

William D. McDowell Observatory Public Observing Nights

March 2024 (8:00 P.M. – 10:00 P.M.)

13th Moon?, Jupiter?, Castor, M31?, M42, M44, NGC 869/884, M45

20th Moon, Castor, M42, M44, NGC 869/884, M45

27th Moon, Castor, M42, M44, NGC 869/884, M45

Key:

Castor- Double star system Stars with different colors

M31- The Andromeda Galaxy

M42- The Orion Nebula is one of the brightest nebulae and the closest region of massive star formation to Earth.

Star clusters

NGC869/NGC884 Double cluster in Cassiopeia

M45- The Pleiades is an open cluster in Taurus and the cluster most obvious to the naked eye.

Mizar & Alcor- Visual binary in Ursa Major. Mizar is a quadruple star system and Alcor is a binary (A sextuple system)

Arcturus- A Bright, orange star

Sirius- A bright white star, the brightest in the sky at a distance of 8 light years.

March 2024 (8:00 PM – 10:00PM)

6th Jupiter?, Castor, , M31?, M42, M44, NGC 869/884, M45

13th Moon?, Jupiter?, Castor, M31?, M42, M44, NGC 869/884, M45

20th Moon, Castor, M42, M44, NGC 869/884, M45

27th Moon, Castor, M42, M44, NGC 869/884, M45

Key:

Castor- Double star system Stars with different colors

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April 2024 (8:00 P.M. – 10:00 P.M.)

3rd Jupiter, Castor, M31, M42, NGC 869/884, Uranus

10th Jupiter, Castor, M31, M42, NGC 869/884, Uranus

17th Moon, Jupiter, Castor, M31, M42, NGC 869/884, M45, Uranus

24th Moon, Castor, M31, M42, NGC 869/884

Key:

Jupiter and Uranus are both getting lower in the evening sky in the west. By the end of the month, both will not be visible. No other planets are visible in April.

Castor- Double star system Stars with different colors

M31- The Andromeda Galaxy. This galaxy will be difficult to see because it is getting lower in the western sky. We may be able to find M81/82. These are two galaxies look as if they are very close to each other but are hundreds of light years apart.

M42- The Orion Nebula is one of the brightest nebulae and the closest region of massive star formation to Earth.

Star clusters- NGC869/NGC884 Double cluster in Cassiopeia. There are others we may try to see.

Mizar & Alcor- Visual binary in Ursa Major. Mizar is a quadruple star system and Alcor is a binary (A sextuple system)

Arcturus- A Bright, orange star

Sirius- A bright white star, the brightest in the sky at a distance of 8 light years.

We may be able to locate the comet Pons-Brooks. Comets are known for becoming brighter or dimmer in one day.

May 2024 (8:00 P.M. – 10:00 P.M.)

1st, Moon, Mizar, Castor, M42?, NGC 869/884, M13, M92, M3

8th Full Moon, Mizar, Castor, M42?, NGC 869/884, M13, M92, M3

15th Castor, Mizar, NGC 869/884, M13, M92, M3

22nd Mizar, M31, M42, NGC 869/884 M13, M92, M3

29th Mizar, M31, M42, NGC 869/884 M13, M92, M3

Key:

There are no planets visible in the evening sky in May. If you get up before sunrise you can see Mercury, Venus, Mars and Saturn.

Castor- Double star system Stars with different colors. Mizar & Alcor- Visual binary in Ursa Major. Mizar is a quadruple star system and Alcor is a binary (A sextuple system)

We may be able to find M81/82. These are two galaxies look as if they are very close to each other but are hundreds of light years apart.

M42- The Orion Nebula is one of the brightest nebulae and the closest region of massive star formation to Earth. This may be visible early in the evening at the beginning of the month.

Star clusters- NGC869/NGC884 Double cluster in Cassiopeia. There are others we may try to see.

M13, M92, M3 are Globular clusters

Arcturus- A Bright, orange star

Sirius- A bright white star, the brightest in the sky at a distance of 8 light years.

We may be able to locate the comet Pons-Brooks. Comets are known for becoming brighter or dimmer in one day. This comet is getting dimmer in May because it is headed back out into space.