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A Naked-Eye Nova in Scorpius

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by Alan MacRobert



Jupiter, Antares, and the familiar constellation

pattern of Scorpius guide the way to the newly erupted Nova Scorpii 2007. This is the view above the south-southeast horizon just before dawn at latitude 40° north. Stars are plotted to magnitude 5.5. *Sky & Telescope diagram.*

Nova Scorpii 2007 wasn't a big deal when two Japanese nova hunters, Yuji Nakamura and Yukio Sakurai, independently discovered it at 9th magnitude on February 4th. But that was then and this is now. The nova has brightened all the way to about magnitude 3.7 as of Friday the 16th.

That puts it in fairly easy naked-eye view if you don't have a too-badly light-polluted sky. Binoculars will show it very well from anywhere.

Scorpius is up in the south-southeast just before the first light of dawn. You can't miss brilliant Jupiter shining near it, as shown here. The nova (which has also been named V1280 Scorpii) is 9° southeast of Antares and a couple degrees northeast of Epsilon Scorpii; at declination $-32^{\circ} 21'$, right ascension 16h 57.7m. Epsilon Sco, by comparison, is magnitude 2.3.

Be out and looking just before morning twilight begins at your site. To find when this occurs, make sure you've entered your location and correct time zone into our [online almanac](#). Bundle up, and make it an early-morning adventure!

Here are [the most recent observations](#) submitted to the [American Association of Variable Star Observers \(AAVSO\)](#), which should have a comparison-star chart up Real Soon Now. In the meantime, if you make a magnitude estimate, be sure to record which stars you are using as comparisons and what magnitudes you are assuming for them.

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<http://www.skytonight.com/observing/home/Nova-Sco-2007.html?showAll=y&c=y>

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