

Our Night Sky for January 6th, 2025

Last month I told you about the Leonid's meteor shower and suggested that is probably the biggest meteor shower of the year, a meteor shower that averages 100 meteors an hour. But last month we had a nearly full moon and as I said, this would wash out most of the flashes of meteors burning up in our atmosphere. Add to that city sky glow if you couldn't make it out to a dark site and it was a disappointment.

Meteor showers are rated by the average hourly count and the peak count of meteors per hour. Last month's average should have been about 100 an hour. We might get lucky this year since the Quadrantids meteor shower is happening right now. The Peak of about 120 an hour was January 4th but the shower could still yield some nice meteors for another day or two and the reason is that the moon is only 10 percent illuminated.

The Quadrantids are from a rocky asteroid, not an active icy comet so it is possible that you may even see the occasional large rocky chunk which would be called a fireball, a much longer duration brighter meteor.

There are three other meteor showers later this year that have favorable lunar illumination, but the Quadrantids may be especially good if a few of these larger chunks fall from the sky. The weather maps for the coming days don't look too promising but the sky may open briefly and offer an opportunity to spot a bright fireball. I am always an optimist hoping for a chance to enjoy Our Night Sky.