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What's Up??

March 2024

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Double Stars

Southern Cross

Alpha Centauri / Rigil Kentaurus-

The brighter outer “pointer”
star – is a triple star system and
these are the closest stars to
our Earth, 4.3 light years away.

Proxima Centauri is the closest
component, 4.2 light years away.
A very faint red dwarf, it was
discovered in 1915 in
Johannesburg by Robert Innes
using the 10 inch Franklin-
Adams camera by comparing
plates taken 3 months apart.



Acrux – 323 light years away.
Ignore the smaller star near
Acrux and increase
magnification on the bright star
until it splits.

Gacrux is a reddish orange giant
star 87 light years away.

It does not have an actual
companion but is an optical
double, the “companion” is 400
light years away.





GACRUX

ACRUX

Mimosa

RIGIL KENTAURUS

Double Stars

Orion



Rigel is a blue white supergiant with a faint blue white companion star.

It is 863 light years away.

Rigel can be split by even a 3 inch telescope at about 100x.

Mintaka, in the belt of Orion, is 1200 light years away.





RIGEL

Saiph

TRAPEZIUM

Hatysa

Alnitak

Anilam

MINTAKA

BETELGEUSE

Cursa

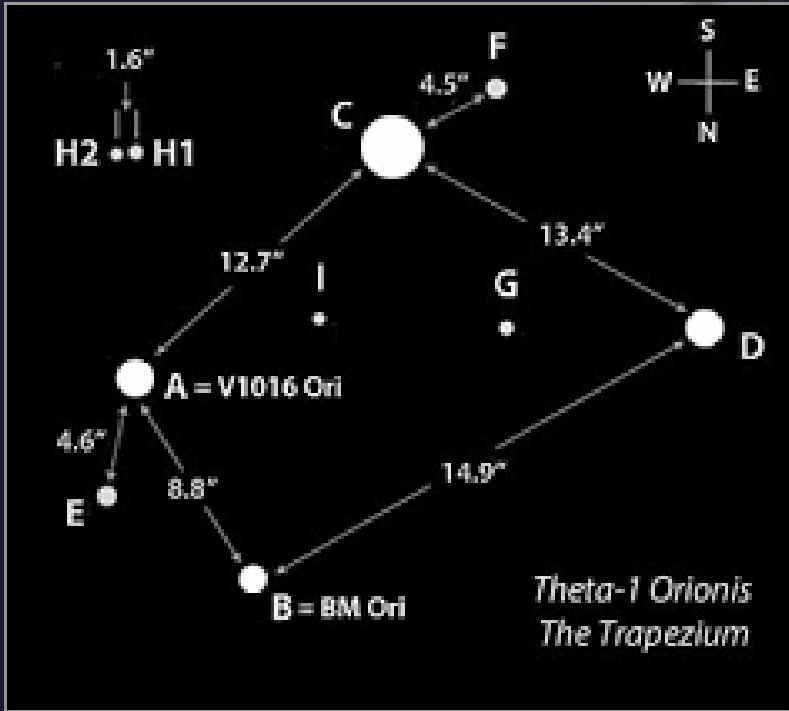
Bellatrix

The Trapezium in M42, the great nebula in Orion is a tight open cluster in the heart of the nebula.

Four stars, the a, b, c, d components are easily visible even with a small telescope.

The much fainter e and f components require good observing conditions and quite high magnification to see. There are still fainter components only visible in very large telescopes.





