



WEST
VIRGINIA®

Dark Skies Constellation Guide

almost heaven®

CAN YOU FIND THESE CONSTELLATIONS?

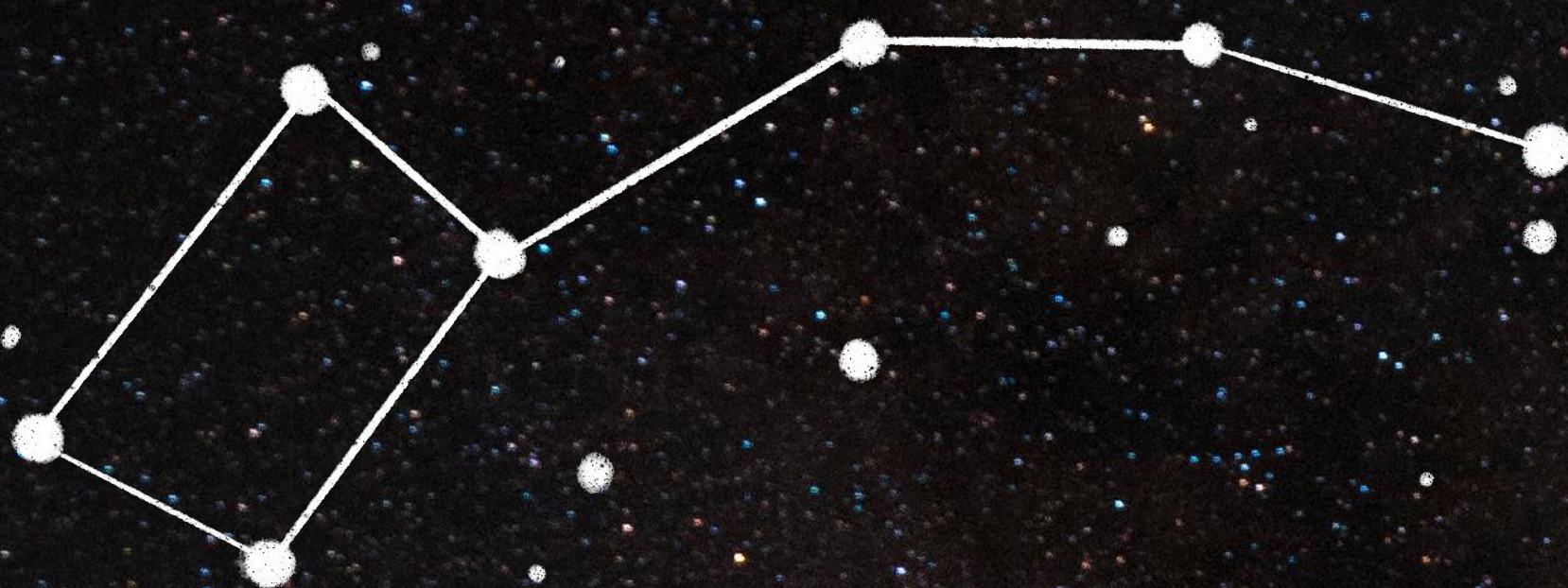


Ursa Major “The Great Bear”

Best seen: Spring/Summer

Probably the best known group of stars in the Northern Hemisphere is the Big Dipper.

The Big Dipper is not technically a constellation, but part of the constellation known as Ursa Major.

