

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-round 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 you waiting for? Let's go stargazing.

March Constellations

Cancer
Canis Minor

April Constellations

Hydra
Leo

May Constellations

Corvus
Virgo

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:

10 a.m. - 6:30 p.m. daily



.....

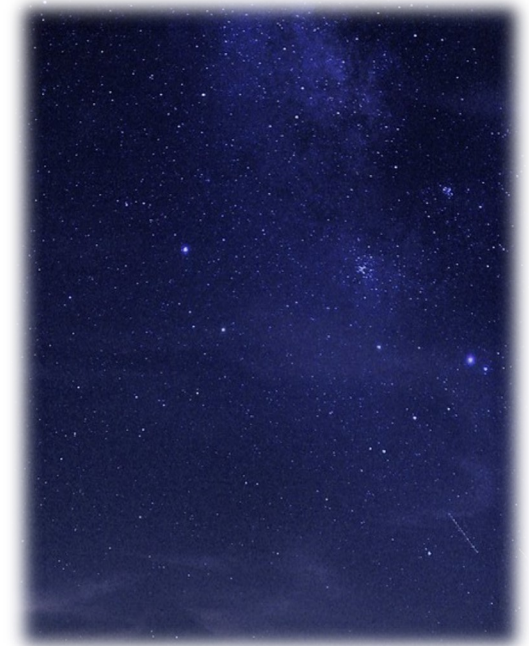
Interpretation Office:

Phone: 276-781-7413
hungrymother@dcr.virginia.gov

Virginia State Parks

Hungry Mother State Park

Stargazing in the Park



March/April/May



.....

www.virginiastateparks.gov

March Constellations

Cancer (The Crab)

According to an ancient Greek legend, the figure of a gigantic crab was placed in the nighttime sky by the goddess Hera to form the constellation Cancer. Hera swore to kill Heracles, the most famous Greek hero. Hera attempted to kill Heracles many times, but each time his incredible physical strength allowed him to survive. Hera then decided to cast a spell of madness on Heracles, causing him to commit a great crime. In order to be forgiven, he had to perform twelve difficult tasks. One of these tasks was destroying the terrible nine-headed water-serpent, Hydra. During the battle between Heracles and Hydra, the goddess Hera sent a giant crab to aid the serpent. But Heracles, being so strong, killed the crab by smashing its shell with his foot. As a reward for its service, Hera placed the crab in the night sky.

Canis Minor (The Little Dog)

In the Greek myth, it is said that this constellation, along with Canis Major, are Orion's hunting dogs.

April Constellations

Hydra (The Serpent)

Hydra is the longest constellation in the sky. It is so long that it takes more than six hours to rise completely. In the myth, the people of Lerna were terrorized by this serpent; a horrifying beast with many snake-like heads, one of which was immortal. The heads of the Hydra could grow back even if they were cut off. Anyone approaching the Hydra was killed by its venomous breath. The destruction of the Hydra was one of the many difficult tasks that Heracles had to perform to show that he was sorry for a terrible crime he committed. Heracles was so brave and strong that he succeeded in killing the Hydra, with the help of his nephew Iolaus. Every time Heracles would cut off one head of the beast, Iolaus would sear its injured neck, preventing new heads from growing back. During their fight, an enormous crab emerged from the swamp to aid the Hydra. Heracles killed the crab by crushing its shell with his foot. Heracles buried the Hydra's head under a heavy rock.

Leo (The Lion)

During the dry season in ancient Egypt, the lions of the desert came close to the valley of the Nile when the river flooded, which used to happen when the sun was in Leo. Some have interpreted this as the origin of the name of the constellation. The ancient Sumerians, Babylonians, Persians, Syrians, Greeks and Romans all recognized this constellation as a lion. The Greeks believed

the god Zeus placed the figure of a gigantic lion in the sky with the rest of the stars. The people of Nemea were terrorized by the lion. Several times they tried to destroy the beast. Heracles was ordered by the king, Euryshtheus, to kill the Nemean lion. When Heracles reached the cave where the beast was living, he realized all his weapons were useless against the lion, thus Heracles killed the lion by strangling it with his bare hands. When the beast was dead, Heracles used its pelt as a coat and the head as a helmet.

May Constellations

Corvus (The Raven)

The raven was Apollo's sacred bird in Greek mythology. According to the myth, the raven originally had white feathers. Apollo told the bird to watch over Coronis, one of his lovers, who was pregnant at the time. Coronis gradually lost interest in Apollo and fell in love with a mortal man, Ischys. When the raven reported the affair to Apollo, the god was so enraged that the bird did nothing to stop it, that he flung a curse on it, scorching the raven's feathers. That, the legend goes, is why all ravens are black.

Virgo (The Maiden)

The constellation represents almost every famous and powerful female in mythology, including Athena, Artemis, Persephone and Demeter. She is usually carrying a grain of wheat and a staff.

