

Eridanus Optics CC

Comet C/2007 N3 (Lulin) and Comet 144P/Kushida.

Introduction

Comet Lulin was discovered on 2007 July 11 by Quanzhi Ye from images taken at the Lulin Observatory. Initially it was identified as an asteroid but on July 17 it was confirmed that it has a 2" to 3" coma around a bright core. The comet's magnitude was 18.9 at the time.

The comet passed perihelion (1.24 AU) on 14 January 2009 and is approaching Earth 'head-on' (retrograde) and almost parallel to our orbit. The comet is visible in the early morning during January and will be closest to Earth late February when it will be only 0.41 AU away. In late December the magnitude was estimated to be 7.6 and it was observed with 25x100 binoculars. It is expected to reach Magnitude 4 during late February.

On 8 February, the comet will be up by midnight on 18 February it will be 13° up by 22:00.

Yoshio Kushida discovered comet Kushida in 1994 and the current visit is its third on its 7.6-year orbit. It was expected to reach only magnitude 10 to 11 but was recently estimated at magnitude 8.8. The comet reaches perihelion at 1.44 AU on 26 January and is currently situated in Taurus. It is expected to brighten a little. Notice that Lulin's path is close to Regulus (~ 0.5 degrees on midnight 27/28th Feb), and Kushida's path is very close to Aldebaran (~ 3 arc minutes at midnight of 5/6th February)

Comet Kushida's orbit is also almost parallel to Earth's and passes within 5° of Comet Lulin on 26 March 2009.

The maps below can be used to locate these comets in the night sky.

For more information on telescopes and related accessories, visit our website at <http://www.eridanusoptics.com/store>. See also <http://www.eridanusoptics.com/newsletter.htm>.

Good luck

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