

Our Night Sky for April 7th, 2025

For a few weeks I have been suggesting night sky objects that will help you understand how well your eyes can spot differences in the brightness of stars. Last week I suggested the Andromeda galaxy which is right on the edge of naked eye visibility and the most distant object you can see with your unaided eye. This week I'm offering one of the jewels of our skies, it is called the Seven sisters or The Jewel box. The proper name is The Pleiades Star cluster and is currently in our western skies setting earlier each evening. This is a misty group of several stars of various brightness or magnitude. It has been used as quick test of eyesight since most people will see six stars but if your eyesight is very good you should be able to pick out seven stars. In fact, it is a cluster of thousands of stars all formed from the same misty blue cloud you can still see with binoculars. If you Google a map of the Pleiades, you can see that there are slight differences in the brightness of each star. If you're lucky to have lakeside property like a friend of mine, you might be able to spot all seven brighter stars unaided, but this drops off quickly when you are in town with the added sky glow. If you check a printed sky map, printed because you don't have to adjust from an illuminated screen to a dark sky, you will be able to spot the approximate values, and this will help find your way around Our Night Sky.