

CAS Sky Notes for May 2024

The lighter nights make astronomy more challenging now, especially as none of the planets are well placed. You may need to concentrate on the Moon.

Planets:

Mercury: Mercury becomes a morning object, reaching elongation of -26° on the 9th May. However, it will be low in the sky and, although of magnitude +0.4, it will be difficult to find.

Venus: Venus is technically a morning object but is not really observable as it approaches superior conjunction at the start of next month.

Mars: It remains a difficult morning object throughout at magnitude +1.1 and diameter of 4.8 arcsec. It continues to increase its declination to $+7^\circ$, so you may be able to view it.

Jupiter: Jupiter reaches conjunction on the 18th and so is not observable this month.

Saturn: Although Saturn rises well before the Sun in the morning sky, its southerly declination of -6° and magnitude of only +1.2 will make it a tricky object.

Uranus: Uranus is not observable this month.

Neptune: Neptune is not observable this month.

The Sun

Solar activity is still increasing, providing a good opportunity for solar observations.

Take great care to never look directly at the Sun, or directly through an optical instrument.

Aurora Borealis: Increasing solar activity increases the chance of seeing an aurora. There are a number of Apps that can give you warnings and chances of seeing Aurorae. Mine is called *Aurora Pro*.

Meteor Showers: There are no observable meteor showers this month but keep an eye out for sporadic ones.

Moon

1st May: Moon is at last quarter.

15th May: Moon is at First Quarter

8th May: New Moon**

23rd May: Full Moon

Comet 12P Pons-Brooks

This may still be visible at the start of the month, although it is moving southwards. Look online for updated expectations.

Deep Sky Objects: This is becoming increasingly difficult with the lighter nights. By the end of the month, astronomical twilight will last virtually all night. Only objects in the southern part of the sky will be able to be photographed successfully.