



# Dark Nebula Observing Program

*It's all a matter of contrast!*

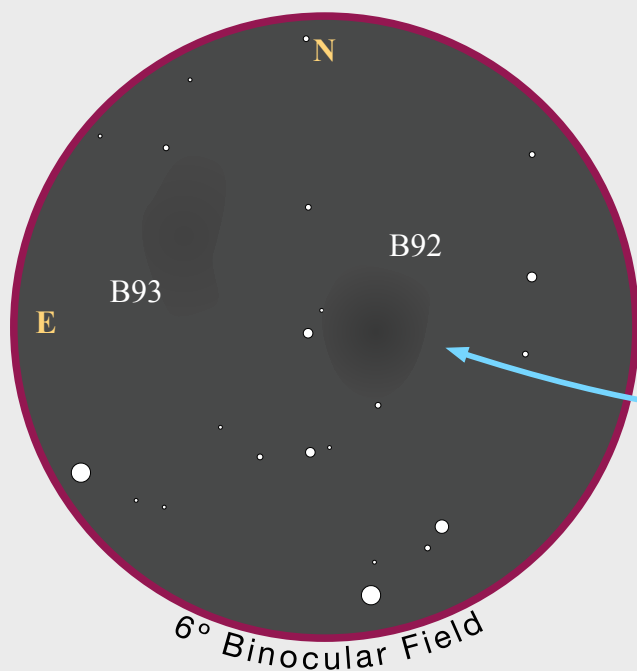


Dark nebulae were once thought to be holes in the Milky Way. This viewpoint changed as astronomers such as EE Barnard started serious study of these dark areas, and as photography was developed as a useful tool to study the heavens. These pioneers discovered that the dark regions were not holes in the Milky Way, but obscuring interstellar dust clouds blocking our view – nebulae.

## How to best observe dark nebulae:

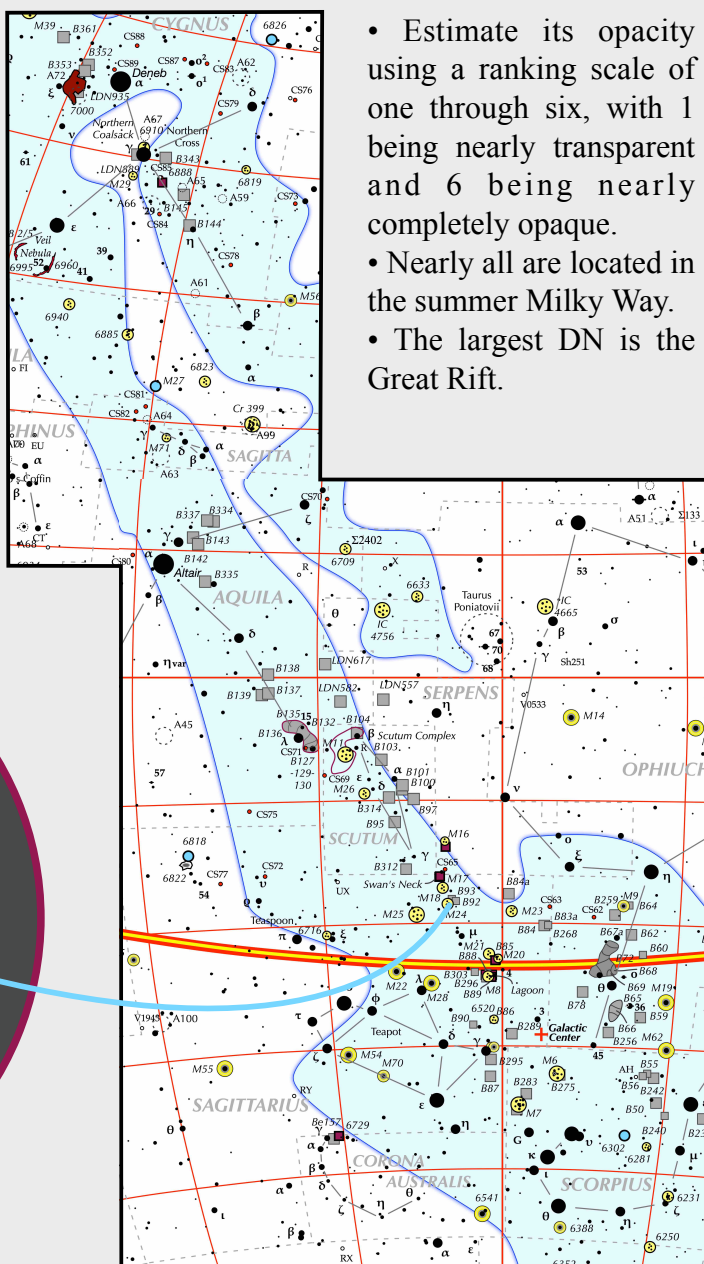
- Nothing larger than an 8 inch telescope is needed.
- Dark, transparent skies are a must.
- For low contrast nebulae, try tapping the scope gently.
- Most successful sightings occur near culmination.
- If the sighting attempt is unsuccessful, return on a another night with different sky conditions or try observing from a darker site.

A few DN require a telescope, many need only binoculars, while some can be seen with the unaided eye.



## In the Dark Nebula Observing Program:

- Estimate its opacity using a ranking scale of one through six, with 1 being nearly transparent and 6 being nearly completely opaque.
- Nearly all are located in the summer Milky Way.
- The largest DN is the Great Rift.



For complete details, <https://www.astroleague.org/dark-nebula-observing-program/>