#4 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
December	**Equatorial**	**Diphda**

Cetus is the sea monster Poseidon sent to destroy Aethiopia, killed by Perseus before it could eat Andromeda. Later star atlases often drew it as a whale. Its star Mira was the first variable star discovered, apart from novae.

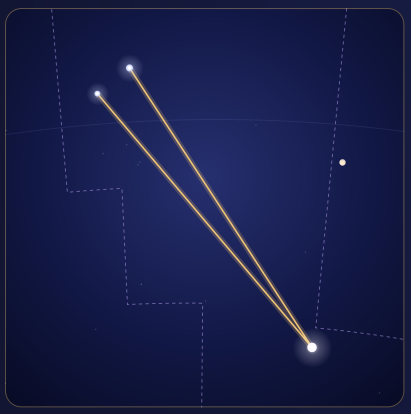


Chamaeleon *kuh-MEE-lee-un*

The Chameleon

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
Cha	**Chamaeleontis**	**#79 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
April	**Southern**	**Alpha Chamaeleontis**

Dutch navigators named it after the lizard that changes color, an animal they saw on their voyages. It sits close to the south celestial pole, next to Musca, the fly it seems to be chasing.

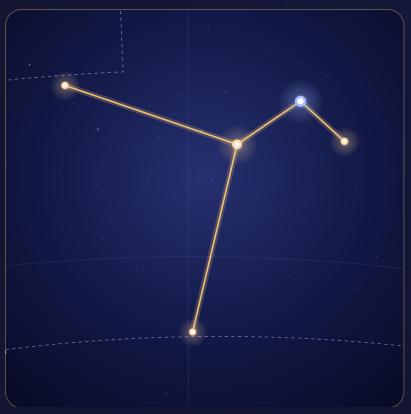


Circinus *SUR-sih-nus*

The Compass

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
Cir	**Circini**	**#85 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
June	**Southern**	**Alpha Circini**

Circinus is the drafting compass used to draw circles, named by Lacaille. It sits beside Norma, the carpenter's square, and is the fourth smallest constellation.

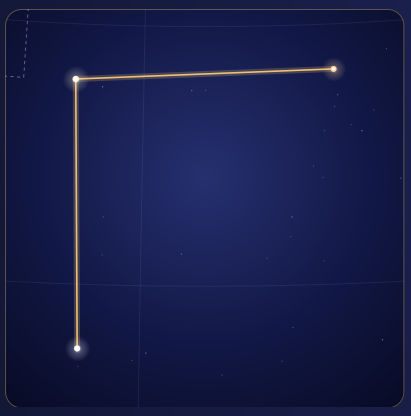


Columba *kuh-LUM-buh*

The Dove

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
Col	**Columbae**	**#54 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
February	**Southern**	**Phact**

Plancius drew Columba in 1592 as the dove Noah released from the ark to find dry land. It sits just south of Lepus, the hare at Orion's feet.

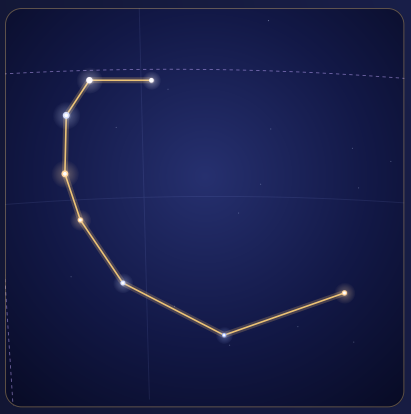


Coma Berenices *KOH-muh bair-uh-NY-seez*

Berenice's Hair

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
Com	**Comae Berenices**	**#42 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
May	**Northern**	**Beta Comae Berenices**

Queen Berenice II of Egypt cut off her hair as an offering for her husband's safe return from war. When it vanished from the temple, the court astronomer said the gods had placed it in the sky. Only Coma Berenices and Scutum honor real people.

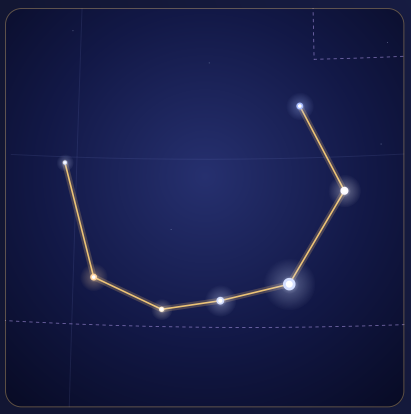


Corona Australis *kuh-ROH-nuh aw-STRAY-lis*

The Southern Crown

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
CrA	**Coronae Australis**	**#80 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
August	**Southern**	**Meridiana**

Corona Australis is a curved arc of stars at the feet of Sagittarius. The Greeks saw it as a wreath, sometimes linked to the archer or to Dionysus.

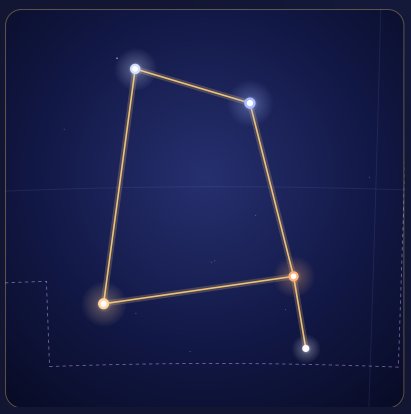


Corona Borealis *kuh-ROH-nuh bor-ee-AL-is*

The Northern Crown

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
CrB	**Coronae Borealis**	**#73 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
July	**Northern**	**Alphecca**

Corona Borealis is the crown Dionysus gave to Ariadne when they married, later placed in the sky. Its seven main stars form a neat semicircle. It holds T Coronae Borealis, a recurrent nova that flared up in 1866 and 1946.

