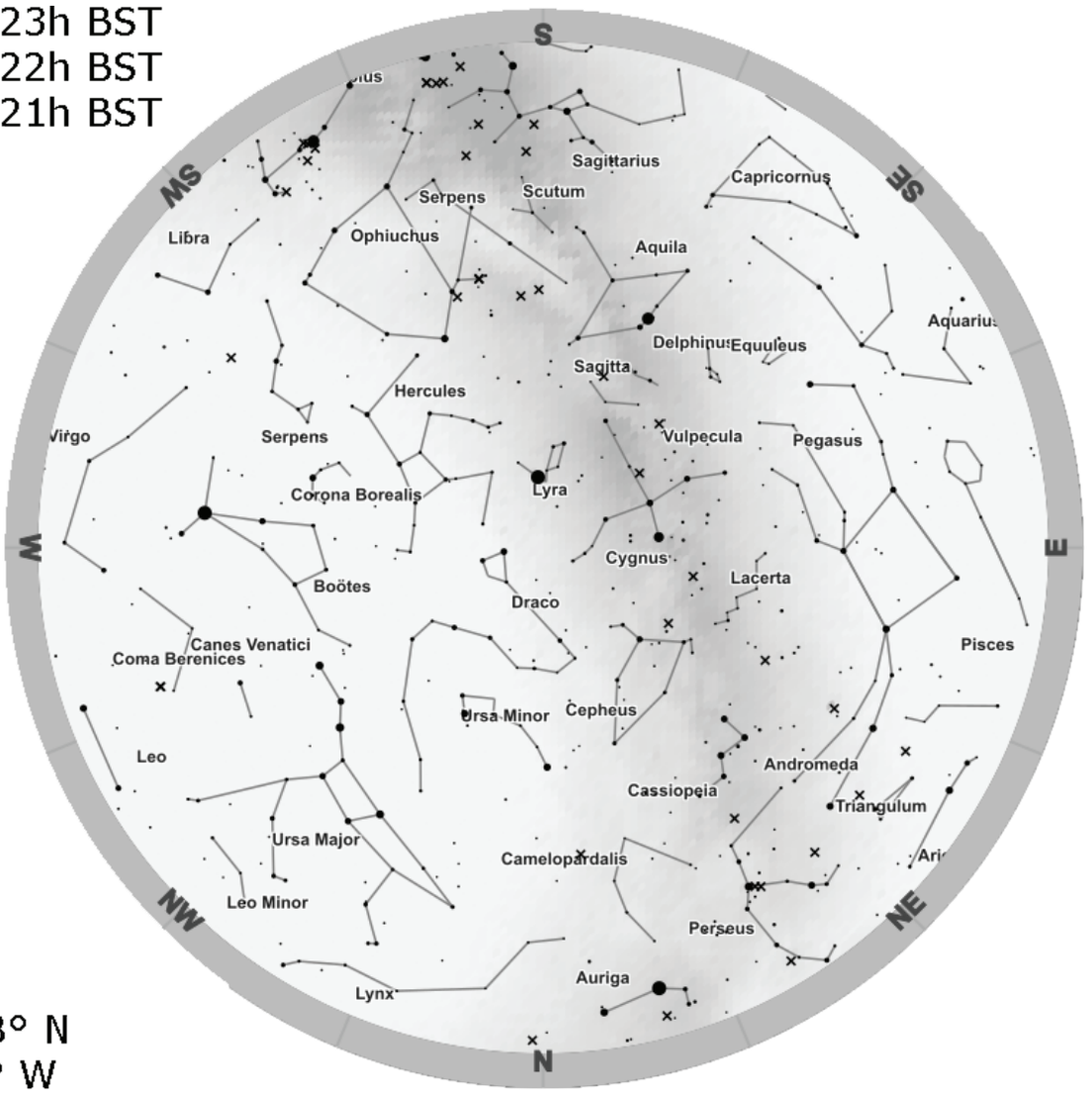
August Sky Notes 2020

01 Aug 23h BST
15 Aug 22h BST
31 Aug 21h BST



Woking
51.3168° N
0.5600° W

Constellations

These constellations are well placed in the evening this month, but many more can be seen. Check the star map for more.

