

Best Objects for Binoculars

A curated selection of 20 showpiece deep-sky objects and double stars ideal for 10x50 binoculars from northern latitudes. These targets are bright enough to stand out in handheld optics, large enough to fill the wide field of view, and span all four seasons. From glittering star clusters to glowing nebulae and nearby galaxies, each object reveals something special through modest glass.

20

Objects

18

Easy

1

Medium

1

Hard

Cyg · Tau · Per · UMa · Cnc · Gem · Sct · Aur · Her · CVn · Ser · Ori

Visibility scored for: **150mm Reflector** · Bortle 41 **M45**

● Open Cluster · Tau · –

Easy

Position RA 03h 47m 24.0s Dec +24d 07' 0"

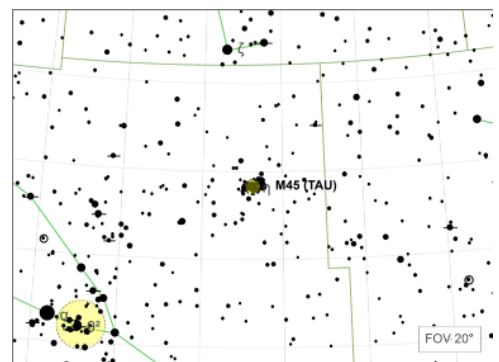
Magnitude 1.6 mag

Distance 445 ly

Visibility 9.5 / 10

Notes

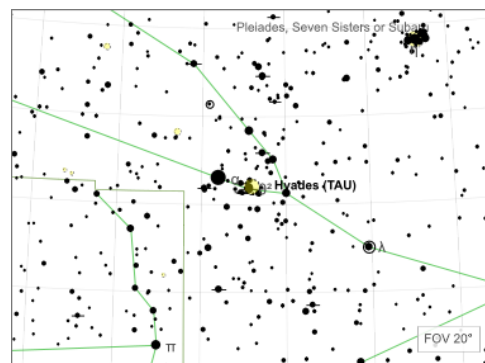
The quintessential binocular object. Six to nine brilliant blue-white stars form a tiny dipper shape in a 110' field, with dozens of fainter members filling the view. Far too large for most telescopes — binoculars show it at its best.

 Observed2 **Hyades** C41

● Open Cluster · Tau

Easy

Position RA 04h 28m 0.0s Dec +16d 00' 0"
Magnitude 0.5 mag
Distance 151 ly
Visibility 8.5 / 10



Notes

The nearest open cluster to Earth at 150 light-years, spanning a huge 5.5 degrees. Binoculars reveal dozens of orange and white stars in a V-shaped pattern around Aldebaran, which is actually a foreground star.

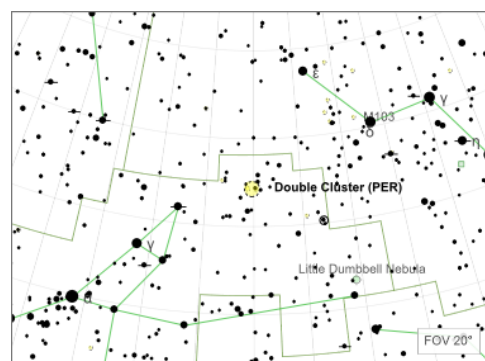
Observed

3 Double Cluster C14

● Open Cluster · Per · NGC 869

Easy

Position RA 02h 20m 42.0s Dec +57d 07' 59"
Magnitude 4.3 mag
Size 14.4'
Distance 7.3 kly
Visibility 10.0 / 10



Notes

Two rich clusters side by side, both fitting in a single binocular field. Each cluster contains hundreds of stars — look for the contrasting orange giants sprinkled among the blue-white members. Visible to the naked eye as a hazy patch.

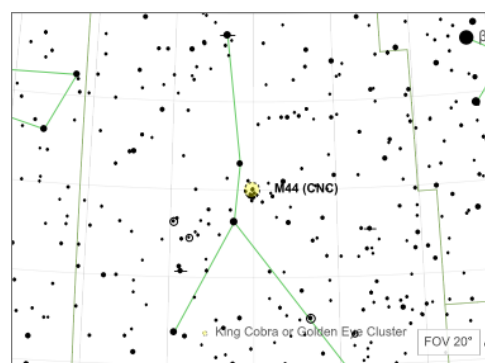
Observed

4 M44

● Open Cluster · Cnc · NGC 2632

Easy

Position RA 08h 40m 24.0s Dec +19d 58' 60"
Magnitude 3.7 mag
Size 108.6'
Distance 610 ly
Visibility 9.5 / 10



Notes

A swarm of 50+ stars scattered across 1.5 degrees, perfectly framed by binoculars. Known since antiquity as 'Praesepe' (the Manger). Look for chains and arcs of stars — this is a cluster that binoculars were made for.

