

Examples of Star-Hopping

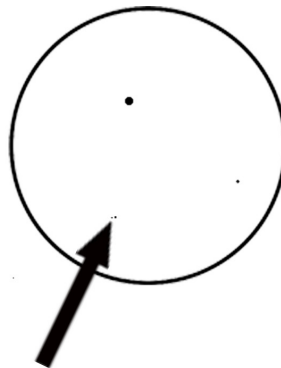
<----- 6 degrees ----->

Lyra the harp

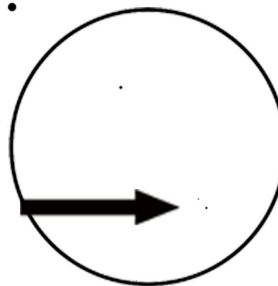
Recognize Vega, the blue-white bright star, & the "parallelogram" just south of Vega. Also note the other star near Vega, epsilon, the "Double-Double" star.

Can you split it with your un-aided eye? It looks elongated to me, but I usually can't call it a clean split.

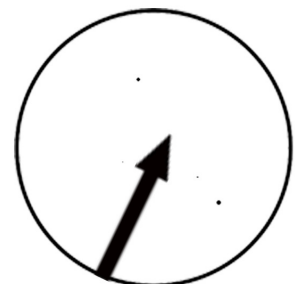
Aiming your finder at Vega, you can see epsilon in the finder. Look at it in the main scope to split both pairs.



Back to the finder, scoot to this corner of the parallelogram. Look in the eyepiece at delta, a pair including 1 red-orange star, with a blue-white companion, in a sparse open cluster known as Stephenson 1.



In the finder, scoot to the other end of the parallelogram. Center the scope on the pattern on 3 stars where a 4th one might belong. Look in the eyepiece for a small smoke ring of glowing gas, the nebula M57. Also in the finder, notice a fairly bright star 1° north of M57; center it, look in the eyepiece. It is a blue-yellow double star.

