

CAROLINA SKIES FEBRUARY-MARCH 2020

Hold this chart over your head. Find north, and align the chart accordingly. To see it while preserving your night vision, use a red light, or put a brown paper bag over your flashlight for a muted glow.

Winter constellations, Orion the Hunter, Taurus the Bull, and Gemini the Twins, begin to give way to spring patterns, Leo the Lion, Ursa Major the Great Bear, and Virgo the Maiden. Find Leo the Lion by locating the backward question mark mark that outlines his head and mane.

Brilliant **Venus** dominates the western sky just after sunset. Throughout early February it is joined by swift little **Mercury**, hanging low and immersed within evening twilight. Mercury then disappears into the solar glare around mid-month. The other naked eye planets are visible shortly before sunrise in the southeast. In early February, **Mars** is just east of the bright, reddish star Antares. Looking eastward from Mars you'll see bright **Jupiter**, and then **Saturn**, peeking just above the horizon. As the calendar approaches late March, the three planets draw closer together, with Mars passing Jupiter on the 20th, and then Saturn on the 31st.

Hear legends of love at “**Carolina Skies: Valentine Edition**” (for adults; evenings of Feb. 8, 14, 15). Our Starry Nights series for adults and teens continues with “**Spring Skies**” (Mar. 25). Our Star Families series aimed at families with children ages 7-12 continues with “**African Sky Stories**” (Feb. 22) and “**Time Machine in the Sky**” (Mar. 21).

Skywatching Sessions:

If you liked your Carolina Skies planetarium experience, consider joining us to view the real sky! For information on Morehead's free monthly public skywatching sessions please check our web page:

www.moreheadplanetarium.org/skywatching

Admission to skywatching is free, telescopes are active, and constellation tours are provided. Sessions will be cancelled if weather is poor. For directions to the skywatching sites, cancellation updates, and information on astronomy and skywatching classes for children and adults, visit www.moreheadplanetarium.org, or call (919) 962-1236.

