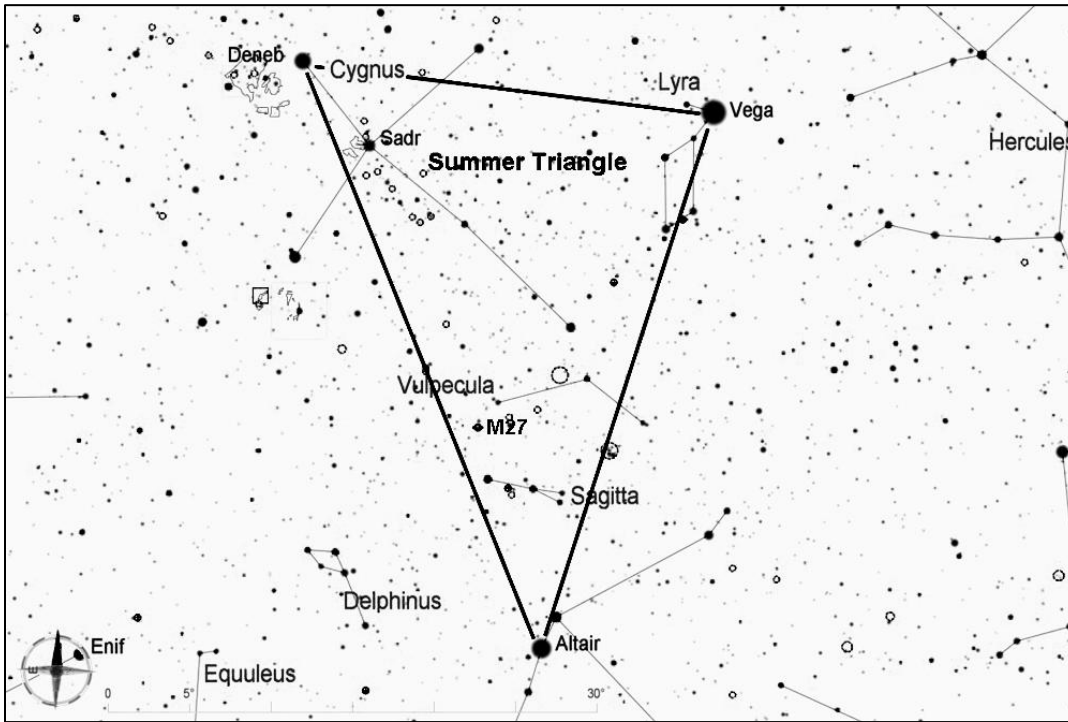


## IC 1434, Open Cluster in Lacerta

IC 1434 is an inconspicuous 9th magnitude open cluster that I find interesting because of its unusual appearance. I observe three wispy strings of stars in the shape of a bird with outstretched wings. These strings extend much farther than the listed diameter of 7', so maybe the strings are not really part of the cluster, although they appear to be through the eyepiece.



Start by finding the Summer Triangle, which consists of the three of the brightest stars in the sky--Vega, Deneb, and Altair. The Summer Triangle is high overhead throughout the summer, and it sinks lower in the west as fall progresses.

For this star hop, start from Deneb, the first-magnitude star that forms the tail of Cygnus, the swan (or if you visualize the brightest stars of Cygnus as a cross shape, Deneb is at the top of the cross).

Notice that the distance from Deneb at the top of the Cygnus cross to Albireo at the bottom is about the same as the distance (in roughly the opposite direction) to the four dim stars in a diamond shape that form the head of Lacerta, the lizard. All the stars of Lacerta are dim, but this diamond shape should be visible to the naked eye under moderately dark skies. Once you have found the head of Lacerta, look about 2 degrees to the west of the star beta ( $\beta$ ) Lacertae at the tip of the head to find IC 1434.

