

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 19,000 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	275	203	72
Antlia, the Air Pump	Ant	42	6	36
Apus, Bird of Paradise	Aps	34	15	19
Aquarius, the Water Bearer	Aqr	320	261	59
Aquila, the Eagle	Aql	321	258	63
Ara, the Altar	Ara	88	59	29
Aries, the Ram	Ari	228	203	25
Auriga, the Charioteer	Aur	390	309	81
Boötes, the Herdsman	Boo	387	333	54
Caelum, the Engraving Tool	Cae	14	7	7
Camelopardalis, the Giraffe	Cam	110	47	63
Cancer, the Crab	Cnc	220	191	29
Canes Venatici, the Hunting Dogs	CVn	118	38	80
Canis Major, the Great Dog	CMa	480	408	72
Canis Minor, the Lesser Dog	CMi	140	135	5

Capricornus, the Sea Goat	Cap	195	174	21
Carina, the Keel	Car	290	212	78
Cassiopeia, the Seated Queen	Cas	371	190	181
Centaurus, the Centaur	Cen	398	267	131
Cepheus, the King	Cep	308	117	191
Cetus, the Sea Monster	Cet	254	148	106
Chamaeleon, the Chameleon	Cha	18	7	11
Circinus, the Compass	Cir	20	10	10
Columba, the Dove	Col	52	40	12
Coma Berenices, Berenices' Hair	Com	174	102	72
Corona Australis, the Southern Crown	CrA	80	66	14
Corona Borealis, the Northern Crown	CrB	175	165	10
Corvus, the Crow	Crv	114	97	17
Crater, the Cup	Crt	81	64	17
Crux, the Southern Cross	Cru	336	324	12
Cygnus, the Swan	Cyg	493	227	266
Delphinus, the Dolphin	Del	145	110	35
Dorado, the Swordfish	Dor	133	93	40
Draco, the Dragon	Dra	336	232	104
Equuleus, the Little Horse	Equ	42	34	8
Eridanus, the River	Eri	215	124	91
Fornax, the Furnace	For	56	10	46
Gemini, the Twins	Gem	446	390	56
Grus, the Crane	Gru	73	36	37
Hercules	Her	257	176	81
Horologium, the Clock	Hor	20	3	17
Hydra, the Female Water Snake	Hya	322	188	134
Hydrus, the Male Water Snake	Hyi	17	8	9
Indus, the Indian	Ind	31	11	20
Lacerta, the Lizard	Lac	72	33	38
Leo, the Lion	Leo	491	392	99

Leo Minor, the Lesser Lion	LMi	47	21	26
Lepus, the Hare	Lep	79	48	31
Libra, the Scales	Lib	203	165	38
Lupus, the Wolf	Lup	113	93	20
Lynx, the Lynx	Lyn	121	78	43
Lyra, the Lyre	Lyr	224	196	28
Mensa, the Table	Men	12	6	6
Microscopium, the Microscope	Mic	25	17	8
Monoceros, the Unicorn	Mon	145	36	110
Musca, the Fly	Mus	37	26	11
Norma, the Carpenter's Square	Nor	30	12	18
Octans, the Octant	Oct	23	6	17
Ophiuchus, the Serpent Bearer	Oph	267	158	110
Orion, the Hunter	Ori	1330	1171	133
Pavo, the Peacock	Pav	67	14	53
Pegasus, the Winged Horse	Peg	344	227	117
Perseus, the Hero	Per	247	162	85
Phoenix, the Phoenix	Phe	45	21	24
Pictor, the Painter's Easel	Pic	12	2	10
Pisces, the Fishes	Psc	241	180	61
Piscis Austrinus, the Southern Fish	PsA	110	96	14
Puppis, the Stern	Pup	168	83	85
Pyxis, the Compass	Pyx	32	20	12
Reticulum, the Reticule	Ret	21	8	13
Sagitta, the Arrow	Sge	66	44	22
Sagittarius, the Archer	Sgr	439	277	162
Scorpius, the Scorpion	Sco	656	568	89
Sculptor, the Sculptor	Scl	53	10	43
Scutum, the Shield	Sct	39	10	29
Serpens, the Serpent	Ser	133	81	52
Sextans, the Sextant	Sex	39	8	31
Taurus, the Bull	Tau	1421	1305	116
Telescopium, the Telescope	Tel	36	22	14

Triangulum, the Triangle	Tri	82	63	19
Triangulum Australe, the Southern Triangle	TrA	32	20	12
Tucana, the Toucan	Tuc	101	77	24
Ursa Major, the Great Bear	UMa	1022	838	184
Ursa Minor, the Lesser Bear	UMi	421	410	18
Vela, the Sails	Vel	157	93	64
Virgo, the Maiden	Vir	502	317	188
Volans, the Flying Fish	Vol	21	9	12
Vulpecula, the Fox	Vul	72	17	57
Unknown		459		