

# What's Up, Doc? †

## March 2026

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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 **Central Time Zone, Houston, TX.**

### 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:

Mercury, Venus, Mars, 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 1930 mid-month.

Moon:

The Maria requirement can be done any time the moon is visible. Look before 3/11 and after 3/25 for the fullest views.

The Highlands requirement can be done at the same time.

The Crater Ages requirement is best done on 3/24 or 3/25.

The Scarps requirement is best done on 3/26.

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

Ceres is in Pisces and sets at 2131 mid-month.

Jupiter is in Gemini and is up all evening mid-month.

Saturn is in Pisces and sets at 1941 mid-month.

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

Neptune is in Pisces and sets at 1937 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, 3/18      4 days, 3/22      7 days, 3/25      10 days, 3/28      14 days, 3/3

Old moon in new moon's arms – before 2023 on 3/21, ~10 % illuminated. (72 hr > New)

New moon in old moon's arms – after 2023 on 3/15, ~10 % illuminated. (72 hr < New)

Waxing Crescent – before 2023 on 3/20, ~4 % illuminated. (48 hr > New)

Waning Crescent – after 2023 on 3/16, ~4 % illuminated. (48 hr < New)

## Major Astronomical Events:

3/2 – Ceres begins Retrograde Motion

3/3 – Total Lunar Eclipse

3/7 – Venus / Neptune Conjunction (4')

3/7 – Mercury at Inferior Conjunction

3/8 – Venus / Saturn Conjunction (60')

3/10 – Lunar Apogee

3/11 – Jupiter ends Retrograde Motion

3/12 – Saturn at Solar Conjunction

3/20 – March Equinox

3/20 – Mercury ends Retrograde Motion

3/22 – Neptune at Solar Conjunction

3/22 – Lunar Perigee

3/24 – Saturn at Solar Conjunction

3/26 – Mars at Perihelion

Although many Astronomical League Observing 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 (version 4.1). To get your copy, talk to the Doc, Aaron Clevenson, by sending an email to [aaron@clevenson.org](mailto:aaron@clevenson.org). It is also available on the Astronomical League website: (<https://www.astroleague.org/navigating-the-night-sky-guides/>).

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