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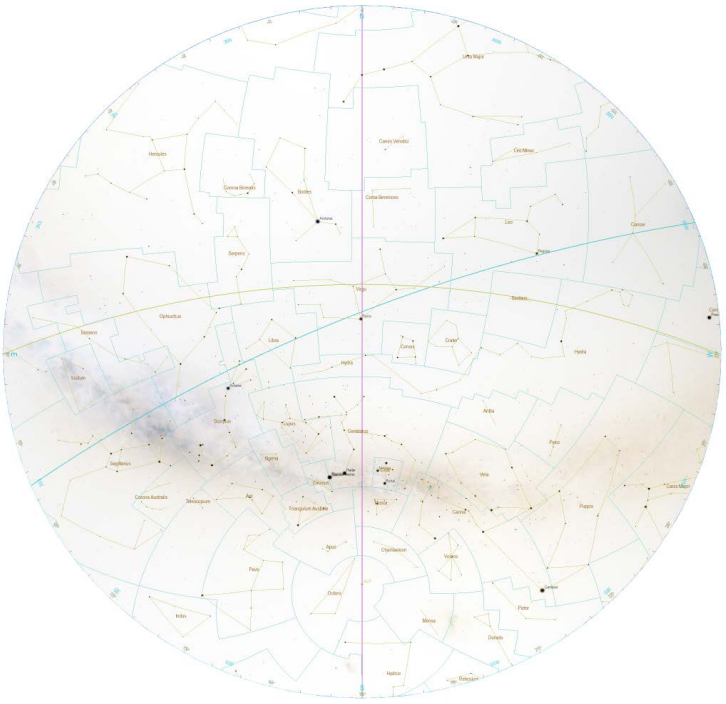
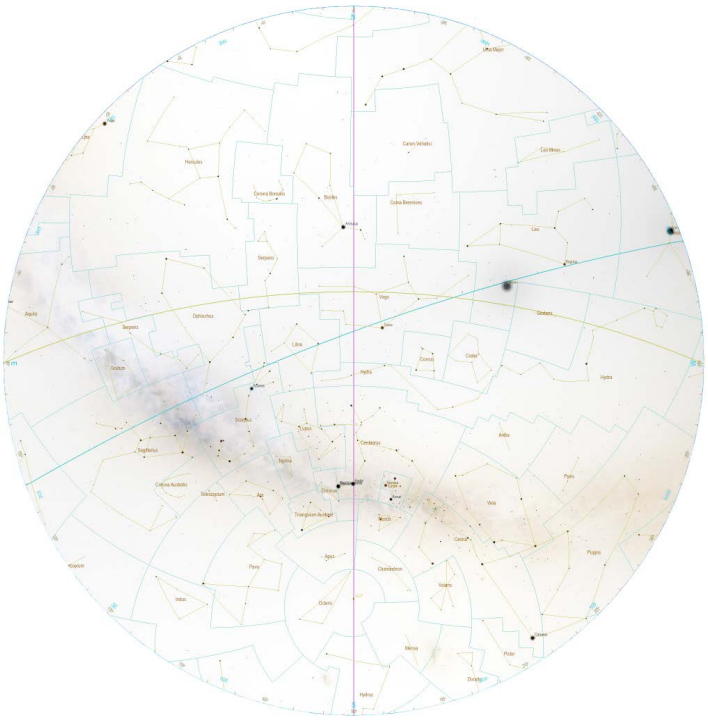
Astro News June 2026

