Dark Sky in April 2024

All times are in British Summer Time (UTC+1)

		Duration of Dark Sky			
		Date	Time from	Time to	Date
		1	22:05	04:47	2
	Last Quarter Moon	2	22:05	04:47	3
		3	22:05	04:19	4
		4	22:05	04:19	5
		5	22:05	04:19	6
		6	22:05	04:19	7
		7	22:05	04:19	8
	New Moon	8	22:05	04:19	9
		9	22:05	04:19	10
	Moon and Jupiter low in west after sunset. Uranus is close by	10	22:34	04:19	11
		11	Moonlight all evening		
		12	00:00	04:19	12
		13	01:27	03:50	13
	Moon close to Castor and Pollux in Gemini First Quarter on 15th	14	02:24	03:50	14
		15	03:22	03:50	15
		16	Moonlight all night		17
		17	Moonlight all night		18
	Moon close to Regulus in Leo	18	Moonlight all night		19
Lyrid Meteor Shower is at its best before dawn between 19th and 25th Maximum on 22nd		19	Moonlight all night		20
		20	Moonlight all night		21
		21	Moonlight all night		22
	Moon close to Spica in Virgo	22	Moonlight all night		23
		23	Moonlight all night		24
	Full Moon	24	Moonlight all night		25
		25	23:03	00:28	26
		26	23:03	01:25	27
		27	23:03	02:52	28
		28	23:03	02:52	29
		29	23:32	02:52	30
		30	23:32	02:52	1

Dark Sky in May 2024

All times are in British Summer Time (UTC+1)

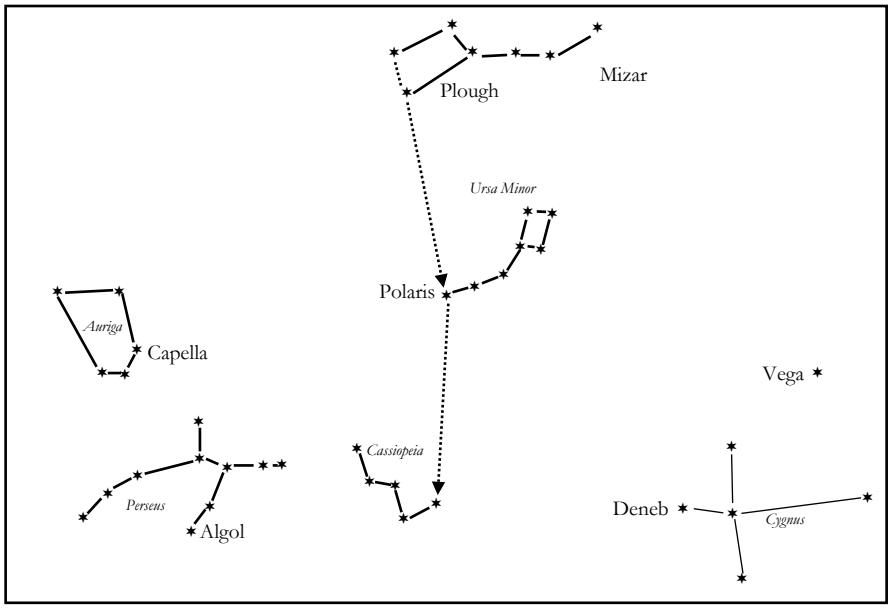
	Duration of Dark Sky			
	Date	Time from	Time to	Date
Last Quarter Moon	1	23:32	02:52	2
	2	23:32	02:52	3
	3	23:32	02:52	4
	4	23:32	02:23	5
	5	Twilight all evening		
	6	00:00	02:23	6
	7	00:00	02:23	7
New Moon	8	00:00	02:23	8
	9	00:00	01:55	9
	10	00:00	01:55	10
	11	Twilight From Sunset To Sunrise		12
Moon close to Castor and Pollux, the brightest stars in Gemini	12			13
	13			14
	14			15
First Quarter Moon close to the star Regulus in Leo	15			16
	16			17
	17			18
	18			19
	19			20
	20			21
	21			22
Full Moon close to Antares in Scorpius. Antares is very red.	22			23
Full Moon	23			24
	24			25
	25			26
	26			27
	27			28
	28			29
	29			30
Last Quarter Moon	30			31
	31			1

Dark Sky in June 2024

The sky never gets dark enough to see the stars at their best this month. Mars and Saturn can be seen in the east before sunrise, but that is about it.

Dark Sky in July 2024

Like June, the sky never gets dark enough to see the stars at their best this month. The morning sky is best with Saturn in Aquarius, Mars and Jupiter in Taurus. Saturn is close to the Moon on July 25. The Perseid meteor shower is active from July 25 to August 20.



With fewer stars in the sky, stargazing becomes less complicated and this is a good time to learn your way around the heavens. Then return in the autumn and winter to see the sky at its best.

Start by looking due north. All these stars are always visible in the night sky of Southern Scotland but as the Earth spins on its axis these stars circle around Polaris, the Pole Star, so you will have to rotate this diagram to match their position.

You can find Polaris by first seeking out The Plough. These seven stars are known as an asterism because they form an easily identifiable pattern but are not a constellation as such - in fact they are part of the constellation of The Great Bear (astronomers call it Ursa Major). The fainter stars of the rest of the constellation are not always seen in the summer. Two stars in the Plough are known as The Pointers because they point to Polaris (The Pole Star).

Follow the line from the Pointers, through Polaris and the easily recognisable shape of the ‘W’ of Cassiopeia can be found. The constellation is slightly larger than the ‘W’ asterism - but that is a technicality.

To the left of Cassiopea can be found the constellation of Perseus. Algol, its brightest star, is not one but three stars. Every 2.86 days the fainter star passes directly in front of the brighter two, turning a bright magnitude 2.1 star into a dim magnitude 3.4 and the eclipse lasts for about ten hours.

In Auriga, the constellation of the Charioteer, its brightest star, Capella, never sets, but is highest in the sky during the winter.

To the right of Cassiopea are the bright stars Deneb in Cygnus, and Vega in Lyra. These are two stars in the Summer Triangle.

Polaris is the brightest star in the constellation of the Little Bear (Ursa Minor), and it is like a smaller version of the Plough, but with the tail up instead of down, as in the case of the Great Bear. Polaris is not directly above the Earth’s north pole but only 0.66° away. About a hundred years from now it will be at its closest to the pole at only 0.45°.