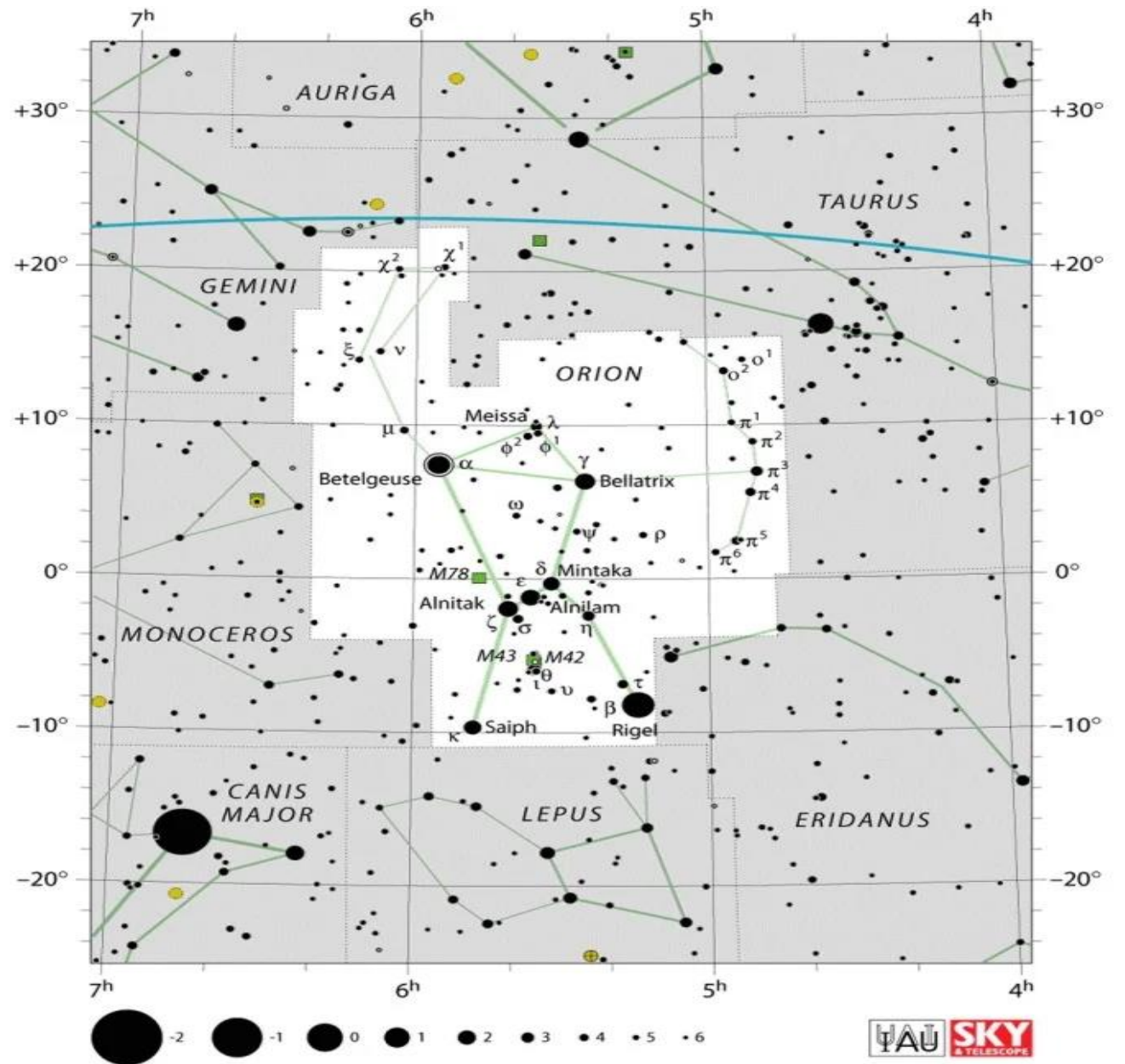


Binocular
Observing
January 2022
by Andrew
Lohfink



Orion Constellation.



Lambda Orionis – Collinder 69 Open Cluster.

The easily recognised constellation of Orion (look for the three stars of Orion's Belt) is visible in the southern night sky. Look at The "Head" of The Hunter. The naked eye visible star is Lambda Orionis which is part of the open cluster Collinder 69. A beautiful triangular shaped cluster is revealed by binoculars of any size with striking star colours. The vibrancy of the star colours are often used to test the quality of binocular optics.



23 Orionis – a Double Star.

The star chart shows how to find 23 Orionis – a binocular double star. A fine blue /yellow pairing they can be resolved in mounted x10 binoculars and are easily visible in x15/16. A beautiful sight.



