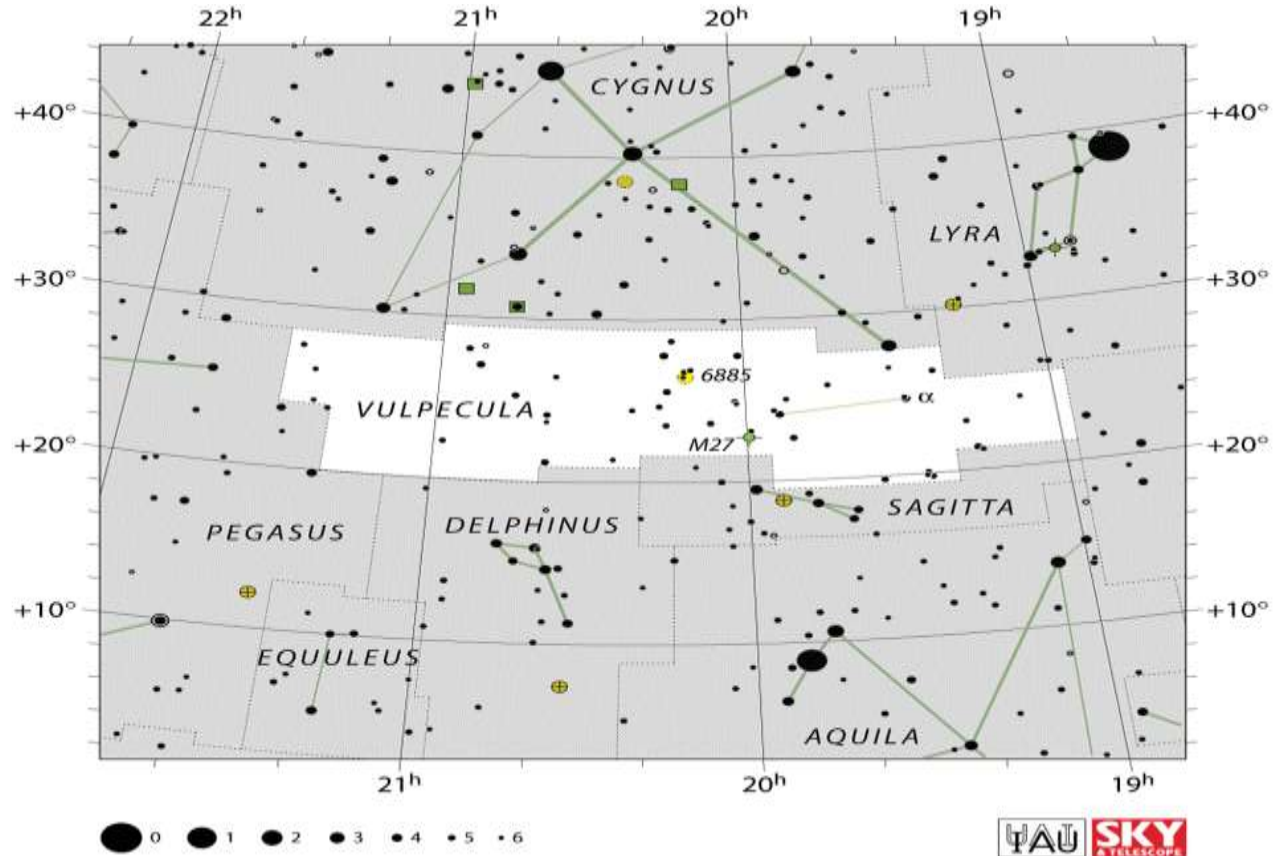


Binocular Observing September 2020 by Andrew Lohfink.



The Night Sky
(September 2020)

Vulpecula Constellation.



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Vulpecula is a small easily missed constellation.

.It can be found between the Northern Cross asterism of Cygnus and the distinctive small arrow - like constellation of Sagitta.

.It contains only 2 bright stars – imagine a line drawn between the two. Although there are more stars within the constellation, the two brightest stars are the only ones easily visible.

.Vulpecula is worth seeking out as it contains 2 highlights of the night sky – Brocchi's Cluster and the Dumbbell Planetary Nebula.

Brocchi's Cluster.

Brocchi's Cluster has a number of names including The Coathanger and Cr399. Imagine a line from Beta Cygni (Albireo) through Alpha Vulpeculae and extend roughly the same distance again. The cluster looks like an upside down coathanger in binoculars and can be seen in all sizes of binoculars which reveal the beauty of the ten brightest stars and different colours.



