

## SPAXTON NIGHTS.

August is upon us and truly dark skies have returned, so back to the star gazing.

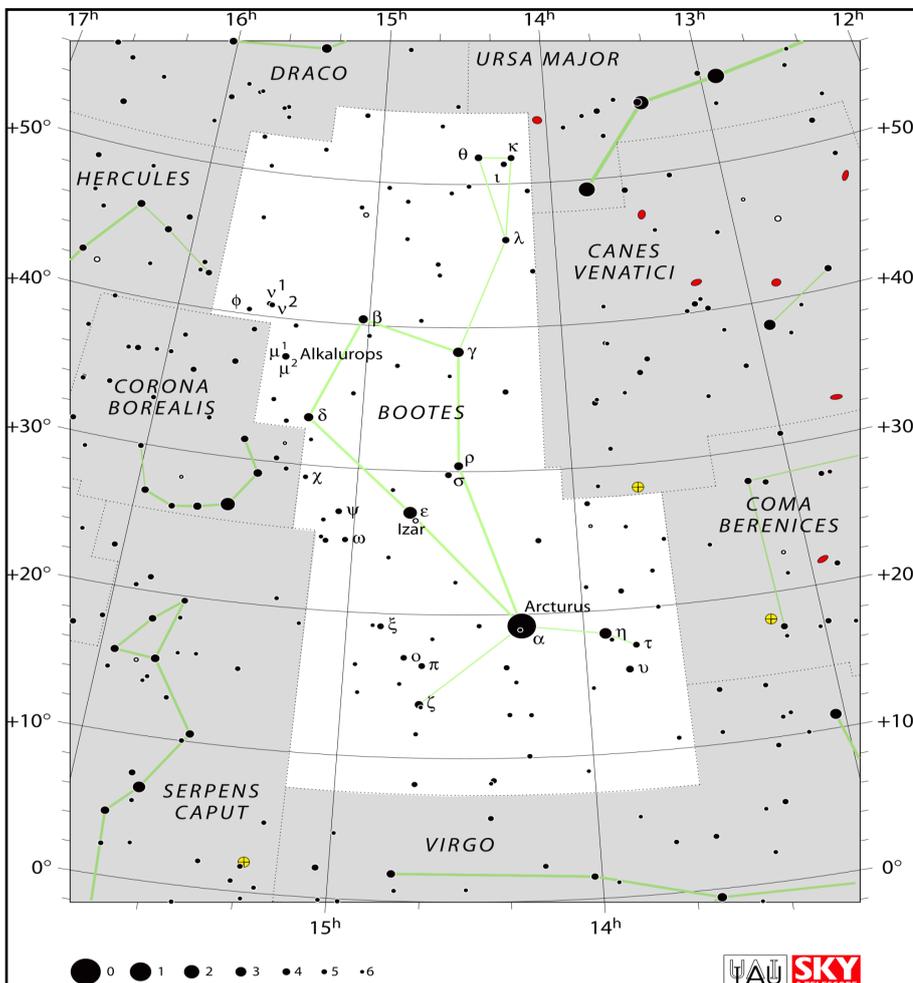
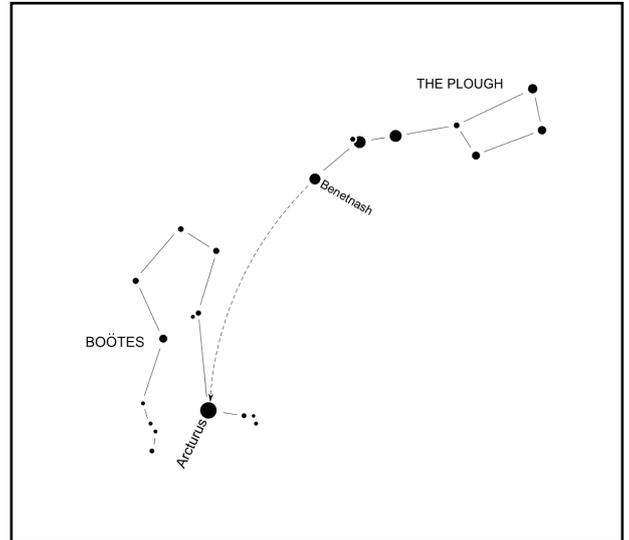
Bootes (pronounced Bo-oh-tis), is a large constellation representing a herdsman. Very easily found, it has one of the brightest stars in the sky, called Arcturus. So to find Bootes look for the plough and follow the curve of the handle down and you will come to Arcturus. (The nice diagrams below and to the right show it better than I could describe it). It is a lovely pale orange colour.

Take a look at Alkalurops through a pair of binoculars. It is a lovely double star (it's shown in the lower diagram, to the left of Bootes, near the top of the constellation).

While you have your bins out, swing over to Corona Borealis (To the left of Bootes in the diagram below). It's a lovely constellation representing a crown and has a bright star called Alphecca, sort of in the centre so it looks like a gem stone.

Let's hop over to the other side of Bootes to Coma Berenices (also in this diagram). This constellation represents a load of...hair, yes hair. Greek mythology tells us it belonged to Queen Berenice of Egypt, who cut it off to thank the gods for the safe return of her husband after some war or another, and he put it in the sky so all could see how much she loved him - a little extreme if you ask me...it would be like my wife shaving her head because I got back safely from Tesco but that's those Greeks for you.

When you look at Coma Berenices with the naked eye you should see a milky patch, but with your bins you should see a wonderfully rich cluster of stars.



So to finish off, just one more thing to look out for; look to the south western sky (towards Broomfield) about one hour after sunset and you should see a group of stars quite low to the horizon. There will be a bright star with a ruddy hue to the left (called Antares), then three stars in a vertical line, then another soft yellow star to the right of them. That soft yellow star is in fact the planet Saturn, and the other stars are the head of Scorpio the scorpion. I think that's enough to do this month but just before I go, a question....what is a black hole?.....It's what you get in a black sock, (I pinched that one from Stephen Hawking) Until next time, goodbye.