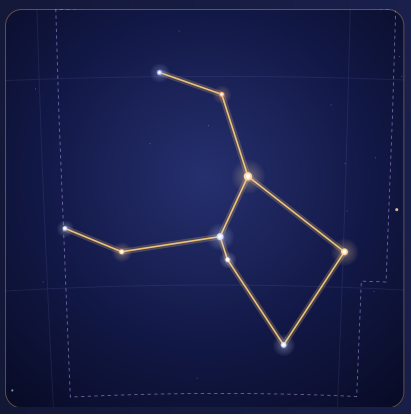


Corvus *KOR-vus*

The Crow

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
Crv	**Corvi**	**#70 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
May	**Southern**	**Gienah**

Apollo sent a crow to fetch water in a cup. The crow stopped to eat figs and returned late with a water snake as its excuse. Apollo threw all three into the sky, where Corvus, Crater and Hydra sit side by side.

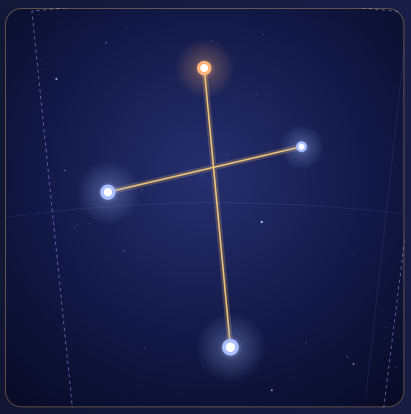


Crater *KRAY-tur*

The Cup

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
Crt	**Crateris**	**#53 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
April	**Southern**	**Delta Crateris**

Crater is the cup Apollo gave to the crow in the same story as Corvus. It sits on the back of Hydra, just out of the crow's reach.

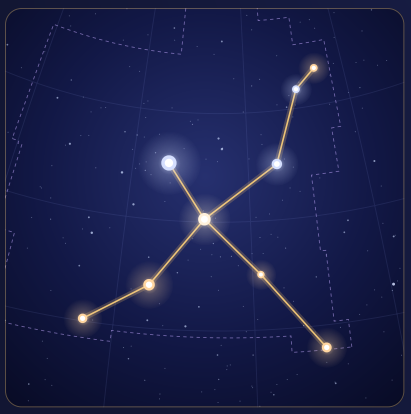


Crux *KRUKS*

The Southern Cross

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
Cru	**Crucis**	**#88 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
May	**Southern**	**Acrux**

Ancient Greeks counted these stars as part of Centaurus. European navigators made it a separate constellation in the 1500s and 1600s. Crux is the smallest constellation and appears on the flags of Australia, New Zealand, Brazil, Papua New Guinea and Samoa.



Cygnus *SIG-nus*

The Swan

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
Cyg	**Cygni**	**#16 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
September	**Northern**	**Deneb**

Cygnus is often the swan that Zeus became to visit Leda. It flies along the Milky Way with outstretched wings, and its brightest stars form the Northern Cross. Deneb, its tail, is part of the Summer Triangle.

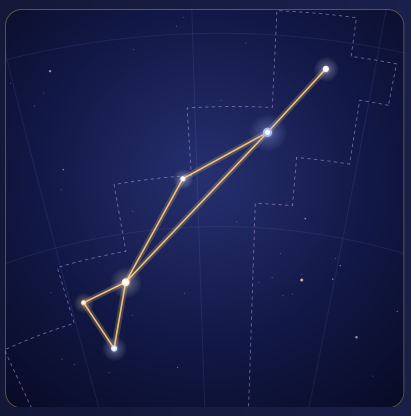


Delphinus *del-FYE-nus*

The Dolphin

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
Del	**Delphini**	**#69 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
September	**Equatorial**	**Rotanev**

Poseidon sent a dolphin to find the sea nymph Amphitrite and persuade her to marry him. As a reward he placed the dolphin among the stars. Two of its stars, Sualocin and Rotanev, spell the name of astronomer Niccolò Cacciatore backwards in Latin.



Dorado *doh-RAH-doh*

The Dolphinfish

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
Dor	**Doradus**	**#72 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
January	**Southern**	**Alpha Doradus**

Dorado is the mahi-mahi, a golden fish Dutch sailors saw chasing flying fish in tropical waters. It holds most of the Large Magellanic Cloud, a small galaxy that orbits the Milky Way.

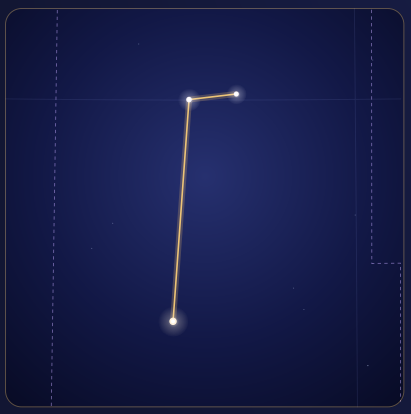


Draco *DRAY-ko*

The Dragon

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
Dra	**Draconis**	**#8 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
July	**Northern**	**Eltanin**

Draco is Ladon, the dragon that guarded the golden apples of the Hesperides until Hercules killed it. Its star Thuban was the pole star around 2,800 BC, when the Egyptians built the first pyramids.



Equuleus *eh-KWOO-lee-us*

The Little Horse

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
Equ	**Equulei**	**#87 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
September	**Equatorial**	**Kitalpha**

Equuleus is a small horse's head next to Pegasus, sometimes said to be Celeris, the brother of Pegasus. It is the second smallest constellation.

