

Welcome to Hungry Mother State Park

Attention all stargazers, the night sky is calling. Here at the park we have some prime viewing areas located at the spillway, the beach front and the ballfield behind Ferrell Hall. Year-round the sky is filled with stars, planets and constellations with stories to tell. Here in the Northern Hemisphere we have circumpolar constellations that can be viewed all year long. What are we waiting for? Let's go stargazing.

June Constellations

Bootes
Libra

July Constellations

Corona Borealis
Hercules
Ophiuchus
Scorpius

Star Gazing Smart Phone Apps

Star Walk 2
Night Sky
Star Tracker
Sky Map



Please watch for additional monthly Stargazing guides to learn more about stargazing in our park.

For more information about Virginia State Parks, please visit:
www.virginiastateparks.gov

Discovery Center Hours of Operation:

10 a.m. - 6:30 p.m. daily



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Virginia State Parks

Hungry Mother State Park

Stargazing in the Park



June & July



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www.virginiastateparks.gov

June Constellations

Bootes (The Herdsman)

Bootes, the herdsman, may have appeared as a shepherd to the ancients. Modern stargazers like us can easily recognize the shape of a kite, with the bright star Arcturus at the point of the kite where the tail is attached. Bootes was identified with a farmer who plows the land during spring. The Romans called Bootes the Herdsman of the Septemtriones, that is, of the seven oxen represented by the seven stars of the Big Dipper, which was seen as the cart or the plow.

Libra (The Scales)

Ancient Greeks knew the part of the sky occupied by the Libra constellation as Chelae, or “claws,” and considered it part of Scorpio constellation. The association of this region of the sky with scales was established among the Romans. It is said that Moon was located in Libra when Rome was founded. The Romans considered Libra to be a favored constellation, one associated with balanced seasons and equal length of night and day. The Sun was at the autumnal equinox in Libra until the year 729, when the precession of the equinoxes shifted the equinox to Virgo. The autumnal equinox will move to constellation Leo in the year 2439. The Romans were not the first to associate Libra with the idea of balance. The Babylonians called it ZIB.BA.AN.NA, which means “the balance of heaven,” about a thousand years before Christ. Once Libra became associated with balance, its association with Scorpio’s claws faded and the one with the goddess of justice, the Greek Dike or Astraea, represented by the constellation Virgo, became stronger.

July Constellations

Corona Borealis (The Northern Crown)

Corona Borealis was sometimes considered to represent a crown that was given by Dionysus to Ariadne, the daughter of Minos of Crete. Ariadne was stranded on an island by her fickle lover. Dionysus found her crying, and he placed her crown in the sky so that no one would ever forget her again. The Cheyenne nation of Native Americans called it the “Camp Circle” as they arranged their camps in a semicircle. In Welsh mythology, the Northern Crown was called Caer Arianrhod, ‘the Castle of the Silver Circle,’ and was the heavenly abode of the Lady Arianrhod

Hercules (The Hero)

Hercules, was the Greek people’s most famous hero. The ancient Romans named him Heracles. Heracles was a courageous and strong man; but unfortunately, Heracles had a terrible enemy, the goddess Hera. Hera decided to cast a spell over him. As a result, he committed a terrible crime. Seeking forgiveness, Heracles was told to perform twelve very difficult tasks for the king, Eurystheus, that he would complete. He has been famous for this ever since.



Ophiuchus (The Serpent Bearer)

The constellation is a combination of three different figures. Ophiuchus is holding Serpens Caput in his left hand and Serpens Cauda in his right. In Greek myth, Ophiuchus represents the god of medicine, Asclepius. Asclepius was the son of Apollo and was taught by Chiron, the Centaur. He learned how to bring people back from the dead, which worried Hades. The god of the underworld asked his brother Zeus to kill the medicine god. Zeus did strike him dead, but then placed the figure of Asclepius in the sky to honor him.



Scorpius (The Scorpion)

According to one story, Orion wanted to kill all the earth's wild animals. However, the earth goddess Gaia was not pleased with Orion's intention. So, she sent a giant scorpion to attack Orion. Before he defeated the scorpion, the scorpion stung him to death with its poisonous tail. As a reward for its service, Gaia placed the scorpion's image in the nighttime sky. To this day, it looks as if the scorpion is always chasing after Orion in the nighttime sky.