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### Grand Strand Astronomers Leadership

*Ian Hewitt – Executive Officer*  
*John DeFreitas – Treasurer*  
*Gerald Drake – Secretary*  
*Tim Kelly – Newsletter Co-Editor*

## Club Announcements

### Club Social Media

Grand Strand Astronomers:  
<https://www.gsastro.org/>

Grand Strand Amateur Astronomy Club:  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/gsatro/>

## Upcoming Club Events

Hampton Dark Sky Observing: May 16, 2026

Indoor Zoom Meeting: May 28, 2026

## Remarks From the Editor

### Articles

I would like to remark on the fine article submitted by Gerald on his trip to West Virginia. He took along his telescope for observing from much darker skies than the light polluted Bortle skies of Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. Although he encountered some rain, the article still makes for good reading.

These types of articles from a few years past or only a few months ago would make excellent features in our newsletter. These adventures make for good reading and help our newsletter readers plan for future travels with their telescopes. We wait to hear from our readers about their past observing travels.

### Sky Chart

Please note that the Heavens Above Sky Chart in this Newsletter is time stamped for observing at 22:00 hours (10:00 pm).

### Dues - Dues – Dues - Last Reminder

#### Dues for 2026 - Reminder

Our membership runs from January to December of each year, so now it is time to pay dues for 2026. Membership in the Grand Strand Astronomers is only \$25.00 per year. Part of this goes toward your Astronomical League's membership and Reflector Magazine. The rest goes toward our minimal operating expenses. So, please rejoin if you haven't already. You can pay online by going to <https://www.gsastro.org/joinrenew/>.

You can also mail in a check to Grand Strand Astronomers, 1771 Alford Rd, Conway, SC 29526.

## April Meeting Recap

Submitted by: Tim Kelly

Due to unexpected events, there was no April 30<sup>th</sup> Zoom meeting. Club activities will continue as



announced and addressed here and on the Grand Strand Astronomers website.

## Aynor Middle School Outing

by: Geral Drake

The Grand Strand Astronomers were invited to participate in the second annual Aynor Middle School Astronomy Night, held on April 23, 2026. This was our second time participating in this event, and we sincerely hope it continues.

We had a better-than-expected turnout, with over 60 people of all ages attending. Students, parents, and many members of the community came out for an enjoyable evening of observing the night sky.



The clouds cleared, and the school parking lot lights were turned off, providing good observation conditions. The Moon, Venus, Jupiter, and even Uranus were observed. Other night sky objects were also visible, but the Moon and planets were easy targets for the many first-time viewers.

Through grants and donations, Aynor Middle School is building a strong collection of telescopes. The Grand Strand Astronomers also brought telescopes to share with the public and answered questions throughout the evening. There were a

variety of telescopes available for viewing, including refractors, reflectors, and Cassegrain's.

Adrienne Bostic, Grade 8 Science/Department Head at Aynor Middle School, organized the event. She truly appreciated our club's support again this year and hopes we can participate again in the future.

Our club was represented by Ian, Ken, and Gerald. We all had a great time sharing our passion for astronomy.

## Flower Moon and Evening Planets-Venus and Jupiter Lead the May Sky

by: Jeffrey L. Hunt  
Submitted by: Tim Kelly

### Almanac for Sun, Moon, and Planets

**Sun:** At Chicago's latitude, the sun shines for 14 hours, 2 minutes. During the month, daylight gains 58 minutes. In Miami, daylight spans 13 hours, 8 minutes, gaining 30 minutes during May. Farther north in Anchorage, the sun is in the sky for 16 hours, 15 minutes, gaining 147 minutes by month's end. The sun is overhead at local noon at 15° north latitude. South of the equator, the sun shines in Auckland for 10 hours, 36 minutes, losing 47 minutes by May 31.

Today, May Day, is the traditional midpoint of spring. These days (Groundhog Day, May Day, Lammas Day, and Halloween), the middle of the seasons, are known as the cross-quarter days. This year, spring's actual midpoint occurs May 6.

By the middle of spring in the northern hemisphere, the agricultural signs of the season are well established. Daylight is longer, flowers are blooming, the last frost date approaches, and fields are ready for planting.