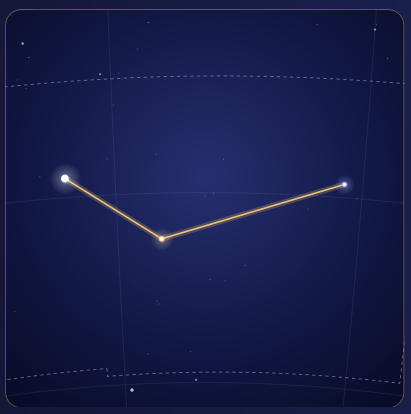


Eridanus *eh-RID-uh-nus*

The River

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
Eri	**Eridani**	**#6 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
January	**Southern**	**Achernar**

Eridanus is the river that Phaethon fell into after losing control of his father Helios's sun chariot. It winds from Orion's foot far into the southern sky and ends at the bright star Achernar, "the river's end".

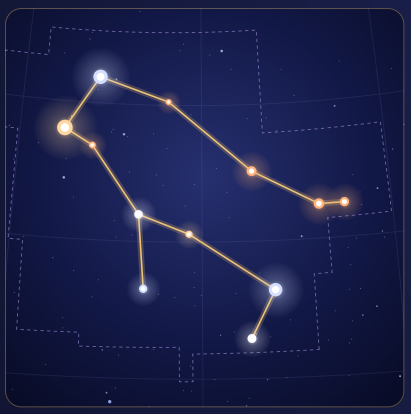


Fornax *FOR-naks*

The Furnace

ABBREVIATION **For**	GENITIVE **Fornacis**	SIZE **#41 of 88**
BEST MONTH **December**	SKY **Southern**	BRIGHTEST STAR **Dalim**

Lacaille named it the Chemical Furnace, after the small furnaces chemists used in their experiments. The Hubble Ultra Deep Field, one of the deepest images of the universe, was taken in Fornax.

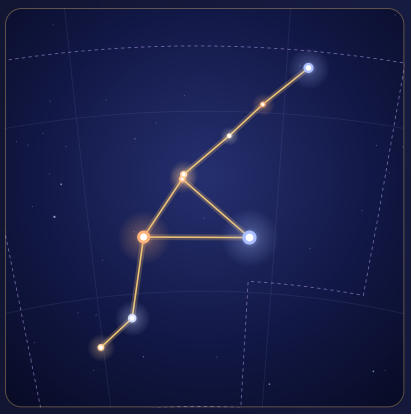


Gemini *JEM-ih-nye*

The Twins ZODIAC

ABBREVIATION **Gem**	GENITIVE **Geminorum**	SIZE **#30 of 88**
BEST MONTH **February**	SKY **Northern**	BRIGHTEST STAR **Pollux**

Gemini shows the twin brothers Castor and Pollux. When mortal Castor died, Pollux shared his immortality with him, and Zeus placed them side by side in the sky. Their names belong to the constellation's two brightest stars.



Grus *GROOS*

The Crane

ABBREVIATION **Gru**	GENITIVE **Gruis**	SIZE **#45 of 88**
BEST MONTH **October**	SKY **Southern**	BRIGHTEST STAR **Alnair**

Dutch navigators named this long-necked bird after the crane. Its stars were once counted as part of Piscis Austrinus, the southern fish.



Hercules *HER-kyoo-leez*

Hercules, the Hero

ABBREVIATION **Her**	GENITIVE **Herculis**	SIZE **#5 of 88**
BEST MONTH **July**	SKY **Northern**	BRIGHTEST STAR **Kornephoros**

Hercules is the Greek hero who completed twelve labors. The ancient Greeks called the figure only "the kneeler" before linking it to Hercules. Its four central stars form the Keystone, which holds the globular cluster M13.

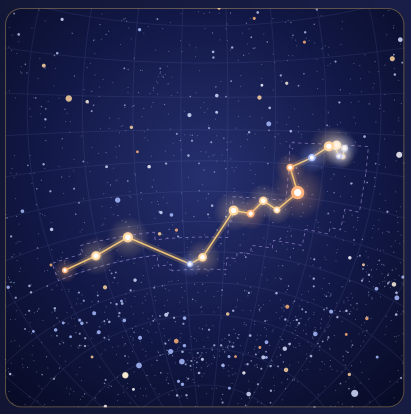


Horologium *hor-oh-LOH-jee-um*

The Pendulum Clock

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
Hor	**Horologii**	**#58 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
January	**Southern**	**Alpha Horologii**

Lacaille named it after the pendulum clock, the most accurate timekeeper of his day and an essential tool for astronomers measuring star positions.

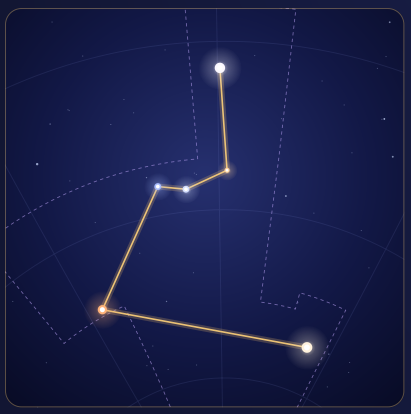


Hydra *HY-druh*

The Water Snake

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
Hya	**Hydrae**	**#1 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
April	**Southern**	**Alphard**

Hydra is the water snake from the story of the crow and the cup. It is often linked to the many-headed monster Hercules fought. Hydra is the largest constellation, stretching more than a quarter of the way around the sky.