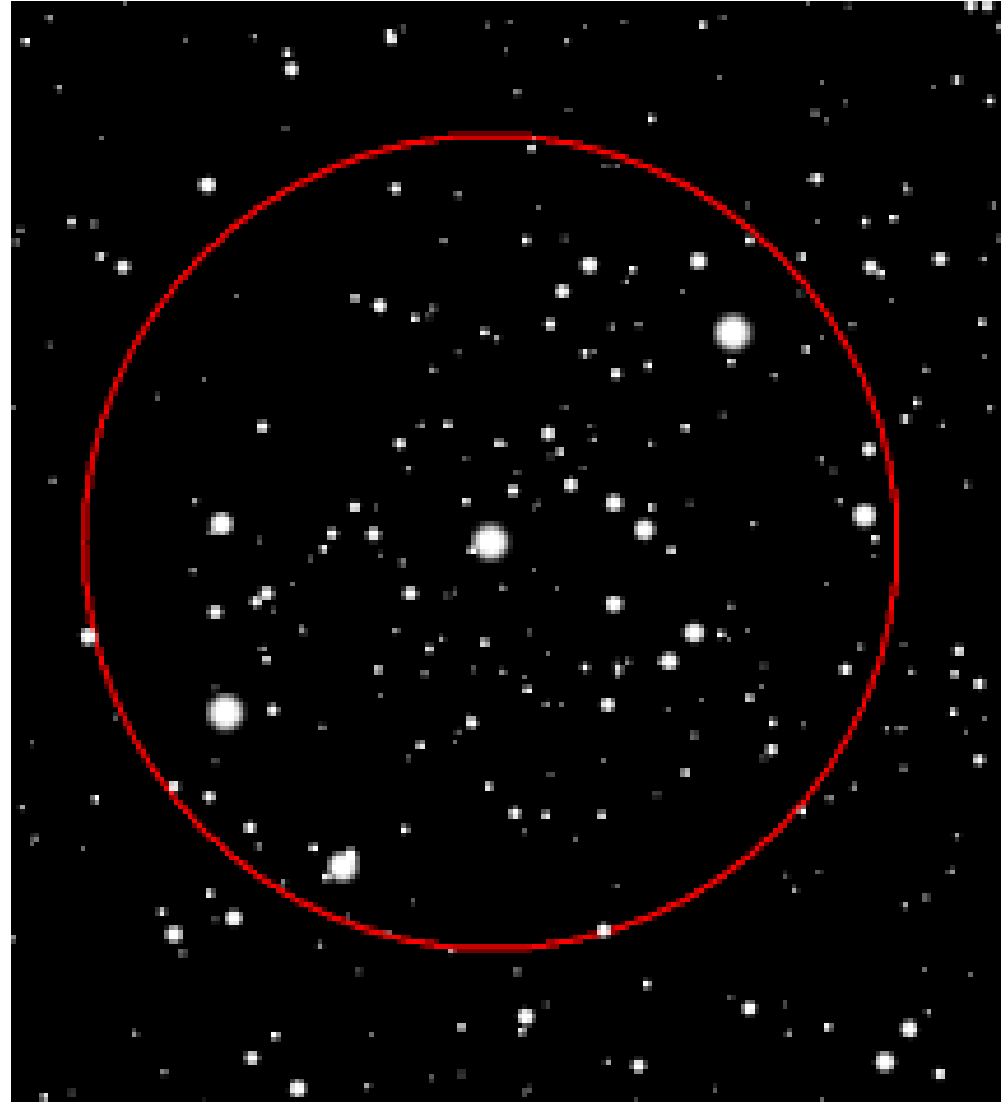
Mintaka – A Double Star.

Look at the most westerly star of Orion's Belt (to the right as you look at it). Mintaka is a double star. In 16x70 binoculars the separation is easy. Here the beauty is in the brightness difference with the primary being much brighter than the secondary. This brightness difference makes it difficult to resolve at lower magnifications.



Orion's Belt – Collinder 70.

Place Orion's Belt in the centre of the field of view of your binoculars. Wider and lower magnifications may get all three of the major stars within the same field of view. Look between Mintaka on the right and Alnilam (the middle star). There is a pretty "S" shaped pattern of stars which is actually an open cluster – Collinder 70.



Orion's Sword Area.

With the naked eye look below to left side of Orion's Belt and a misty glow is visible. This is Orion's Sword and contains a number of binocular targets.



NGC 1981 – An Open Cluster

At the top of “The Sword” you will see the open cluster NGC 1981 – also known as “The Crocodile Cluster” because of its binocular appearance. See if you can make out the legs, head and tail. The cluster is 1300 light years distant and was discovered by Herschel.



Messier 42 – The Orion Nebula

M42 – The great Orion Nebula is perhaps the most famous night sky object. Visible with the naked eye, binoculars of any magnification will reveal clouds of nebulous details. Higher magnifications reveal swirls and spider web strands. The brightness at the centre is The Trapezium Cluster and it is the light from these bright stars that illuminate the nebula. Telescopes can resolve the cluster. It is 1344 light years distant and is the closest star forming region to planet Earth.

