



Evening sky in MARCH 2013

Equinox, when the sun is directly above the equator, marks the start of autumn in the southern hemisphere, a little earlier this year on March 20. The brightest star in the night sky, Sirius, in the constellation of Canis Major (Big Dog) is high in the northwest above the three stars of Orion's Belt. High in the south is Canopus, the second brightest star, in the keel (Carina) of the ship Argo Navis, with sails (Vela) and rear deck (Puppis) above. In Greek mythology the ship formed a single constellation, but was divided in 1763, after a visit to Cape Town by French astronomer Nicolas De Lacaille. Canopus is known as *u-Canzibe*, the harbinger of winter, in isiXhosa. The presence of Leo (Lion) on the north-western horizon confirms that winter is on its way. Regulus, the "heart" of the lion, is a multiple star system composed of four stars about 77.5 light years from Earth. The Southern Cross (Crux) is on its side in the southwest with the Pointers, Alpha and Beta Centauri below it.

Planet Jupiter shines brightly low in the northwest in Taurus with Aldebaran, its red eye just above.

The Moon is in the evening sky from March 14 until March 30