

World Asterisms Project

An Introduction to the Sky Cultures of the World



Volume Two, Appendix One:
Occurrence of Asterisms in Each IAU Constellation
Version 2026.1

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Asterisms in IAU Constellations:

From the beginning of this World Asterisms project, we've been keeping track of how many of the over 17,000 asterisms we've listed so far are associated with each of the 88 IAU constellations. This is recorded under each constellation listed in the Handbook, but we've also created the table below to show these statistics. In some cases, we know that a peoples had a particular asterism, but we do not yet know precisely where it was located in the sky: In this case they are listed under the "unknown" category at the bottom of the list. As research continues asterisms will hopefully get moved from this list to the appropriate constellation.

Creation of asterisms began with unaided visual observing by our ancestors. You can clearly see how brighter constellations got more attention than dimmer ones. Some of those dimmer constellations were created to fit into the zodiac. After optical aids such as telescopes and binoculars came into use, the number of asterisms beyond the view of the unaided eye increased, and this began to show which constellations had nebulae, clusters, and galaxies to view. Most recently technical advancements in astrophotography and the use of space telescopes has revealed even dimmer objects, many of which end up with names due to human pareidolia. In 2025 I started recording how many asterisms in each constellation were visible to the unaided eye VS telescopic observations.

IAU Constellation	Abbreviation	Total	Unaided	Telescopic
Andromeda, the Chained Maiden	And	266	195	71
Antlia, the Air Pump	Ant	42	6	36
Apus, Bird of Paradise	Aps	33	14	19
Aquarius, the Water Bearer	Aqr	306	248	58
Aquila, the Eagle	Aql	311	248	63
Ara, the Altar	Ara	86	58	28
Aries, the Ram	Ari	213	191	22
Auriga, the Charioteer	Aur	381	304	77
Boötes, the Herdsman	Boo	373	320	53
Caelum, the Engraving Tool	Cae	14	7	7
Camelopardalis, the Giraffe	Cam	106	45	61
Cancer, the Crab	Cnc	211	183	28
Canes Venatici, the Hunting Dogs	CVn	116	37	79
Canis Major, the Great Dog	CMa	423	361	62
Canis Minor, the Lesser Dog	CMi	138	133	5

Capricornus, the Sea Goat	Cap	190	170	20
Carina, the Keel	Car	277	203	74
Cassiopeia, the Seated Queen	Cas	358	184	174
Centaurus, the Centaur	Cen	387	257	130
Cepheus, the King	Cep	281	106	175
Cetus, the Sea Monster	Cet	246	141	105
Chamaeleon, the Chameleon	Cha	15	5	10
Circinus, the Compass	Cir	20	10	10
Columba, the Dove	Col	51	39	12
Coma Berenices, Berenices' Hair	Com	170	98	72
Corona Australis, the Southern Crown	CrA	79	65	14
Corona Borealis, the Northern Crown	CrB	173	163	10
Corvus, the Crow	Crv	109	92	17
Crater, the Cup	Crt	80	63	17
Crux, the Southern Cross	Cru	299	289	10
Cygnus, the Swan	Cyg	473	215	258
Delphinus, the Dolphin	Del	142	107	35
Dorado, the Swordfish	Dor	127	87	40
Draco, the Dragon	Dra	332	228	104
Equuleus, the Little Horse	Equ	42	34	8
Eridanus, the River	Eri	209	119	90
Fornax, the Furnace	For	54	9	45
Gemini, the Twins	Gem	431	377	54
Grus, the Crane	Gru	72	35	37
Hercules	Her	255	175	80
Horologium, the Clock	Hor	20	3	17
Hydra, the Female Water Snake	Hya	312	178	134
Hydrus, the Male Water Snake	Hyi	17	8	9
Indus, the Indian	Ind	31	11	20
Lacerta, the Lizard	Lac	70	31	38
Leo, the Lion	Leo	461	366	95

Leo Minor, the Lesser Lion	LMi	47	21	26
Lepus, the Hare	Lep	74	45	29
Libra, the Scales	Lib	193	156	37
Lupus, the Wolf	Lup	111	91	20
Lynx, the Lynx	Lyn	119	76	43
Lyra, the Lyre	Lyr	221	193	28
Mensa, the Table	Men	12	6	6
Microscopium, the Microscope	Mic	25	17	8
Monoceros, the Unicorn	Mon	125	24	102
Musca, the Fly	Mus	37	26	11
Norma, the Carpenter's Square	Nor	30	12	18
Octans, the Octant	Oct	23	6	17
Ophiuchus, the Serpent Bearer	Oph	263	156	108
Orion, the Hunter	Ori	1072	948	124
Pavo, the Peacock	Pav	66	14	52
Pegasus, the Winged Horse	Peg	327	211	116
Perseus, the Hero	Per	242	158	84
Phoenix, the Phoenix	Phe	45	21	24
Pictor, the Painter's Easel	Pic	12	2	10
Pisces, the Fishes	Psc	228	169	59
Piscis Austrinus, the Southern Fish	PsA	108	94	14
Puppis, the Stern	Pup	159	75	84
Pyxis, the Compass	Pyx	32	20	12
Reticulum, the Reticule	Ret	21	8	13
Sagitta, the Arrow	Sge	65	43	22
Sagittarius, the Archer	Sgr	415	256	159
Scorpius, the Scorpion	Sco	601	514	87
Sculptor, the Sculptor	Scl	52	10	42
Scutum, the Shield	Sct	38	10	28
Serpens, the Serpent	Ser	124	75	49
Sextans, the Sextant	Sex	39	8	31
Taurus, the Bull	Tau	1184	1101	83
Telescopium, the Telescope	Tel	36	22	14

Triangulum, the Triangle	Tri	81	62	19
Triangulum Australe, the Southern Triangle	TrA	31	19	12
Tucana, the Toucan	Tuc	99	76	23
Ursa Major, the Great Bear	UMa	962	790	172
Ursa Minor, the Lesser Bear	UMi	403	385	18
Vela, the Sails	Vel	147	86	61
Virgo, the Maiden	Vir	483	296	187
Volans, the Flying Fish	Vol	21	9	12
Vulpecula, the Fox	Vul	68	15	55
Unknown		323		