

WEEKLY SKY REPORT

March 10 – March 16, 2024

SPACE STATIONS

The International Space Station is back in our evening skies with passes this week:

March 12 9:00pm South West, Altitude 20°; 9:01pm South West, Alt. 51°; Magnitude -3.1

March 13 8:12pm South West, Altitude 20°; 8:14pm South East, Alt. 50°; Magnitude -3.6

March 15 8:12pm South West, Altitude 20; 8:14pm North West, Alt. 50°; Magnitude -2.9

CONSTELLATIONS

This is a great time of year to see some of the most striking constellations. That big man of the night, Orion, with his 3-starred belt and the glowing red chip on his shoulder, Betelgeuse, is in the southern sky. His good dog Canis with his shiny nose Sirius, is chasing Lepus the jackrabbit right past Orion's feet. Orion is too busy to notice as he's dealing with Taurus the bull with his long horns ready to charge him. The Gemini twins are arm in arm above Orion watching the action. Meanwhile, Leo the lion is bounding from the Berkeley Hills and the twins better watch out!

LAUNCHES

SpaceX's Starship is on the launch pad and ready to go! They hope to try for the third liftoff on March 14th. Starship stands at 400 feet tall, and is the largest and most powerful rocket ever flown—okay, the first two test rockets blew up, but so did a bunch of the first Falcon rocket tests. Now there have been 316 successful launches and only 2 failures—and one partial success. This test, as with the first two, aims to send the Starship around Earth to land in the Indian Ocean. The first stage booster will splash down in the Gulf of Mexico. None of this has been easy—hey, it's rocket science! SpaceX has spent around \$3 billion in the ten years it has been developing the base and rockets in Boca Chica, Texas. Now we get to see if it can get one off the ground—and not explode! Watch the launch on [spacex.com](https://www.spacex.com).

Telescopes @ Berkeley Public Library!

We have 5 Orion StarBlast Astro Reflector Telescopes that you can borrow! Each BPL Branch has a telescope, which may be borrowed for 1 week. Place a hold on it and then pick it up from your branch when it is ready. It is fairly easy to carry at 13 lbs., and stands about 2 feet tall.

Here's what you get:

"A great compact grab-and-go telescope designed for entry-level and intermediate astronomy enthusiasts. Substantial 4.5" aperture and fast f/4 focal ratio provides bright, detailed views of solar system targets like the Moon and planets, as well as wide-field celestial objects like nebulas and star clusters."



Much of the information for this report comes from the wonderful web site, Heavens Above. You can enter your home city location and bookmark it for easy access: <http://www.heavens-above.com>. Other stellar sources include: <http://www.space.com> and <http://www.nasa.gov>. And check spacex.com for launches.

Binoculars @ Berkeley Public Library!

Thanks to a generous donation from the Cal Falcons program, we have 9 Vortex-Raptor binocular kits that you can put on hold and pick up at the location of your choice.

Here's what you get:

Porro prism performance in a mid-size, wide-angle design, the Raptors deliver a bright, crisp image with excellent color fidelity - even in low light conditions. With a wide range of interpupillary distance, they can easily be adjusted to fit anyone in the family, making them ideal for serious, hard-core youth hunters. The kit comes with a copy of The Sibley Field Guide to Birds of Western America and a pocket guide to local birds of the SF Bay Area. But it is also great for looking at planets, the moon and the stars!

