

Our Night Sky for The Week June 25, 2023

As summer continues, we enjoy long summer evenings. This means there is not much night time darkness. This does present some advantages, in the not very dark sky only the brighter stars are visible. The brightest stars are usually part of a constellation. This gives us a chance to pick out a few of the constellations. If you have ever wanted to be able to find some of the beautiful objects you've only seen in photographs, constellations are the guideposts. Astronomy enthusiasts have always used the shapes and bright stars to identify where the galaxies and clusters are in the sky. Most of these objects are reasonably large, just very faint but some can be easily found with a reasonable pair of binoculars.

So, if you're settled in a comfortable seat, have a pair of binoculars and a clear, fairly dark night, let's start with an easy constellation. The Big Dipper is circumpolar, it's always up, and it circles around the north star. Take a close look at the stars in the dipper, or Ursa Major. There are many deep sky objects grouped around the dipper, which I will tell you about next time, but here's a hint. There's a lovely galaxy about the same distance above the handle as the depth of the bowl of the dipper. Have fun.