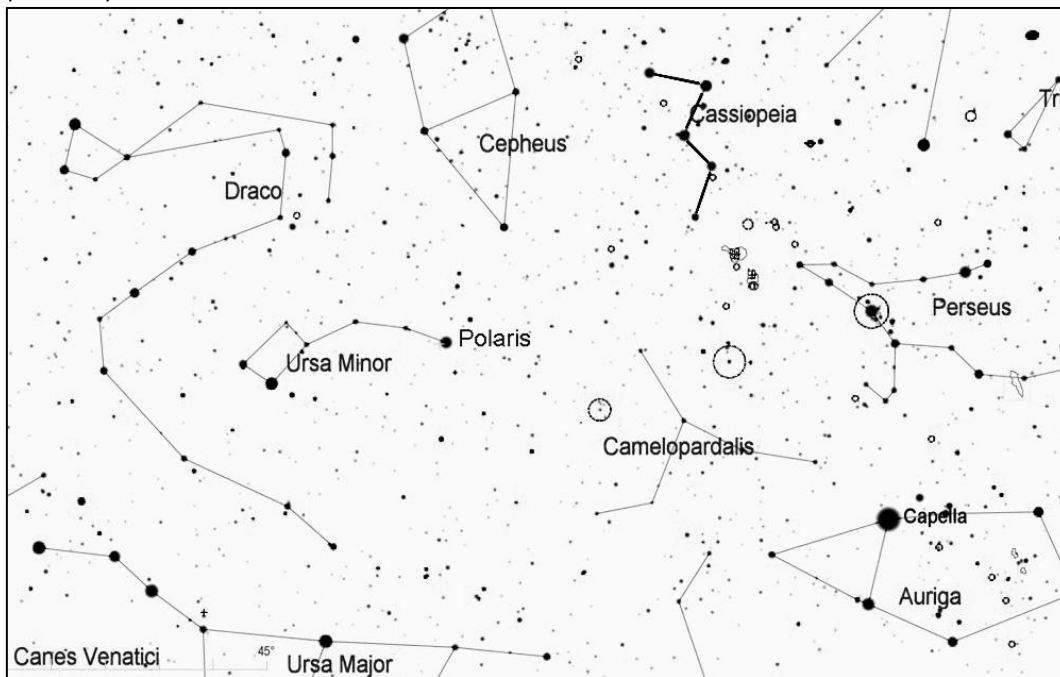


Stock 2 (Muscleman Cluster), Open Cluster in Cassiopeia

Stock 2 is a sprawling open cluster covering about 1 degree of sky, so it is best viewed with binoculars or a telescope with a wide-field eyepiece. Some people see the figure of a man with arms flexed over his head, so its nickname is the "Muscleman Cluster." The cluster is about 990 light years away.



Find the constellation Cassiopeia, which has a 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".

One way to find Stock 2 is first to find the Perseus Double Cluster, which is distinct and pretty easy to locate. Use the first two stars of the W shape of Cassiopeia to make a slightly elongated triangle pointing in the direction of Perseus, as shown in the chart below. With the naked eye, you might see a hazy spot there, which is the Double Cluster. If not, the clusters will be readily visible in binoculars or a finderscope. Then move about 2 degrees north (back toward Cassiopeia) to reach Stock 2.