Some European countries celebrate the season with dances, decorate animals with flowers, and exchange baskets of flowers. Spring is here.

# The Astrogator

## Grand Strand Astronomers Club Newsletter

Volume #4, Issue #2  
April 1, 2026



Celebrate the season. The [Farmer's Almanac](#) has additional background about the day.



Two hours after sunset, the Flower Moon is in the southeast to Spica's lower left.

**Moon:** The moon reaches the Full (Flower) Moon today at 12:23 p.m. Central Time, when it is below the horizon in North America. The moon is opposite the sun. During morning twilight, the lunar orb is low in the west-southwest. After sunset, it is low in the southeast, and it is visible all night. Two hours after sunset, the bright moon is nearly 15° above the southeast horizon and over 20° to Spica's lower left.

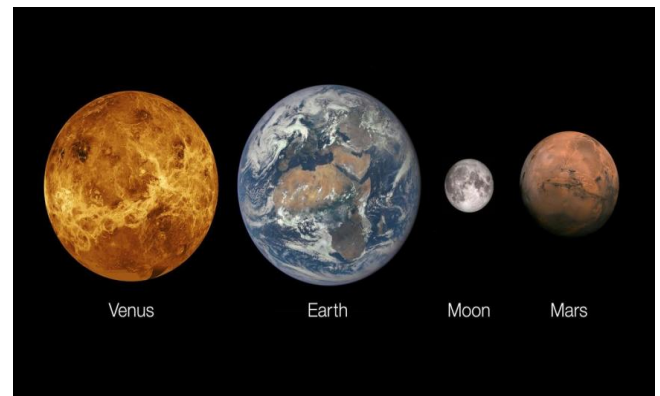
Tonight, the moon is low in the southeast in front of Libra, 5.6° to Zubenelgenubi's lower right, the Scorpion's southern claw.

A second Full moon occurs on May 31 at 3:45 a.m. Central Time, sometimes named a Blue Moon. Usually, an astronomical season (solstice to equinox or equinox to solstice) has three full moons. Following the traditions of naming a full moon after nature's events in a season, there was no name for the extra full moon, so it was named "Blue." This year, spring has three Full moons, although the year has 13 full moons. To keep the twelve seasonal names intact, so that the Harvest Moon occurs closest to the autumnal equinox, the

season's additional Full moon receives the [blue designation](#).

An article in [Sky & Telescope](#) traced the origins of the term to the *Maine Farmers' Almanac* in the 1930s. The Blue Moon name has been expanded over time to indicate the second full moon in a calendar month, a mistake noted by *Sky & Telescope* that has caught on in popular culture.

### Planets Not Visible



A comparison of Venus, Earth, Moon and Mars. (NASA)

**Mercury:** After a disappointing apparition in the eastern morning sky, the Elusive Planet reaches superior conjunction on the sun's far side on May 14. About 10 days later, it appears in the western evening sky with Venus and Jupiter. Mercury is too close to the sun for easy observation.

**Mars:** After its solar conjunction during early January, the Red Planet slowly emerges from bright morning twilight. Its visibility suffers from the shallow angle the ecliptic — the plane of the solar system — makes with the eastern horizon during spring. It rises nearly an hour before daybreak, but 30 minutes later it is only 4° above the east horizon. It is too dim and the sky is too bright to see it.

**Saturn:** Like Mars, the Ringed Wonder is similarly situated in the predawn sky, rising only 10 minutes earlier than Mars. Its visibility is hampered by bright morning twilight, low altitude, and brightness. Like Mars, it becomes visible in less than two months.



**Neptune:** In the same region of the sky as Mars and Saturn, the Distant Planet is too faint to be seen during twilight.

**Uranus:** The Tilted World is still in the evening sky, but low in the west during twilight. It is washed out and not visible.

### Planets Visible



An hour after sunset, Venus passes to Aldebaran's upper right in a wide conjunction.

**Venus:** The brilliant Evening Star shines from the west-northwest until it sets nearly 2 hours, 30 minutes after sunset. It is easily visible as early as 30 minutes after sunset. An hour after sundown, Venus is nearly  $15^\circ$  above the west-northwest horizon. Tonight, it passes Aldebaran in a wide conjunction,  $6.4^\circ$  to the star's upper right. Venus continues stepping eastward in front of Taurus as it overtakes Jupiter.



