



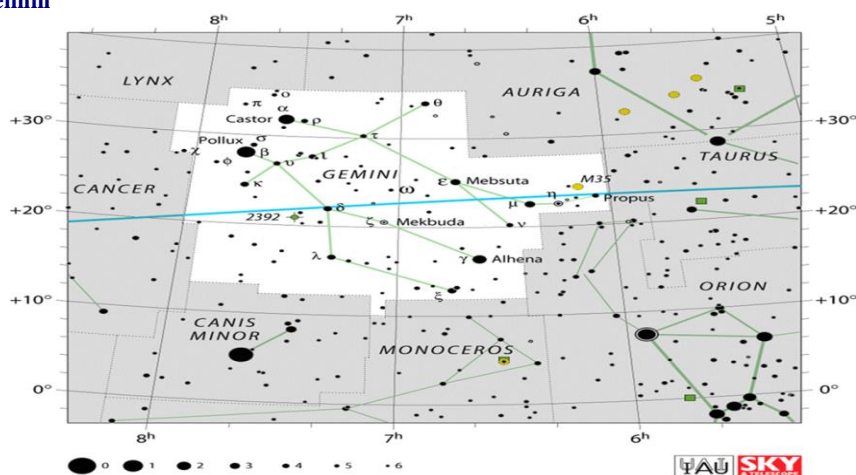
Binocular Observing (March 2019)

UT (Universal Time) or GMT is used this month.

Written by Andrew Lohfink

The following is a guide to some binocular targets in the night sky for March 2019. It is aimed at beginners but may come in handy for more experienced observers. Unless otherwise stated these targets can be seen in 8x40 or 10x50 binoculars.

Targets in Gemini



M35 – (NGC2168) : An open cluster with an apparent magnitude of 5.3 which is approximately 2,700 light years from Earth. Binoculars will show a glowing whiteness with a few resolved stars.

M35 Image Credit: Atlas Image [or Atlas Image]



Mu and Eta Geminorum are both red giants – note their orange colour in binoculars. You may be able to get both stars and M35 in the same field of view – a beautiful sight.

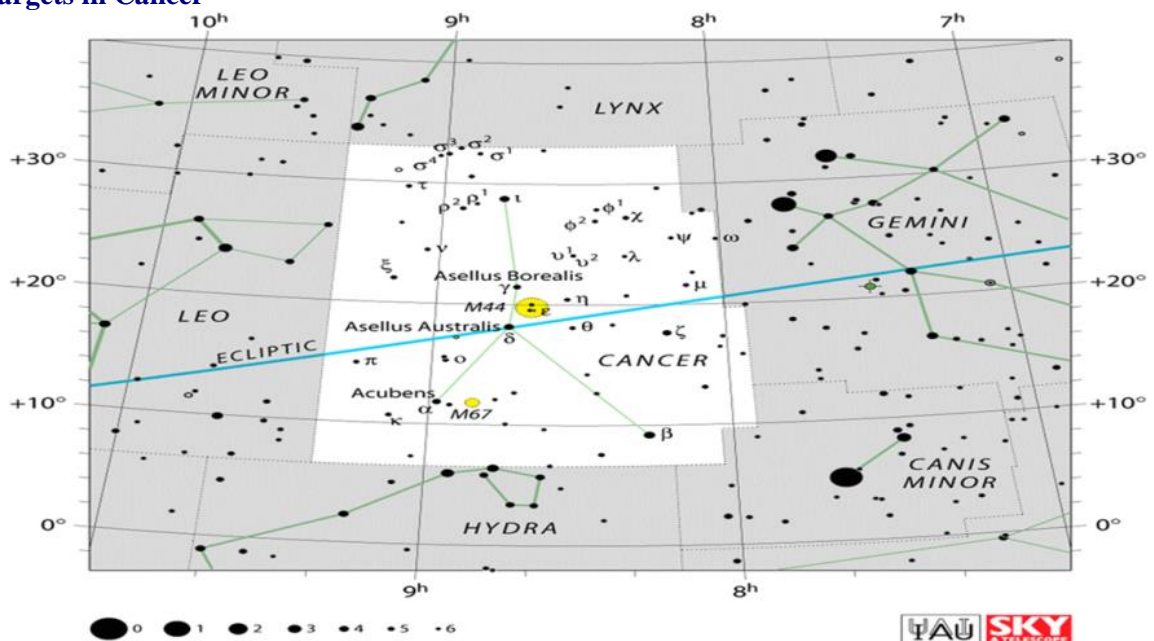
To the east of M35 (left as you look through your binoculars) there is an asterism which looks like an upside down kite (a diamond shaped head and a tail blowing in the cosmic wind).

Castor – Alpha Geminorum. This is the second brightest star in Gemini and is actually a sextuple star system which are all gravitationally bound. Compare the yellow/white colour in binoculars to the orange colour of **Beta Geminorum** or **Pollux** which is a red giant. The different colours are due to the different temperatures in each star with Pollux being the cooler.



Castor and Pollux Image Credit:

Targets in Cancer



M44 – The Beehive Cluster or Praesepe.

This is an open cluster best seen in binoculars. It is approximately 577 light years from Earth and is around 600 million years old. The brightest stars are blue/white (very hot). Look for the four manager stars at each corner which frame the cluster and try to see their colour difference.



Praesepe – M44

M67 is an open cluster between 3.2 and 5 billion years old. You may need 15x70 binoculars to see this cluster depending on your sky conditions.



M67

Look for **Hydra's head** just below cancer. Hydra is the longest constellation but only part is visible from the UK. Different cultures have described this as a potter's wheel, flag or willow branch. The wide angle of view in binoculars frame this well with colours from white to orange



The last target is a challenge with 15x70 and your binoculars may need to be mounted. **Iota Cancri** is a true binary separated by 30 arc seconds. The primary is a yellow giant and the secondary is a white dwarf. They have an orbital period of about 65,000 years.



ι Cancri A and B Image Credit: (Jeffrey Fisher)

Highlight Target – Orion's Belt & Sword



Binocular Calendar Events

2nd March at 06.00 UT: crescent moon west of Venus.

3rd March at 06:30 UT: crescent moon east of Venus.

1st - 3rd March at 06:00 UT: Morning line up of Venus, Moon, Saturn, Jupiter and Antares.

11th March at 19:30 UT: crescent moon south of Mars.

31st March at 20:30 UT: Mars is south of the Pleiades.