

Monday, October 5, 2026

' 2026 Morning Update • Marin Night Skies • Tue, 06 Oct 2026 00:13:39 GMT • 4:56

Maya: Good evening, and welcome to Mahrin Night Skies for Monday, October fifth, twenty twenty-six. I'm Maya.

Devon: And I'm Devon. And Maya, tonight could be the best Monday night sky we've had in weeks, because the Moon is simply gone.

Maya: Gone is right. Our waning crescent Moon set this afternoon at four seventeen P M, and it doesn't rise again until two fifty-two tomorrow morning. That means from the time it gets properly dark, around seven thirteen P M, until nearly three A M, we have a completely moonless sky over Mahrin County.

Devon: When it does come up, it's a delicate sliver, only about twenty-three percent lit, low in the east. But the evening belongs to the stars alone.

Maya: Let's start with the planets, because Saturn is still putting on the show of the year. It reached opposition just yesterday, on October fourth, so it's still essentially at its biggest and brightest for all of twenty twenty-six, glowing in the southeast as darkness falls and staying up all night.

Devon: Look west right at sunset and Venus is still hanging on low in the twilight, though this is really farewell season for the evening star. But here's a new target for the week: Mercury is climbing toward its greatest eastern elongation on October twelfth, its widest apparent distance from the Sun. That makes this week your best chance to catch the solar system's speedster. Look very low in the west about half an hour after sunset, and bring binoculars if you can.

Maya: Then there's the early morning drama. Before dawn tomorrow, that slender crescent Moon slides right past brilliant Jupiter in the eastern sky. I want to be precise here: across the eastern two-thirds of the country, the Moon will actually cover Jupiter in a rare lunar occultation, one of the best placed in years. From Mahrin, the geometry just misses, so instead we get an extremely close encounter between the crescent and the giant planet, low in the east before sunrise. Worth setting the alarm for.

Devon: Mars is up there in those predawn hours too. And mark your calendar for October thirteenth, when the asteroid Vesta reaches opposition. Vesta is the brightest asteroid in the sky, and around midnight on a moonless night you can pick it out with ordinary binoculars as a tiny star-like point drifting through the south. No visible disk, just a wandering speck of light, and there's something wonderful about that.

Maya: Now the meteors, because October's shower season is about to begin. The Draconids are active from October sixth through the tenth, and they peak on the night of Thursday, October eighth, into the early hours of Friday the ninth. Here's what's special: unlike most showers, the Draconids are best in the evening, because their radiant, the constellation Draco the Dragon, is already high in the northern sky

meteors per hour. Nothing like that is forecast, but with the Draconids, you never quite know.

Maya: Looking further ahead, the Orionids, debris from Halley's Comet, peak on the night of October twenty-first into the twenty-second, with around twenty meteors per hour possible, though a bright waxing gibbous Moon will wash out the fainter ones until it sets, after about two forty A M. And the full Hunter's Moon rises on October twenty-sixth.

Devon: In the deep sky, we're in the final weeks for the bright core of the Milky Way, which sinks into the southwest soon after dark, so soak it in while you can. By late evening, the Andromeda Galaxy climbs high in the east, and with new Moon coming on the tenth, next weekend will be ideal for it. The Summer Triangle still rides high overhead, a fine signpost for the season.

Maya: For viewing tonight, the weather is on our side. Skies over Mahrin look mostly clear to partly cloudy, with temperatures in the sixties and calm wind, and this warm offshore flow is holding the marine layer back. The best bet is to get up above it all: the Rock Spring area on Mount Tamalpais, or out to Point Reyes, where Limantour and Drake's Beach have wide open horizons. The prime window runs from about seven fifteen until ten, so bring a warm layer and give your eyes a good twenty minutes to adapt. Honestly, with no moonlight at all, even a backyard in San Rafael will show far more than usual tonight.

Devon: And the aurora outlook? Noah's Space Weather Prediction Center reports quiet to unsettled geomagnetic conditions right now, with the planetary K index hovering around two to three, well below storm levels. No geomagnetic storm watches are in effect, so an aurora reaching Northern California tonight is, frankly, implausible. If that changes, we'll be the first to tell you.

Maya: That's your sky for tonight. Dark, clear, and full of slow dragons. I'm Maya.

Devon: And I'm Devon. Look up, Mahrin.