



Evening sky in OCTOBER 2011

Many constellations representing birds are visible this month. Find the Swan (Cygnus) by looking for a bright star, Deneb, low above the northern horizon. Above the Swan soars the Eagle (Aquila) with its bright star, Altair, flanked by two fainter stars. Almost directly overhead is the Crane (Grus), close to the bright star, Fomalhaut, which lies in Piscis Austrinus, the Southern Fish. The Peacock (Pavo) and the Toucan (Tucana) that do not have bright stars to help identify them easily, can be found somewhat lower in the South. Tucana lies close to Achernar, the bright star in the River (Eridanus).

Two bright stars above the south-western horizon point downwards to the Southern Cross (Crux) and are known as the Pointers.

For those night owls - watch the Orionid meteor shower between 00:00 and 04:00 (max 21 October), believed to be leftover dust particles from comet Thatcher that crossed the Earth's path in 1861. These "shooting stars" appear to emanate from an area below the three stars forming Orion's Belt.

Planet Jupiter is low down in the East.

The Moon is in the evening sky until 13 October and again from 27 October.