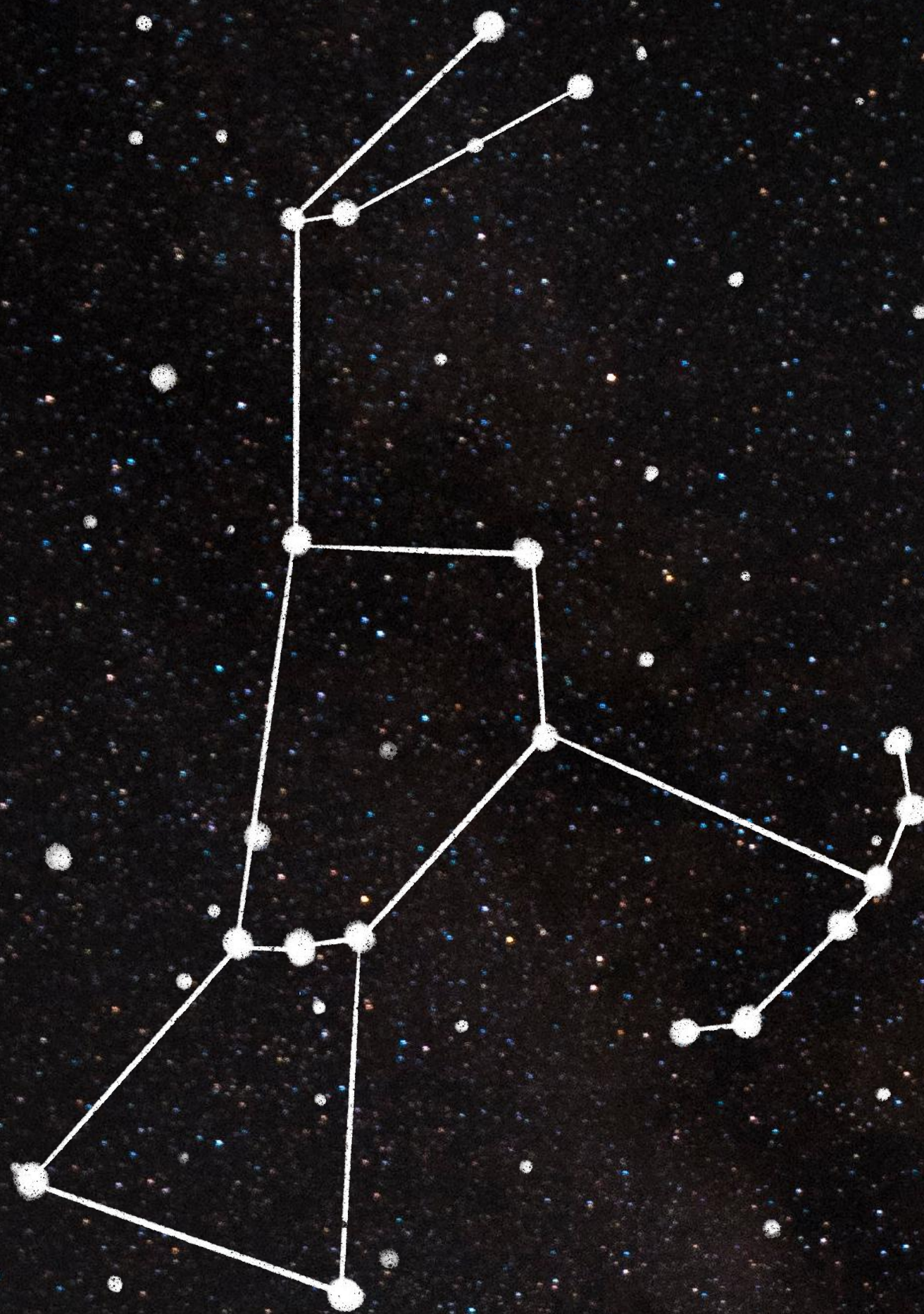


Ursa Minor

“The Little Bear”

Best seen: Summer

If you can find the Big Dipper it makes finding the Little Dipper easier. Once you find the Big Dipper find the two stars that form the right side of the cup.



Orion

“The Hunter”

Best seen: Winter

The best way to begin is to look for the three stars that form a straight line or Orion's belt. Next, you can follow the curved group of stars that makes the hunter's bow or shield in one hand.



Taurus

“The Bull”

Best seen: Spring/Summer

To find Taurus look slightly above the shield/bow side of Orion like both constellations are facing off. Find the group of stars that make a fork shape to form the Bull’s horns. The brightest star in the constellation is Aldebaran also known as Alpha Tauri.



