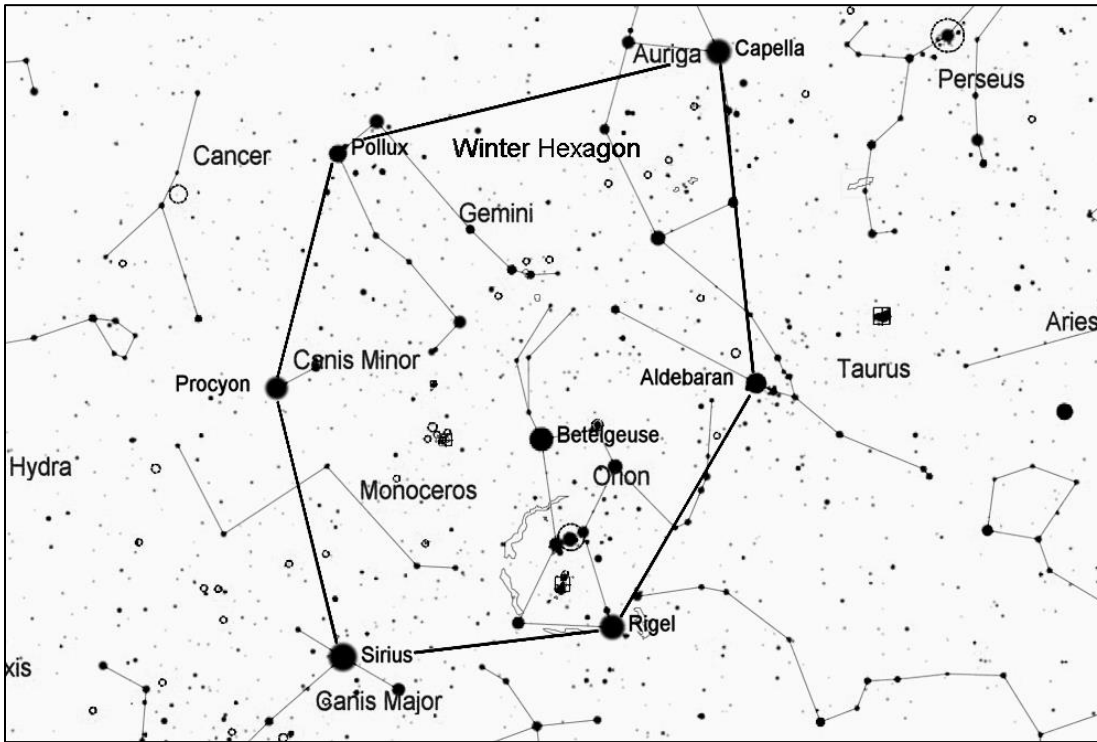


Messier 93, Open Cluster in Puppis

Messier 93 is a distinctive group of about 80 stars that stands out well against the Milky Way background when viewed through a telescope at low power. The densely packed center of the cluster has a wedge shape. The cluster is about 20 light years across and about 3400 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 Sirius, the brightest star in the sky.

Sirius is known as the "dog star," and it forms the neck region of the constellation Canis Major, the big dog. From Sirius, look to the southeast to find δ (delta) Canis Majoris, one of the three bright stars that form the back leg and tail of the dog. From δ , look about 10 degrees east to find 3rd magnitude ξ (Xi) Puppis. M93 is just about 1.5 degrees to the northwest of ξ Puppis.

