



Evening sky in JUNE 2012

The Southern Cross (Crux) and Pointers dominate the southern sky. The False Cross lower to the west straddles two constellations: Vela (the Sail) and Carina (the Keel of the mythological ship Argo Navis). Canopus, the 2nd brightest star in the night sky is in Carina while the 4th brightest, Arcturus is in Boötes (the Herdsman) to the north. Scorpius, followed by Sagittarius is rising above the eastern horizon, while Leo is plunging head first towards the north-western horizon. Virgo and Libra can be found by looking along the ecliptic, the "path" of the Sun, Moon and planets (often referred to as the zodiac).

Mercury is best viewed towards the end of the month in the west shortly after sunset. During the latter half of the month Venus, often mistakenly referred to as the "morning star", becomes visible in the east before sunrise, joining Jupiter in Taurus. The transit of Venus on June 6 cannot be observed from Cape Town as it will be over by sunrise. Mars is moving from Leo to join Saturn in Virgo.

The Moon is in the evening sky until June 6 and again from June 23. A partial lunar eclipse on June 4 is not visible from Southern Africa. Winter solstice is on June 21.