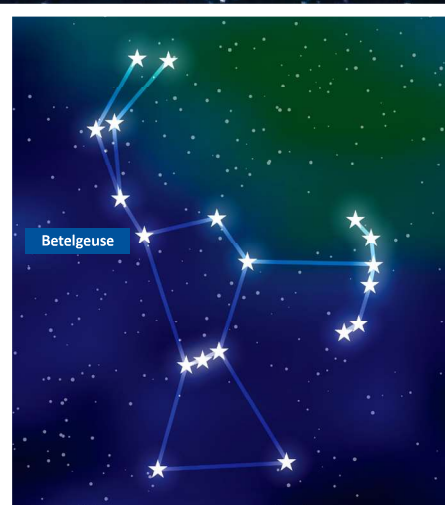


SCIENCE NEWS *by Eddie de Oliveira*

CROWDED SKIES



ORION INFO

Orion is a constellation that is named after a hunter from Greek mythology. Can you spot his belt, shield and club above? The star in the left-hand shoulder is called Betelgeuse. It is a 'red giant' star, 20 times bigger than the sun, and astronomers say it could blow up at any time – that is, anytime in the next 100,000 years!

A clear view of the night sky is easier to find where there aren't many buildings

THE annual Star Count, when people look to the night sky to map the country's light pollution, will take place next month.

Organisers want you to become a citizen scientist by looking up at the sky on a clear night between 21 and 28 February. You'll be asked to count how many stars you can spot within the constellation of Orion. A constellation is a group of stars that form a pattern, and Orion is one of the most recognisable ones.

The data is studied and a map of where light pollution is affecting our vision of the night sky will then be published. The more lights there are on the ground, the harder it is to get a view of the stars.

In 2019, 57% of participants could see ten stars or fewer within Orion. This indicated severe light pollution,

and it is estimated that only around a fifth of England is untouched by light pollution.

Astronomers' views of the night sky are also under threat from satellites. Tech companies such as SpaceX have plans to launch tens of thousands of satellites in the near future. These objects can get in the way of our view, both with telescopes and the naked eye.

There are around 5,000 satellites in orbit. SpaceX wants to launch a total of 42,000 satellites into space, most of which will provide internet connectivity for people on Earth. On the plus side, they have said they will paint the undersides of future satellites black, to make them much harder to spot.

You can find out more about getting involved in Star Count 2020 at tinyurl.com/StarCount2020.

Science News



GLOSSARY

data – Large amounts of information, especially facts and numbers

indicated – Showed, suggested

SpaceX – An American company that makes spacecrafts and has aims to set up space tourism and send people to Mars

■ Look at the article 'Crowded skies'.

1. When is the next Star Count happening?
2. What do you have to do to take part?
- 3a. Where do you think all this light is coming from? You aren't told the answer; give your own opinion.
- 3b. What problem is the light causing?
4. How would you define a 'citizen scientist'?
5. Fill in the spaces with the correct word.

Words:

red	hunter	shield
three	Betelgeuse	constellation
club	explode	Greek

Orion is a named after a from mythology. To locate it in the sky, first, try to spot the stars in a straight line that make up the belt. Then, try to find the star of the left shoulder, which is called If you're lucky, this will while you're watching. You may also be able to make out the shape of Orion's and

6. What do you know about the results of last year's Star Count?
7. Look closely at the paragraph about last year's results. Can you find a word that means:

Not changed or spoiled in any way	
People taking part	
Approximated, roughly worked out	
Very serious or bad	

8. The American company SpaceX has many ambitious aims. Explain the aim reported in this article.
9. What do you think of this plan? Give your own opinion.
10. Pollution is the introduction of something harmful into an environment. Do you think it's right to call light in the night sky 'light pollution'? Give one reason for and one reason against.

Yes, describing this problem as 'light pollution' makes sense because...	No, describing this problem as 'light pollution' isn't right because...