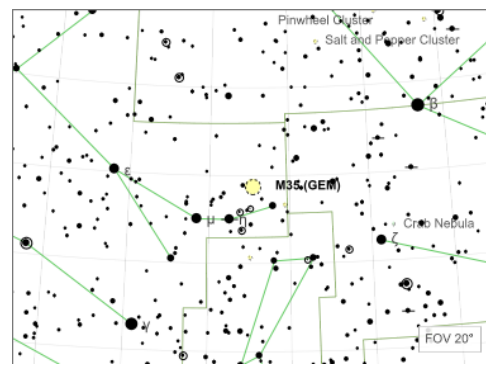
Observed

5 M35

● Open Cluster · Gem · NGC 2168

Easy

Position RA 06h 09m 6.0s Dec +24d 21' 0"
 Magnitude 5.3 mag
 Size 24.0'
 Distance 2.8 kly
 Visibility 10.0 / 10



Notes

A bright, rich cluster near the foot of Gemini, visible as a fuzzy spot to the naked eye. Binoculars resolve it into a granular glow of stars spanning half a degree. The tiny companion cluster NGC 2158 may appear as a faint smudge nearby.

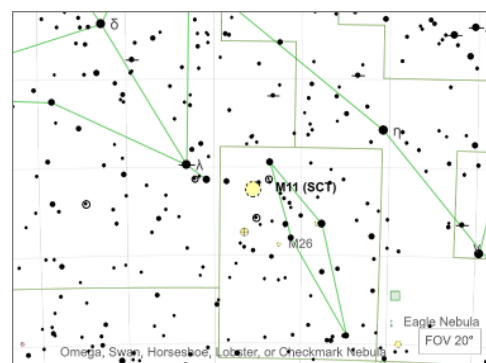
Observed

6 M11

• Open Cluster · Sct · NGC 6705

Easy

Position RA 18h 51m 6.0s Dec -6d 16' 0"
 Magnitude 5.8 mag
 Size 9.0'
 Distance 6.2 kly
 Visibility 10.0 / 10



Notes

One of the richest open clusters in the sky with nearly 3,000 members. Binoculars show a bright, compact wedge-shaped glow set against the dense Scutum Star Cloud. A prominent single star leads the 'flock' of stars.

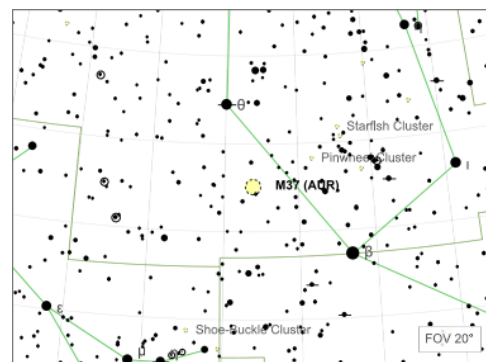
Observed

7 M37

• Open Cluster · Aur · NGC 2099

Easy

Position RA 05h 52m 18.0s Dec +32d 33' 2"
 Magnitude 6.2 mag
 Size 11.4'
 Distance 4.4 kly
 Visibility 10.0 / 10



Notes

The richest of the three Auriga clusters. Binoculars reveal a soft, grainy glow — a dense ball of faint stars. Nearby M36 and M38 are also binocular targets, all three fitting in a sweeping tour of Auriga.

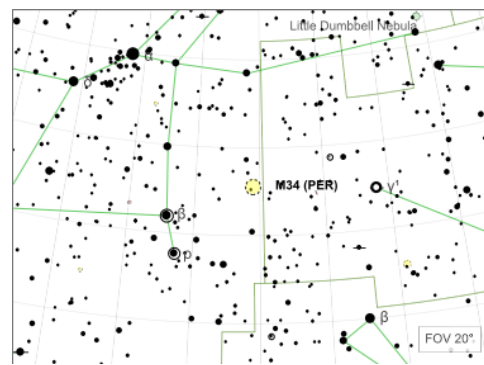
Observed

8 M34

• Open Cluster · Per · NGC 1039

Easy

Position RA 02h 42m 6.0s Dec +42d 46' 0"
 Magnitude 5.5 mag
 Size 22.5'
 Distance 1.5 kly
 Visibility 10.0 / 10



Notes

A loose, scattered cluster midway between Perseus and Andromeda, easily found with binoculars. About 20 stars are visible in 10x50s across a 35' field. A pleasant sight with curving chains of stars.

