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	281	208	73
Antlia, the Air Pump	Ant	42	6	36
Apus, Bird of Paradise	Aps	34	15	19
Aquarius, the Water Bearer	Aqr	327	267	60
Aquila, the Eagle	Aql	332	268	64
Ara, the Altar	Ara	88	59	29
Aries, the Ram	Ari	235	209	26
Auriga, the Charioteer	Aur	401	313	88
Boötes, the Herdsman	Boo	399	344	55
Caelum, the Engraving Tool	Cae	14	7	7
Camelopardalis, the Giraffe	Cam	112	49	63
Cancer, the Crab	Cnc	224	194	30
Canes Venatici, the Hunting Dogs	CVn	122	39	83
Canis Major, the Great Dog	CMa	488	413	75
Canis Minor, the Lesser Dog	CMi	141	136	5

Capricornus, the Sea Goat	Cap	198	177	21
Carina, the Keel	Car	295	215	80
Cassiopeia, the Seated Queen	Cas	379	195	185
Centaurus, the Centaur	Cen	404	272	132
Cepheus, the King	Cep	311	118	193
Cetus, the Sea Monster	Cet	262	156	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	179	105	74
Corona Australis, the Southern Crown	CrA	85	71	14
Corona Borealis, the Northern Crown	CrB	183	173	10
Corvus, the Crow	Crv	117	100	17
Crater, the Cup	Crt	82	65	17
Crux, the Southern Cross	Cru	351	339	12
Cygnus, the Swan	Cyg	511	235	272
Delphinus, the Dolphin	Del	147	112	35
Dorado, the Swordfish	Dor	134	93	41
Draco, the Dragon	Dra	340	235	105
Equuleus, the Little Horse	Equ	44	36	8
Eridanus, the River	Eri	218	125	93
Fornax, the Furnace	For	57	11	46
Gemini, the Twins	Gem	450	390	60
Grus, the Crane	Gru	75	37	38
Hercules	Her	267	186	81
Horologium, the Clock	Hor	20	3	17
Hydra, the Female Water Snake	Hya	328	193	135
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	493	394	99

Leo Minor, the Lesser Lion	LMi	47	21	26
Lepus, the Hare	Lep	82	51	31
Libra, the Scales	Lib	204	165	38
Lupus, the Wolf	Lup	118	98	20
Lynx, the Lynx	Lyn	121	78	43
Lyra, the Lyre	Lyr	237	208	29
Mensa, the Table	Men	12	6	6
Microscopium, the Microscope	Mic	27	19	8
Monoceros, the Unicorn	Mon	148	36	113
Musca, the Fly	Mus	37	26	11
Norma, the Carpenter's Square	Nor	33	15	18
Octans, the Octant	Oct	23	6	17
Ophiuchus, the Serpent Bearer	Oph	273	163	111
Orion, the Hunter	Ori	1386	1233	137
Pavo, the Peacock	Pav	68	14	54
Pegasus, the Winged Horse	Peg	357	238	119
Perseus, the Hero	Per	258	164	94
Phoenix, the Phoenix	Phe	46	22	24
Pictor, the Painter's Easel	Pic	12	2	10
Pisces, the Fishes	Psc	258	197	61
Piscis Austrinus, the Southern Fish	PsA	114	100	14
Puppis, the Stern	Pup	173	85	88
Pyxis, the Compass	Pyx	33	20	13
Reticulum, the Reticule	Ret	21	8	13
Sagitta, the Arrow	Sge	70	47	23
Sagittarius, the Archer	Sgr	459	294	165
Scorpius, the Scorpion	Sco	680	590	91
Sculptor, the Sculptor	Scl	54	10	44
Scutum, the Shield	Sct	41	11	30
Serpens, the Serpent	Ser	139	84	55
Sextans, the Sextant	Sex	39	8	31
Taurus, the Bull	Tau	1486	1369	118
Telescopium, the Telescope	Tel	37	22	15

Triangulum, the Triangle	Tri	83	64	19
Triangulum Australe, the Southern Triangle	TrA	32	20	12
Tucana, the Toucan	Tuc	102	77	25
Ursa Major, the Great Bear	UMa	1043	860	184
Ursa Minor, the Lesser Bear	UMi	434	422	19
Vela, the Sails	Vel	157	93	64
Virgo, the Maiden	Vir	511	326	188
Volans, the Flying Fish	Vol	21	9	12
Vulpecula, the Fox	Vul	74	17	59
Unknown		473		