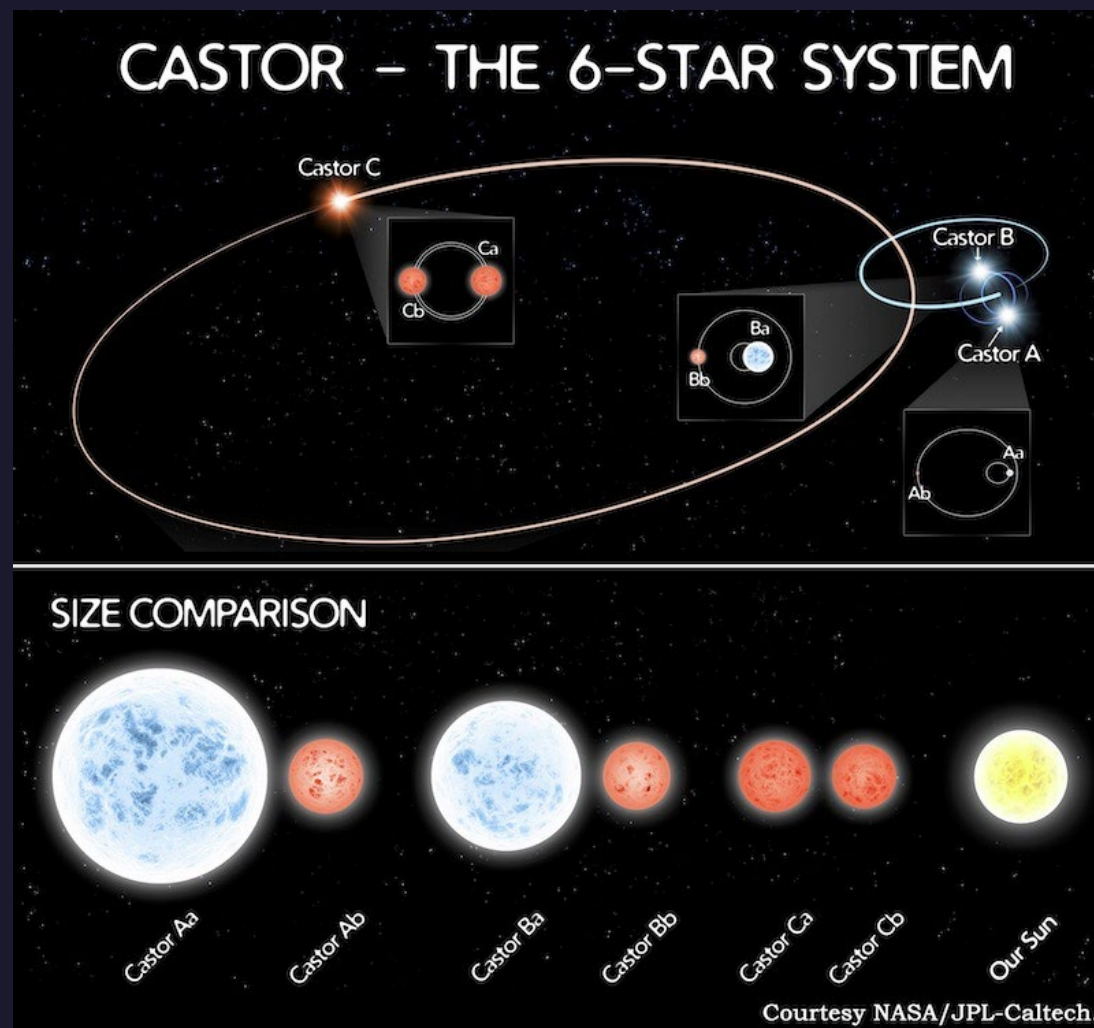
Double Stars

Gemini

Castor in Gemini is 51 light years away.

This is a multiple star system made up of 6 stars in three binary pairs.

Even a fairly small telescope will show Castor as two stars.



