

What's Up, Doc? †

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This document tells you what objects are visible this next month for many of the Astronomical League Programs. If you are working on one of the more advanced programs, then I assume that you are also probably tracking where your objects are all the time. I have concentrated on the more common and starter-level programs. This information is for the Eastern Time Zone, Washington D.C.

Naked-Eye Programs

Meteors – any night, any time, anywhere, the darker the sky the better.

| <u>Shower</u> | <u>Duration</u> | <u>Maximum</u> | <u>Type</u> |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Eta Draconids | 3/22-4/8 | 3/29-3/31 | Minor |
| Beta Leonids | 2/14-4/25 | 3/19-3/21 | Minor |
| Rho Leonids | 2/13-3/13 | 3/1-3/4 | Minor |
| Leonids-Ursids | 3/18-4/7 | 3/10 & 3/11 | Minor |
| Delta Mensids | 3/14-3/21 | 3/18 & 3/19 | Minor |
| Gamma Normids | 3/11-3/21 | 3/16 & 3/17 | Minor |
| Eta Virginids | 2/24-3/27 | 3/18 & 3/19 | Minor |
| Pi Virginids | 2/13-4/8 | 3/3-3/9 | Minor |
| Theta Virginids | 3/10-4/21 | 3/20 & 3/21 | Minor |
| March Aquarids | 2/1-4/30 | 3/15-3/18 | Daytime Shower |

Constellations, Northern Skies – any night, any time, anywhere, the darker the sky the better.

Last Chance this cycle: Cassiopeia, Andromeda, Triangulum, Aries, Caelum.

Transit Camelopardis, Lynx, Gemini, Canis Minor, Monoceros, Canis Major, Puppis.

New arrivals: Canes Venatici, Coma Berenecis, Crater, Corvus, Antlia, Pyxis.

Binocular Programs

Binocular Messier – Monthly highlights include:

Easy – 31, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 41, 42, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 50, 52, 67, 93, 103.

Medium – 33, 40, 49, 63, 64, 78, 79, 81, 82, 94.

Hard – 1, 32, 51, 65, 66, 97, 101, 106.

Big Binoculars – 58, 59, 60, 61, 77, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 95, 96, 99, 100, 102, 105, 108, 109, 110.

Deep Sky Binocular – Monthly highlights include (by Astronomical League numbers):

1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 60.

Other Programs

Messier: Messier Marathon (seeing all 110 in one night) is ideal on 3/14/2015 and 3/21/2015!

In addition to those listed under Binocular Messier, check out: 43, 74, 76, 91, 98.

Caldwell

1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 17, 18, 21, 23, 24, 25, 26, 28, 29, 31, 32, 35, 36, 38, 39, 40, 41, 46, 48, 49, 50, 53, 54, 58, 59, 64, 71, 73.

Double Star (by Astronomical League numbers):

2, 3, 5, 8, 11, 16, 17, 19, 20, 23, 24, 25, 27, 28, 32, 33, 34, 40, 42, 45, 49, 51, 52, 53, 55, 57, 59, 60, 61, 63, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 73, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 85, 95, 98, 99.

Other Programs (of the Solar System)

Planetary – These are the tasks that can be done this month:

Venus, Mars, Ceres, Saturn, Neptune, and Pluto will not be visible during the evening hours. They are morning stars or too close to the sun.

Sun – Any clear day is a good time to get those sunspots. Sunset is at 1915 mid-month.

Moon:

The Maria requirement can be done any time the moon is visible. Look before 3/3 and after 3/17 for the fullest views.

The Highlands requirement can be done at the same time.

The Crater Ages requirement is best done on 3/16 or 3/17.

The Scarps requirement is best done on 3/18.

Occultations occur all the time, the bright ones can be found on the internet. Objects disappear on the East side of the moon.

Mercury is in Pisces and sets at 2032 mid-month.

Jupiter is in Aries and sets at 2327 mid-month.

Uranus is in Aries and is up all evening mid-month.

Asteroids – Course Plotting and Measuring Movement requirements can be done at any time on any asteroid. See above to identify the bright ones this month.

Lunar

Key timings are indicated below:

New, 3/10 4 days, 3/14 7 days, 3/17 10 days, 3/20 14 days, 3/24

Old moon in new moon's arms – before 0500 on 3/13, ~10 % illuminated. (72 hr > New)

New moon in old moon's arms – after 0400 on 3/7, ~10 % illuminated. (72 hr < New)

Waxing Crescent – before 0500 on 3/12, ~4 % illuminated. (48 hr > New)

Waning Crescent – after 0400 on 3/8, ~4 % illuminated. (48 hr < New)

Major Events in March:

- 3/5 – Eta Aquarids Meteor Shower
- 3/10 – Start of Daylight-Saving Time
- 3/10 – Moon at Perigee
- 3/11 Moon at Ascending Node
- 3/17 – Neptune and Sun Conjunction
- 3/19 – March Equinox
- 3/21 – Venus and Saturn Conjunction (0.3')
- 3/23 – Moon at Apogee
- 3/25 – Penumbral Lunar Eclipse

* - Although these programs are not detailed in this “**What’s Up Doc?**” handout, you can get information on many of their objects by using the “**What’s Up Tonight, Doc?**” spreadsheet. To get your copy, talk to the Doc, Aaron Clevenson, by sending an email to aaron@clevenson.org. It is also available on the Astronomical League website.

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