



Evening sky in May 2017

The well-known constellation of Orion, the Hunter, is low on the western horizon. Associated with summer skies, it will soon disappear from the evening sky. The line of three bright stars known as Orion's Belt, sets vertically and almost directly east. Above the belt is the brightest star in the night sky, Sirius, in Canis Major (Big Dog). The second brightest star, Canopus, lies not far off towards the south in Carina (Keel). It is a white supergiant 310 light-years away and about 71 times the size of our Sun. If Canopus was placed at the centre of the Solar System, it would extend 90% of the way to the orbit of Mercury.

The bright star high in the north, Regulus, lies at the top of a curve of stars known as the Sickle of Leo (Lion). To the east, Antares, the red supergiant star in the constellation of Scorpius (Scorpion) has made its appearance, announcing that winter is on its way.

Planet Jupiter shines brightly in Virgo (Maiden), close to the bright star Spica. By mid-month planet Saturn is visible above the eastern horizon, moving from Sagittarius (Archer) to Ophiuchus (Serpent Bearer).

The Moon is in the evening sky until 14 May and again after 26 May