An hour after sunset, bright Jupiter is  $45^\circ$  above the western horizon with the Gemini Twins, Castor and Pollux.

**Jupiter:** As the second brightest starlike body in the sky tonight, Jupiter is nearly  $40^\circ$  to Venus' upper left and about halfway from the west horizon to overhead. Moving eastward in front of Gemini, it is  $7.6^\circ$  to Pollux's lower left, one of the Twins, and moves at about one-tenth of Venus' speed. A Venus–Jupiter conjunction occurs on June 9. Watch Venus close the gap each night. Jupiter passes Castor on May 11 and Pollux 17 nights later in wide conjunctions.

### New Moon Calendar 2026: When Is the Next New Moon?

by: Daisy Dobrijevic  
Submitted by: Tim Kelly

The dark skies during a new moon provide ideal conditions for spotting skywatching targets that would otherwise be outshone by moonlight.



Though a new moon is not visible, the dark skies during a new moon provide ideal skywatching conditions. (Image credit: by-studio via Getty Images)

## When is the next new moon?

A new moon occurs when [the moon](#) is directly between [Earth](#) and the sun, with its shadowed side pointing towards us. You can see a new moon when it crosses the face of [the sun](#) during a solar eclipse.

New moons occur approximately once every month because that's roughly how long it takes for the moon to orbit Earth. But because the moon's orbit is slightly tilted relative to Earth's orbit around the sun, it doesn't block out the sun on every orbit, hence why not every new moon results in a solar eclipse, [according to NASA](#).

On the nights before and after a new moon, when just a thin crescent is present, it is sometimes possible to make out the stunning effect known as Earthshine, or Da Vinci glow.

During this time, it appears as though you can see the entire disk of the moon dimly illuminated with an almost bluish-gray glow, along with the brightly lit crescent. As such, the term Earthshine is sometimes referred to as "The old moon in the new moon's arms." The glow is produced by light from a fully illuminated Earth reflecting off the lunar surface.

Space.com's skywatching columnist Joe Rao explains the phenomenon in more detail in this [interview conducted with FoxWeather.com](#).



New moon of April 2026 brings incredible views of the constellation Hydra, Jupiter, Venus and more this week



Planets, constellations and more: Here's what to look out for around the new moon this week



Lunar eclipse calendar 2026: When and where to see the next lunar eclipse



### When is the new moon? Calendar dates for 2026

This is when new moons will occur through 2026, according to NASA.

Date	U.S. EST
Jan. 18	2:52 p.m.
Feb. 17	7:01 a.m.
18-Mar	9:23 p.m.
17-Apr	7:52 a.m.
16-May	4:01 p.m.
14-Jun	10:54 p.m.
14-Jul	5:43 a.m.
Aug. 12	1:37 p.m.
Sep. 10	11:27 p.m.
Oct. 10	11:50 a.m.
Nov. 9	2:02 a.m.
Dec. 8	7:52 p.m.

### Moon Phases:



The moon's phases leading up to and away from the first quarter moon. (Image credit: NASA)

As the moon orbits Earth, it reflects sunlight and appears to cycle through eight distinct phases:

**New moon:** The moon is between Earth and the sun, and the side of the moon facing toward us receives no direct sunlight; it is lit only by dim sunlight reflected from Earth.

**Waxing crescent:** As the moon moves around Earth, the side we can see gradually becomes more illuminated by direct sunlight.

**First quarter:** The moon is 90 degrees away from the sun in the sky and is half-illuminated from our point of view. We call it "first quarter" because the moon has traveled about a quarter of the way around Earth since the new moon.

**Waxing gibbous:** The area of illumination continues to increase. More than half of the moon's face appears to be getting sunlight.

**Full moon:** The moon is 180 degrees away from the sun and is as close as it can be to being fully illuminated by the sun from our perspective. The sun, Earth and the moon are aligned, but because the moon's orbit is not exactly in the same plane as Earth's orbit around the sun, they rarely form a perfect line. When they do, we have a [lunar eclipse](#) as Earth's shadow crosses the moon's face.

