



CAROLINA SKIES

APRIL 2023



To use your star chart, hold it over your head. To avoid ruining your night vision with a bright flashlight, use a red light. Or stretch a red balloon or brown paper bag over your flashlight for a muted glow.

Align north on the chart with north in the night sky by finding Polaris, the North Star. Begin by locating the **Big Dipper**. Draw a line between the Dipper's "pointer stars" **to guide you to Polaris**, going about four and a half times the distance between the two pointer stars. The Dipper's handle "arcs" toward the orange star **Arcturus**, where you can "speed on to Spica" and then "curve on to Corvus."

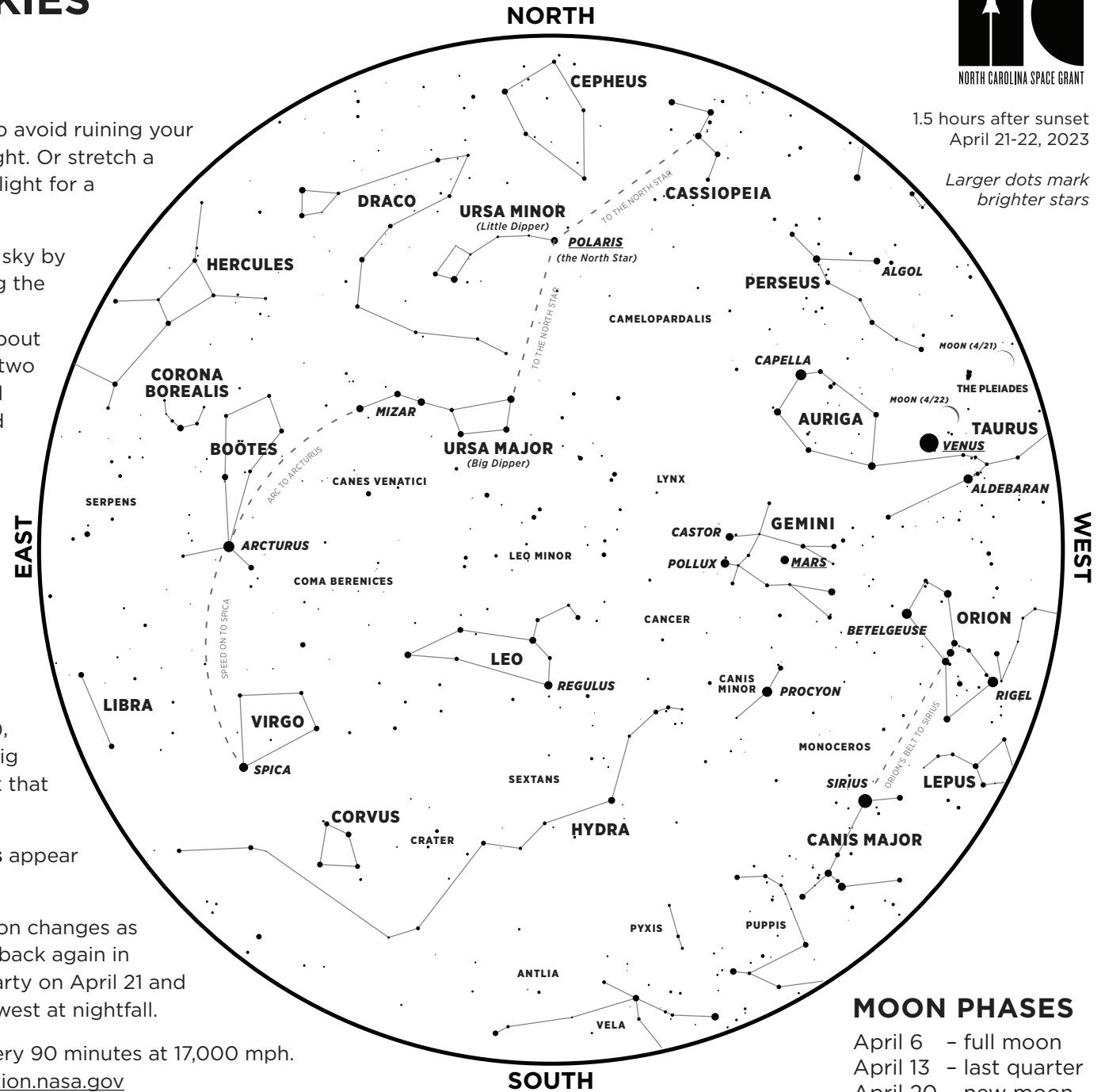
The winter constellations Orion, Taurus, and Gemini are still visible in early spring in the west. Tracing a line through **Orion's belt** will lead you westward to **Aldebaran** (the orange "eye" of Taurus) or eastward to **Sirius** (the brightest star in the night sky).

These winter stars and constellations are followed across the sky by the spring patterns Leo, Ursa Major (which includes the Big Dipper), and Virgo. Find **Leo** the Lion just south of the Big Dipper by locating the backward question mark that outlines Leo's head and mane.

At nightfall, very bright **Venus** and reddish **Mars** appear in the west.

Where's the **Moon**? The Moon's apparent position changes as it goes through its phases from new to full and back again in about a "moonth." During the Statewide Star Party on April 21 and 22, 2023, the waxing crescent moon lies in the west at nightfall.

The International Space Station orbits Earth every 90 minutes at 17,000 mph. When can you see it? Check <https://spotthestation.nasa.gov>



1.5 hours after sunset
April 21-22, 2023

Larger dots mark
brighter stars

MOON PHASES

- April 6 - full moon
- April 13 - last quarter
- April 20 - new moon
- April 27 - first quarter

ncscifest.org/starparty