



*A changing constellation that is no longer:*



## Musca Borealis



- Musca Borealis dates back to 1612 when Petrus Plancius grabbed the 4th and 5th magnitude stars later known as 33, 35, 39, and 41 Arietis, and created a bee. He called it Apis.
- Jakob Bartsch reworked these stars in 1624 as a more sinister sounding wasp, Vespa.
- In 1687 Johannes Hevelius depicted it as a fly, Musca. It appeared in his 1690 star catalogue. The fly is found resting on the haunches of Aries.
- By 1822, "Borealis" was tacked on to avoid confusion with the southern sky's Musca, a small constellation bordering Crux.
- Modern renditions have eliminated Musca Borealis entirely, leaving 41 Arietis placed at the haunches of Aries, the ram. Its foreleg stretches into eastern Pisces, drooping comfortably over the ecliptic.

41 Arietis is the eastern member of Aries' four primary stars. Ever wonder why it does not have a Bayer Greek letter designation, when most constellation stars of 3.6 magnitude do? When Johannes Bayer was assigning Greek letters to stars, this star was Alpha Musca Borealis. So, when Musca Borealis was disbanded and became part of Aries, it held on to its Flamsteed designation of 41.

Musca Borealis is listed in the Astronomical League's Asterism Observing Program as number 87.