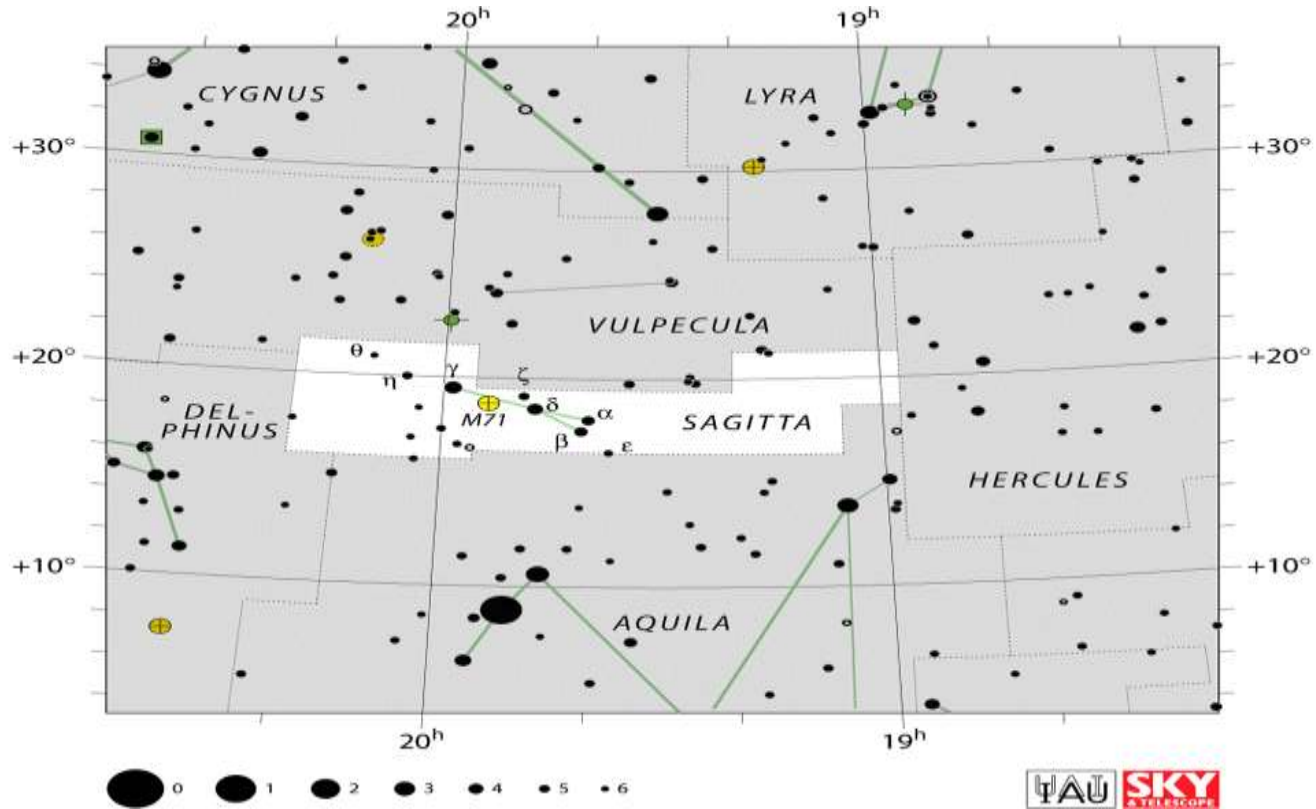
Messier 27 – The Dumbbell Nebula.

The Dumbbell Planetary Nebula is perhaps the most famous planetary nebula in the night sky. It lies just south east of the second brightest star of Vulpecula (13 Vulpeculae). It gets its name because of a double lobe structure which resembles a bar bell. Other observers think it resembles an apple core. It lies about 1360 light years away. Larger binoculars will start to reveal its shape and structure while smaller apertures will show a milky ill defined object.



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Sagitta Constellation.



Sagitta Constellation.

Sagitta is an easily spotted constellation below Vulpecula whose brightest stars form an arrow – hence its name. The whole arrow shape fits easily into wide field binoculars and makes a pleasing image. Look closely and you may be able to pick out the globular cluster M71.