**Waning gibbous:** More than half of the moon's face appears to be getting sunlight, but the amount is decreasing.

**Last quarter:** The moon has moved another quarter of the way around Earth, to the third quarter position. The sun's light is now shining on the other half of the visible face of the moon.

**Waning crescent:** Less than half of the moon's face appears to be getting sunlight, and the amount is decreasing.

Finally, the moon is back to its new moon starting position. Now, the moon is between Earth and the sun. Usually, the moon passes above or below the sun from our vantage point, but occasionally it passes right in front of the sun, and we get a [solar eclipse](#).

### What's the difference between a new moon and a full moon?

When the moon is at its new phase it is positioned between the sun and the Earth and appears in close proximity to where the sun is in our sky. So a



new moon appears to rise and set with the sun and is invisible because sunlight is falling on that part of the moon that is turned away from us. We call it a "new" moon, because the cycle of phases that the moon displays to us takes 29.53 days to complete, and is known as a *synodic month*. The word synodic is derived from the Greek "sunodos" which literally means "meeting." And indeed, at roughly 29½-day intervals, the moon "meets" the sun and the cycle of lunar phases starts anew (hence we have a "new" moon).

In contrast, a full moon appears opposite to the sun in the sky. So it rises at sunset, appears highest in the middle of the night and sets at sunrise. The side of the moon that is turned toward Earth is fully illuminated, hence the term "full" moon.

### How long does a new moon last?

Astronomers calculate the moment of a new moon based on its position in the sky relative to the sun. When both the sun and the moon have the same right ascension (the distance of a point east of the vernal equinox, measured along the celestial equator and expressed in hours, minutes, and seconds) that is the time of a new moon. Since the moon is constantly moving in its orbit around the Earth, a new moon only lasts for a moment. However, to be able to see the moon is another matter; we usually must wait at least 18-24 hours after the new moon to allow it to move far enough away from the sun. We then see it low in the western sky appearing as a lovely crescent phase and setting an hour or two after sunset.

There is another way to see a new moon: When it passes directly in front of the sun to produce a solar eclipse. Then, the dark disk of the new moon — normally unseen every month — is visible in silhouette, passing across the face of the sun.

The man who was known as "the world's greatest nonprofessional astronomer," Leslie C. Peltier (1900-1980), once noted that "Only during an eclipse of the sun can we note the instant when the old moon, moving eastward, crosses the median

line of the sun and becomes a fresh new moon just starting out on another monthly lifetime."

### How often do we experience a new moon?

Usually once a month, although if a new moon happens on the first or second day of the month, a second new moon is likely to occur at the end of the month. Only in the month of February is it possible not to have a new moon. This can happen because even in years where there is a leap day, February can have no more than 29 days. But because a synodic month lasts about 29.5 days, we can have a new moon on January 30 or 31, but the very next new moon would not occur until March 1; completely bypassing February! Such an odd circumstance will happen in the year 2033.

### Visit to the Dark Sky Cabins of Cooper's Rock, West Virginia

By: Gerald Drake

Just outside Morgantown, off Interstate 68, lies Coopers Rock State Forest—a scenic destination that recently added a unique attraction for astronomy enthusiasts. In 2025, the park completed the first five of its planned twelve "Dark Sky Cabins," designed specifically to minimize light pollution and enhance stargazing ([wvstateparks.com](http://wvstateparks.com)).



My cousin and his wife live nearby and invited my wife and me to spend a weekend in one of these

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cabins, and it turned out to be great. The cabins sit in a relatively open section of forest, carefully designed to preserve darkness. Despite its proximity to Morgantown, the area is rated a Bortle scale Class 4 sky

Impressively dark for this area. For comparison, Hampton Plantation State Historic Site, where our club often observes, shares the same Bortle 4 rating. Where I live in Myrtle Beach, is a Bortle 6 with much light pollution.



([lightpollutionmap.info](http://lightpollutionmap.info)).

The cabins themselves are well constructed A-frame structures with two bedrooms and a single bath. They have modern amenities including: full kitchen, central heating and air, ceiling fans, a wood stove, an outdoor fire pit, free wifi, and a spacious deck. Thoughtful lighting design keeps exterior illumination minimal, with subtle LED strips under the eaves. Blackout shades eliminate interior light spill. Each cabin comes equipped with a telescope: a Celestron Inspire 100AZ, making it easy for beginners to explore the night sky.



