

Matariki celebration commences from 18 June 2015

The pre-dawn rise of [Matariki](#), also known as the Seven Sisters or Pleiades, traditionally signals the Māori New Year under the [maramataka](#), or lunar calendar.

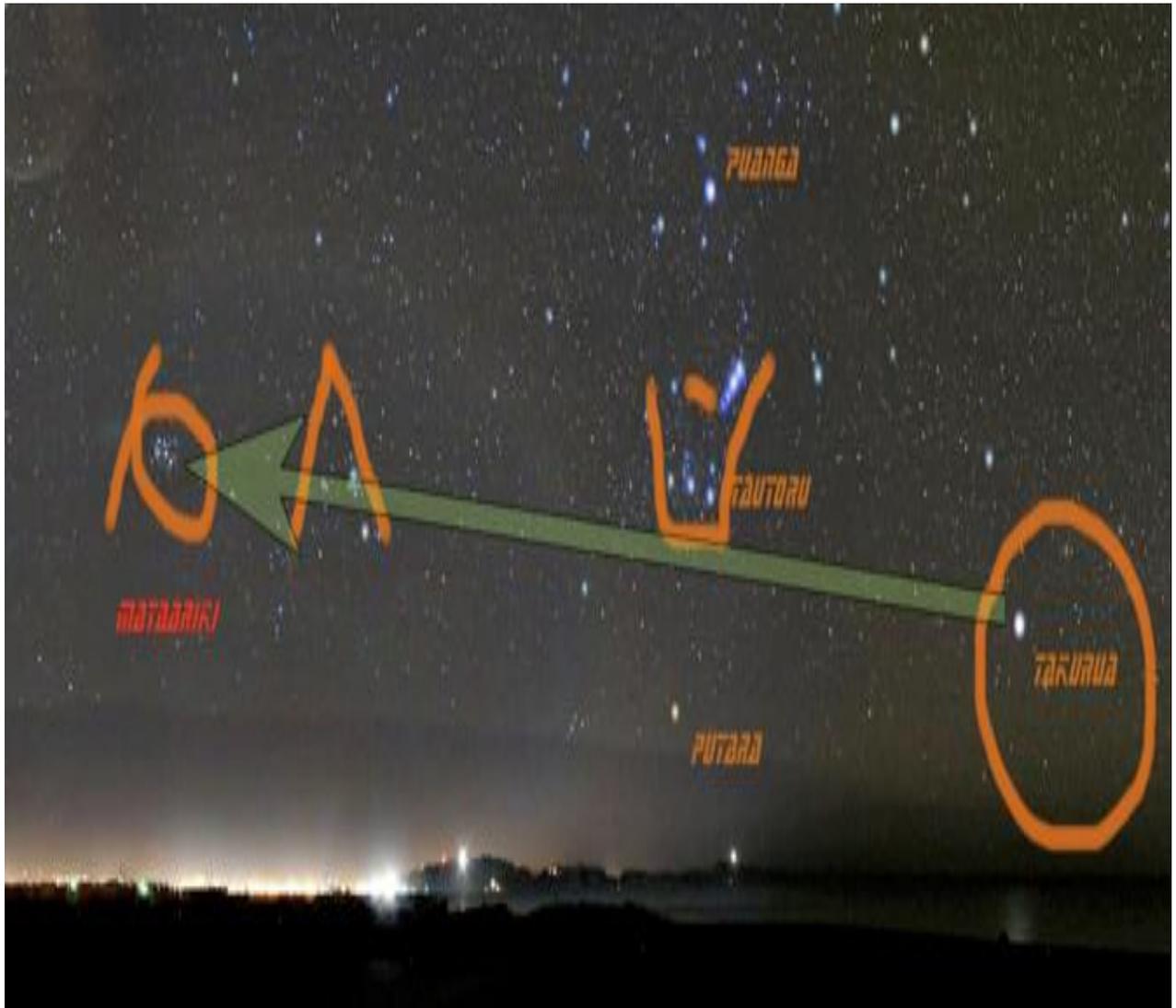
In general, celebration of Matariki starts when the first new moon can be seen following the pre-dawn rise of Matariki, this will happen on 18 June 2015. Traditionally, Matariki was both a time to commemorate those who had passed on and celebrate a time of plenty when stores were abundant from horticulture, hunting and fishing.

For some iwi, Puanga (Rigel), rather than Matariki, was the signal for the new year. For instance, [Whanganui iwi](#) are having a [Puanga](#) festival. In the South Island it is [Puaka](#) (which is Puanga in [Ngāi Tahu](#) dialect) that heralds the new year.

Whether you're celebrating Matariki or Puanga, here's an easy guide to try to find the stars.

Matariki is a small group of stars that are used by many Iwi to mark the end and beginning of the year. Maori are not the only people to use these stars as a seasonal marker; they have captivated people all over the world, being a major signpost in the sky for many indigenous cultures.

To find Matariki in the Sky you first need to look for the *Pot*. If you draw a straight line from the pot towards North (your left) you will first stumble across a cone – shaped formation of stars. That is Matakaheru or the Hydes. Follow the line to the left and you will find Matariki.



Matariki Magic Māori Television is celebrating New Zealand's future stars

Māori Television is celebrating New Zealand's young stars with Matariki Magic, a two-hour LIVE spectacular at the Vodafone Pacific Events Centre in Manukau on Sunday 21 June. Hosted by award-winning presenter Matai Smith, the concert will feature ten of the country's best and brightest young talents across a range of skills as well as performances by some of New Zealand's top musicians.

Tune into Māori Television at 7.00pm on Sunday 21 June and prepare to be inspired.

How do communities recognise Matariki?

Matariki is a good opportunity for Maori to share their stories and culture with the wider community and many events and activities are planned throughout the country to share and celebrate Matariki. Some common events and activities include:

- Concerts and cultural performances
- Art exhibitions
- Art and Craft Workshops
- The sharing of myths and legends
- Looking at the stars – lantern & Astronomy evenings
- Hangi and Feasts or a fish and chip night
- Dawn Ceremonies
- Whanau Days
- Tree Planting in Conservation Areas
- Whakapapa (Genealogy) Workshops
- Sharing Kai

How can you celebrate Matariki with your whanau?

A Whanau Feast

Make Matariki a time when the whole family gets together to feast and give thanks. It may be a nice opportunity to explore traditional Maori food like hangi and rewena (Maori bread).

A New Harvest

Use Matariki as a time to clear the winter vegetables and prepare your vegetable garden for the new planting. It could become a family tradition to do the gardening altogether – at least for one day of the year.

Tree Planting

Contact your local Department of Conservation to find out if there are any regeneration projects happening in your area. Organise to plant a tree on Matariki, or better still, get together with a group of friends and plant several.

Sleep Under the Stars

Spend a night sleeping under the stars (or under a tent!), and tell your own family stories. You may want to talk about family memories or create goals for the coming lunar year.

New Years Resolutions

Most of us create New Years Resolutions in January, but by the time June rolls around they are long forgotten. Why not use Matariki as a time to renew your resolutions.

Local libraries in Christchurch are also offering Matariki themed story telling for pre-schoolers during June, please check the Christchurch City Libraries website for dates and times at libraries near your Playcentre and homes.

Matariki resources are available online through Te Papa Museum or MapCo NZ Ltd.