2026 by Lutz von Dewitz for the Namibia Scientific Society

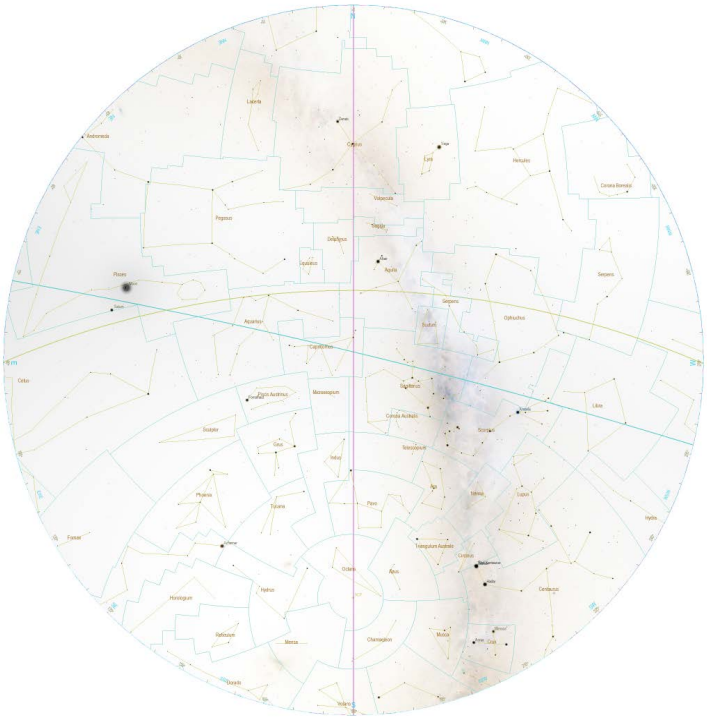


Skychart at Windhoek on 10 June 2026
at 21h00 (GMT + 2hH Central African Time)

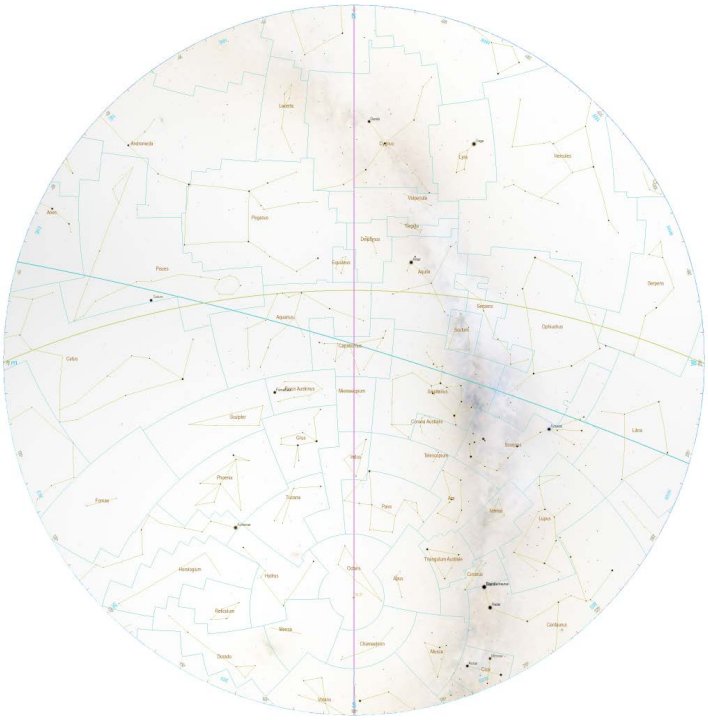


Skychart at Windhoek on 20 June 2026
at 21h00 (GMT + 2hH Central African Time)

Ecliptic Line – Celestial Equator – Meridian – Constellation Borders / SCP = Southern Celestial Pole – Z = Zenith



Skychart at Windhoek on 10 June 2026
at 04h00 (GMT + 2hH Central African Time)



Skychart at Windhoek on 20 June 2026
at 04h00 (GMT + 2hH Central African Time)

Ecliptic Line – Celestial Equator – Meridian – Constellation Borders / SCP = Southern Celestial Pole – Z = Zenith

Moon Phases
08 June 2026 - Last Quarter
15 June 2026 - New Moon
21 June 2026 - First Quarter
30 June 2026 - Full Moon

Solar System

Planet Visibility	Rise	Culm.	Set
Mercury	09:13	14:34	19:56
Venus	10:08	15:32	20:56
Mars	04:53	10:26	15:59
Jupiter	09:45	15:10	20:35
Saturn	02:11	08:08	14:06

Planets in gray are not visible
Above Times accurate for 15 June 2026 and CAT

Mercury becomes visible at about 18:33 above the north-western horizon as dusk deepens into darkness. It then remains low and gradually sinks back towards the horizon. On 20 June, Mercury reaches the highest point of its May–July 2026 evening apparition. It will shine at magnitude 0.4 and reach a peak altitude of 20°, making it reasonably placed but still somewhat difficult to observe.