We arrived on April 17 to fairly clear skies and a peaceful forest setting. I brought along three telescopes of my own—a CPC 9.25, an 8-inch Dobsonian, and a 102mm refractor—anticipating two good nights of observing. Family members joined us Friday evening, and with eleven people gathered, the telescopes saw plenty of use.

Although the surrounding tree line limited views near the horizon, conditions overhead were excellent. Venus appeared shortly after sunset, bright and unmistakable. While it shows little surface detail, its brilliance and distinct phase never fail to impress in a telescope, especially for first-time observers who often mistake it for a star.

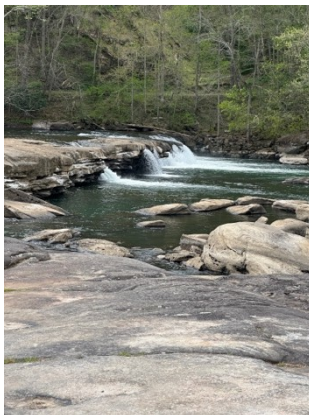
Soon after Jupiter was visible high in the sky, offering one of the clearest views I've seen. Its cloud bands were sharply defined, and all four Galilean moons were visible. Later in the evening, we turned to the Orion Nebula, which is always impressive. We wrapped up early after having traveled all day with hopes to continue observing deep sky objects the next night. However, rain set in Saturday afternoon and washed out our Saturday stargazing plans.

Even without a second night under the stars, the area offered plenty to explore during the day. The scenic overlook at Coopers Rock provides sweeping views of the surrounding landscape. We also visited Tygart Lake State Park to tour the dam and hiked to the falls at Valley Falls State Park.



[Scenic Overlook](#)

[Tygart Dam](#)



[Valley Falls](#)

Despite the weather setback, the weekend was well worth it. Between the peaceful setting, quality stargazing, and time spent with family, the Dark Sky Cabins offer a memorable experience—and one I'd gladly return to.

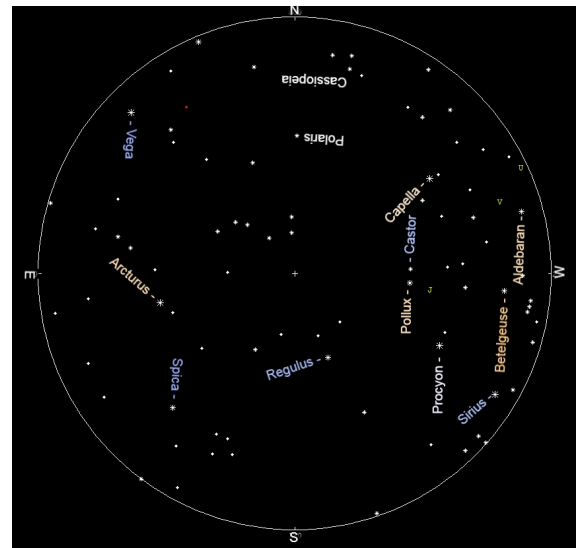
### Eight Brightest Stars Visible with Venus and Jupiter After Sunset

by: Jeffrey L. Hunt  
Submitted by: Tim Kelly

See Venus and Jupiter alongside eight of the brightest stars visible from mid-northern latitudes. A guide to the spring evening sky.



Venus is 1.8° to the lower left of Elnath. Times are calculated by the US Naval Observatory's *MICA* computer program. Check local sources for sunrise and sunset times.



On the chart above, the horizon is shown by the circle and overhead is marked by a "+" symbol. Rotate the map so that the direction you are facing is at the bottom. "V" is Venus and "J" marks Jupiter's location.

Step outside an hour after sunset. With trees beginning to block the view of celestial bodies near the horizon, find an observing spot with clear horizons in every direction, especially toward the west and east.



Brilliant Venus and Jupiter continue to dominate the western evening sky. As spring's midpoint approaches, during evening twilight, eight of the ten brightest stars are visible from the mid-northern latitudes. In order of brightness, this group is: Sirius, Arcturus, Vega, Capella, Procyon, Betelgeuse, Aldebaran, and Spica.

