

Welcome to Hungry Mother State Park

Attention all stargazers the night sky is calling. Here at the park we have some prime viewing areas located at the spillway, the beach front, and the ballfield behind Ferrell Hall. Year-around the sky is filled with stars, planets, and constellations with stories to tell. Here in the Northern Hemisphere we have circumpolar constellations that can be viewed all year long. What are we waiting for? Let's go stargazing.

January Constellations

Orion
Taurus

February Constellations

Auriga
Canis Major
Gemini

Star Gazing Smart Phone Apps

Star Walk 2
Night Sky
Star Tracker
Sky Map



Please watch for additional monthly Stargazing guides to learn more about stargazing in our park.

For more information about Virginia State Parks, please visit:
www.virginiastateparks.gov

Discovery Center Hours of Operation:

8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. daily



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Virginia State Parks

Hungry Mother State Park

Stargazing in the Park



January & February

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Virginia State Parks

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January Constellations

Orion (The Hunter)

Orion, the Hunter, is by far the most famous seasonal constellation, as no other is more distinct or bright as this northern winter constellation. The famous Orion's Belt makes the hunter easy to find in the night sky, which is made of three bright stars in a straight line. Orion is honored by having both a Greek and Roman version of his myth. In one, Orion was a famed hunter, who had boasted that no creature could kill him. Hera then sent a scorpion to sting the hunter. Orion smashed the animal with his club, but not before he was poisoned. Both are now constellations on opposite sides of the sky. They cannot be seen at the same time. A different story tells of the love between Orion and the goddess, Artemis. One day, Orion was swimming out in the sea. Apollo, who hated Orion, bet his sister that she couldn't hit the object in the sea with her bow. Artemis didn't realize it was her lover, and shot Orion with an arrow. When she later found out what she had done, she honored the hunter by putting him in the sky.



Taurus (The Bull)

The Greeks thought this group of stars represented Zeus in disguise as a white bull. He tricked Europa into climbing on his back. He then swam out to sea and carried her to Crete. In Egypt, the constellation was a reminder of Apis, the Bull of Memphis. He served as a servant to Osiris, god of the Sun. Just as famous as Taurus is the group of stars within it. The seven stars that lie on the Bull's shoulder were believed by the Greeks, to be the Seven Sisters, daughters of Atlas and Pleione. It was told that they asked Zeus to place them in the sky to escape Orion, who was desperately pursuing them. Little did they know that Orion would be placed right next to Taurus in the night sky.



February Constellations

Auriga (The Charioteer)

Auriga is holding the reins of a chariot with his right hand and carrying a goat and its two young on his left arm. In mythology, Auriga is most frequently identified with Erichthonius, king of Athens and son of the fire god Hephaestus. Raised by the goddess Athena, Erichthonius, was taught many skills. He would tame and harness four horses to a chariot, imitating the chariot of the Sun god. Zeus was impressed and later

placed Erichthonius among the stars. Erichthonius is usually credited for the invention of the four-horse chariot, the quadriga.

Canis Major (The Great Dog)

In the Greek myth, it is said that this constellation, along with Canis Minor, are Orion's hunting dogs. Canis Major was one of the most important constellations in ancient times because the brightest star in the sky, Sirius the Dog Star, is part of it. Only the Moon, Venus, Jupiter and Mars are brighter. Those that lived near the Nile River used the star to signal the flooding of the Nile. This special occasion represented the return from the dead of the Sun god Osiris.

Gemini (The Twins)

Many different civilizations saw this pair in the sky. Gemini is one of the few constellations that actually looks like the figure it represents. The Ancient Greeks saw the twins Castor and Pollux, sons of Leda and Zeus. The Romans saw the brothers Romulus and Remus, two heroes that founded Rome. Both the Greeks and the Romans believed the twins were raised by the centaur, Chiron.

