

MAY HARATUA HIGHLIGHTS

Eta Aquarids

Occurring from 19 April to 28 May, the Eta Aquarids is a meteor shower that is capable of producing up to 30 meteors per hour at its peak, with most of the activity seen here in the Southern Hemisphere. It peaks this year during the first week of May.

While the brightness of the nearly full moon at this time will reduce the visibility of the meteors, the brightest ones will still be visible.

The best viewing conditions are after midnight, through to the early hours of the morning, at a dark location away from light pollution. The meteors will radiate from the constellation Aquarius in the east but can appear anywhere in the sky.

The Eta Aquarids are produced by dust particles that came from Halley's Comet hundreds of years ago. The current path of the comet is too far from Earth to produce meteorites now.

When comets pass the sun, they leave behind a trail of ice and rock particles. When the Earth passes through these trails, the debris collides with our atmosphere and disintegrates, creating the bright streaks we see in the sky.

The debris from Halley's Comet becomes the Eta Aquarids in May and the Orionids in October.

Orion and Scorpius

This month, we have a window of opportunity to see two constellations that tell a story together, but that we usually see at opposite times of the year.

During summer, you may have seen the constellation Orion in the sky, easy to spot due to the three bright stars in a row that make up Orion's belt.

As we head into winter, Orion is moving down towards the horizon in the west, and another constellation is rising in the east – Scorpius.

The names of these constellations both originate in Greek mythology. Orion was a skilled hunter, who liked to boast that he could hunt any animal on Earth.

In one of the many, and sometimes conflicting stories about Orion, the Earth goddess, Gaia, was upset about this, and sent a giant scorpion to see if Orion could hunt it. It turned out that Orion wasn't as powerful as he claimed, and the scorpion won the fight.

After the battle, Zeus placed both Orion and Scorpius in the stars, as a memorial to the hero's death. As Orion sets below the horizon in the west, we can see Scorpius rising in the east.

Remember a moment in time with a personalised star chart from Otago Museum!

Each chart shows the position of stars, constellations, planets, and the Sun, and the phase of the Moon for the exact time, date, and location of your special event.

Save 10% on your chart by enjoying a show in the Perpetual Guardian Planetarium while you wait!

Place your order at the Museum Shop.

