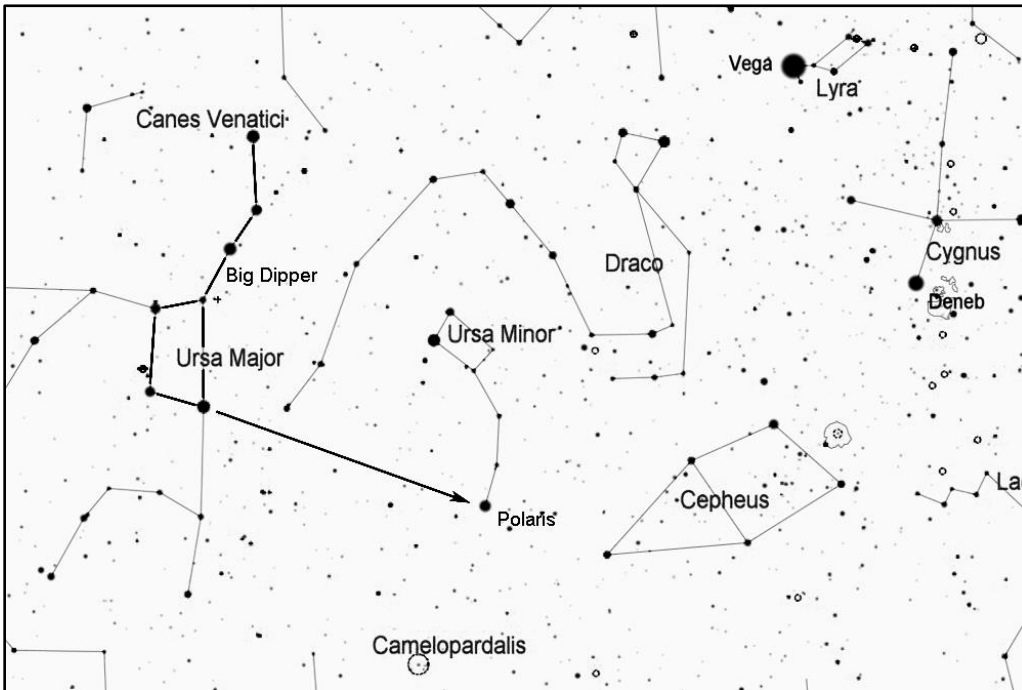


NGC 188 (Caldwell 1), Open Cluster in Cepheus

This is one of the oldest open clusters known, about 9 billion years old. It is just 4 degrees away from the North Star (Polaris), so it is visible all year throughout the northern hemisphere. The cluster is about 15 arcminutes in diameter (about half the apparent diameter of the full Moon), and consists of over 100 fairly dim stars.



Start by finding the Big Dipper, one of the most recognizable star patterns in the sky. It is part of the constellation Ursa Major, the big bear. It is shown here roughly as it is oriented in the evenings of late summer and fall. Use the two pointer stars in the bowl of the Big Dipper to find Polaris, the North Star.

Using the pointer stars of the Big Dipper to find Polaris, continue about 3 degrees past Polaris on almost the same line to reach a 4th magnitude star, which will be visible to the naked eye in a reasonably dark sky (and easily seen through binoculars or finder as the brightest star in that area). Continue from the 4th magnitude star 1 more degree and you will arrive at NGC 188.

