



Evening sky in MARCH 2015

The three brightest stars seen from planet Earth are well-positioned for viewing. Sirius, the brightest, is in the constellation of Canis Major, the Big Dog and is to the east of the three Belt Stars in Orion, the Hunter. In isiXhosa it is known as *iQhawe*, the 'champion'. Second brightest is Canopus in Carina, the Keel of the mythological ship, Argo, sailing high in the southern sky. To the North Sothos it was known as *Naka*, the 'horn'. *Naka's* annual reappearance in the dawn sky was eagerly awaited and the first person to see it was richly rewarded. Slightly lower to the southeast is Alpha Centauri, in the Centaur, a big constellation almost enfolding Crux, the Southern Cross. To the naked eye Alpha Centauri appears to be one star, but in reality it is a triple star system with its combined brightness placing it third in brightness. Alpha and Beta Centauri, the bright stars close to Crux, are known as the Pointers. To the Venda they were two male giraffes. Planets Venus and Mars are both in Pisces but from mid-month Venus moves into Aries. Planet Jupiter is in Cancer.

The Moon is in the evening sky until 9 March and again from 22 March.

The Autumn equinox is on 21 March.