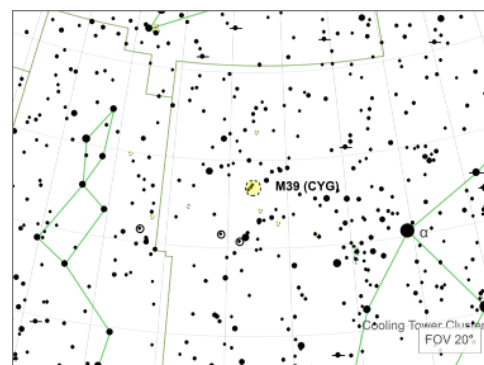
Observed

9 **M39**

• Open Cluster · Cyg · NGC 7092

Easy

Position RA 21h 31m 42.0s Dec +48d 25' 60"
 Magnitude 4.6 mag
 Size 19.5'
 Distance 800 ly
 Visibility 10.0 / 10



Notes

A large, loose triangular grouping of about 30 bright stars spanning nearly a full degree. Set in a rich Milky Way field in Cygnus. Best appreciated in binoculars — too spread out for most telescopes.

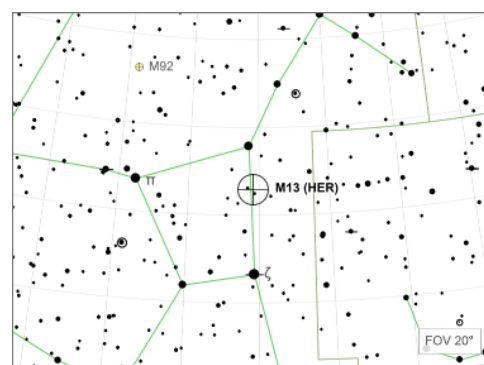
Observed

10 **M13**

• Globular Cluster · Her · NGC 6205

Easy

Position RA 16h 41m 41.2s Dec +36d 27' 36"
 Magnitude 5.8 mag
 Size 16.5'
 Distance 22.2 kly
 Visibility 9.5 / 10



Notes

The finest globular cluster in the northern sky. Binoculars show a bright, round fuzzy ball about 20' across between the keystone stars of Hercules. It won't resolve into stars, but the concentrated glow is unmistakable.

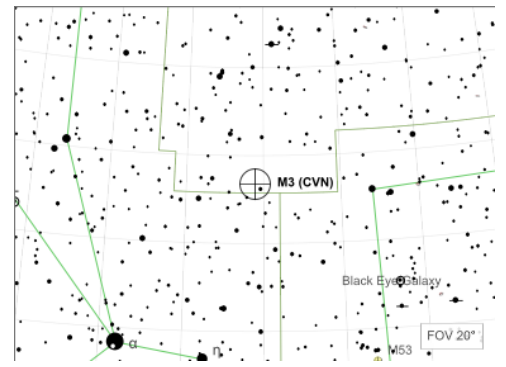
Observed

11 **M3**

• Globular Cluster · CVn · NGC 5272

Easy

Position RA 13h 42m 11.6s Dec +28d 22' 38"
 Magnitude 6.2 mag
 Size 16.2'
 Distance 33.9 kly
 Visibility 9.5 / 10



Notes

A bright globular cluster midway between Arcturus and Cor Caroli, containing half a million stars. In binoculars it appears as a small, concentrated fuzzy spot — bright enough to spot easily once you know where to look.

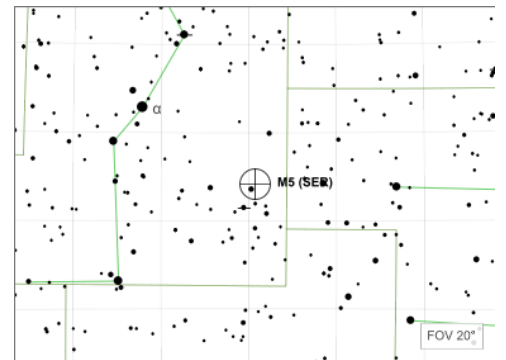
Observed

12 M5

• Globular Cluster · Ser · NGC 5904

Easy

Position RA 15h 18m 33.2s Dec +2d 04' 52"
 Magnitude 5.6 mag
 Size 15.0'
 Distance 24.5 kly
 Visibility 9.5 / 10



Notes

One of the oldest known globular clusters at 13 billion years. Binoculars reveal a bright, slightly oval fuzzy glow near the star 5 Serpentis. Rivals M13 in total brightness and many observers consider it the more beautiful of the two.