Gemini

“The Twins”

Best seen: Winter

Gemini gets its name because of the group of stars that look like two stick figures. Gemini can be found by looking for its brightest stars Pollux and Castor which are also the names of each of the twins.

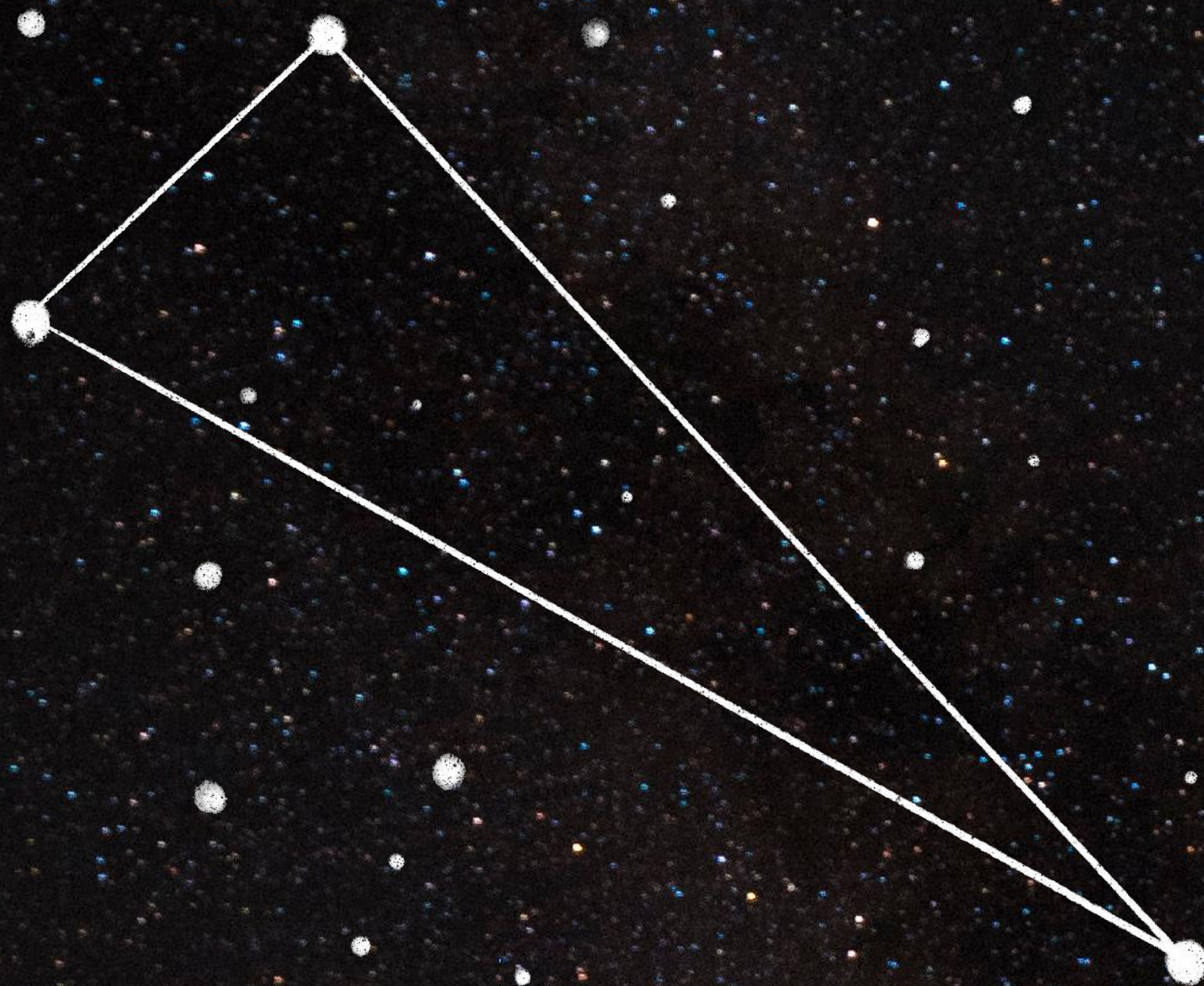


Perseus

“The Hero”

Best seen: Winter

Named after the mythological hero, Perseus is one of the 48 ancient constellations and is the 24th largest in the sky. Perseus contains Algol, or the Demon Star, a “variable star” meaning it brightens and dims with regularity that’s visible to the naked eye.



