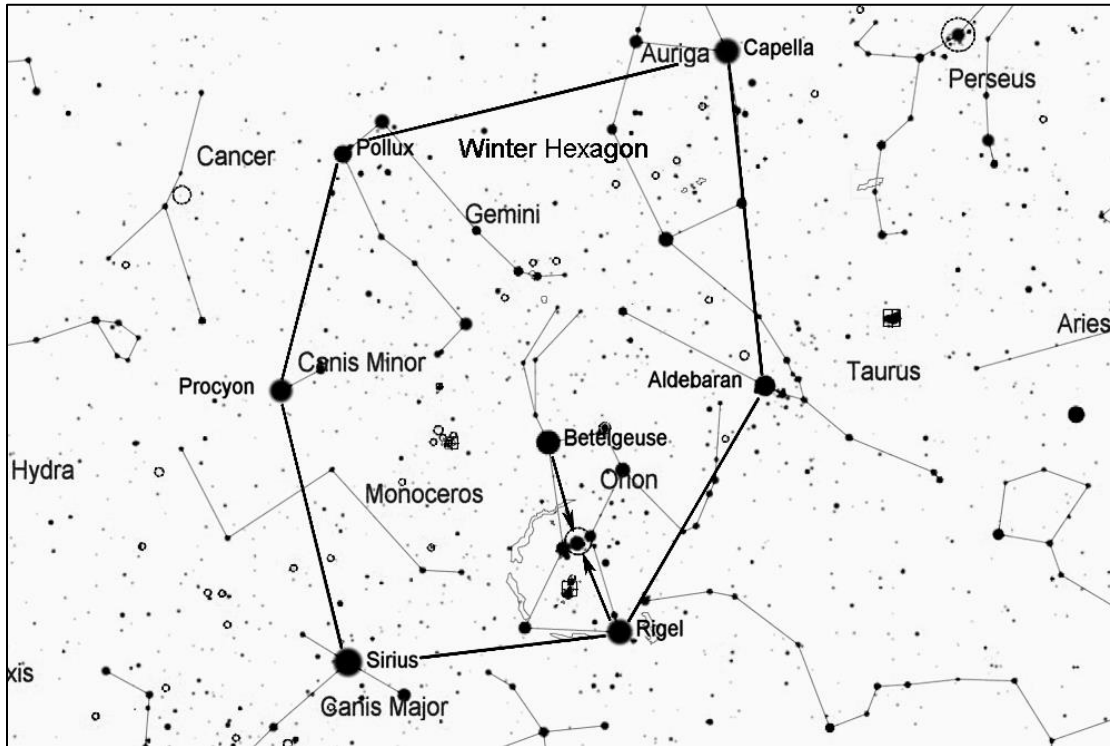


NGC 2169 ("37 Cluster") and 2194, Open Clusters in Orion

NGC 2169 is a compact open cluster of relatively bright stars that form the digits "37", hence its nickname. The cluster is about magnitude 6 and about 5 arcminutes across. NGC 2194 is about 9 arcminutes across but a much dimmer 8th magnitude, and its individual stars are also dimmer than those of NGC 2169. NGC 2194 is about 12,000 light years away, almost 4 times as far as NGC 2169.



If you don't know how to find the constellation Orion, first 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, above the row of three bright stars that form the belt of Orion.

Look 8 degrees above Betelgeuse to find two 4th magnitude stars about a degree apart that represent the raised hand of Orion. These two stars form a small triangle with NGC 2169, which is below the two stars. From NGC 2169, the much dimmer NGC 2194 is less than 2 degrees to the southeast.