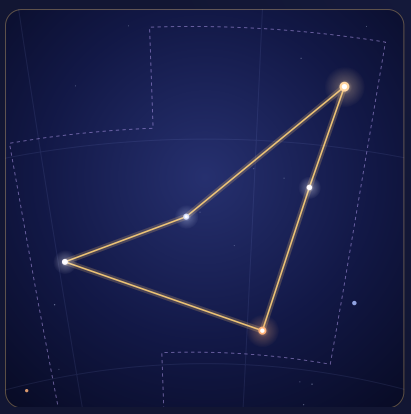


Hydrus *HY-drus*

The Male Water Snake

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
Hyi	**Hydri**	**#61 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
December	**Southern**	**Beta Hydri**

Hydrus is a small southern water snake, named by Dutch navigators so it would not be confused with the much bigger Hydra. It lies between the two Magellanic Clouds.

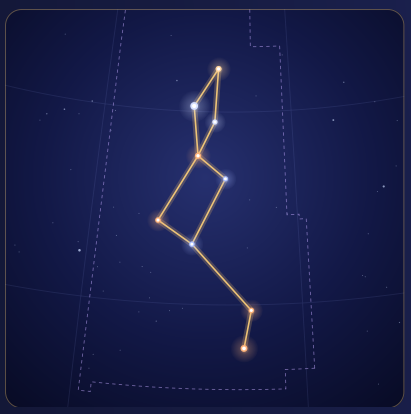


Indus *IN-dus*

The Indian

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
Ind	**Indi**	**#49 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
September	**Southern**	**Persian**

Indus shows a native person, drawn with arrows and a spear. The early atlases do not say which people it represents. It lies near Pavo, Tucana and Grus, other birds and figures the Dutch navigators added.



Lacerta *luh-SUR-tuh*

The Lizard

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
Lac	**Lacertae**	**#68 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
October	**Northern**	**Alpha Lacertae**

Hevelius placed a small lizard in the faint gap between Cygnus and Andromeda. Its stars form a zigzag line like a lizard's body.

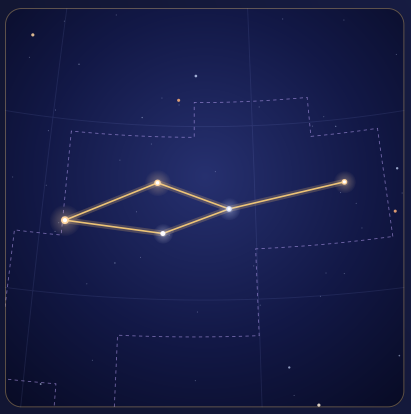


Leo *LEE-oh*

The Lion ZODIAC

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
Leo	**Leonis**	**#12 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
April	**Northern**	**Regulus**

Leo is the Nemean lion, whose skin no weapon could pierce, strangled by Hercules as his first labor. The backwards question mark of stars called the Sickle forms the lion's head and mane, with Regulus at its base.

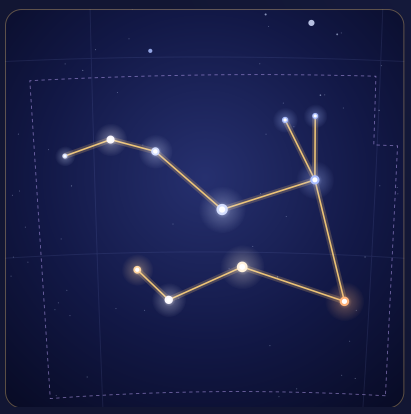


Leo Minor *LEE-oh MY-nur*

The Little Lion

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
LMi	**Leonis Minoris**	**#64 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
April	**Northern**	**Praecipua**

Hevelius created Leo Minor from faint stars between Leo and Ursa Major. It has no myth of its own.

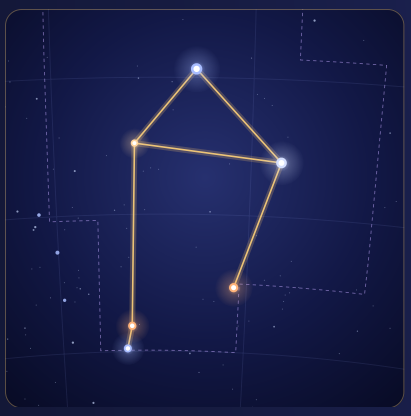


Lepus *LEE-pus*

The Hare

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
Lep	**Leporis**	**#51 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
January	**Southern**	**Arneb**

Lepus is the hare hiding at Orion's feet, hunted by the hunter and his dogs. In one Greek story it honors the hares that overran the island of Leros.



Libra *LEE-bruh*

The Scales ZODIAC

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
Lib	**Librae**	**#29 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
June	**Southern**	**Zubeneschamali**

Libra is the scales of justice, often held by Astraea, the goddess linked to Virgo next door. The Greeks first saw these stars as the claws of Scorpius, which is why its two brightest stars have names meaning "southern claw" and "northern claw".

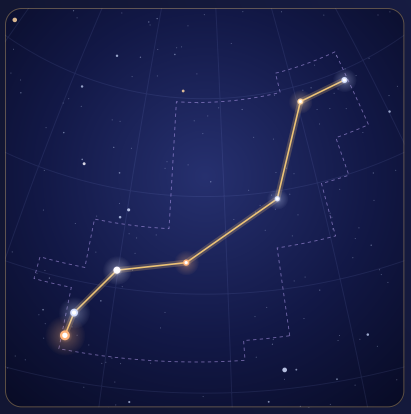


Lupus *LOO-pus*

The Wolf

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
Lup	**Lupi**	**#46 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
June	**Southern**	**Alpha Lupi**

The Greeks saw Lupus as a wild animal held by Centaurus, perhaps as a sacrifice at the altar of Ara. It became a wolf in later Latin translations.