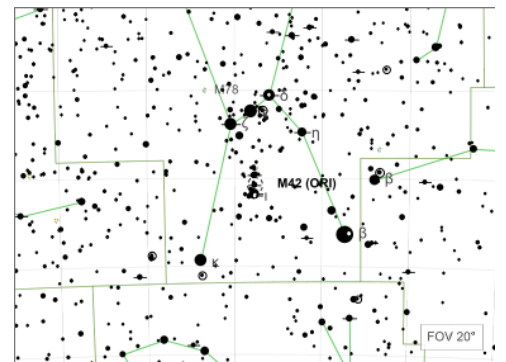
Observed

13 M42

• Diffuse Nebula · Ori · NGC 1976

Easy

Position RA 05h 35m 17.3s Dec -5d 23' 28"
 Magnitude 4.0 mag
 Size 90.0' × 60.0'
 Distance 1.3 kly
 Visibility 8.4 / 10



Notes

The most spectacular nebula in the sky, easily visible to the naked eye as the fuzzy middle 'star' of Orion's sword. Binoculars reveal the glowing fan of gas surrounding the Trapezium stars, spanning a full degree with averted vision.

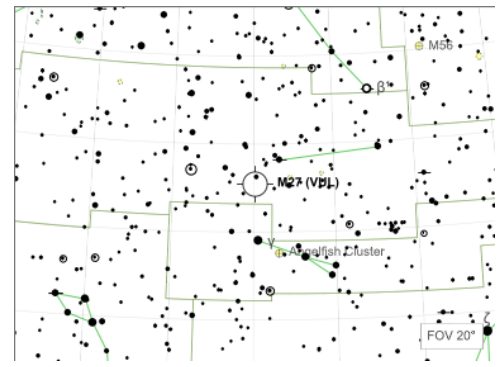
Observed

14 M27

• Planetary Nebula · Vul · NGC 6853

Easy

Position RA 19h 59m 36.3s Dec +22d 43' 16"
 Magnitude 7.4 mag
 Size 6.7'
 Distance 1.4 kly
 Visibility 9.4 / 10



Notes

The brightest planetary nebula in the sky. In 10x50 binoculars it appears as a small but distinct fuzzy rectangle or apple-core shape, noticeably non-stellar. A UHC or OIII filter held in front of one eyepiece makes it pop.

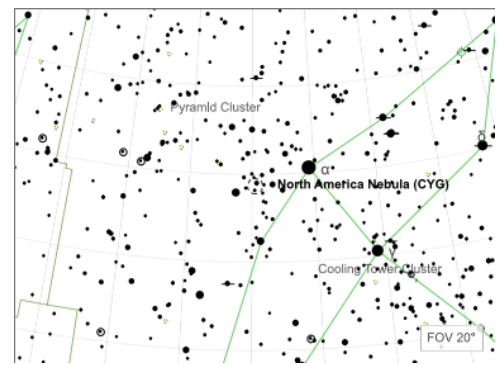
Observed

15 **North America Nebula** C20

Medium

• Diffuse Nebula · Cyg · NGC 7000

Position RA 20h 59m 0.0s Dec +44d 19' 59"
 Magnitude 5.0 mag
 Size 120.0' × 30.0'
 Distance 2.2 kly
 Visibility 7.4 / 10



Notes

A huge emission nebula near Deneb spanning 2 degrees, shaped like the continent. Too large and diffuse for telescopes — binoculars from a dark site show a distinct brightening in the Milky Way. A UHC filter enhances the view dramatically.

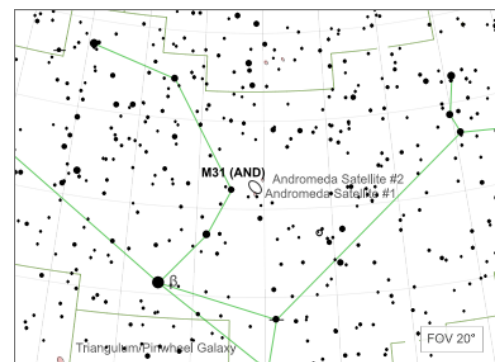
Observed

16 **M31**

Easy

• Galaxy · And · NGC 224

Position RA 00h 42m 44.3s Dec +41d 16' 9"
 Magnitude 3.4 mag
 Size 177.8' × 69.7'
 Distance 2.5 Mly
 Visibility 9.0 / 10



Notes

Our nearest large galactic neighbor at 2.5 million light-years. Binoculars reveal a long, bright oval glow spanning 3 degrees — six times the width of the full moon. Look for the compact companion galaxy M32 as a tiny bright spot nearby.

