



Looking towards the location of the Summer Solstice

The Summer Solstice Star Cluster Quartet



Many amateur astronomers have viewed M35 not just once, but multiple times. Fewer have glimpsed its neighboring cluster, NGC 2158. Fewer still have spotted two other clusters, one sitting smack dab on the summer solstice point.

In recognition of the winter solstice and the year's longest night, why not revisit the pretty open star cluster M35? And while you are in the area, pick up its three neighboring open clusters the much smaller NGC 2158, IC 2157 on M35's west side, and NGC 2129, the solstice cluster?

Because of the precession of the equinoxes, NGC 2129 was placed directly on the summer solstice point in 1982. It has since moved 40 minutes east.

Easy



M35

Magnitude: 5.3

Size: 28 min

Distance: 3000 ly

No. of Stars: > 300

Compact.
8 inch scope

NGC 2158

Magnitude: 8.6

Size: 5 min

Distance: 11,000 ly

No. of Stars: > 1000

*Might be challenge
for an 8 inch scope*

IC2157

Magnitude: 8.4

Size: < 3 min, sparse

Distance: ?

No. of Stars: > 50

*Led by two stars,
one of 7th and one
of 8th magnitude.*

NGC 2129

Magnitude: 6.7

Size: 2.5 min

Distance: 7000 ly

No. of Stars: ~ 20 