



Evening sky in SEPTEMBER 2012

Bright stars, Altair in Aquila (Eagle), Vega in Lyra (Lyre) and Deneb in Cygnus (Swan) dominate the northern sky. South Sea Islanders know them as the "navigator's triangle" and use them to navigate on the open ocean in the Pacific. In this triangle, known as the Summer Triangle to stargazers in the northern hemisphere, the Kepler satellite is currently searching for exoplanets orbiting around 100 000 stars. To the naked eye Deneb appears the faintest of the three stars. In reality it is 70 000 times the luminosity of our Sun at a distance of 1550 light years.

Early evening Virgo, followed by Libra, and Scorpius, sets in the west. Sagittarius, Capricornus, Aquarius and Pisces complete the "path" of the Sun, Moon and planets known as the ecliptic. Fomalhaut in the Southern Fish (Pisces Austrinus) and Achernar in the River (Eridanus) are the bright stars east and southeast. The Southern Cross (Crux), Pointers (Alpha and Beta Centauri), and directly above them, the small constellation of the Southern Triangle (Triangulum Australe), appear above the south-western horizon.

Planet Saturn is in Virgo and Mars in Leo.

The Moon is in the evening sky until 2 September and again from 18 September.