

Two meteor showers peak this week: The Draconids and the Southern Taurids

October 8 2019, by Doyle Rice, Usa Today



Credit: CC0 Public Domain

A skywatcher's doubleheader is on tap this week as a pair of meteor showers will peak on back-to-back nights.

The Draconids peak Tuesday night into Wednesday morning, and the Southern Taurids peak Wednesday night into Thursday morning.

You can expect to see up to 10 meteors an hour for each [shower](#).

"The Draconids meteor shower kicks off the fall meteor shower season," said Dave Samuhel, AccuWeather astronomy blogger and meteorologist.

Though often a rather quiet shower, the Draconids did produce some awesome meteor displays in 1933 and 1946, EarthSky's Bruce McClure said, when thousands of meteors per hour were seen.

More recently, European observers saw more than 600 meteors per hour in 2011.

The Draconids are best seen in the evening, instead of before dawn, because the winged Dragon, the shower's radiant point in the constellation Drago, flies highest in the sky at nightfall, EarthSky said.

"This is a good shower for younger stargazers, especially since the shower peaks on a school night," Samuhel said.

Unfortunately, the moon will be in the sky during this part of the night, so stargazers should look for meteors in areas of the sky away from the bright moon, AccuWeather reported.

The next night will be the peak of the Southern Taurids meteor shower, according to the American Meteor Society (AMS).

Though best viewed from the Southern Hemisphere, the Taurids can be seen in the Northern Hemisphere, according to NASA meteor expert Bill Cooke.

Similar to the Draconids, the Southern Taurids are a minor shower with fewer than 10 meteors per hour, AccuWeather said, but don't let the slim numbers discourage you:

"The Taurids are rich in fireballs and are often responsible for increased number of fireball reports from September through November," the AMS said.

Fireballs are [meteors](#) that appear incredibly bright as they streak through the sky, according to AccuWeather. They can be so bright that they can cast shadows on the ground for several seconds.

Although there aren't many of them, "if you see a Taurid, it can be very brilliant, and it'll knock your eyes out," Cooke told Space.com. "It's simply the fact that when a Taurid appears, it's usually big and bright."

This month, the Orionid meteor shower promises even more of a sky show. It will peak the night of Oct. 21-22.

(c)2019 USA Today

Distributed by Tribune Content Agency, LLC.

Citation: Two meteor showers peak this week: The Draconids and the Southern Taurids (2019, October 8) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2019-10-meteor-showers-peak-week-draconids.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--