

CAS Sky Notes for July 2023

The light evenings persist throughout most of the month, although it will be getting dark noticeably earlier by the end of the month.

Planets:

Mercury: Mercury is not well placed, but might be picked up in the evening sky in the second half of the month. It has an elongation of 25° at the end of July, but sets barely an hour after the Sun. It will be difficult to pick up, unfortunately.

Venus: Venus is now racing in towards inferior conjunction early next month. It is still a prominent object after sunset, with an elongation of 40° at the start of the month, but dropping to 22° by the end of July. The phase decreases from a crescent of 33% at the start, dropping to a thin crescent of less than 10% by the end of the month. The angular size does increase rapidly from 33 arc secs to 52 arc secs in the same period. This will be your last chance to see it in the evening sky for a while.

Mars is still visible in the evening sky, but is a difficult object now. The disc size drops to 4 arc seconds this month and it is very low in the western sky by the time it gets dark. It moves into Leo and passes very close to Regulus in the first week of the month. It might be worth looking out for this.

Jupiter is now a prominent object in the morning sky, rising around 1 a.m. by the end of the month.

Saturn is still just a morning object in Aquarius, but rises well before midnight. It is low in the sky, but is now worth staying up for. It reaches opposition next month.

Uranus and **Neptune** are still morning objects. They will be better placed in the autumn.

Pluto reaches opposition on the 22nd at RA 20h 06.1m Dec $-23^\circ 1.5'$ with a magnitude of 14.9. Good luck!!

The Sun

Solar activity is still increasing and solar observations are a good idea. **Take great care to never look directly at the Sun, or directly through an optical instrument.**

Ensure a proper filter is in place or project the image onto card.

Meteor Showers: The Perseid meteor shower lasts from 17th July until 24th August. These can be quite prolific and it's well worth waiting up for them. The Moon won't be a problem near the end of the month.

Moon

3rd July: Full Moon.

17th July: New Moon

10th July: Moon is at last quarter.

25th July: Moon is at First Quarter