

THE SKY THIS MONTH

AUGUST 2009

JUPITER RULES THE SUMMER SKIES

As Saturn sinks into the western twilight skies to say goodbye, The King of the Planets once again dominates the summer skies.

Jupiter is not difficult to find, since it will be one of the brightest objects in the evening sky. Jupiter will be near the eastern edge of the constellation Capricornus (The Sea Goat) for the entire month.

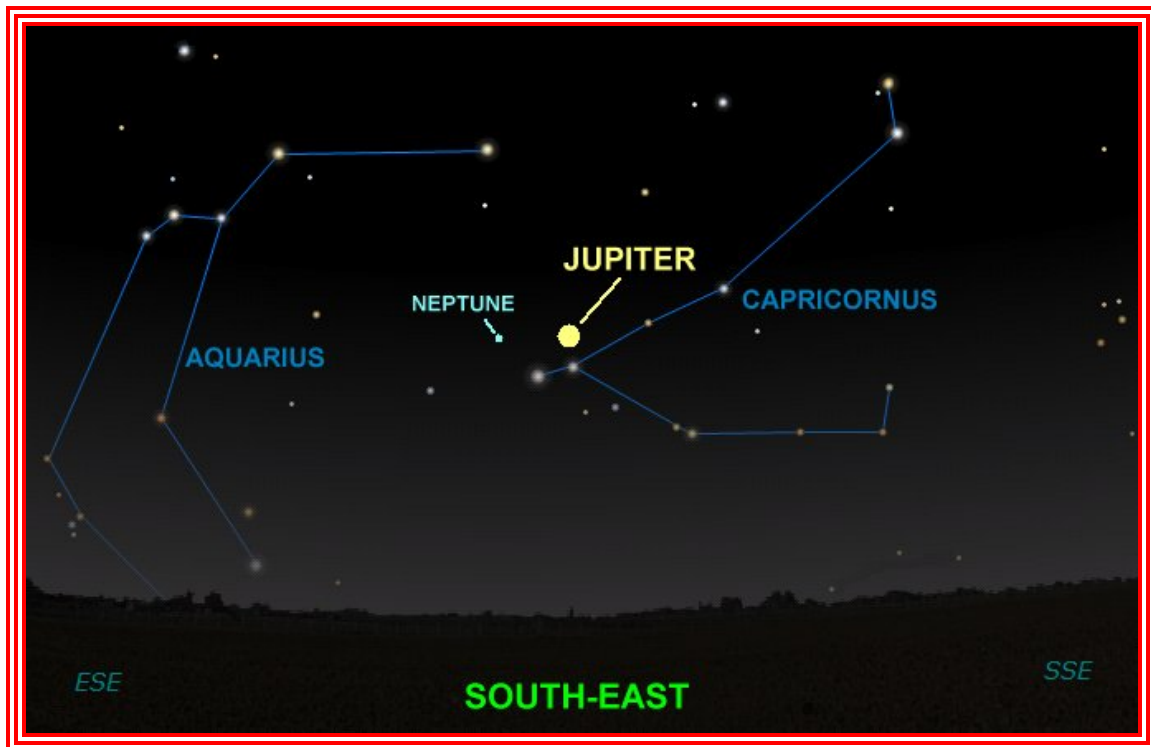


Figure 1: The planet Jupiter as it will appear at 10 p.m. August 15th. Much dimmer Neptune will lie 4 degrees east of Jupiter on that night.

Some might believe that Jupiter and Saturn lie on opposite sides of our sky all the time. Jupiter and Saturn have much longer orbit times (Jupiter's period is 11.9 years; Saturn's is 29.5 years), therefore they can be seen in a specific

configuration for a long time. Jupiter will eventually “catch up” with Saturn so that they will appear only 1/10 of a degree apart on December 21, 2020.

Telescope owners in southern Ontario will have a tough time discerning Jupiter’s finer details because of its low altitude of 30 degrees or less. However, Jupiter’s four Galilean moons (Io, Europa, Ganymede and Callisto) will still be easily visible through even the smallest telescopes.

On July 19, an amateur astronomer in Australia observed a new spot on Jupiter’s southern hemisphere. The spot was most likely caused by a small asteroid slamming into the planet. This is just one example of the amazing potential of discovery that astronomy contains!



Figure 2: The new small dark spot on Jupiter is indicated on this image taken on July 19, 2009 by Anthony Wesley in Murrumbateman, Australia.

MILL OF KINTAIL PUBLIC NIGHT SKY TOURS

Celebrate the **International Year of Astronomy** by attending our Night Sky Conservation free public summer night sky tours! Both events will be held at the Mill of Kintail gatehouse.

Our first sky tour will begin at **8 p.m. Friday, August 21, 2009** (weather permitting).

Our second sky tour will begin at **7 p.m. Friday, September 18, 2009** (weather permitting).

There will be three rain dates for each event. For more information, including tour schedules, please visit www.castor2.ca/nsc/04_Tours.

MILL OF KINTAIL AUTUMN ASTRONOMY COURSE

Do you ever read an interesting article about astronomy and wish there was a place to go to learn more about the science? Do you wish there was an astronomy course that focused on exciting current events in astronomy? Do you wish for a one-on-one exposure to astronomy and the wonders of the heavens? If your answer to each question is “yes”, you are a perfect student for the Night Sky Conservation Autumn Astronomy Course!

Every class will focus on and discuss the science behind exciting current astronomical events! You will have plenty of opportunities to ask questions and contribute your input.

After each class, weather permitting, there will be an observing session with the instructor's 8-inch reflecting telescope. You will be free to bring your own binoculars and/or telescopes to the protected Mill of Kintail night skies.

Each class will begin at 7:30 every Friday evening at the Mill of Kintail Gatehouse beginning on **September 11th** and ending on **November 20th**. The cost for the entire course is \$75 per student.

For more information, including enrolment methods, please visit www.castor2.ca/nsc/05_Courses.

About Night Sky Conservation: www.castor2.ca/nsc

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