### Some Stellar Properties

Here are some characteristics of those stars:

Star Name	Brightness (mid-northern latitudes)	Color	Distance (light years)	Luminosity compared to sun
Sirius	1	Blue-white	8.6	20
Arcturus	2	Yellow - orange	37	110
Vega	3	Blue-white	25	50
Capella	4	Yellow -white	43	132
Procyon	6	Yellow -white	11.5	10
Betelgeuse	7	Red-orange	500	10,000
Aldebaran	9	Yellow - orange	67	160
Spica	10	Blue-white	250	9,800

### In the West

An hour after sunset, find Venus in the west-northwest to the upper right of Aldebaran, the follower. Venus is brightest, but not a star. Slightly fainter Jupiter is about halfway from the west horizon to overhead, to Venus' upper left. Blue-white Sirius, the Dog Star, twinkles wildly low in the west-southwest, at nearly the same altitude – height above the horizon – as Venus.

Red-orange Betelgeuse, marking Orion's shoulder, is slightly higher than Venus above the west horizon.

Sirius and Betelgeuse disappear into bright evening twilight during the next few weeks, returning to the eastern morning sky later during the summer.

Jupiter is below the Gemini Twins. Pollux ranks 12th on the list.

Capella, the little she goat, is to the right of Jupiter and also to Venus' upper right, while Procyon, the Little Dog Star, is to Jupiter's lower left. Capella, Castor – the other Twin – Pollux, and Procyon are along an imaginary arc.

### In the East

Farther eastward, golden Arcturus – the bear guard – is over halfway up in the east, while Spica – the ear of corn – is low in the southeast. Vega, Lyra's brightest star, is about 10° above the northeast horizon. During the next several weeks, it is joined by Altair and Deneb. Together they are known as the Summer Triangle which appears in the eastern sky at nightfall near the summer solstice.

Notice Regulus, high in the southern sky and 15th on the list, is Leo's brightest star.

While the mid-winter sky has many bright stars tightly grouped, mid-spring's sky has many bright stars that are more widely spaced.

### NASA Chief Isaacman Backs Pluto' Return as a Planet, Reigniting Decades-Old Classification Debate

by: Disita Sikdar  
Submitted by: Tim Kelly

Back in 2006, the International Astronomical Union (IAU) shocked the world by denying Pluto its planetary status.

# The Astrogator

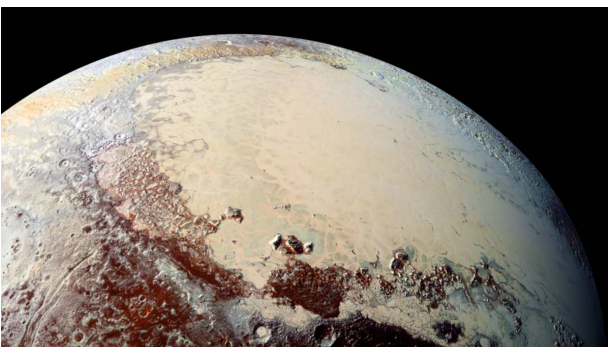
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(L) NASA Chief Jared Isaacman testifies during a House budget hearing at the Rayburn House Office Building on April 27, 2026. (Source: Heather Diehl/Getty) (R) Image of Pluto captured by NASA's New Horizons spacecraft. (Source: NASA/APL/SwRI/Getty)

Ever since Pluto was stripped of its planetary status, the controversies have not stopped. As school children around the world had to revisit their solar system learnings, the little icy planet's classification of being a 'dwarf planet' also hurt American sentiments. Why so? Well, as a matter of fact, Pluto was the sole planet to be discovered by an American. It was Clyde Tombaugh who made the find back in 1930. And now, a fellow countryman, [NASA chief Jared Isaacman, is fighting hard](#) to bring back the lost glory for Pluto.