THE SKY TONIGHT

TE ĀHUA O TE RAKI I TĒNEI PŌ



MAY HARATUA SKY GUIDE

PERPETUAL
GUARDIAN
PLANETARIUM



MOON MARAMA PHASES

Phase

Date

First Quarter

Friday, 1 May

Full Moon

Thursday, 7 May

Third Quarter

Friday, 15 May

New Moon

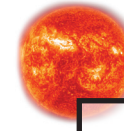
Saturday, 23 May

First Quarter

Saturday, 30 May



MAY HARATUA 2020



SUN RĀ RISE / SUNSET

Date

Friday, 1 May

Rise

7.34am

Set

5.35pm

Friday, 15 May

7.51am

5.16pm

Sunday, 31 May

8.08am

5.02pm

PLANETS WHETU ĀO

Venus

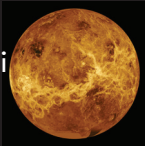
Meremere-tū-ahiahi

1 May until 7.01pm

15 May until 6.19pm

31 May not visible

In Taurus



Jupiter

Hine-i-tiweka

1 May after 10.18pm

15 May after 9.24pm

31 May after 8.15pm

In Sagittarius



Saturn

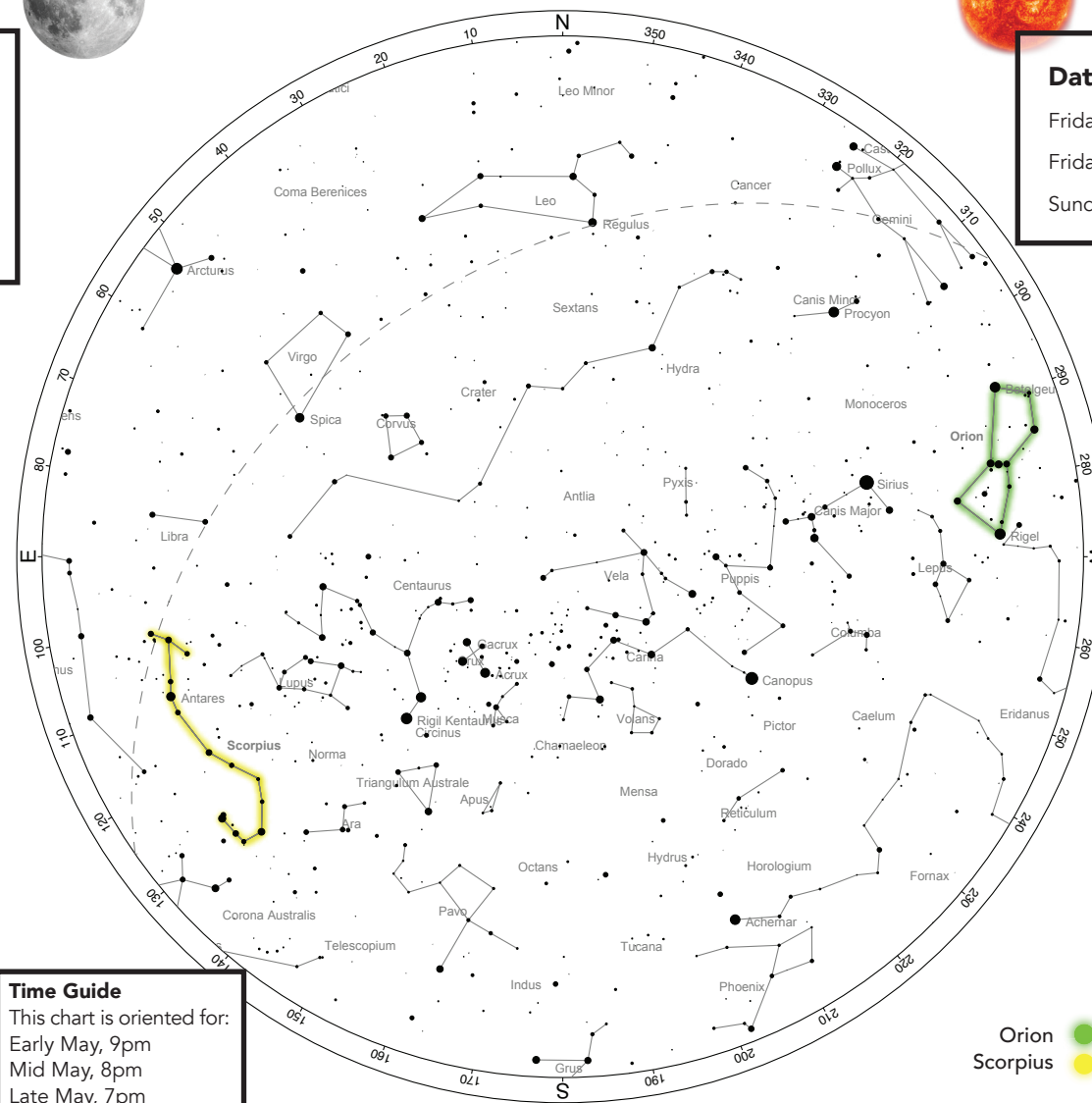
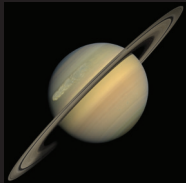
Pareārau

1 May after 10.44pm

15 May after 11.48pm

31 May after 8.40pm

In Capricornus



Time Guide

This chart is oriented for:

Early May, 9pm

Mid May, 8pm

Late May, 7pm

Orion ●
Scorpius ●

How to use this chart: Hold the chart up to the sky and rotate it, so the direction you are looking matches the direction printed on the bottom. For example, if you are looking south, place 'S' at the lower edge. Stars rise in the east and set in the west like the Sun. As the Earth turns, the sky appears to rotate clockwise around the south celestial pole. The sky makes a small shift to the west every night, as the Earth rotates around the Sun.

ANTARES

The best way to find the constellation Scorpius is to look for its brightest star, Antares. Appearing red when viewed with the naked eye, this star was said to represent the heart of the scorpion.

Antares is a red supergiant star, and while its size is not precisely known, its mass is calculated to be at least 11 times larger than our sun.

While it appears as a single star when viewed with the naked eye, Antares is actually a binary star – a system of two stars that orbit closely around each other.

The word Antares comes from the Ancient Greek, meaning 'rival to Ares' or 'opponent to Mars', named because of its red hue, just like that of the planet Mars.

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