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 20,000 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	281	208	73
Antlia, the Air Pump	Ant	43	6	37
Apus, Bird of Paradise	Aps	35	15	20
Aquarius, the Water Bearer	Aqr	327	267	60
Aquila, the Eagle	Aql	334	268	66
Ara, the Altar	Ara	90	59	31
Aries, the Ram	Ari	236	209	27
Auriga, the Charioteer	Aur	404	313	91
Boötes, the Herdsman	Boo	400	344	56
Caelum, the Engraving Tool	Cae	15	7	8
Camelopardalis, the Giraffe	Cam	113	49	64
Cancer, the Crab	Cnc	224	194	30
Canes Venatici, the Hunting Dogs	CVn	122	39	83
Canis Major, the Great Dog	CMa	489	413	76
Canis Minor, the Lesser Dog	CMi	143	136	8

Capricornus, the Sea Goat	Cap	199	177	22
Carina, the Keel	Car	296	215	81
Cassiopeia, the Seated Queen	Cas	382	195	187
Centaurus, the Centaur	Cen	405	272	133
Cepheus, the King	Cep	316	118	198
Cetus, the Sea Monster	Cet	262	156	106
Chamaeleon, the Chameleon	Cha	20	7	13
Circinus, the Compass	Cir	25	11	14
Columba, the Dove	Col	53	40	13
Coma Berenices, Berenices' Hair	Com	179	105	74
Corona Australis, the Southern Crown	CrA	85	71	14
Corona Borealis, the Northern Crown	CrB	183	173	10
Corvus, the Crow	Crv	123	100	23
Crater, the Cup	Crt	83	65	18
Crux, the Southern Cross	Cru	351	339	12
Cygnus, the Swan	Cyg	515	235	276
Delphinus, the Dolphin	Del	148	112	36
Dorado, the Swordfish	Dor	134	93	41
Draco, the Dragon	Dra	340	235	105
Equuleus, the Little Horse	Equ	45	36	9
Eridanus, the River	Eri	218	125	93
Fornax, the Furnace	For	58	11	47
Gemini, the Twins	Gem	452	390	62
Grus, the Crane	Gru	76	37	39
Hercules	Her	267	186	81
Horologium, the Clock	Hor	21	3	18
Hydra, the Female Water Snake	Hya	329	193	136
Hydrus, the Male Water Snake	Hyi	18	8	10
Indus, the Indian	Ind	33	11	22
Lacerta, the Lizard	Lac	73	33	41
Leo, the Lion	Leo	493	394	99

Leo Minor, the Lesser Lion	LMi	47	21	26
Lepus, the Hare	Lep	82	51	31
Libra, the Scales	Lib	204	165	38
Lupus, the Wolf	Lup	118	98	20
Lynx, the Lynx	Lyn	121	78	43
Lyra, the Lyre	Lyr	237	208	29
Mensa, the Table	Men	13	6	7
Microscopium, the Microscope	Mic	28	19	9
Monoceros, the Unicorn	Mon	151	36	116
Musca, the Fly	Mus	39	26	13
Norma, the Carpenter's Square	Nor	35	15	20
Octans, the Octant	Oct	24	6	18
Ophiuchus, the Serpent Bearer	Oph	274	163	112
Orion, the Hunter	Ori	1388	1235`	137
Pavo, the Peacock	Pav	69	14	55
Pegasus, the Winged Horse	Peg	359	238	121
Perseus, the Hero	Per	259	164	95
Phoenix, the Phoenix	Phe	48	22	26
Pictor, the Painter's Easel	Pic	12	2	10
Pisces, the Fishes	Psc	258	197	61
Piscis Austrinus, the Southern Fish	PsA	114	100	14
Puppis, the Stern	Pup	173	85	88
Pyxis, the Compass	Pyx	33	20	13
Reticulum, the Reticule	Ret	21	8	13
Sagitta, the Arrow	Sge	70	47	23
Sagittarius, the Archer	Sgr	459	294	165
Scorpius, the Scorpion	Sco	682	590	93
Sculptor, the Sculptor	Scl	54	10	44
Scutum, the Shield	Sct	41	11	30
Serpens, the Serpent	Ser	141	84	57
Sextans, the Sextant	Sex	39	8	31
Taurus, the Bull	Tau	1495	1375	121
Telescopium, the Telescope	Tel	38	22	16

Triangulum, the Triangle	Tri	83	64	19
Triangulum Australe, the Southern Triangle	TrA	32	20	12
Tucana, the Toucan	Tuc	103	77	26
Ursa Major, the Great Bear	UMa	1045	860	186
Ursa Minor, the Lesser Bear	UMi	435	422	20
Vela, the Sails	Vel	161	93	68
Virgo, the Maiden	Vir	511	326	188
Volans, the Flying Fish	Vol	22	9	13
Vulpecula, the Fox	Vul	75	17	60
Unknown		473		