Aquila is visible for the whole night for most of the month, setting earlier as the month goes on. It appears near the zenith towards the south after sunset, eventually setting due west.

Pegasus is in the sky all night this month, moving from the eastern sky over towards the west. Look for the Great Square of Pegasus to locate it, a large group of 4 stars that form the body of the winged horse.

Capricornus becomes visible in the south east this month, moving across the sky before setting in the south west. Look for it near the horizon.

Planets

Mercury will only be visible this month before sunrise just above the eastern horizon. After this, it rises too close to the Sun to be seen. **Beware of glare from the Sun.** It reaches inferior conjunction, passing behind the Sun on the 17th, so will not be visible after this.

Venus appears in the early morning sky, rising higher until sunrise. You can view it in the east, and around the 12th it is at dichotomy (half-phase). It reaches Greatest Western Elongation on the 13th, its furthest point from the Sun in the sky. It is in conjunction with the Moon on the 15th.

Mars rises about an hour after sunset in the eastern sky, and is visible throughout the night. It will move towards the south, disappearing relatively high in the sky at sunrise. Over the course of the month, it increases in brightness. It is in conjunction with the Moon on the morning of the 9th.

Jupiter is visible in the evening sky. Look for it low on the southern horizon. It then sets a couple of hours before sunrise. Jupiter will be in conjunction wiht the Moon in the evening of the 1st, appearing close to Saturn in the sky, and also in the early hours of the morning on the 29th.

Saturn sticks very close to Jupiter this month, appearing low in the southern sky after sunset. It's visible until it sets a couple of hours before sunrise. Saturn will be in conjunction with the Moon on the morning of the 2nd, shortly after the Moon's conjunction with Jupiter, and again on the 29th. Check out the northern edge of Saturn's rings with a telescope as they begin to close.

Uranus is too faint to be seen with the naked eye. It rises in the east, getting higher and moving towards the south before sunrise.

Neptune is too faint to be seen with the naked eye. It makes its way across the southern horizon and is in the sky all night.

Meteor Showers

The **Perseids** reach their peak on the 12th. This is one of the most spectacular meteor showers of the year, with over 100 meteors visible per hour. The radiant (origin point) of the meteors is in the constellation of Perseus, and is circumpolar, so meteors will be visible all night. This shower peaks near the new Moon, so it shouldn't provide much interference.

The **κ-Cygnids** reach their peak on the 17th. There'll be about 2 meteors visible per hour, and the radiant (origin point) of the meteors is in the constellation of Draco. The radiant is circumpolar, so meteors will be visible all night. This shower peaks near the new Moon, so it shouldn't provide much interference.

The **Aurigids** reach their peak on the 31st. There'll be about 5 meteors per hour, and the radiant (origin point) of the meteors is in the constellation of Auriga. The radiant is circumpolar, so meteors will be visible all night. The Moon is close to full, so may provide interference, but is situated away frm the radiant.

Moon

Full Moon: 3rd

Last Quarter: 11th

New Moon: 19th

First Quarter: 25th

The Moon reaches **perigee**, its closest point to the Earth, on the 21st and **apogee**, its furthest point on the 14th. This effect is not visually apparent.

The Moon will be at **aphelion**, its furthest point from the Sun, on the 2nd. This effect is not visually apparent.

Look out for **Earthshine** on the dark part of the crescent Moon from the 12th to the 18th, and the 20th to the 23rd.

Points of Interest

The globular cluster **M15** will be well placed for observation on the 13th. It will be visible all night, reaching its highest point in the sky around midnight. M15 will be visible with a pair of binoculars.

The globular cluster **M2** will be well placed for observation on the 14th, in the constellation of Aquarius. It will be visible all night, reaching its highest point in the sky around midnight. You will need decent binoculars or a small telescope to see it.

Ceres, the dwarf planet, is at opposition in the constellation of Aquarius on the 28th. Ceres is smaller than the Moon and located in the Asteroid Belt, so you will need a small telescope to see it.

Asteroid 20 Massalia is at opposition in the constellation of Aquarius on the 29th. You will need a four-inch telescope to view it between 22:28 and 03:32. It reaches its highest point in the sky around midnight.

Visit https://spotthestation.nasa.gov/sightings/ to find out when the **ISS** will be visible from your location.

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