NASA's New Horizons spacecraft reveals features on Pluto never-before seen (Image Source: NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center)

Back in 2006, the International Astronomical Union (IAU) shocked the world with its statement. Denying

Pluto its planetary status, the IAU classified it as a '[dwarf planet](#).' For twenty years now, the tension has been brewing. As the US billionaire private astronaut took over as the NASA chief in December 2025, the ploy to make Pluto a planet again gained significant traction. On April 28, 2026, the [NASA chief testified in front of the US Senate Committee on Appropriations](#). While his main agenda was the White House's budget request for 2027, Pluto, too, became a topic of some serious discussion.



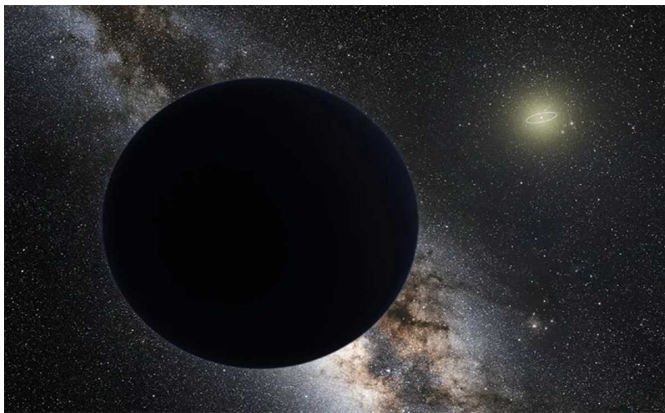
Pluto's bladed terrain as seen from NASA's New Horizons during its July 2015 flyby (Image Source: NASA/Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory/Southwest Research Institute)

As the hearing came to an end, Republican Senator Jerry Moran expressed his curiosity about where Isaacman stood on Pluto's eliteness. Moran also stressed the fact that Tombaugh, who discovered the planet initially, was from his hometown, Kansas. Immediately, the NASA Administrator replied, "Senator, I am very much in the camp of 'make Pluto a planet again.'"

And that was not all. Isaacman also had more to add about his fight for Pluto. Reassuring the senator, the [NASA](#) chief said, "And I would say, we are doing some papers right now on, I think, a position that we would love to escalate through the scientific community to revisit this discussion and ensure that Clyde Tombaugh gets the credit he received once and rightfully deserves to receive again." Now then, although this looks like a strong

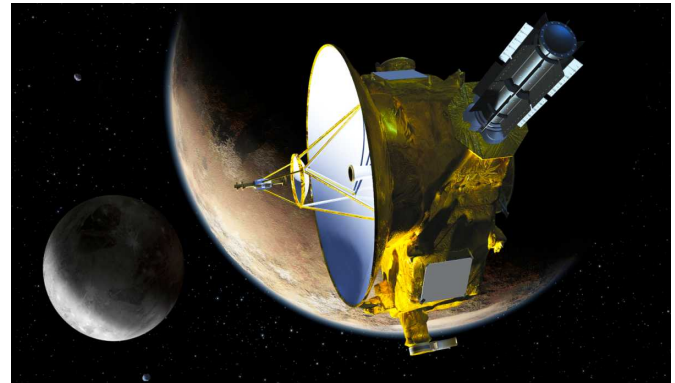


statement coming from NASA, they do not have a lot of leverage in the matter. After all, the only thing they can do is to escalate the matter. The final boss will be the IAU, an international society composed of professional astronomers who are responsible for defining the outer space objects and naming them.



An artist's illustration of a possible ninth planet in our solar system, hovering at the edge of our solar system (Image Source: ESO | Tom Ruen)

When the IAU took their call on Pluto, it was based on three primary criteria. In order to be classified as a planet, a celestial object has to orbit the Sun, must have a significant size with a prominent spherical shape, and clear its orbit of debris. Unfortunately, despite passing the first two criteria, Pluto failed to meet the third because it lies in the [Kuiper Belt](#) alongside other dwarf planets. However, some significant debates against their statements were made. Scientists advocating for Pluto pointed out that Earth and Jupiter, too, share their orbits with a lot of asteroids.