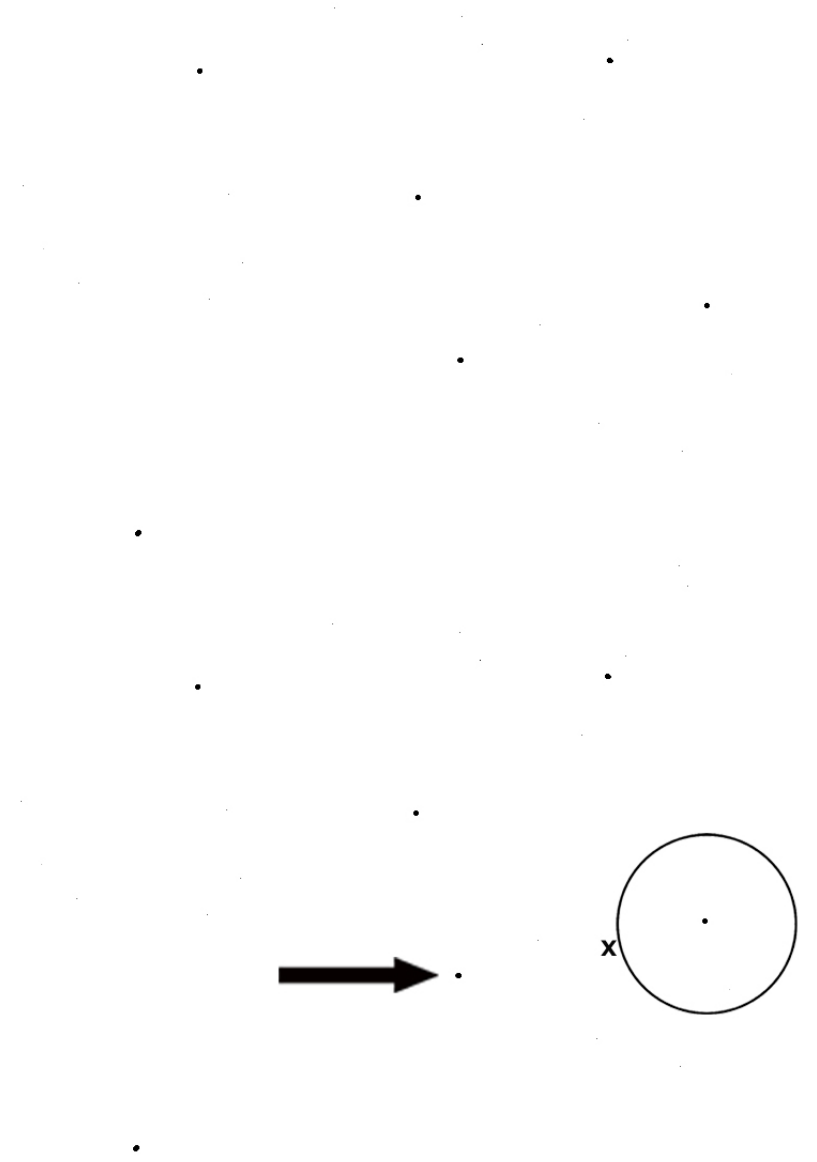


Globular Cluster M13 in Hercules

<----- 12 degrees ----->

These 6 stars remind me of a butterfly shape. Find this pattern. The stars are not especially bright, and the pattern can be difficult to recognize as it rotates and moves across the sky.

Position the finder on the star shown with the circle.
Scoot toward the star marked with an arrow. Globular cluster M13 is marked with an X. You will encounter it on that line, the west side of the Hercules keystone. It should show in any decent finder. This is one of the most incredible sights available in the night sky from northern latitudes. One half degree northwest is fainter galaxy NGC 6207. It appears as a faint smudge.



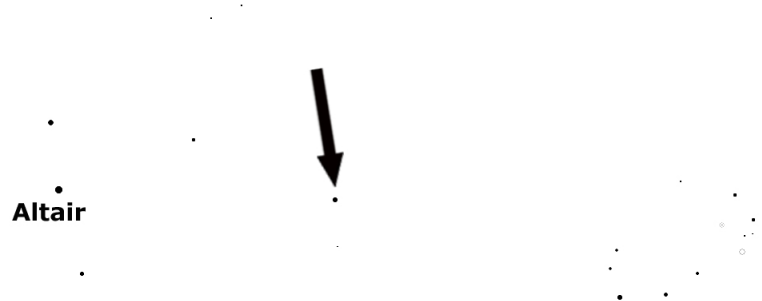
M11, the Wild Duck Cluster

<----- 15 degrees ----->

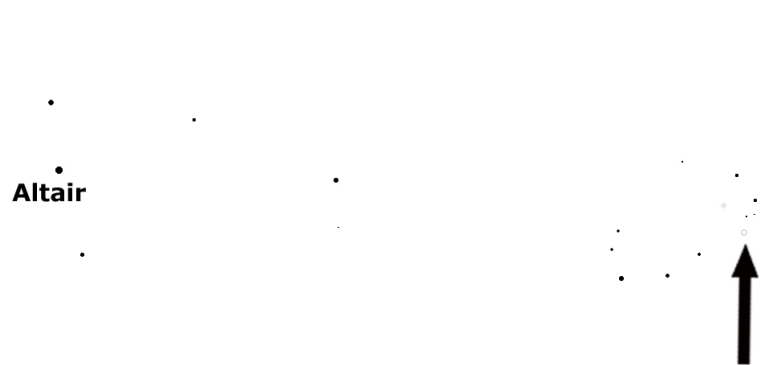
Find bright star Altair, part of the "Summer Triangle" and 2 stars framing it.



Move your eye (or finder-hop) to a bright star nearly 10° (or 1 fist with your arm extended) toward the south. Continue the same direction a similar distance to an oval shape of faint stars.



One of the "stars" in that oval is actually the cluster. It is obvious in a finder and can be seen naked eye under very good sky conditions. There are a few hundreds of stars in this cluster, some arranged in curving lines. A few of the brighter stars are nearer to us.



M42, the Orion Nebula

This shows the brighter stars in Orion. The belt, 3 stars in a row, is very distinctive. Then observe the 3 stars in a row a few degrees south of the belt. The center star of this group may look fuzzy to the unaided eye; it is the Orion Nebula.

The circle shows a finder centered on the Orion Nebula, M42. It is a grand sight in any telescope, composed of gas that glows by starlight, and said to be birthing stars.

The circle represents a finder centered on Rigel, a bright blue-white star, which is a double star. The companion star is not always easy to see because it is 6.7 magnitudes dimmer, and only about 9" separate the pair.

<----- 19 degrees ----->

