

Our Night Sky for August 19th, 2024

Let's talk about confusion and the night sky for a moment. It is certainly easy to be totally lost in the view overhead and it seems even worse under a very dark sky. It seems like there are millions of stars splattered here and there overhead. So perhaps you decide you want to find your way around this jewel box. You have a nice open view of the southern sky, so you set yourself up with a comfortable lawn chair, a sky map and a red flashlight. After a few nights you recognize several of the constellations, but you notice each night they are moving in a new location creeping westward. Keep in mind as we move through the seasons and circle the sun each year. We are looking out at a different area of the sky. The best way to learn the night sky is to look from the same place at the same area of the sky every night month after month. You will see the progress of familiar constellations moving westward and as the weeks go by eventually setting earlier each evening. These are stars in our southern half of the sky. Fortunately, if you turn and face north, you will find stars that are in our night sky all year. If you find the North star at the tip of the handle of the little dipper you will see that it is in the same place every night in Our Night Sky.