Venus will soon pass behind the Sun. It becomes visible at about 18:30 CAT, some 23° above the north-western horizon, as dusk deepens. It then drops steadily towards the horizon and sets about two hours after the Sun.

Mars recently passed behind the Sun at solar conjunction. From Namibia, it is visible in the dawn sky, rising at 05:00 and climbing to an altitude of 21° above the north-eastern horizon before fading from view as dawn breaks.

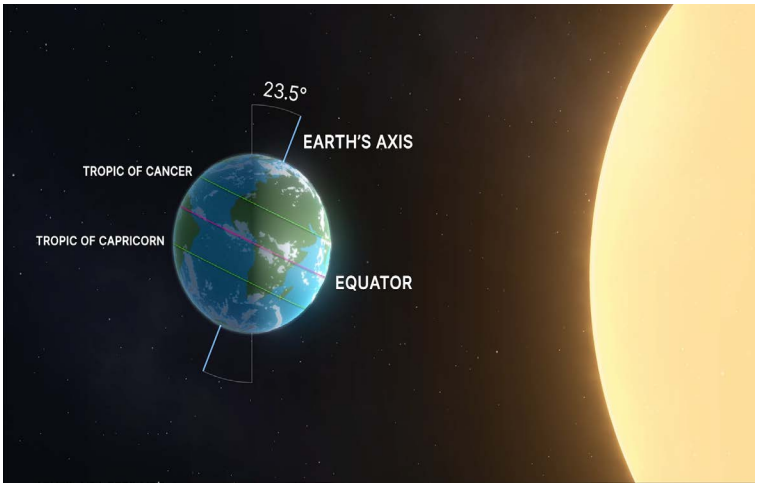
Jupiteris still an early evening object and will become visible shortly after sunset, 31° above your north-western horizon. It will then sink towards the horizon, setting around 3 hours after the Sun.

Saturn it is visible in the dawn sky, rising at shortly after 03:00 and reaching an altitude of 49° above the north-eastern horizon before fading from view at dawn.

Other Occurrences:
In 2026, the June solstice occurs at 08:25 UTC on 21 June.

What it is: This is the moment when the Sun reaches its northernmost point in the sky, on the celestial Tropic of Cancer, 23.5° north of the celestial equator. At that time, the Northern Hemisphere is tilted most strongly towards the Sun, while the Southern Hemisphere is tilted away by the same amount.

What it means in the Southern Hemisphere: The Sun rises and sets at its northernmost points on the horizon and reaches its lowest midday position of the year. The June solstice therefore marks the winter solstice in the Southern Hemisphere, bringing the shortest day and longest night of the year and signalling the astronomical start of winter south of the Equator.



Close approach of Venus and Jupiter on 9 Jun 2026: The planets Venus and Jupiter will make a close approach, passing within 1°36′ of each other. The pair will become visible at around 18:30, 27° above the north-western horizon, after dusk.

They will then sink towards the horizon, setting 2 hours and 30 minutes after the Sun. Venus will be at mag -4.0; and Jupiter will be at mag -1.9. Both objects will lie in the constellation Gemini. They will be too widely separated to fit within the field of view of a telescope but will be visible to the naked eye or through a pair of binoculars.