Rigel

Procyon

Betelgeuse

Aldebaran

Pollux

Castor

Capella

Uranus

Jupiter

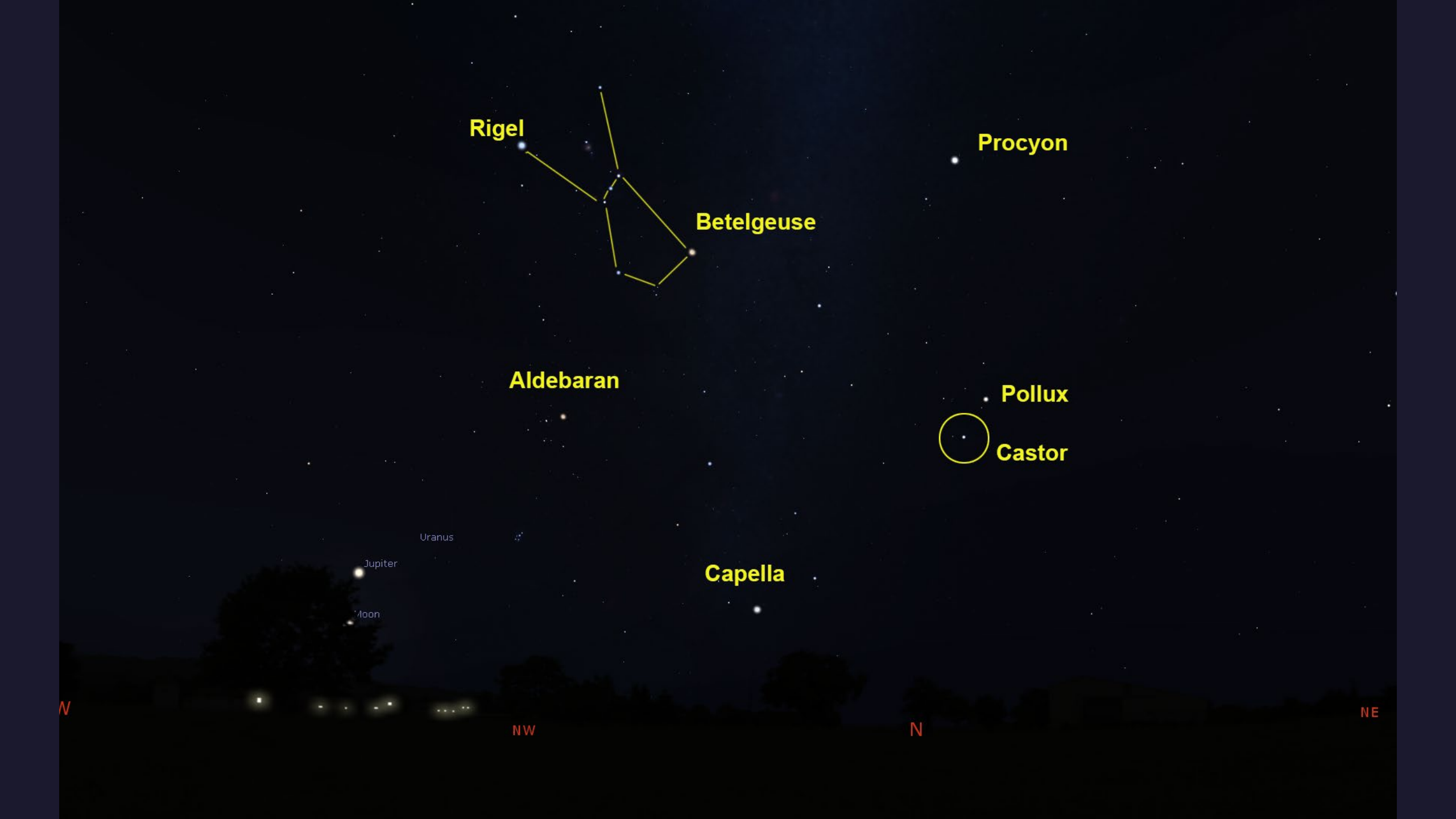
Moon

N

NW

N

NE



Challenge

The Tarantula Nebula

NGC 2070

The Tarantula nebula is also known as 30 Doradus.

Situated in the Large Magellanic Cloud galaxy it is 161 000 light years away.

The nebula consists of a cloud of interstellar gas—principally hydrogen—lit from within by young, hot stars that ionize the gas around them. As the atoms in the gas recombine, they emit visible light.





CANOPUS

TARANTULA NEBULA

ACRUX

MIMOSA

Hadar

Rigil Kentaurus

Achernar

SE

S

SW

Thank You

