



Evening sky in SEPTEMBER 2014

Four constellations representing birds appear in this month's evening sky. Aquila (Eagle) and Cygnus (Swan) are in the northern sky, while Phoenix (the bird rising from the ashes) and Grus (Crane) are in the south-east. Astronomers have discovered an exoplanet in the constellation of Grus. This planet receives the same amount of sunlight from its star as the Earth does from the Sun. At a distance of 16 light-years, it is currently the closest planet to Earth that has the potential to support life. In the south-western sky we find Alpha Centauri, at a distance of approximately

4.3 light years, the closest star to our Solar System. It is one of the Pointer stars "pointing" to the Southern Cross. High above the western horizon is the well-known constellation of Scorpius (Scorpion). From the bright red giant star, Antares, a line of stars runs upwards in a curve to form the scorpion's tail, with two stars at the end as its sting.

During the course of the month planet Mars moves from Libra (Scales) into Scorpius while planet Saturn remains in Libra throughout the month.

Equinox occurs later than normal this year on the 23 September.

The Moon is in the evening sky until 10 September and again from 26 September.