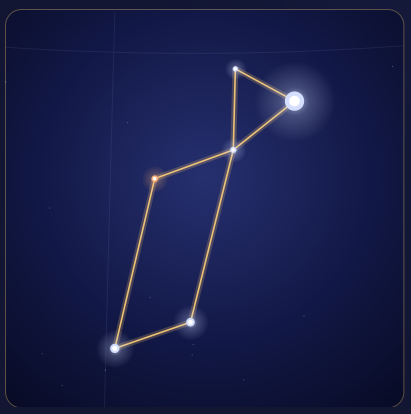


Lynx *LINKS*

The Lynx

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
Lyn	**Lyncis**	**#28 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
March	**Northern**	**Alpha Lyncis**

Hevelius said you would need the eyes of a lynx to see this faint constellation, and named it for that reason.

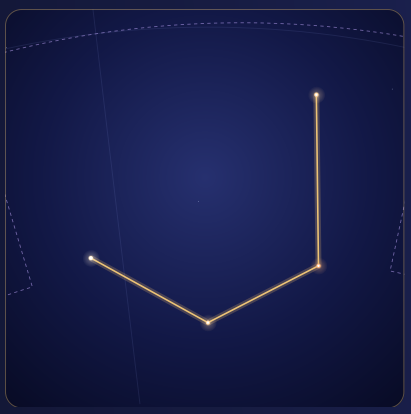


Lyra *LYE-ruh*

The Lyre

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
Lyr	**Lyrae**	**#52 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
August	**Northern**	**Vega**

Lyra is the lyre of Orpheus, whose music could charm animals, trees and even stones. Its star Vega is the fifth brightest star in the night sky and one corner of the Summer Triangle.

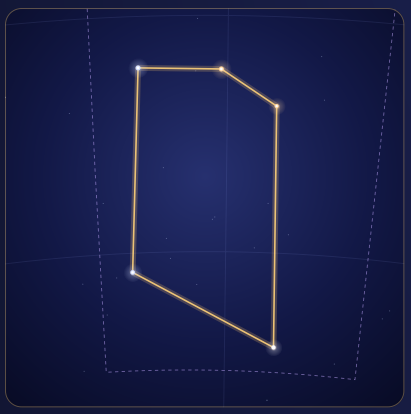


Mensa *MEN-suh*

The Table Mountain

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
Men	**Mensae**	**#75 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
January	**Southern**	**Alpha Mensae**

Lacaille named it after Table Mountain near Cape Town, where he made his southern star survey. Part of the Large Magellanic Cloud sits in it, like the cloud that often caps the real mountain.



Microscopium *my-kro-SKOH-pee-um*

The Microscope

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
Mic	**Microscopii**	**#66 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
September	**Southern**	**Gamma Microscopii**

Lacaille named it after the microscope, one of several scientific instruments he placed in the southern sky. None of its stars is brighter than magnitude 4.

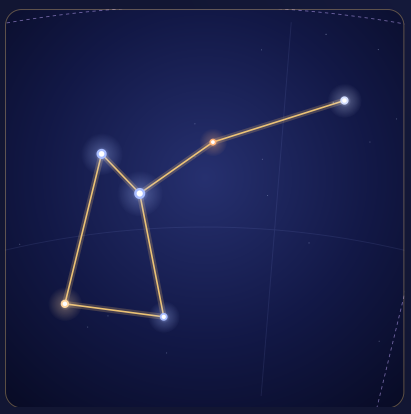


Monoceros *moh-NOS-er-us*

The Unicorn

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
Mon	**Monocerotis**	**#35 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
February	**Equatorial**	**Beta Monocerotis**

Plancius drew a unicorn in the faint area between Orion and Canis Minor in 1612. The Milky Way runs through it, so it is rich in star clusters and nebulae, including the Rosette Nebula.

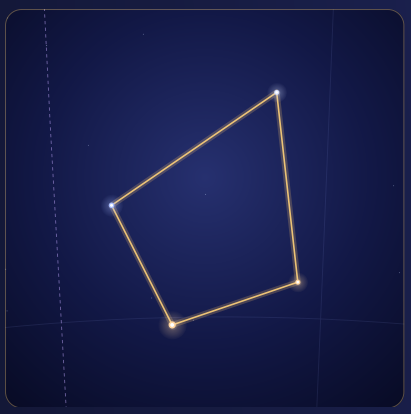


Musca *MUSS-kuh*

The Fly

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
Mus	**Muscae**	**#77 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
May	**Southern**	**Alpha Muscae**

The Dutch navigators called it the Fly. Johann Bayer renamed it the Bee in 1603, and Lacaille restored the Fly in 1756. It is the only insect among the 88 constellations and sits just south of the Southern Cross.

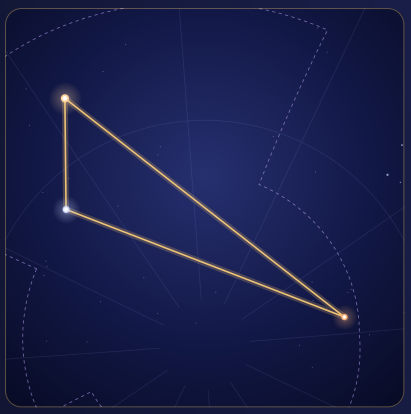


Norma *NOR-muh*

The Carpenter's Square

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
Nor	**Normae**	**#74 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
July	**Southern**	**Gamma² Normae**

Lacaille named it after the set square used by carpenters and draftsmen to draw right angles. Its original Alpha and Beta stars were later moved into Scorpius.



Octans *OK-tunz*

The Octant

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
Oct	**Octantis**	**#50 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
August	**Southern**	**Nu Octantis**

Lacaille named it after the octant, a navigation instrument invented by John Hadley in 1730. It contains the south celestial pole. Its nearest visible star to the pole, Sigma Octantis, is very faint.



