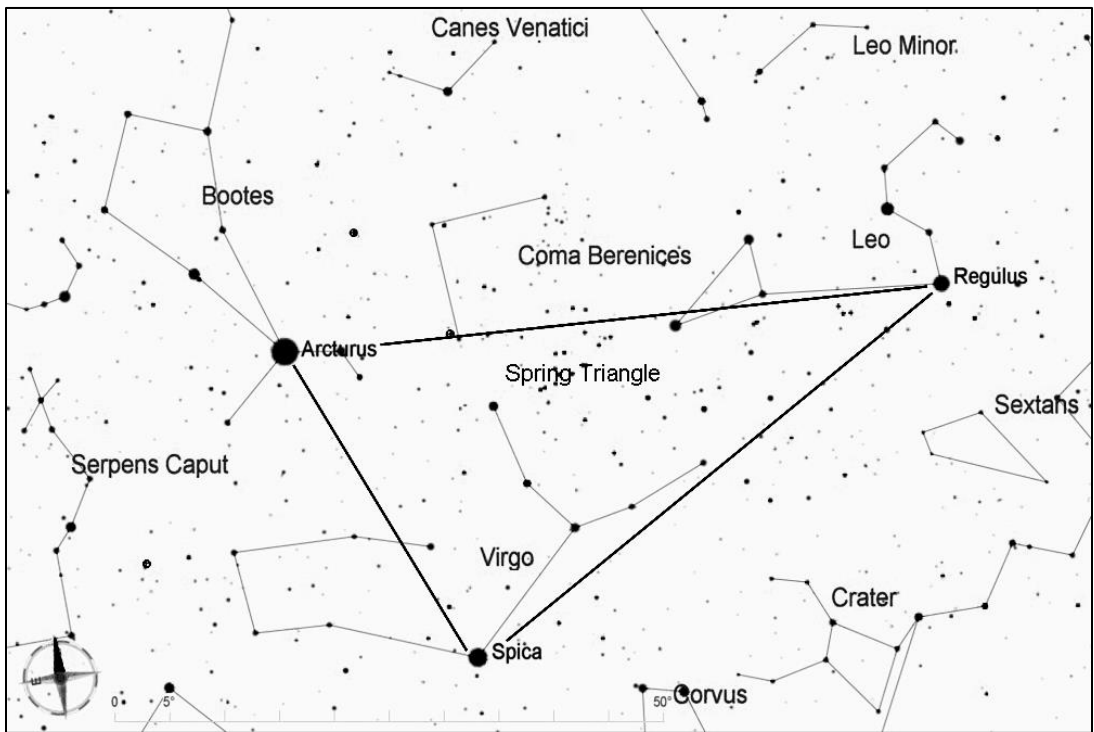


Messier 68, Globular Cluster in Hydra

Messier 68 is one of the few globular clusters that can be found in a region of the sky populated by many galaxies. In the spring, it passes low in the southern sky below the stars of Corvus the crow. A telescope of medium size can resolve some of its individual stars. M68 is about 100 light years in diameter and about 34,000 light years away.



Start by finding the Spring Triangle, which consists of three widely-separated first magnitude stars--Arcturus, Spica, and Regulus. The Spring Triangle is high in the southeast sky in early spring, and in the southwest sky by mid-Summer. (To get oriented, you can use the handle of the Big Dipper and "follow the arc to Arcturus").

For this star hop, begin at Spica in the constellation Virgo.

Look about 20 degrees to the southwest of Spica to find the distinctive four-sided shape of Corvus, the crow. Form a line with the two stars on the east side of Corvus (δ and β), and extend this line half as far to the south. This will take you to the general area of M68, as shown below. A 5th magnitude star $1/2$ degree southwest of M68 can help you find the correct location.