Triangulum

“The Triangle”

Best seen: Spring/Summer

As the name suggests, Triangulum’s three brightest stars form a small triangular-shaped constellation within the northern sky. This cluster is home to the Triangulum galaxy, the largest stellar mass black hole known to man.



Draco

“The Dragon”

Best seen: Spring

The 8th largest constellation of the night sky, Draco spans a massive area of 1,083 square degrees. Draco is home to 17 formally named stars and is associated with the meteor shower the Draconids.



Hercules

“The Strongman”

Best seen: Summer

Hercules contains two bright globular clusters, one of which is the brightest globular cluster in the entire northern hemisphere. Although Hercules is the 5th largest formation out of the 88 modern constellations, it can often be difficult to spot due to its dim stars.



Lynx

“The Cat”

Best seen: Winter/Spring/Summer

Created to fill a large gap between two neighboring constellations, astronomer Johannes Hevelius decided on the name because he said it took the eyesight of a lynx to see it.

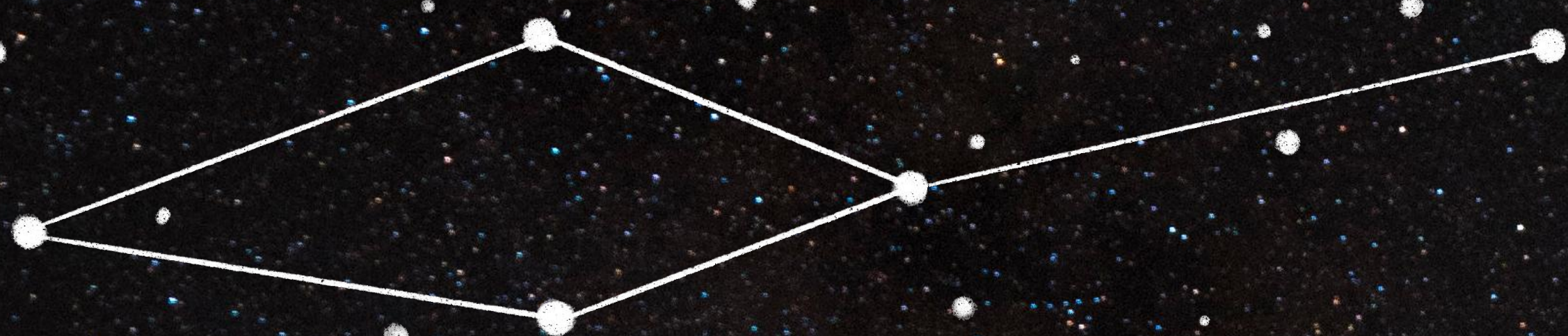


Cygnus

“The Swan”

Best seen: Summer/Fall

One of the most recognizable constellations of the northern summer and autumn, Cygnus displays a distinct cross shape that swims through the river of the Milky Way.



Leo Minor

“The Smaller Lion”