Ophiuchus *off-ee-YOO-kus*

The Serpent Bearer

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
Oph	**Ophiuchi**	**#11 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
July	**Equatorial**	**Rasalhague**

Ophiuchus is Asclepius, the healer who learned to bring the dead back to life, placed in the sky by Zeus holding a snake. The Sun passes through Ophiuchus from late November to mid December, but it is not one of the twelve zodiac signs.



Orion *oh-RYE-un*

The Hunter

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
Ori	**Orionis**	**#26 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
January	**Equatorial**	**Rigel**

Orion was a giant hunter who boasted he could kill every animal on Earth, so Gaia sent a scorpion to kill him. He and Scorpius sit on opposite sides of the sky, so one sets as the other rises. His belt of three stars is one of the easiest patterns to find.



Pavo *PAY-voh*

The Peacock

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
Pav	**Pavonis**	**#44 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
August	**Southern**	**Peacock**

Dutch navigators named it after the green peacock they saw in the East Indies. Its brightest star is simply called Peacock.



Pegasus *PEG-uh-sus*

The Winged Horse

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
Peg	**Pegasi**	**#7 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
October	**Northern**	**Enif**

Pegasus sprang from the neck of Medusa when Perseus cut off her head. The hero Bellerophon later rode him. Its body is the Great Square of Pegasus, one of the main landmarks of the autumn sky.

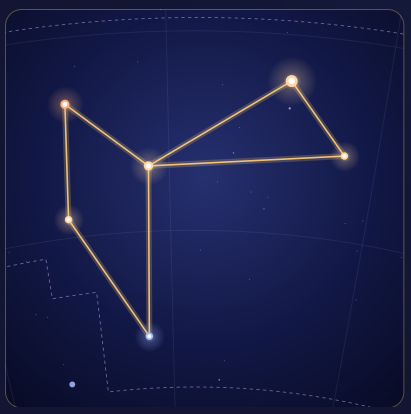


Perseus *PUR-see-us*

The Hero Perseus

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
Per	**Persei**	**#24 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
December	**Northern**	**Mirfak**

Perseus killed Medusa and rescued Andromeda from the sea monster Cetus. He holds Medusa's head, marked by the star Algol, the "demon star", which dims every 2.87 days. The Perseid meteor shower seems to come from here each August.

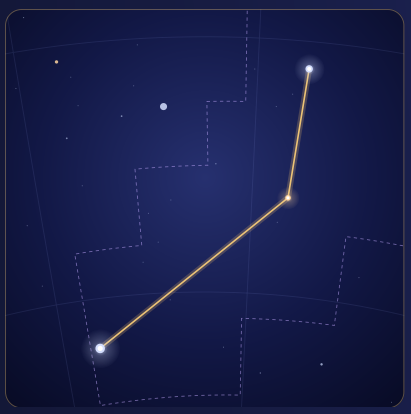


Phoenix *FEE-niks*

The Phoenix

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
Phe	**Phoenicis**	**#37 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
November	**Southern**	**Ankaa**

The phoenix is the mythical bird that burns itself and is reborn from its ashes. Dutch navigators named this southern constellation after it.



Pictor *PIK-tor*

The Painter's Easel

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
Pic	**Pictoris**	**#59 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
February	**Southern**	**Alpha Pictoris**

Lacaille called it the Painter's Easel. Its star Beta Pictoris was one of the first stars found with a disk of dust and debris around it, where planets have since been discovered.

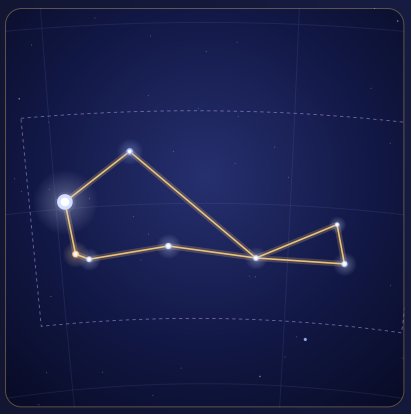


Pisces *PY-seez*

The Fishes ZODIAC

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
Psc	**Piscium**	**#14 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
November	**Equatorial**	**Alpherg**

Pisces shows two fish tied together by their tails. In Greek myth they are Aphrodite and her son Eros, who turned into fish to escape the monster Typhon. The March equinox point now lies in Pisces.

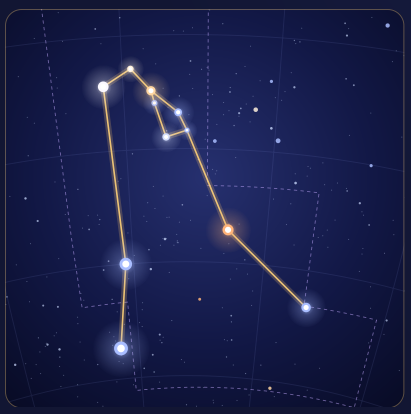


Piscis Austrinus *PY-sis aw-STRY-nus*

The Southern Fish

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
PsA	**Piscis Austrini**	**#60 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
October	**Southern**	**Fomalhaut**

Piscis Austrinus is a fish drinking the water poured by Aquarius. Its bright star Fomalhaut, "mouth of the fish", is the only first-magnitude star in that part of the autumn sky.

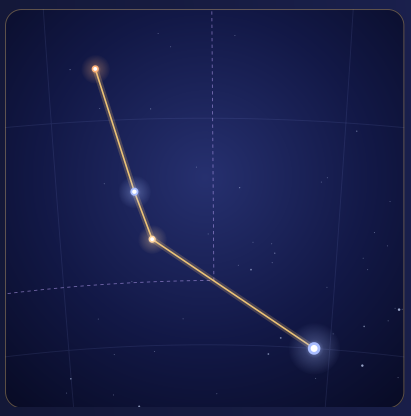


Puppis *PUP-is*

The Stern

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
Pup	**Puppis**	**#20 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
February	**Southern**	**Naos**

Puppis is the stern, or poop deck, of the Argo. It is the largest of the three pieces Lacaille made from Argo Navis.



