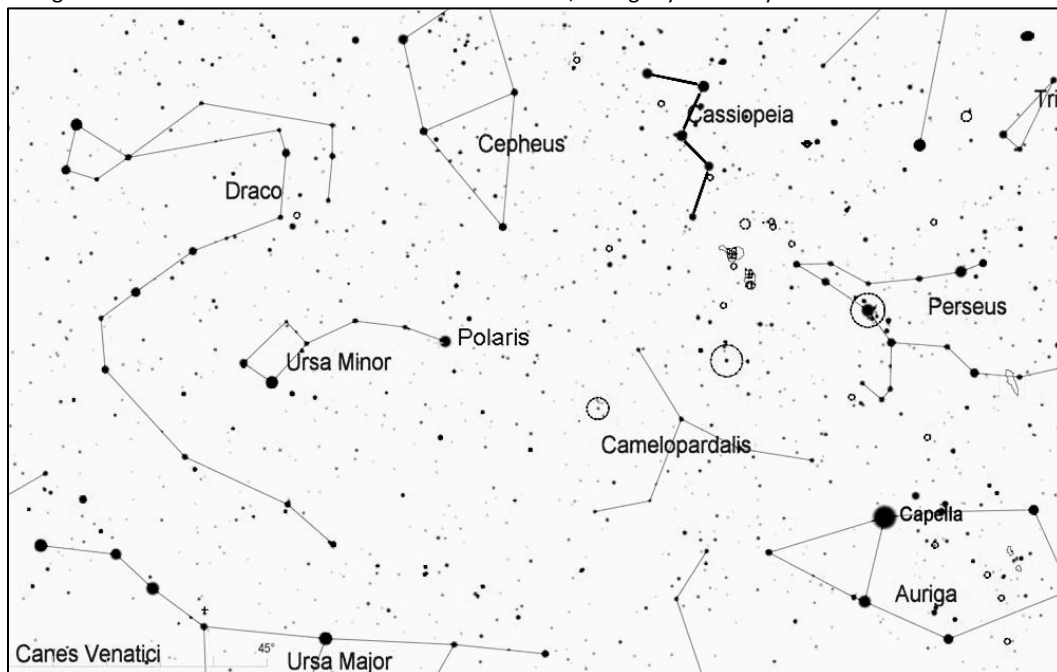


NGC 129, Open Cluster in Cassiopeia

NGC 129 is a group of several dozen stars in an area of about half the diameter of the full Moon. It is located in the Cassiopeia Milky Way, and the background is dense with dim stars. The cluster is about 5,300 light years away.



Find the constellation Cassiopeia, which can be recognized by its distinctive "W" shape (although its orientation changes at different times of year as it circles the north celestial pole). On fall evenings, look for Cassiopeia in the northeast, where its tilt makes it look like a "3", and in the winter look high in the north above Polaris, where it is oriented like an "M".

Once you have located Cassiopeia, find Caph (the star at the end of the W shape) and gamma (γ) Cassiopeiae (the star that is in the middle of the W shape). Visualize a spot half way between these two stars, and aim your telescope there to find NGC 129.