Best seen: Spring

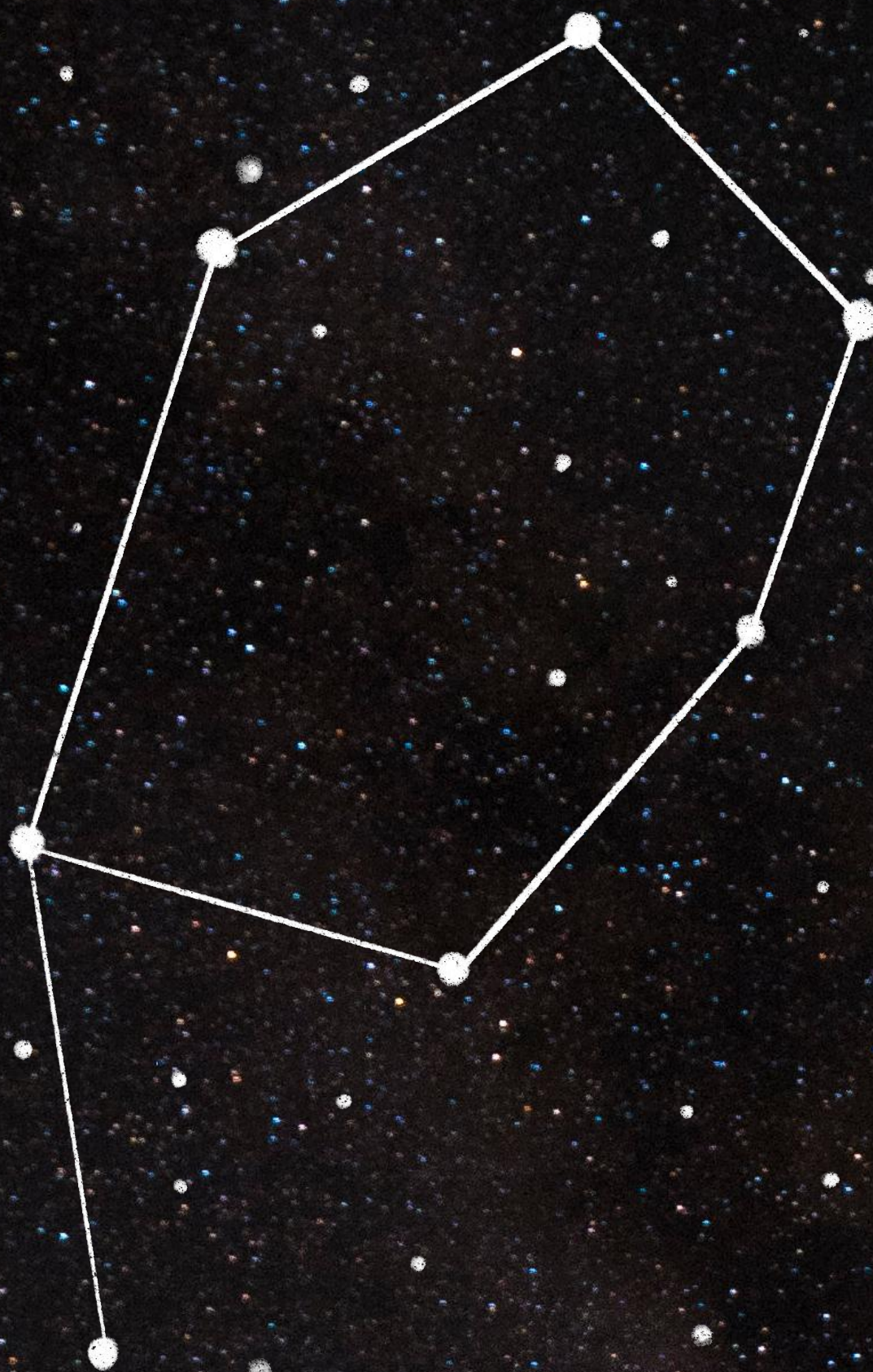
Leo Minor is a dim constellation that lies between the larger and more recognizable Ursa Major to the north and Leo to the south. This cluster is also known as Praecipue, which means “principal star” and is located about 95 light years from Earth.



Canes Venatici “The Hunting Dogs”

Best seen: Spring/Summer

Canes Venatici is a small northern constellation that was first created in the 17th-century. Cor Caroli, the constellation's brightest star, is one of the reddest naked-eye stars as well as one of the brightest carbon stars.



Auriga

“The Charioteer”

Best seen: Winter/Spring

Auriga is a hidden gem constellation that can be found neighboring Gemini and Taurus in the northern hemisphere. This constellation contains three star clusters known as M36, M37 and M38.

Share Your Constellation Photos

Be sure to use #AlmostHeaven
and tag @wvtourism when you
post it on social media!