

Culminations of Constellations by Month

Visible from the UK

A celestial body or region of the sky is said to culminate when it crosses an observer's meridian (an imaginary line drawn overhead and through both poles). At this position the object is seen at its highest above the horizon, and all other things being equal it is usually, best observed in this position as the light from it travels through the least amount of atmosphere.

Circumpolar constellations have two culminations each day. The one at highest elevation (above the North Celestial Pole) is known as the upper culmination the other at lowest elevation (below the North Celestial Pole) is known as the lower culmination.

To help you choose your observing targets here are the times of year when constellations are well above the horizon. For this list times are adjusted for British Summer Time as appropriate.

Constellation	Convenient Culminations	Midnight Culminations	Observability
Cetus	19:00 Early January	Late October	Whole
Triangulum	19:00 Mid-January	Late October	Whole
Aries	19:00 Mid-January	Early November	Whole
Fornax	19:00 Late January	Early November	Unfavourable - partially hidden
Perseus	19:00 Late January	Mid-November	Whole - at zenith upper culmination
Eridanus	19:00 Early February	Late November	Only northern stars visible
Taurus	19:00 Mid-February	Late Nov. /Early Dec.	Whole
Lepus	20:00 Mid-February	Mid-December	Whole but quite low
Orion	20:00 Mid-February	Mid-December	Whole
Columba	20:00 Mid-February	Late December	Very unfavourable - partially hidden
Puppis	20:00 Mid-February	Mid-January	Unfavourable - partially hidden
Auriga	20:00 Late February	Late December	Whole - at zenith
Camelopardalis	20:00 Early March	Early January	Whole - face north upper culmination
Canis Major	20:00 Early March	Early January	Whole but low
Monoceros	20:00 Mid-March	Early January	Whole
Gemini	20:00 Mid-March	Mid-January	Whole - high
Ursa Major	23:00 Mid-March	Mid-March	Whole - at zenith upper culmination
Canis Minor	21:00 Late March	Mid-January	Whole
Lynx	21:00 Late March	Late January	Whole - at zenith
Cancer	22:00 Late March	Early February	Whole
Pyxis	22:00 Late March	Early February	Whole but poor; very low in the murk
Hydra	22:00 Early April	Late February	Northern stars visible - partially hidden
Antilia	22:00 Mid-April	Late February	Unfavourable and partially hidden
Sextans	22:00 Mid-April	Late February	Whole
Leo Minor	22:00 Mid-April	Late February	Whole
Leo	22:00 Mid April	Early March	Whole
Crater	23:00 Mid-April	Mid-March	Whole
Corvus	23:00 Early May	Mid-April	Whole
Coma Berenices	23:00 Early May	Late April	Whole - high
Canes Venatici	23:00 Early May in twilight	Late April	Whole - at zenith
Virgo	23:00 Mid-May in twilight	Late April	Whole
Boötes	24:00 Late May in twilight	Late May	Whole - at zenith
Libra	24:00 Late May in twilight	Late May	Whole but poor - low down
Ursa Minor	23:00 Late May in twilight	Late May	Whole - face north upper culmination
Serpens (Caput)*	24:00 Early June in twilight	Early June	Whole
Lupus	24:00 Early June in twilight	Early June	Very unfavourable - mostly hidden
Corona Borealis	24:00 Early June in twilight	Early June	Whole

Draco	24:00 Mid-June in twilight	Mid-June	Whole - at zenith upper culmination
Hercules	24:00 Late June in twilight	Late June	Whole - high
Scorpius	24:00 Late June in twilight	Late June	Unfavourable - partially hidden
Ophiuchus	24:00 Early July in twilight	Late June /Early July	Whole
Serpens (Cauda)*	24:00 Mid-July in twilight	Mid-July	Whole
Scutum	24:00 Late July in twilight	Late July	Whole
Lyra	24:00 Late July in twilight	Late July	Nearly at zenith
Sagittarius	23:00 Early August	Late July	Unfavourable - partially hidden
Aquila	21:00 Late September	Early August	Whole
Sagitta	21:00 Late September	Early August	Whole
Cygnus	20:00 Mid-October	Mid-August	Whole at zenith
Delphinus	20:00 Mid-October	Mid-August	Whole
Vulpecula	20:00 Mid-October	Mid-August	Whole
Equuleus	20:00 Late October	Late August	Whole
Capricornus	20:00 Late October	Late August	Whole but poor; low in the murk
Microscopium	20:00 Late October	Late August	Unfavourable and partially hidden
Aquarius	19:00 Mid-November	Mid-September	Whole
Cepheus	19:00 Mid-November	Mid-September	Whole - face north upper culmination
Lacerta	19:00 Mid-November	Mid-September	Whole - at zenith upper culmination
Piscis Austrinus	19:00 Mid-November	Mid-September	Whole but poor; very low in the murk
Pegasus	19:00 Late November	Late September	Whole - high
Pisces	19:00 Mid-December	Mid-October	Whole
Sculptor	19:00 Mid-December	Mid-October	Unfavourable - partially hidden
Andromeda	19:00 Late December	Mid-October	Nearly at zenith
Cassiopeia	19:00 Late December	Mid-October	Whole - at zenith at upper culmination

*Serpens is a divided constellation which occupies regions either side of Ophiuchus. The eastern area was traditionally known as Serpens Cauda meaning 'serpent's body' and the western zone was Serpens Caput meaning 'serpent's head'.