

WEEKLY SKY REPORT

July 5 – July 11, 2026

READING RECOMMENDATIONS

Nightfaring: In Search of the Disappearing Darkness by Megan Eaves-Egenes.

This is a great book to read if you are planning summer overnight trips to parks and other places removed from the lights of cities. The author writes about her travels, as the dust jacket describes, from "New Zealand to Uzbekistan, Italy to Japan, Germany to the Himalayas, exploring the many ways that humans have depended on, feared, and mythologized darkness." She describes how stars have affected her life and how other cultures have interpreted stars in different and in similar ways. The stories of the stars seen throughout history is fascinating and the author finds many wonderful examples of the night sky illuminating the world.

CONSTELLATIONS

Leo the lion looks like it is getting ready to pounce on San Francisco as it gets dark. In the middle of the sky and to the north east of Leo, Ursa Major is pointing the way with the two stars on the right of the pitcher to her North Star, her cub Ursa Minor. Mama bear's tail is also pointing to the red giant star Arcturus, known as the Guardian of the Bear. It is the fourth-brightest star in the sky and is an aging star, about 7 billion years old. While it has close to the same mass as our sun, Arcturus is 25 times our star's size and 170 times as luminous. This star rests at the bottom of the constellation Boötes, also known as the asterism The Giant Ice Cream Cone; next to it is Corona Borealis, or the asterism The Scoop of Ice Cream that Fell off the Giant Ice Cream Cone.

PLANETS

Venus and Jupiter are a stunning sight in the western sky as it gets dark. If you have a clear enough sky, you may see Mercury hanging just below Jupiter and a little north of the pair. Saturn is now sharing the morning sky with Mars. Come August, Saturn will return to the east in the late night sky. Mars will have to wait until November.

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Telescopes @ Berkeley Public Library!

We have a Orion StarBlast Astro Reflector Telescope that you can borrow 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 nebulae and star clusters."

We also have pairs of binoculars to check out!



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!

