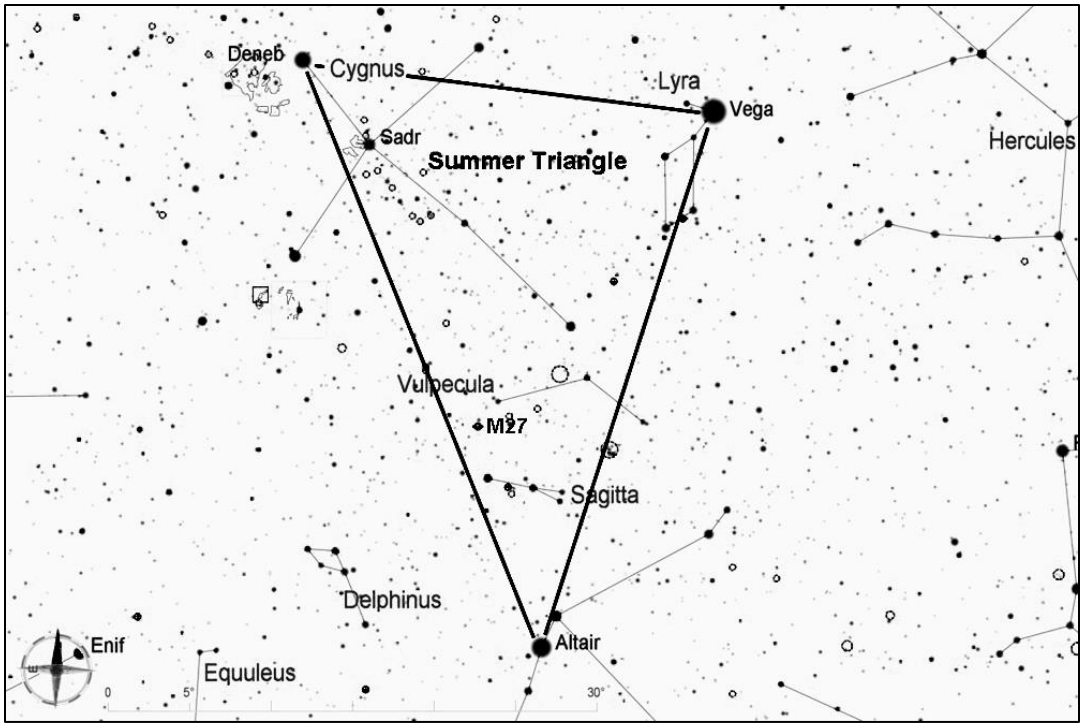
NGC 6885 (Caldwell 37) and NGC 6882, Open Clusters in Vulpecula

