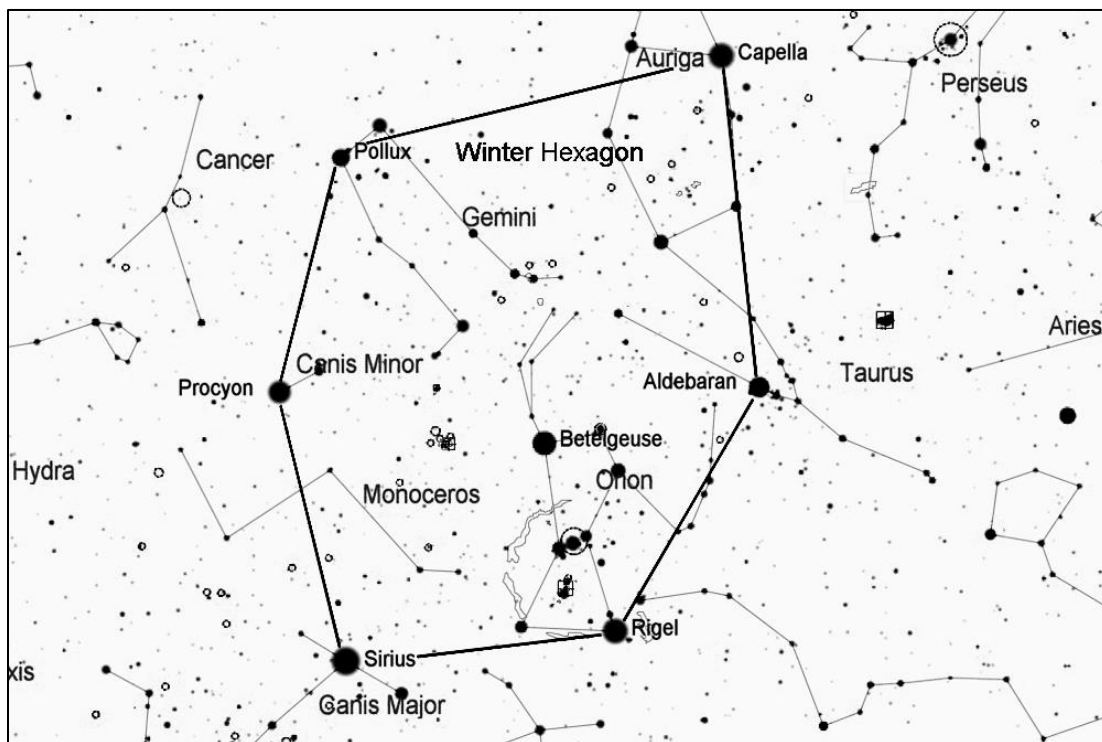


Melotte 25 (Caldwell 41), the Hyades

The Hyades group is the closest star cluster, 153 light years away. It is about 10 light years across, and it covers a full 5 degrees of sky. Many of its stars are plainly visible to the naked eye, and more can be seen with binoculars. The red first-magnitude star Aldebaran looks like it is part of the cluster, but actually it is in the foreground, 65 light years from Earth.



Find the Winter Hexagon, which is composed of six of the brightest stars in the sky-- Sirius, Procyon, Pollux, Capella, Aldebaran, and Rigel. On mid-winter evenings, these stars form a large oval stretching from low in the south to nearly overhead. As spring begins, the Winter Hexagon sinks toward the west. The constellation Orion and its bright red star Betelgeuse are inside the Hexagon.

For this star hop, find Aldebaran, the reddish star that represents the eye of Taurus, the bull.

Look with the naked eye around Aldebaran to see some of the stars of the Hyades cluster. Its brightest stars form a V shape that represents the head of Taurus, the bull. This is an excellent target for binoculars.