Pyxis *PIK-sis*

The Compass Box

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
Pyx	**Pyxidis**	**#65 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
March	**Southern**	**Alpha Pyxidis**

Pyxis is a mariner's magnetic compass, named by Lacaille. It sits next to the old Argo Navis, as if it were the ship's compass, although the ancient Greeks had no magnetic compass.

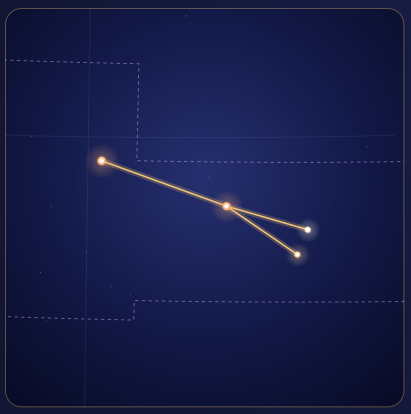


Reticulum *reh-TIK-yoo-lum*

The Reticle

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
Ret	**Reticuli**	**#82 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
January	**Southern**	**Alpha Reticuli**

Lacaille named it after the grid of crossed wires in a telescope eyepiece, the reticle he used to measure star positions.



Sagitta *suh-JIT-uh*

The Arrow

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
Sge	**Sagittae**	**#86 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
September	**Northern**	**Gamma Sagittae**

Sagitta is an arrow, said to be the one Hercules used to kill the eagle that tormented Prometheus, or Apollo's arrow. It is the third smallest constellation.



Sagittarius *saj-ih-TAIR-ee-us*

The Archer ZODIAC

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
Sgr	**Sagittarii**	**#15 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
August	**Southern**	**Kaus Australis**

Sagittarius is a centaur drawing a bow, aimed at Scorpius. The center of the Milky Way lies in this direction. Its brightest stars form the Teapot asterism, with the Milky Way rising like steam from the spout.



Scorpius *SKOR-pee-us*

The Scorpion ZODIAC

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
Sco	**Scorpii**	**#33 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
July	**Southern**	**Antares**

Scorpius is the scorpion that killed Orion. The two were placed on opposite sides of the sky. Its red star Antares means "rival of Mars" because of its color.

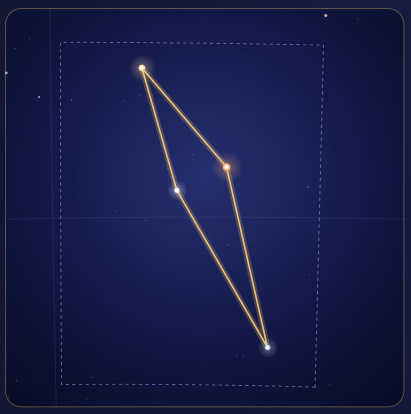


Sculptor *SKULP-tor*

The Sculptor

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
Scl	**Sculptoris**	**#36 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
November	**Southern**	**Alpha Sculptoris**

Lacaille named it the Sculptor's Workshop. It contains the south galactic pole, so looking toward it you see out of the Milky Way's disk and into deep space, with many distant galaxies.



Scutum *SKOO-tum*

The Shield

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
Sct	**Scuti**	**#84 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
August	**Equatorial**	**Alpha Scuti**

Hevelius named it Scutum Sobiescianum, the shield of Sobieski, in honor of the Polish king John III Sobieski after his victory at Vienna in 1683. It holds the Wild Duck Cluster, M11.

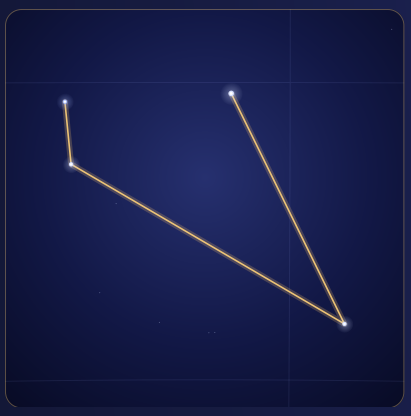


Serpens *SUR-penz*

The Serpent

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
Ser	**Serpentis**	**#23 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
July	**Equatorial**	**Unukalhai**

Serpens is the snake held by Ophiuchus. It is the only constellation split in two parts: Serpens Caput, the head, and Serpens Cauda, the tail, on either side of the serpent bearer. The Eagle Nebula with the Pillars of Creation is in Serpens Cauda.



Sextans *SEKS-tunz*

The Sextant

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
Sex	**Sextantis**	**#47 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
April	**Equatorial**	**Alpha Sextantis**

Hevelius named it after the astronomical sextant he used to measure star positions, an instrument he lost when a fire destroyed his observatory in 1679.

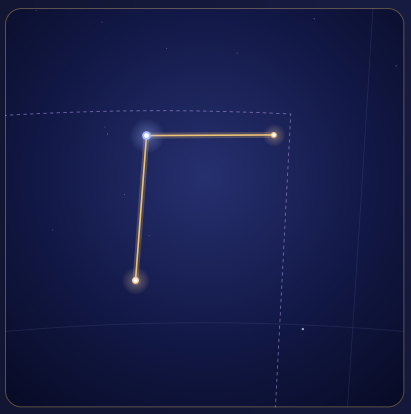


Taurus *TOR-us*

The Bull ZODIAC

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
Tau	**Tauri**	**#17 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
January	**Equatorial**	**Aldebaran**

Taurus is the white bull that Zeus became to carry off the princess Europa. Its red eye is Aldebaran. It holds two famous star clusters, the Pleiades and the Hyades, and the Crab Nebula.