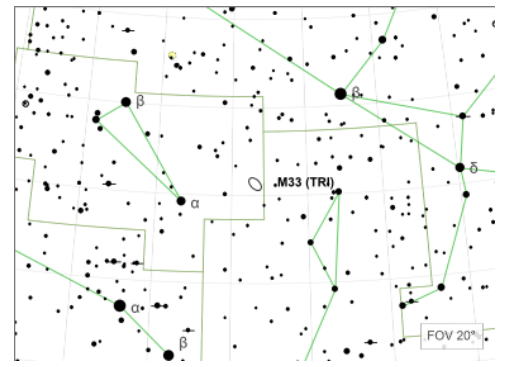
Observed

17 **M33**

Hard

• Galaxy · Tri · NGC 598

Position RA 01h 33m 50.0s Dec +30d 39' 37"
 Magnitude 5.7 mag
 Size 62.1' × 36.7'
 Distance 2.7 Mly
 Visibility 5.1 / 10



Notes

A face-on spiral galaxy with very low surface brightness. Paradoxically easier in binoculars than in a telescope because the wide field captures the entire diffuse glow. Requires dark skies — look for a large, ghostly oval patch.

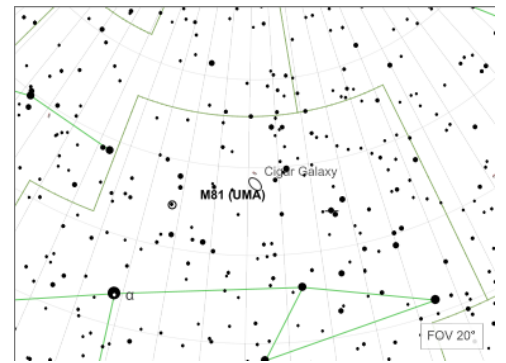
Observed

18 M81

• Galaxy · UMa · NGC 3031

Easy

Position RA 09h 55m 33.2s Dec +69d 03' 55"
 Magnitude 6.9 mag
 Size 21.6' × 11.2'
 Distance 12.0 Mly
 Visibility 9.3 / 10



Notes

A bright spiral galaxy forming a stunning pair with the Cigar Galaxy (M82) just 38' away — both fit in a single binocular field. M81 appears as an elongated glow while M82 is a thin sliver. Best galaxy pair for binoculars.

Observed

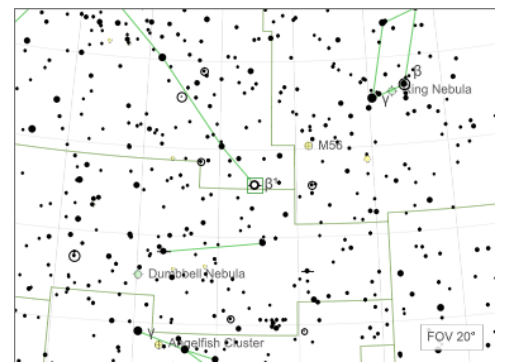
19 Albireo

HIP 95947; Beta1 Cyg; 6 Cyg

• Double Star · Cyg

Easy

Position RA 19h 30m 43.3s Dec +27d 57' 35"
 Magnitude 3.1 mag
 Distance 433 ly
 Visibility 9.5 / 10



Notes

The sky's finest color-contrast double star, marking the beak of the Swan. Binoculars easily split the wide 34" pair into a brilliant golden primary and sapphire companion. A showpiece at every star party.

Observed

20 Mizar

HIP 65378; Zeta UMa; 79 UMa

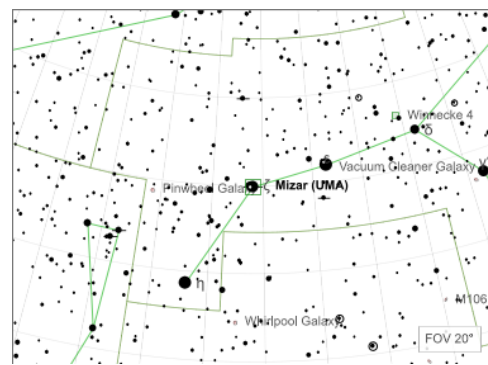
• Double Star · UMa

Easy

Position RA 13h 23m 55.5s Dec +54d 55' 31"
Magnitude 2.3 mag
Distance 69 ly
Visibility 9.5 / 10

Notes

The famous naked-eye double in the Big Dipper's handle. Binoculars clearly separate Mizar (mag 2.3) from Alcor (mag 4.0), 12 arcminutes apart. An ancient eye-test star pair and one of the first doubles discovered telescopically.



Observed

