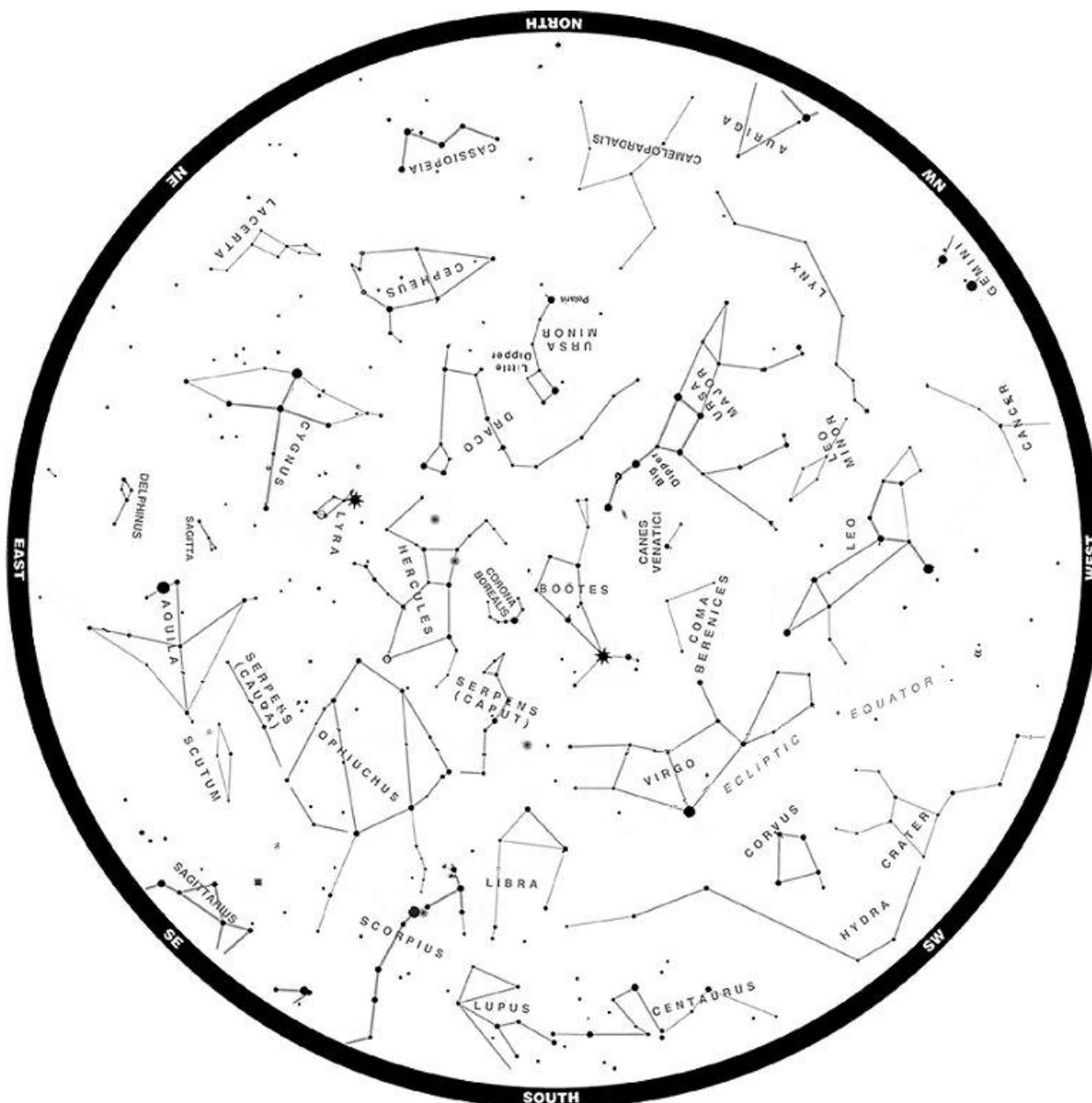


Summer Constellation Chart and Legends

This chart is specifically for summer viewing. The legends are age appropriate for campers and although there are many, you can highlight those you like the best, or just tell about those that can be seen easily by campers, or talk about which ever you can during the time you have. Not all of these will easily be seen as it depends on your surroundings (trees, mountains, buildings) and light pollution from surrounding towns and cities.

I recommend printing the star chart on a red piece of paper to help keep eyes adjusted in the dark. It is recommended to use a flashlight with a red filter, but it is understood that not many have this available.



Ursa Major – ‘The Great Bear’ – ‘The Big Dipper’

– It was named ‘The Great Bear’ because of how far north it is since only a bear could live in such a northerly climate (such as a polar bear). In Greek mythology, Callisto was the daughter of a king that was chosen to be a companion of the goddess Artemis. Artemis became angry with Callisto and changed her into a bear to be hunted down and killed. Zeus took pity on Callisto and sent her to the heavens in the same form of the bear.

Ursa Minor – ‘The Little Bear’ – ‘The Little Dipper’ – This is Callisto’s son, Arcas, that later joined her in the heavens.

Bootes – ‘The Hunter’ – ‘The Herdsman’ – Named ‘The Hunter’ because he is on the tracks of the Great Bear (Ursa Major) and ‘The Herdsman’ because he shepherds the stars around the North Star.

Hercules – Named after the Greek hero, Heracles. Heracles was the son of Zeus and was named after Zeus’s sister, Hera. He became favored by the gods and was given many gifts to help him as he was not a god himself, but was mortal. Heracles performed many heroic deeds and was later put into the heavens.

Draco - ‘Ladon’ - A monstrous dragon with a hundred heads set to guard the Golden Apple tree of Hera’s. He was later killed by Heracles who was given the task of stealing the apples from the tree.