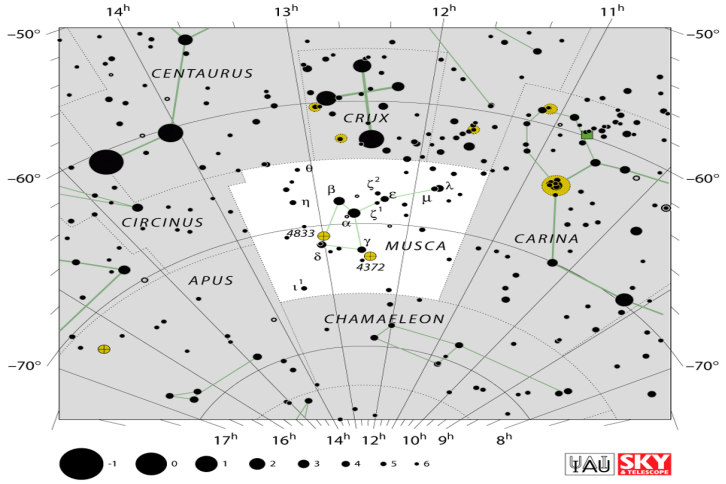
By the end of the month, the Milky Way arcs from the west to the east-southeast across the southern sky, with Sirius and Canopus shining nearby in the west and south-west. The constellations Canis Major, Argo, Crux, Musca, Centaurus, Lupus and Scorpius lie tangled along its bright band. By late June, the galactic centre in Sagittarius is already rising in the early evening, and later on winter nights the Milky Way becomes especially striking as the centre of the galaxy passes almost overhead. Seen from outside, the Milky Way would resemble a glowing, slightly warped disc with a central bulge.

Constellation of the Month
Musca
Compiled by Lutz von Dewitz

Musca constellation is located in the southern sky, just to the south of Crux, the Southern Cross. Its name means “the fly” in Latin. The constellation was created by the Dutch astronomer Petrus Plancius from the observations of Dutch navigators Pieter Dirkszoon Keyser and Frederick de Houtman in the late 16th century. It was first depicted in a celestial atlas in 1603, in Johann Bayer’s Uranometria.

Musca has several notable stars and deep sky objects, among them Nova Muscae 1991, the binary system with a black hole, the Spiral Planetary Nebula (NGC 5189), the Hourglass Nebula (MyCn 18), the globular clusters NGC 4833 and NGC 4372 and the Dark Doodad Nebula.

Musca is the 77th constellation in size, occupying an area of 138 square degrees. It is located in the third quadrant of the southern hemisphere (SQ3) and can be seen at latitudes between +10° and -90°. The neighboring constellations are Apus, Carina, Centaurus, Chamaeleon, Circinus and Crux.



Musca stars Alpha Muscae is the brightest star in Musca. It is a blue-white star in transition between the dwarf and subgiant stages, with a spectral type of B2 IV-V. The star shines at magnitude 2.69 and lies about 315 light-years from the Sun.With 8.8 times the Sun's mass, 4.8 times its radius, and roughly 4,000 times its luminosity, Alpha Muscae is a powerful star. It also rotates rapidly, with a projected rotational velocity of 114 km/s, and is a Beta Cephei variable, so its brightness changes as its surface pulsates.er regions

Beta Muscae is a binary star system with components separated by 1.206 arcseconds. Together they have an apparent magnitude of 3.05, lie about 340 light-years from the Sun, and orbit each other roughly every 194 years. Both stars are blue-white main-sequence stars of spectral types B2 V and B3 V. Beta Muscae A has a magnitude of 3.51 and a mass of 7.35 Suns, while Beta Muscae B has a magnitude of 4.01 and a mass of 6.40 Suns.Deep-sky objects in Musca NGC 5189 is a planetary nebula in Musca with an apparent magnitude of 8.2. It lies about 3,000 light-years away and was discovered in July 1826 by the Scottish astronomer James Dunlop.er regions

Compiled by Lutz von Dewitz

Credits:
SkyChart: Cartes du Ciel / Stellarium / Wikipedia
Data / Photos: https://in-the-sky.org / ASSA Sky Guide 2026, Wikipedia, constellationdirectory.org, constellation-guide.com / NASA, STScI, WikiSky, Public Domain, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=4576771, ESA-Hubbel