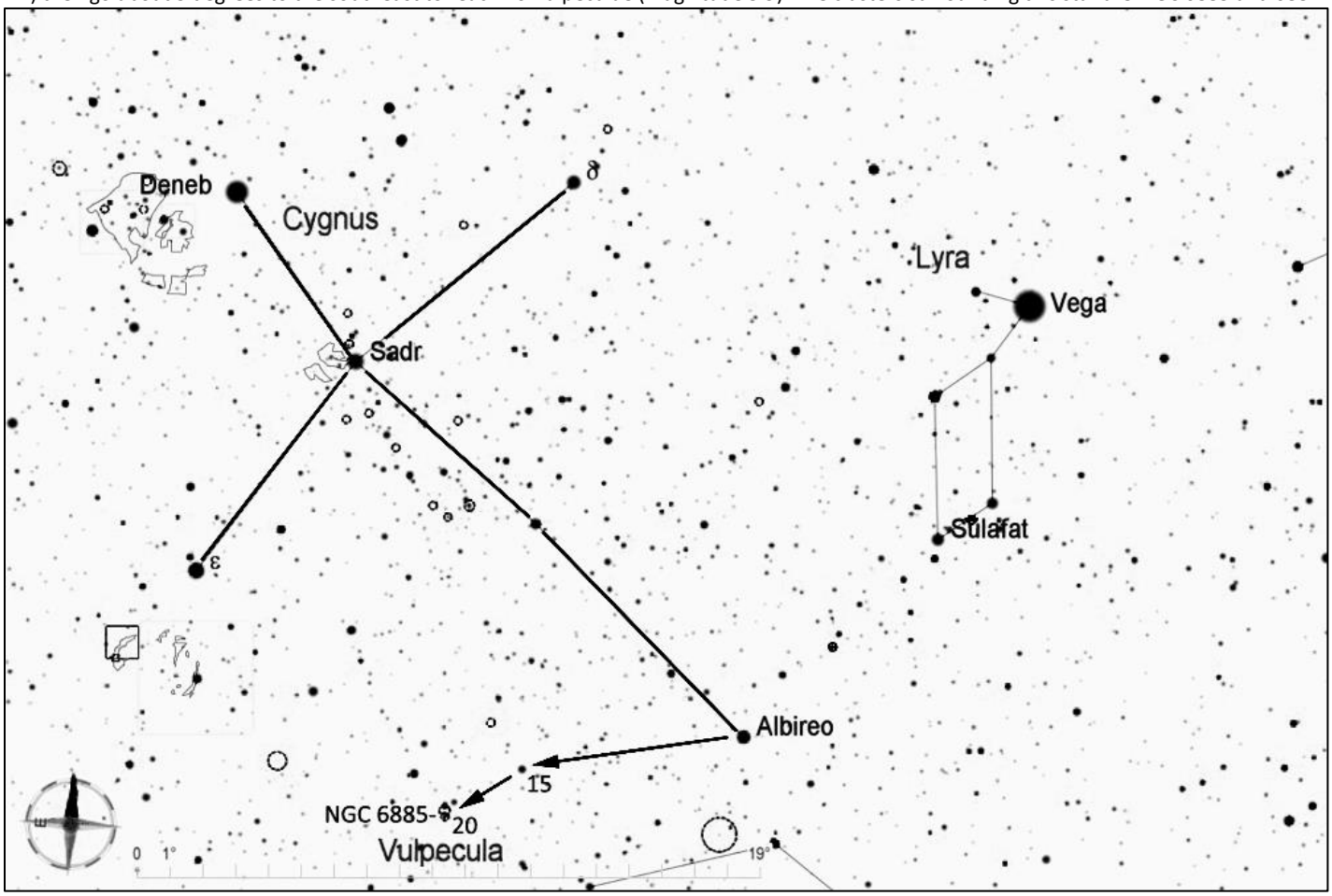
These two NGC numbers have been confused in the literature and on various star charts. They refer to two open clusters around 6th magnitude 20 Vulpeculae. One cluster is larger (about 20') and more scattered, and the other is a more condensed group of dimmer stars about 7' across, just to the northwest of 20 Vulpeculae. There is disagreement about which is NGC 6882 versus 6885, but either way they offer a nice view through a low-power eyepiece.



Start by finding the Summer Triangle, which consists of the three of the brightest stars in the sky--Vega, Deneb, and Altair. The Summer Triangle is high overhead throughout the summer, and it sinks lower in the west as fall progresses.

Look at Deneb, which marks the tail end of the constellation Cygnus, the Swan.

The brightest stars of Cygnus form a large cross shape, so it is also known as the Northern Cross. Albireo is the star at the base of the cross (or the head of the swan). At magnitude 3, it is easily seen with the naked eye. From Albireo, move 7 degrees to the east to find 15 Vulpeculae (magnitude 4.7) then go about 3 degrees to the southeast to reach 20 Vulpeculae (magnitude 5.9). The clusters surrounding this star are NGC 6885 and 6882.



Star hop from www.skyledge.net by Jim Mazur. Star charts created with *Cartes du Ciel.*