Corona Borealis – ‘The Northern Crown’ – This is the crown that Ariadne wore at her wedding.

Lyra – ‘The Lyre’ – A musical instrument created by Hermes and given to Apollo. Apollo later convinced Zeus to make the instrument a constellation.

Cygnus – ‘The Swan’ – ‘The Northern Cross’ - Cygnus is the son of Poseidon who was the god of the seas. Cygnus was left on the shore to die when he was born and a swan took pity and flew down to care for him.

Serpens – ‘The Serpent’ – Ophiuchus the Serpent Holder is grasping Serpens in his hands.

Ophiuchus – Once known as Asclepius, who was the Greek god of medicine. He saved many people until Pluto complained to Zeus who agreed that men couldn’t be immortal. Zeus then sent a thunderbolt to end Asclepius’s life. Zeus later put him in the heavens along with the Serpent, which is a symbol for renewed life (and is currently on the medicine symbol used today).

Aquila – ‘The Eagle’ – Ganymede (Aquarius) was picked from home by the eagle and taken to Mount Olympus to become the wine-pourer for all the gods.

Scorpius – ‘The Scorpion’ – This scorpion was sent by Gaia to kill Orion, the mighty hunter, since Orion swore to rid the earth of all wild animals. In the sky Orion keeps ahead of the scorpion and disappears over the horizon by the time Scorpio rises in the east. Scorpio is seen in the summer months and Orion in the winters.

Libra – ‘The Scales’ – At the beginning of the zodiac, the sun passed through this constellation at the autumnal equinox, which is where the hours of daylight and darkness are equal. Eventually Libra came to represent the Golden Chariot of Pluto (also known as Hades). He rode this chariot when he wanted to visit the Upperworld.

Virgo – ‘The Maiden’ – The goddess of the growth of food and harvests. She is usually shown holding a sheaf of wheat.

Hydra – Hydra is a gigantic dog-like beast with seven heads. Heracles killed the Hydra but it was no easy feat. Heracles sliced off one of the monster’s heads only to see more grow in its place. Iolaus (Heracles’ charioteer) helped by setting fire to the area and stopping the bleeding of the stumps to keep the heads from multiplying. Heracles finally cut off the immortal head and buries it under a rock.

Corvus – ‘The Crow’ – Sent by Apollo to collect water in a goblet, the crow wasted its time eating figs and gathered up a water snake in its claws and flew back to tell Apollo that this creature was the reason for its delay. Apollo knew the crow was lying and threw the crow, the goblet, and the water snake into the heavens.

Crater – ‘The Goblet’ – Apollo’s goblet.

Coma Berenices – This constellation is a story from the ancient Egyptians. The constellation is the Queen’s hair that was ceremoniously clipped and given to Aphrodite as a sacrifice for her husband returning successfully from war.

Leo – ‘The Lion’ – Heracles was tasked with killing the Lion, but found it difficult as the Lion’s skin was resistant to iron, bronze, and stone. Heracles’ arrows bounced off, his sword bent in two, and his wooden club smashed to bits. Heracles finally wrestled with the Lion, choking it to death. The Lion found its way to the heavens to commemorate the great battle.

Leo Minor – ‘Small Lion’

Canes Venatici – ‘Hunting Dogs’ – These dogs, Asterion and Chara, chase the Great Bear around the North Pole while being held on a leash by Bootes.

Cancer – ‘The Crab’ – When Heracles was fighting Hydra, a giant crab emerged at her command and bit Heracles’ foot. He then killed the animal and then Hydra. The Crab was awarded with a heavenly home for sacrificing its life.

Lynx – Not named for the animal, but the inventor of the constellation said that anyone who wanted to study the stars should have eyes like a lynx.

Camelopardalis – ‘The Giraffe’

Cassiopeia – Queen, wife of Cepheus and mother of Andromeda. She was beautiful and vain. She promised her daughter in marriage to Perseus but changed her mind. She convinced Agenor to disrupt the marriage ceremony and he arrived

with an entire army. In the battle, Perseus used the head of Medusa to turn the wedding party to stone, and was victorious. Cepheus and Cassiopeia were in the group that was turned to stone and so Poseidon put them both in the heavens. Because of Cassiopeia’s vanity, he placed her in a chair which revolves around the North Star so half the time she’s sitting upside down.

Cepheus – Husband of Cassiopeia and father of Andromeda.

Lacerta – ‘The Lizard’

Sagitta – ‘The Arrow’

Delphinus – ‘The Dolphin’ – Delphinus was a messenger who succeeded in talking Amphitrite to return to Poseidon and become the Queen of the Sea. He was put in the heavens by a grateful Poseidon.

Scutum – ‘The Shield’

Lupus – ‘The Wolf’ – King Lycaon offered Zeus the sacrifice of a young boy, which angered Zeus so much he struck his house, killing all his fifty sons, and turned Lycaon into a wolf.

Centaurus – ‘The Centaur’ – Centaurus represents two Centaurs, Pholus and Cheiron. Cheiron is accidentally hit by one of Heracles’ poisonous arrows, but since he is immortal, he suffers for eternity. Heracles offers to take Cheiron’s immortality and Zeus agrees and places the king of the Centaurs in the heavens. Pholus is a friend of Heracles and wonders how the arrows could be so fatal. He picks up one arrow and looks at it but he drops it and it strikes him on the foot and kills him instantly.

- Those without descriptions were created by a Polish astronomer, Johannes Hevelius, to ‘fill in’ the blank spots. They may have small references to things but don’t have Greek/Roman/Egyptian myths attached to them.