

Tuesday, October 6, 2026

' 2026 Morning Update • Marin Night Skies • Wed, 07 Oct 2026 00:06:39 GMT • 5:02

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

Devon: And I'm Devon. And Maya, we're counting down tonight, because one of the year's quietest, most charming meteor showers hits its peak in just two nights.

Maya: The Draconids, and we'll get there. But first, the headline for tonight: the Moon is still out of the picture. Our waning crescent set at four forty-eight this afternoon, and it doesn't rise again until two fifty-one tomorrow morning, a thin sliver only about seventeen percent lit. From the time it gets properly dark, around seven thirty P M, the sky over Mahrin is moonless until nearly three A M.

Devon: And it's a clear one, too. The National Weather Service says skies over San Rafael will be clear tonight, with a low around sixty degrees, and clear through the whole week ahead. No marine layer, no fog forecast for tonight. There is a heat advisory in effect through Thursday night, with temperatures pushing toward the nineties tomorrow, but for stargazing, tonight is close to ideal.

Maya: Let's talk planets. Saturn is still the star of the show, just two days past opposition, so it's essentially at its biggest and brightest for all of twenty twenty-six. Look east after sunset and you'll find its steady golden light, climbing highest around midnight.

Devon: And now turn west, because Mercury is having a moment. The solar system's speedster is climbing toward its greatest eastern elongation on October twelfth, its widest apparent distance from the Sun, and this week is your best evening view. Tomorrow night, Mercury sits only about five degrees from Venus in the twilight, and next Monday the twelfth, the thin crescent Moon joins them for a lovely little gathering low in the west. Start looking tonight so you know where to find them.

Maya: Venus itself is fading out of our evenings, the evening star slipping away by mid-month. But before dawn there's still plenty to see: Jupiter glows bright in the east before sunrise, near the star Regulus, with Mars above it. And mark your calendar for October twelfth, when Mars drifts into the heart of the Beehive Cluster, a star cluster in Cancer, close enough to frame in binoculars with the red planet.

Devon: No naked eye comet this week, I'm afraid. Comet Hartley I R A S made its closest approach to Earth last Friday, but it's a telescope only target, dim and small. And there are no eclipses in October. Some months the sky just gives you meteors instead.

Maya: And what meteors. The Draconids peak on the night of Thursday, October eighth, into the early hours of Friday the ninth. This is the rare shower that's best in the evening, because its radiant, the constellation Draco the Dragon, is already

with sudden outbursts. None is forecast this year, but start watching tonight anyway. The shower is already active, and you might catch an early one.

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. But I have to be honest: this year the Moon ruins the party. It'll be nearly eighty percent lit that night, so the fainter Orionids get washed out. Your best window is the morning of the twenty-third, around four to five A M, after the Moon sets.

Devon: In the deep sky, we're in the final weeks for the bright core of the Milky Way, sinking into the southwest after dark, so soak it in. The Andromeda Galaxy climbs high in the east by late evening, and with the new Moon on Saturday, this coming weekend will be ideal for it, two and a half million light years away, visible to the naked eye under dark skies. The Summer Triangle still rides high overhead.

Maya: For viewing tonight, keep it simple. Sunset is at six twenty-six, dark around seven thirty. The Rock Spring area on Mount Tamalpais is always our top pick, or head out to Point Reyes, Limantour or Drake's Beach, for wide open horizons. Give your eyes a good twenty minutes to adapt, bring a warm layer for after the heat of the day, and look north for the Draconids, east for Saturn.

Devon: One more thing, the aurora outlook. Noah's Space Weather Prediction Center reports that we actually had a minor geomagnetic storm in the past twenty-four hours, with the K index touching five. Tonight it's settling back to unsettled conditions, with the K index around four, below storm level, so no aurora over Northern California tonight. But heads up: Noah has issued a moderate storm watch for Friday, October ninth, after an eruption on the Sun today. If that arrives as forecast, auroras could dip as far south as Washington state. We'll be watching, and we'll tell you tomorrow night.

Maya: That's your sky for tonight. Moonless, clear, and the dragons are stirring. I'm Maya.

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