



# *STARRY TRAILS*

*August 2015*

Ahhh! The sounds of summer! Take a few minutes and listen! I love to hear the summer sounds when I head out for my favorite stargazing month. There are so many delights to see with your eyes and binoculars! As you are gazing at the night sky, the sounds of a summer night fill the air! Are you ready for our hike? Grab your Starry Trail map, bug spray, binoculars, light jacket and lawn chair or blanket.

Our hike begins around 9:30pm. We will begin our hike by facing west or the fading colors of the sunset. Turn slightly to the left or southwest. A golden colored object which is the planet, Saturn, will catch your eye. What an incredible sight through a telescope! Trek down and to the left of Saturn to a bright red-orange star, Antares, the heart of Scorpio. To the left of Antares is the constellation, Sagittarius, which looks more like a teapot (Illustration 1). Between Scorpio and Sagittarius is the best part of the sky to scan with your binoculars and telescope! It is rich with deep sky wonders! Take a look!

Head back to Antares and Saturn. Continue to hike upwards, and slightly right, to the brilliant yellow, orange star, Arcturus. To the left of Arcturus, you will see a semi-circle of stars. It looks almost like a necklace, but actually it is the Northern Crown or Corona Borealis. I think it looks like a smiley face! Right overhead, or left of Corona, will be a keystone shape in the stars. This is the body of Hercules, the bravest and strongest hero (Illustration 2)! Binocular time! Take your binoculars and scan around the part of Hercules facing Corona. Do you see the fuzzy object? This is the finest Globular Star Cluster (M13) in the northern skies!

Turn to the opposite part of the sky or north. The Big Dipper is beginning to swing down through the sky. Take the two stars at the end of the cup and draw an imaginary line to the next bright star. You have reached the North Star! The North Star, or Polaris, is at the end of the handle of the Little Dipper. Also, down and to the right of the Little Dipper is Queen Cassiopeia, the W-shaped constellation (Illustration 3).

Trek again to the right and you will be facing east. When looking up, you will see a very bright star, which is Vega. Journey down and to the left and you will come to Deneb. Now go right and you have reached Altair. When you connect these three bright stars you have made the Summer Triangle. Great job! Running through the Summer Triangle is the Milky Way, our galaxy! Pop open that lawn chair or lay out on your blanket. Take your binoculars and scan through that part of the sky from north to south. See all of those stars?! Even if you can not view the Milky Way, due to light pollution, you can still see so many stars with your binoculars! Here is a challenge: scan to the left and up of Altair. Do you see the group of stars that resemble an upside-down coat hanger? Cool!

Head back to Deneb. Imagine this to be the tail of Cygnus, the Swan. To the right will be three stars in a line. These would be the outstretched wings. You should also be able to see the long neck and head of the swan extending from the wings. The head of the swan would be directly below Vega. This star is Albireo, which is a beautiful double star through a telescope! If you look just below the Summer Triangle, you will see a group of stars that look like a kite. This is the constellation, Delphinus, the Dolphin (Illustration 4).

Now just relax and look up. August is the best month to see a shooting star. Anytime around the 12<sup>th</sup> you may be lucky enough to see a few shooting stars. The Perseid Meteor Shower will peak the night of August 12<sup>th</sup>. That is the best night to watch and this year we will have no Moonlight to fade away the meteors! Give it a try and make a wish!

**Wow! What a great night of stargazing! - Next month... signs of Autumn.**

## Highlights

**Aug 6** – Last Quarter Moon.

**Aug 12** – **Peak of the Perseid Meteor Shower! With no Moon to interfere, under dark skies, you can expect to see over 50 shooting stars per hour!**

**Aug 14** – New Moon.

**Aug 22** – The Moon passes north of Saturn.

**Aug 22** – First Quarter Moon.

**Aug 29** - Full Moon. According to folklore it is the Full Corn Moon.

**Brightest Stars: West** – Arcturus, Spica. **East to Overhead** – Vega, Deneb, Altair. **South** – Antares.

**Binocular Highlights** The Moon, Hercules Globular Star Cluster M13, Milky Way Deep Sky Objects to the left of Antares in Scorpio thru the Summer Triangle, the Coat Hanger.

**Telescope Highlights** The Moon, Saturn, Albireo, M3, M4, M5, M6, M7, M8, M51, M39, M92, M13, M57, M81, M82, M10, M11, M12, M27, M15, M16, M17, M20, M21, M22, M23 and M25.

**Starry Trails** is a fun & easy way to explore the night sky as it appears from your very own backyard!

Journey over to **StarryTrails.com** & get everything you need to navigate the night sky!

Starry Trails is a free publication & your able to make copies to pass along to your friends & family so they can learn and enjoy the night sky with you!

Written by Suzie Dills – Remember to download your Illustrations and Star Map !