



Evening sky in JANUARY 2013

Low in the southeast is the nearest star to our Solar System, Alpha Centauri, one of the two Pointer stars that "point" to Crux (Southern Cross). To the west is Fomalhaut, a bright young star at a distance of about 25 light years. In orbit around it is Fomalhaut b, the first exosolar planet to be seen in visible light by the Hubble Space Telescope. High above the eastern horizon is Sirius, the brightest star and Canopus, the 2nd brightest star in the night sky. In isiXhosa Sirius is known as *iQhawe*, the Champion.

Planet Jupiter is in Taurus (Bull) and lies between two star clusters. The Hyades Cluster, the nearest open cluster to the Solar System (153 light years away) forms a "V" shape along with the bright star Aldebaran, a red giant, somewhat closer but not related to the cluster. The other nearby open cluster is slightly lower and to the left, and known as the Pleiades or Seven Sisters. In isiXhosa this group of stars is known as *isiLimela* and play an important part in the initiation rites of young Xhosa males. Planet Mars is in Capricornus (Sea Goat).

The Moon is in the evening sky from 12 January until 29 January.