

World Asterisms Project

An Introduction to the Sky Cultures of the World



Volume Two, Appendix One:

Occurrence of Asterisms in Each IAU Constellation

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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 19,600 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	275	203	72
Antlia, the Air Pump	Ant	42	6	36
Apus, Bird of Paradise	Aps	34	15	19
Aquarius, the Water Bearer	Aqr	322	262	60
Aquila, the Eagle	Aql	327	264	63
Ara, the Altar	Ara	88	59	29
Aries, the Ram	Ari	229	204	25
Auriga, the Charioteer	Aur	397	309	88
Boötes, the Herdsman	Boo	398	343	55
Caelum, the Engraving Tool	Cae	14	7	7
Camelopardalis, the Giraffe	Cam	110	47	63
Cancer, the Crab	Cnc	221	192	29
Canes Venatici, the Hunting Dogs	CVn	121	39	82
Canis Major, the Great Dog	CMa	484	410	74
Canis Minor, the Lesser Dog	CMi	140	135	5

Capricornus, the Sea Goat	Cap	196	175	21
Carina, the Keel	Car	291	213	78
Cassiopeia, the Seated Queen	Cas	375	193	183
Centaurus, the Centaur	Cen	400	268	132
Cepheus, the King	Cep	310	118	192
Cetus, the Sea Monster	Cet	254	148	106
Chamaeleon, the Chameleon	Cha	19	7	12
Circinus, the Compass	Cir	21	11	10
Columba, the Dove	Col	52	40	12
Coma Berenices, Berenices' Hair	Com	177	103	74
Corona Australis, the Southern Crown	CrA	85	71	14
Corona Borealis, the Northern Crown	CrB	183	173	10
Corvus, the Crow	Crv	115	98	17
Crater, the Cup	Crt	81	64	17
Crux, the Southern Cross	Cru	344	332	12
Cygnus, the Swan	Cyg	505	231	270
Delphinus, the Dolphin	Del	147	112	35
Dorado, the Swordfish	Dor	134	93	41
Draco, the Dragon	Dra	337	232	105
Equuleus, the Little Horse	Equ	44	36	8
Eridanus, the River	Eri	217	124	93
Fornax, the Furnace	For	56	10	46
Gemini, the Twins	Gem	449	389	60
Grus, the Crane	Gru	74	37	37
Hercules	Her	264	183	81
Horologium, the Clock	Hor	20	3	17
Hydra, the Female Water Snake	Hya	323	189	134
Hydrus, the Male Water Snake	Hyi	17	8	9
Indus, the Indian	Ind	31	11	20
Lacerta, the Lizard	Lac	72	33	40
Leo, the Lion	Leo	491	392	99

Leo Minor, the Lesser Lion	LMi	47	21	26
Lepus, the Hare	Lep	81	50	31
Libra, the Scales	Lib	203	165	38
Lupus, the Wolf	Lup	113	93	20
Lynx, the Lynx	Lyn	121	78	43
Lyra, the Lyre	Lyr	236	207	29
Mensa, the Table	Men	12	6	6
Microscopium, the Microscope	Mic	27	19	8
Monoceros, the Unicorn	Mon	146	36	111
Musca, the Fly	Mus	37	26	11
Norma, the Carpenter's Square	Nor	31	13	18
Octans, the Octant	Oct	23	6	17
Ophiuchus, the Serpent Bearer	Oph	268	158	111
Orion, the Hunter	Ori	1378	1227	135
Pavo, the Peacock	Pav	68	14	54
Pegasus, the Winged Horse	Peg	352	235	117
Perseus, the Hero	Per	255	162	93
Phoenix, the Phoenix	Phe	45	21	24
Pictor, the Painter's Easel	Pic	12	2	10
Pisces, the Fishes	Psc	255	194	61
Piscis Austrinus, the Southern Fish	PsA	113	99	14
Puppis, the Stern	Pup	170	83	87
Pyxis, the Compass	Pyx	32	20	12
Reticulum, the Reticule	Ret	21	8	13
Sagitta, the Arrow	Sge	70	47	23
Sagittarius, the Archer	Sgr	454	290	164
Scorpius, the Scorpion	Sco	673	584	90
Sculptor, the Sculptor	Scl	54	10	44
Scutum, the Shield	Sct	41	11	30
Serpens, the Serpent	Ser	138	83	55
Sextans, the Sextant	Sex	39	8	31
Taurus, the Bull	Tau	1470	1354	117
Telescopium, the Telescope	Tel	36	22	14

Triangulum, the Triangle	Tri	82	63	19
Triangulum Australe, the Southern Triangle	TrA	32	20	12
Tucana, the Toucan	Tuc	102	77	25
Ursa Major, the Great Bear	UMa	1031	847	184
Ursa Minor, the Lesser Bear	UMi	433	421	19
Vela, the Sails	Vel	157	93	64
Virgo, the Maiden	Vir	506	321	188
Volans, the Flying Fish	Vol	21	9	12
Vulpecula, the Fox	Vul	74	17	59
Unknown		473		