NASA's New Horizons was the first spacecraft to explore Pluto up close, flying by the dwarf planet and its moons in 2015 (Image Source: NASA)

As the debates continued, the year 2015 came as a ray of hope for the Pluto advocates. That was when NASA's New Horizons spacecraft returned high-quality, close-up images of the icy dwarf planet, revealing mountainous regions and nitrogen-filled glaciers. The images also showed a heart-shaped landform, which was named the 'Tombaugh Region.' Unfortunately, none of this was enough to convince the IAU, and Pluto remained a dwarf. Now, with Isaacman taking up the matter with renewed vigor, it remains to be seen whether the glory days come back for Pluto.

## Aquila

Submitted by: Tim Kelly

This month's constellation is Aquila, Latin for "eagle," is a prominent constellation on the celestial equator, best viewed in summer in the Northern Hemisphere. It is characterized by the bright star Altair and represents the mythological eagle that carried Zeus's thunderbolts. Located within the Milky Way, it is easily found near the [Summer Triangle](#).



- **Location:** Situated on the celestial equator, adjacent to Delphinus and Sagittarius, and easily found by locating the Summer Triangle formed by Altair, Vega, and Deneb.
- **Brightest Stars:** Altair is the brightest star in the constellation (12th brightest in the sky), representing the head of the eagle. Other key stars include Alshain and Tarazed.
- **Mythology:** In Greek mythology, it is often identified as the eagle that served Zeus/Jupiter by carrying his thunderbolts, or the eagle that attacked Prometheus.
- **Shape:** The constellation is often imagined as an eagle in flight, with stars forming a distinctive V-shape representing the wings and body.

In classical Greek mythology, Aquila was identified as Αετός Δίας ([Aetos Dios](#)), the eagle that carried the thunderbolts of [Zeus](#) and was sent by him to carry the shepherd boy [Ganymede](#), whom he desired, to Mount Olympus; the constellation of Aquarius is sometimes identified with Ganymede.

In the Chinese love story of [Qi Xi](#), Niu Lang ([Altair](#)) and his two children ( $\beta$  and  $\gamma$  Aquilae) are separated forever from their wife and mother Zhi Nu ([Vega](#)), who is on the far side of the river, the Milky Way.

In [Hinduism](#), the constellation Aquila is identified with the half-eagle half-human deity [Garuda](#).

In [ancient Egypt](#), Aquila possibly was seen as the falcon of [Horus](#). According to Berio, the

identification of Aquila as an Egyptian constellation, and not merely Graeco-Babylonian, is corroborated by the Daressy Zodiac. It depicts an outer ring showing the Sphaera Graeca, the familiar Hellenistic zodiac, while the middle ring depicts the Sphaera Barbarica or foreigner's zodiac with the zodiacal signs of the Egyptian *dodekaoros* which were also recorded by Teucros of Babylon. Under the sign of Sagittarius is the falcon of Horus, presumably because Aquila rises with Sagittarius.

### Equivalents

In [Chinese astronomy](#),  $\zeta$  Aql is located within the [Heavenly Market Enclosure](#), and the other stars of the constellation are placed within the [Black Tortoise of the North](#).

Several different [Polynesian](#) equivalents to Aquila as a whole are known. On the island of [Futuna](#), it was called *Kau-amonga*, meaning "Suspended Burden". Its name references the Futunan name for Orion's belt and sword, *Amonga*. In [Hawaii](#), Altair was called *Humu*, translated to English as "to sew, to bind together parts of a fishhook." "Humu" also refers to the hole by which parts of a hook are bound together. *Humu-ma* was said to influence the astrologers. *Pao-toa* was the name for the entire constellation in the [Marquesas Islands](#); the name meant "Fatigued Warrior". Also, Polynesian constellations incorporated the stars of modern Aquila. The [Pukapuka](#) constellation *Tolu*, meaning "three", was made up of Alpha, Beta, and Gamma Aquilae. Altair was commonly named among Polynesian peoples, as well. The people of Hawaii called it *Humu*, the people of the [Tuamotus](#) called it *Tukituki* ("Pound with a hammer") - they named Beta Aquilae *Nga Tangata* ("The Men") - and the people of Pukapuka called Altair *Turu* and used it as a navigational star. The [Māori people](#) named Altair *Poutu-te-rangi*, "Pillar of the Sky", because of its important position in their cosmology. It was used differently in different Māori calendars, being the star of February and March in one version and March and April in the other. Altair was also the star that ruled the annual [sweet potato](#) harvest.

