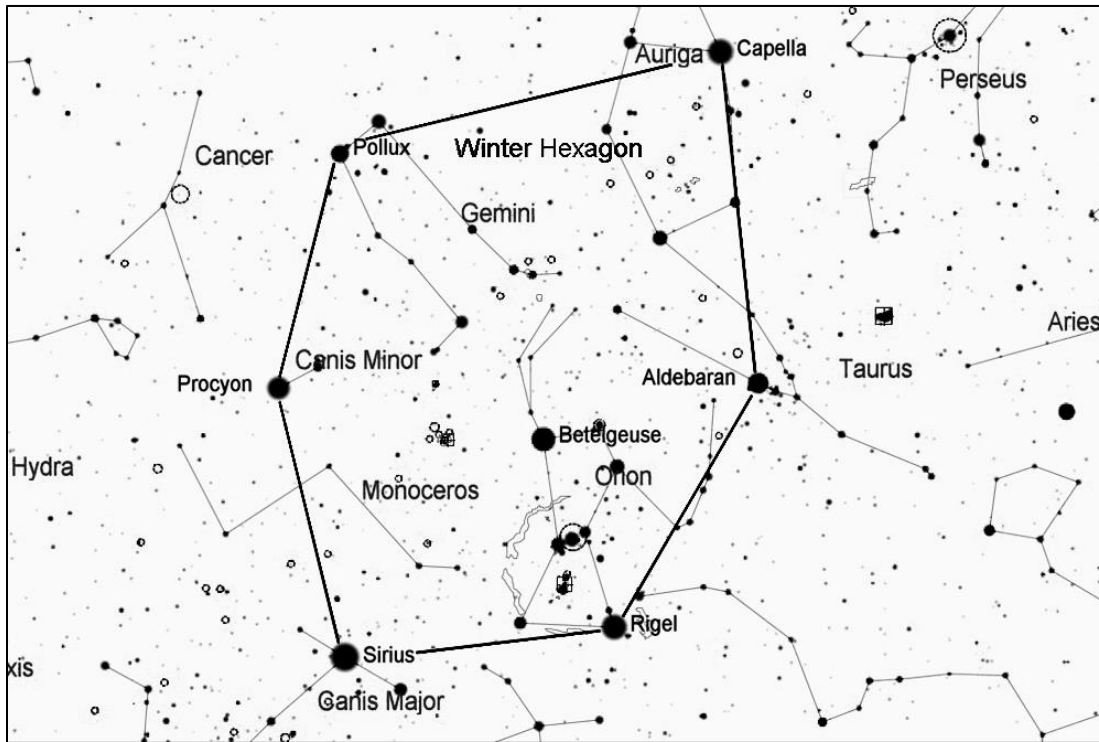


Messier 1, the Crab Nebula

Messier 1 is a supernova remnant—the aftermath of a supernova that appeared in the sky in the year 1054. Through a medium to large telescope, the nebula has an irregular outline accounts for its nickname, the Crab Nebula. Photographs taken several years apart show that the nebula is still gradually expanding. It is estimated to be about 6500 light years away.



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.

Aldebaran is part of a V-shaped group of stars that form the head of the bull (and are the brightest members of the Hyades star cluster). The two horns of the bull stretch to the east. Find ζ (zeta) Tauri, the third-magnitude star that marks the tip of the southern horn. With your telescope centered on ζ, move 1 degree to the northeast to reach Messier 1.

