

Sky Outlook
Dec 2018



Maidenhead
Astronomical
Society

www.maidenhead-astro.net

Planets

Mercury: A morning object, best time will be after the 15th

Venus: Morning object rising four hours before Sun by mid month

Mars: Still climbing in altitude in evening sky but fading in brightness. 7th Neptune will be 0.04* south of Mars.

Jupiter: Becomes morning object towards end of month

Saturn: Gradually sinking from evening sky, still visible low in south-western twilight in early December

Uranus: Visible in binoculars as soon as it gets dark lying in Pisces

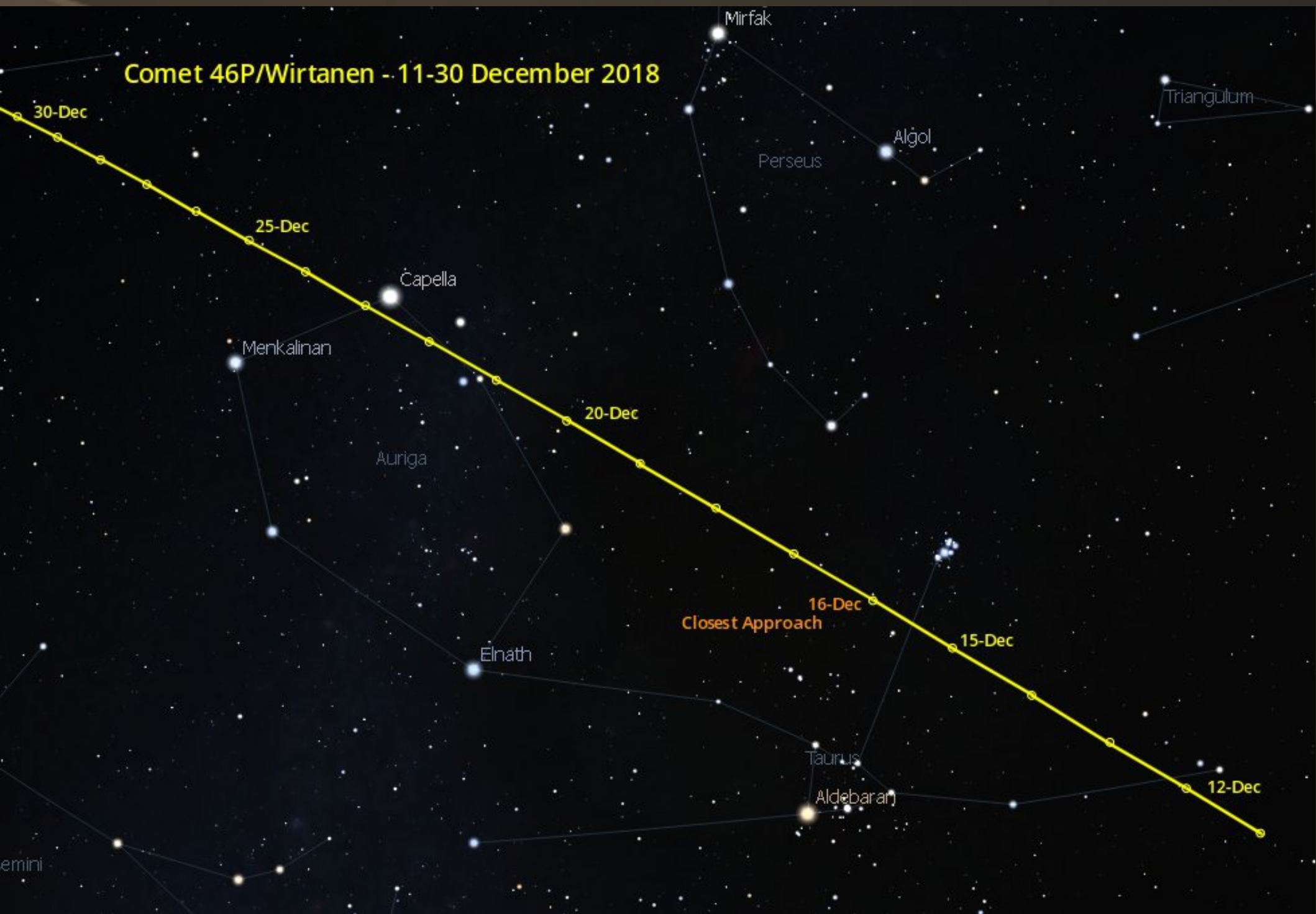
Neptune: In Aquarius, setting in the late evening by mid month

Comets

46P/Wirtanen Visible in the evening sky all month. A short-period comet belonging to the 'Jupiter family' which visits the inner Solar System every 5.4 years. Discovered by the American astronomer Carl A. Wirtanen in 1948 on a photographic plate exposed at the Lick Observatory in California. Not well placed for UK in early part of December as it lies in the Constellation of Cetus, but by the 10th will have moved up into Pisces/Taurus boundary, now just 13 million kilometres (8 million miles) from Earth moving at a rapid eight arcseconds/minute. Comet reaches perihelion on 12th putting it 157.8 million kilometres (98 million miles) from the Sun and will be in western Taurus. On the 16th 46P will be at its closest to us at 11.6 million kilometres (7.2 million miles) or just over 30 times the distance to the Moon. Magnitude estimates are +3 with a coma and comet will be placed between M45 and Hyades.



Comet 46P/Wirtanen - 11-30 December 2018



Meteor storms

Geminids: Active between 8th and 17th and peaks on the night of the 13th/14th. Actual timing for the peak is 08:00 UT so favours those in North America but the storm will still be unmissable in Europe. Radiant point is placed close to Castor (alpha Geminorum). Showers debris stream comes from not a comet as such but an object known as 3200 Phaeton, which looks like a rocky asteroid! One theory says that Phaeton is a rock comet ie an asteroid that comes unusually close to the Sun and resulting solar scorching rips off copious amounts of robust grains.





Mars

Neptune

Hydor

Full-screen mode [F11]

Earth, +51°27'22", -0°58'16"

FOV 3.94°

15 FPS

2018-12-07 20:00:32 UTC+00:00



Venus

Libra

phiuchus

IC 4592

Mercury
Jupiter

Full-screen mode [F11]

Earth, +51°27'22", -0°58'16"

FOV 26.6°

18.7 FPS

2018-12-22 06:59:54 UTC+00:00



Messier 1 (Crab nebula)
C9.25 @ f/10 Atik 314L
4x900s Ha, 4x900s OIII

Alun_H

merry
christmas
everyone

