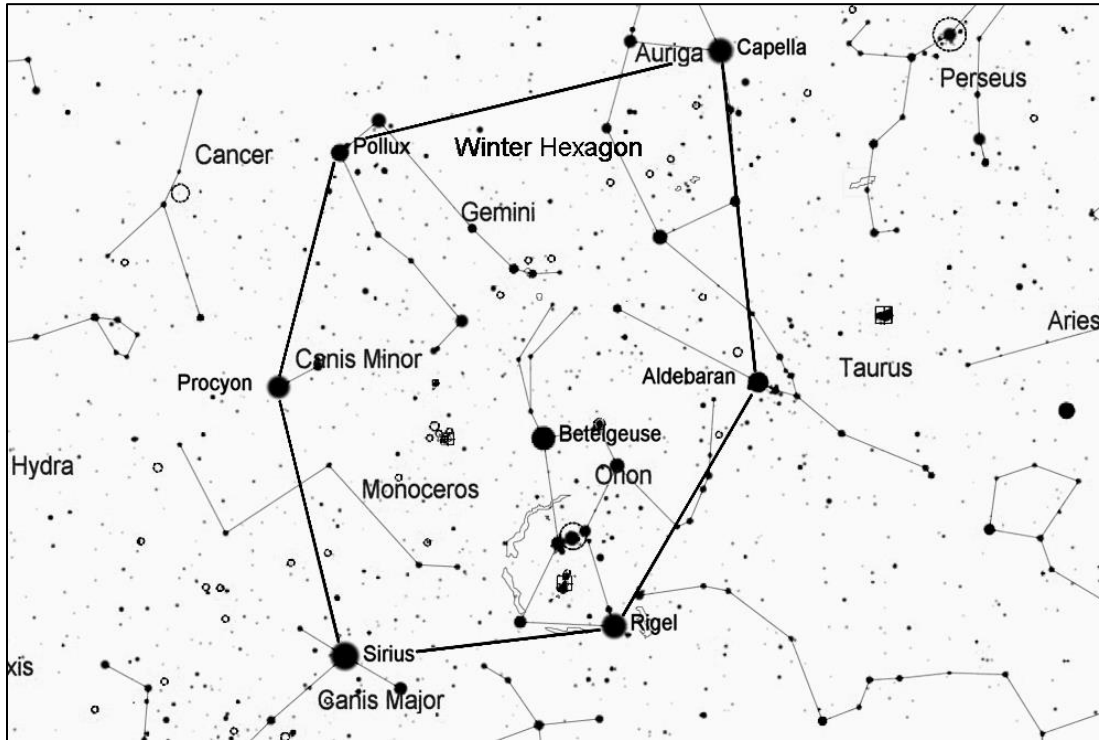


NGC 2360 (Caldwell 58), Open Cluster in Canis Major

This group, also called Caldwell 58, is a nice compact cluster of more than 100 stars that shows well in telescopes of all sizes. Many of the most prominent stars in this cluster appear similar in brightness. The group is about magnitude 7.2, 13 arcminutes in size, and about 3700 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.

Look 5 degrees to the east-northeast of brilliant Sirius to find a much dimmer star, 4th magnitude γ Canis Majoris, which represents the eye or head of the big dog. From γ , follow roughly this same line another 3.5 degrees and you will arrive at NGC 2360.

