

The Sky This Month

12 September – 16 October 2023



What's On

Tuesday, 19 September @ 01:06

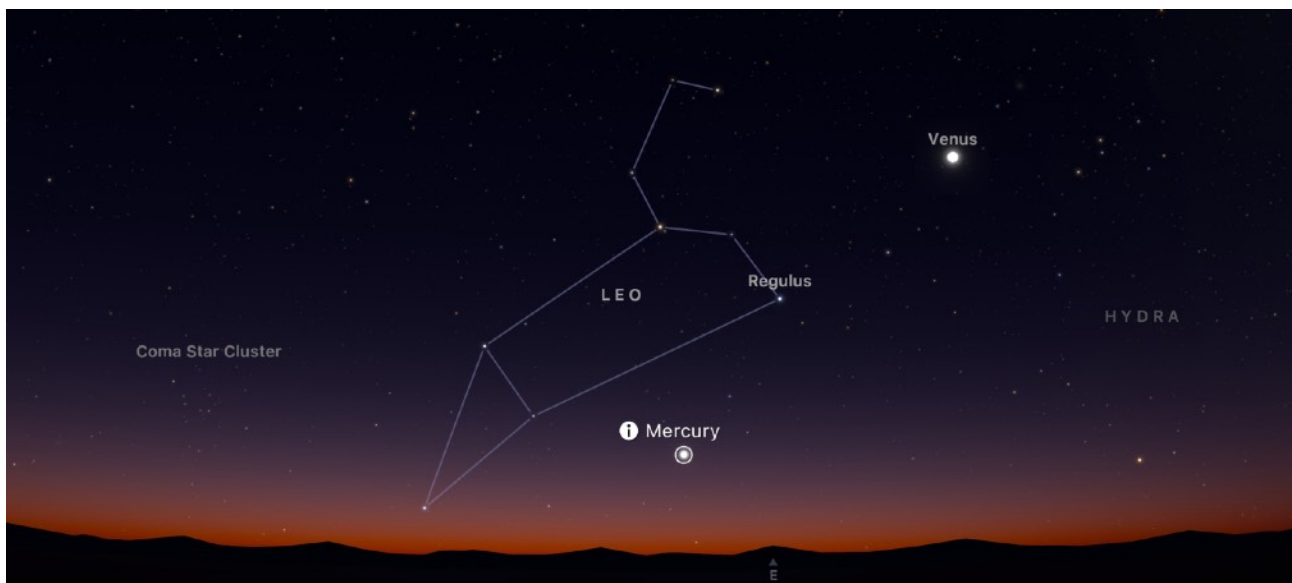
1. Neptune at opposition

Opposition provides the observer two main advantages. First, opposition always occurs at about the time when the planet is closest to earth, so it appears both larger and brighter. Second, the fact that the planet is opposite the sun means that it remains above the horizon throughout the night. However, even around opposition, Neptune is so distant, that it can only be seen through binoculars or a telescope, and high magnifications are always required to see Neptune as a disc instead of a starlike point.

Friday, 22 September

2. Best morning to see Mercury

The planet Mercury reached its greatest western location of 18° on 22 September. Mornings within about a week of this time will be your best opportunities to view the magnitude -0.5 in the predawn sky. At 05:12, Mercury will emerge in the east and reach 15° above the horizon by sunrise, quickly fading into the brightening sky.



Wednesday, 27 September @ 02:09

3. Moon & Saturn

Keep watch after sunset on 27 September to see a close encounter between Saturn and the waxing gibbous moon. At 02:09, the pair will be visible 10° above the south-western horizon, passing within only 3.4° of each other in the constellation Aquarius.

Monday, 02 October @ 01:29

4. Moon & Jupiter

Keep watch after sunset on 2 October to see a close encounter between Jupiter and the waning gibbous moon. At 01:29, the pair will be visible 49° above the south-eastern horizon, passing within only 2.25° of each other in the constellation Aries.

Sunday, 08 October

5. Draconids

The Draconids meteor shower reaches its peak activity on the night of 8–9 October. The radiant point will be 66° above the north-western horizon.



Tuesday, 10 October

6. Southern Taurids

The Southern Taurids meteor shower reaches its peak activity on the night of 10–11 October. The radiant point will be 35° above the south-western horizon.

Constellation of the month:

7. Sagittarius

One of the most distinctive features of Sagittarius is its resemblance to a teapot, a shape formed by a group of stars. This asterism makes it easy to identify the constellation in the night sky.

8. Lagoon Nebula (M8)

The Lagoon Nebula is a stunning emission nebula located in the Sagittarius constellation. It is visible to the naked eye and appears as a faint, cloud-like patch in the night sky. Through telescopes, you can see its intricate details and star-forming regions.

9. Trifid Nebula (M20)

The Trifid Nebula is another famous emission nebula in Sagittarius. It gets its name from the dark lanes of dust that divide it into three parts, or 'trifids'. This nebula is also home to star-forming regions and is a popular target for amateur astronomers.

10. Sagittarius Star Cloud

This region of Sagittarius contains a dense concentration of stars. When observed, it appears as a bright, hazy patch in the Milky Way. It's a fascinating area to explore with binoculars or a small telescope.

11. Omega Nebula (M17)

The Omega Nebula, also known as the Swan Nebula, is another striking emission nebula located in Sagittarius. It has a distinctive shape that resembles a swan when viewed through a telescope.

12. Sagittarius Cluster (M22)

M22 is one of the brightest globular clusters in the sky and is located within the boundaries of Sagittarius. It contains a dense collection of stars and is a popular target for deep-sky observers.

13. Other celestial objects

Sagittarius offers a plethora of celestial objects for telescopic observation, including open star clusters like **M25** and **M23** and numerous double stars.