

# Scoping out this month's night sky!!!

## March Features:

- \* **February 25 - March 8** - Globe At Night citizen-scientist research activity. See our Chirp and Chatter blog or Kids Corner/Astro Activities for details on how you can participate.
- \* **March 9** - Daylight Savings Time begins at 2:00a.m.
- \* **March 11** - Launch of Space Shuttle Endeavour.
- \* **March 20** - Spring begins in the Northern Hemisphere at 1:48am.
- \* **March 21** - Full Moon. According to folklore, it is called the Worm Moon or the Crow Moon.
- \* **March 29 - Lights Out America.** Everyone across the U.S. is encouraged to turn off all lighting that is nonessential for one hour on this night. The idea is to determine how much energy can be saved and do our small part to fight global climate change.

## Starry Trails:

Let's push those winter blues away and head out on a clear March evening around 8:00pm. We can still enjoy those dazzling stars of winter, but signs of spring can be found everywhere in our night sky. Leo, the Lion is climbing higher each night as The Big Dipper swings up and around the North Star. You may still have to grab your coat, hat and gloves and don't forget your Starry Trail Map and binoculars.

Orion, the Hunter will be the guide for our hike. To meet up with Orion, face west or the direction of the sunset. Turn to your left. There you will see Orion's magnificent star pattern. See the three stars in a row. That is Orion's Belt. Notice the four stars that outline the Hunter in the shape of a rectangle. Remember Betelgeuse is the red-orange star above the belt and to the left. Rigel is the blue star below the belt and to the right. Betelgeuse and Rigel are great to look at through binoculars. Also with your binoculars, remember to scan below Orion's Belt to the Orion Nebula, the gas cloud where new stars are forming! Let's visit Orion's great friend Sirius, the Dog Star, by hiking down to the left from Orion's Belt.

Above Orion, the bright red-orange object is Mars! Continuing to the right, you will see a v-shape of stars. This is Taurus, the Bull. Resting on the shoulder of

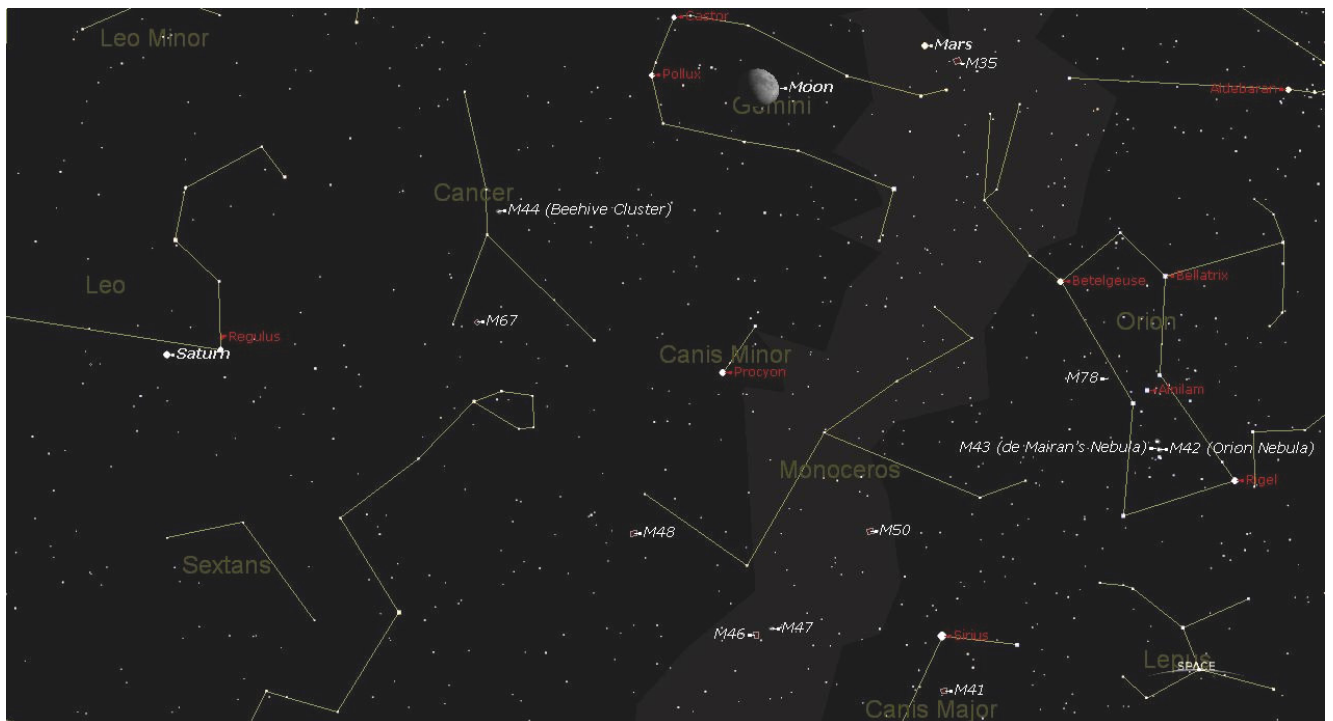
Taurus, are the Seven Sisters or the Pleiades. Anywhere in this part of the sky is great with binoculars!

Now trek north, or to the opposite part of the sky from our guide, Orion. You will see the Big Dipper swinging up on its handle. To find the North Star and Little Dipper, take the two stars at the end of the cup of the Big Dipper. Draw an imaginary line to the next bright star or the North Star. The Little Dipper hangs off of the North Star.

Now for a treat, take the bottom part of the cup of the Big Dipper, head slowly to the right, or eastward. You will see the shape of a backwards question mark or hook shape. This is the head of Leo, the Lion. Right below Leo, you will come to a golden object. This is the planet Saturn!! For a challenge, take your binoculars and scan slightly to the right and up from Saturn, to the beautiful Beehive Star Cluster!

Very low in the eastern sky you will see an orange-yellow star. This star's name is Arcturus. It is a sure sign of spring! Good-bye winter! See you on the next hike!

Below is a Starry Trail Map of the southeastern part of the night sky. Just look at all of the gems you can see in just a small part of the sky!



*Starry Trail Maps created by Suzie Dills, Planetarium Specialist, using Starry Night Backyard*