

Exploring Capricornus And Aquarius - Activities (Ages 8-11)



Today we are going to investigate:

- How to locate Capricornus and Aquarius in the sky
- What makes a constellation a member of the Zodiac
- Deep space objects in Capricornus and Aquarius
- Why these constellations are said to lie in the “wet” part of the sky

Activities

- 1 Today we are going to study two star patterns. They are both zodiac constellations linked to water. Start by setting the Space Travel tile to 9.00pm in October and look low in the sky to find the first of them. Search for the constellation of Capricornus.

Question: In which direction did you find Capricornus?

- a) North b) South c) East d) West

- 2 Capricornus represents a strange imaginary beast from a time when some ancient peoples thought that land creatures had counterparts living in the deep sea. This is why sailors believed in mermaids. Look at Capricornus and you will see it has a fish’s tail and the front half of a land animal.

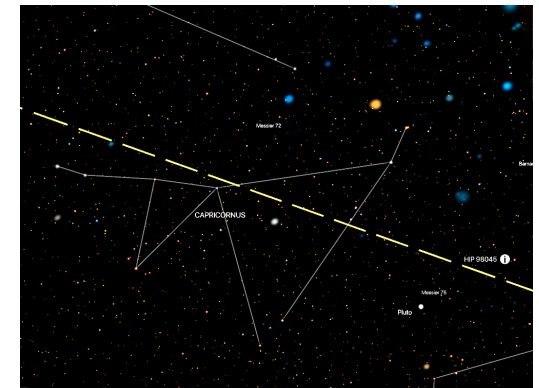
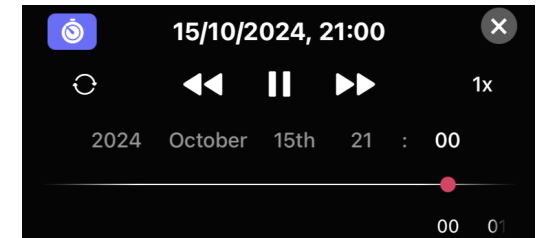
Question: What imaginary beast is Capricornus meant to be?

- a) Sea-pig b) Sea-dog c) Sea-goat d) Sea serpent

- 3 Capricornus hasn’t many bright stars but astronomers have found other interesting objects in the constellation. One of them is Messier 30. You can find it by typing Messier 30 into the Search feature. Zoom in on Messier 30 and you will see it is made of many stars squeezed together. Tap on the ⓘ to bring up the Information panel for Messier 30 and use it to answer the question.


Question: What type of object is Messier 30?

- a) galaxy b) globular cluster c) planetary nebula



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- 4 The yellow dashed line running through Capricornus is called the Ecliptic and marks the path of the Sun across the sky. Constellations crossed by the Ecliptic are members of the Zodiac. Follow the Ecliptic up the sky to find Aquarius, the constellation of the Water Carrier, a legendary servant to the Greek gods. Aquarius is home to the famous Helix Nebula also known as NGC 7293. Look for this colourful little circle. If you can't find it, type Helix Nebula into the Search feature. Tap on the  to bring up its Information panel for more information.

Question: Question: What do the letters NGC stand for?

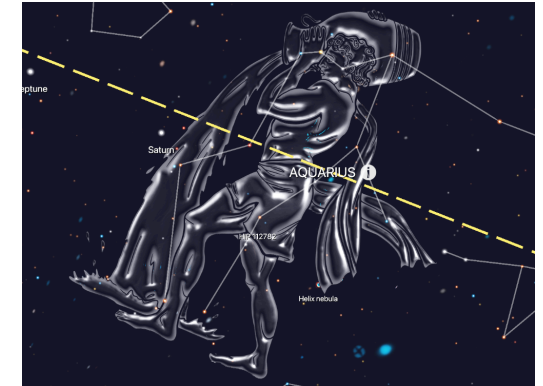
- a) New General Catalogue
- b) New Globular Clusters
- c) National Galaxy Catalogue

- 5 Stargazers sometimes say Capricornus and Aquarius lie in the “wet” part of the sky. This is because several other constellations found near Capricornus and Aquarius represent creatures or things associated with water.

Activity: Look for these “watery” constellations and make a list of the names of the ones you find.

What we have discovered:

- Capricornus and Aquarius are both zodiac constellations
- Both constellations can be seen in the fall (autumn)
- They represent a mythical beast and a servant from ancient legends
- Located in Capricornus and Aquarius are two deep sky objects



★ ★ Well done!
You're a Night Sky
Superstar! ★ ★