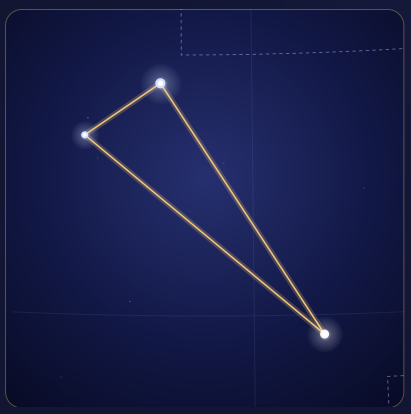


Telescopium *tel-eh-SKOH-pee-um*

The Telescope

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
Tel	**Telescopii**	**#57 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
August	**Southern**	**Alpha Telescopii**

Lacaille named it after the long aerial telescopes of his time. Later astronomers moved several of its stars into neighboring constellations, which left it with few bright stars.

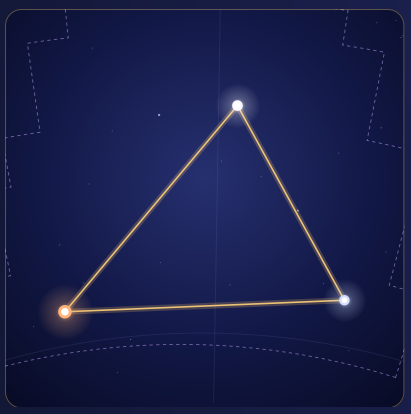


Triangulum *try-ANG-gyoo-lum*

The Triangle

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
Tri	**Trianguli**	**#78 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
December	**Northern**	**Beta Trianguli**

The Greeks called it Deltoton because its three stars look like the letter delta. It holds the Triangulum Galaxy, M33, a member of our Local Group of galaxies.



Triangulum Australe *try-ANG-gyoo-lum aw-STRAY-lee*

The Southern Triangle

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
TrA	**Trianguli Australis**	**#83 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
July	**Southern**	**Atria**

Dutch navigators named this bright triangle of stars near Alpha Centauri. It is brighter and easier to see than its northern twin, Triangulum.



Tucana *too-KAY-nuh*

The Toucan

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
Tuc	**Tucanae**	**#48 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
October	**Southern**	**Alpha Tucanae**

Tucana is the toucan, a South American bird the Dutch navigators heard about. It holds the Small Magellanic Cloud and the bright globular cluster 47 Tucanae.



Ursa Major *UR-suh MAY-jur*

The Great Bear

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
UMa	**Ursae Majoris**	**#3 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
April	**Northern**	**Alioth**

Zeus loved the nymph Callisto, and she was turned into a bear and placed in the sky. Seven of its stars form the Big Dipper, or the Plough, the best-known star pattern in the northern sky. Its pointer stars lead to the North Star.



Ursa Minor *UR-suh MY-nur*

The Little Bear

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
UMi	**Ursae Minoris**	**#56 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
June	**Northern**	**Polaris**

Ursa Minor is often Callisto's son Arcas, placed beside his mother in the sky. Its seven main stars form the Little Dipper, with Polaris, the North Star, at the end of the handle.



Vela *VEE-luh*

The Sails

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
Vel	**Velorum**	**#32 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
March	**Southern**	**Regor**

Vela is the sails of the Argo, the third piece of Argo Navis. With Carina it shares the False Cross, a star pattern often mistaken for the Southern Cross.

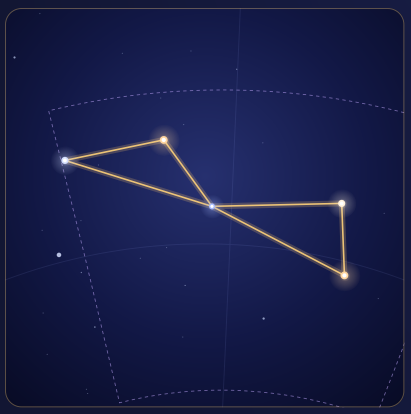


Virgo *VUR-go*

The Maiden ZODIAC

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
Vir	**Virginis**	**#2 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
May	**Equatorial**	**Spica**

Virgo is usually Astraea, the goddess of justice, or Demeter's daughter Persephone, holding an ear of wheat marked by the star Spica. It is the second largest constellation and the largest in the zodiac. The Virgo Cluster of galaxies lies here.

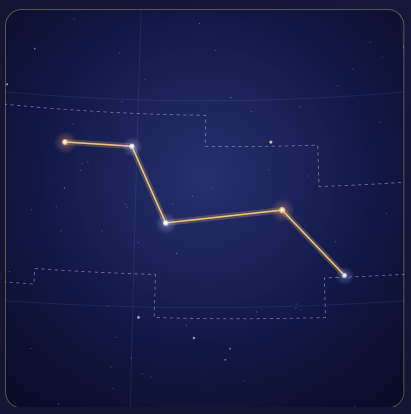


Volans *VOH-lunz*

The Flying Fish

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
Vol	**Volantis**	**#76 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
March	**Southern**	**Gamma Volantis**

Volans is a flying fish, a sight Dutch sailors saw leaping across tropical seas. On old charts it is chased by Dorado, the dolphinfish next to it.



Vulpecula *vul-PEK-yoo-luh*

The Little Fox

ABBREVIATION	GENITIVE	SIZE
Vul	**Vulpeculae**	**#55 of 88**
BEST MONTH	SKY	BRIGHTEST STAR
August	**Northern**	**Anser**

Hevelius drew a little fox carrying a goose in its jaws. It sits inside the Summer Triangle and holds the Dumbbell Nebula, M27, the first planetary nebula ever discovered.