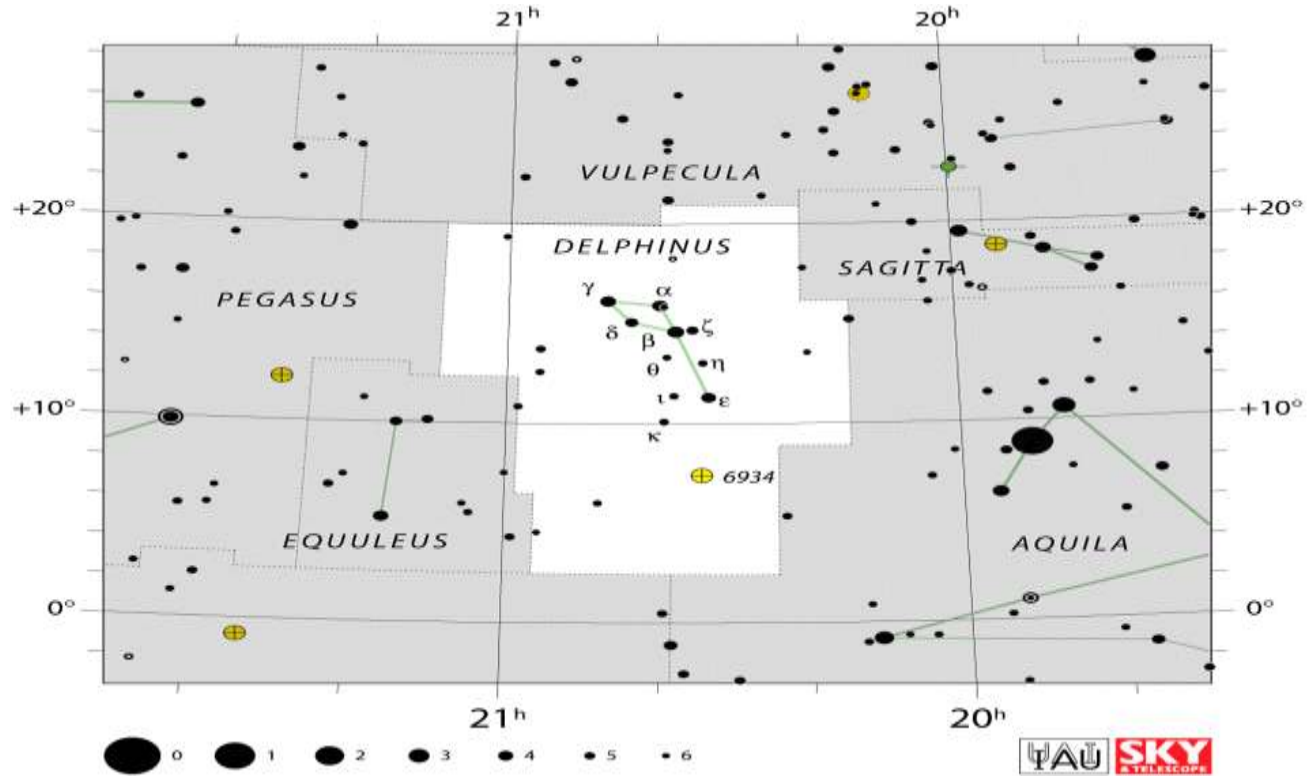


Messier 71 – A Globular Cluster.

M71 is an often forgotten globular cluster and can be viewed in 100mm binoculars. It lies midway between the point of the arrow of Sagitta and the next star along the shaft of the arrow. M71 has been described as a tight open cluster or a loose globular cluster. It spans 27 light years across and is approximately 13,000 light years distant.



Delphinus Constellation.



Delphinus Constellation.

Another often overlooked constellation is The Dolphin – its distinct shape can be made out south east of Sagitta (roughly in the direction where the arrow points). The whole of The Dolphin's "head" formed from four bright stars in a rhomboid shape can be seen in low power wide field binoculars. The different colours are a beautiful sight. The star which forms The Dolphins nose is Gamma Delphini and is a binary star but this can only be split with high powers.



NGC 6934 – A Globular Cluster.

NGC 6934 can be found by simply extending the tale of The Dolphin approximately the same distance south. The globular cluster is an easy object even at x8. In larger 100mm binoculars the cluster appears to expand as transparency increases. Try observing on different nights to see if you can spot this characteristic. It lies about 50,000 light years away.

