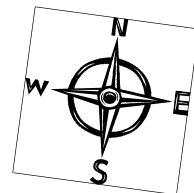


# Find the North Star!



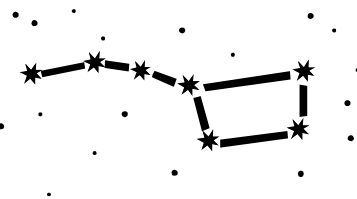
The nighttime sky is one of the most beautiful things when camping. It is difficult to appreciate when living in the city, but once you are away from the city lights, it can be stunning. The stars are not only pretty, but they have also been very important for explorers and travelers for thousands of years. Christopher Columbus and the Pilgrims used the nighttime stars to help guide them across the Atlantic Ocean to the New World. Even today with modern gadgets, like global positioning systems (GPS), stars still play a central role in navigation. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) even uses them to guide unmanned space explorers to far away planets like Jupiter and Saturn and the former planet Pluto!

Being able to locate the North Star (also called Polaris by astronomers) is quite useful when trying to find your way. It can help guide those who are lost in the woods to safety. The North Star is cleverly named that because it is always due North. Once campers find it, it is easy to determine the other directions. West is to their left, east to their right, and south is behind them.



Look at the night sky. You'll notice the stars make some patterns and shapes - called constellations. Can you find any? Do you see a group of seven stars that look like a long ladle or a pan with a curved handle? Look carefully, it may be upside down! Three stars form the handle and four stars form the pan. That group of stars is called the Big Dipper. If you draw a line between the two stars that form the pan on the opposite side of the handle, the line would point to the North Star.

The North Star is located in another smaller ladle. Since this constellation is smaller than the Big Dipper, it is called the Little Dipper. The North Star is the brightest star in the Little Dipper, so the rest of the stars may be more difficult to see than those in the Big Dipper. Like the Big Dipper, the Little Dipper is made of seven stars – three form the handle and four form the pan. The North Star is the last star in the handle of the Little Dipper.



*Written by: Joyce Shriner, Extension Educator, FCS/Hocking County Director.*

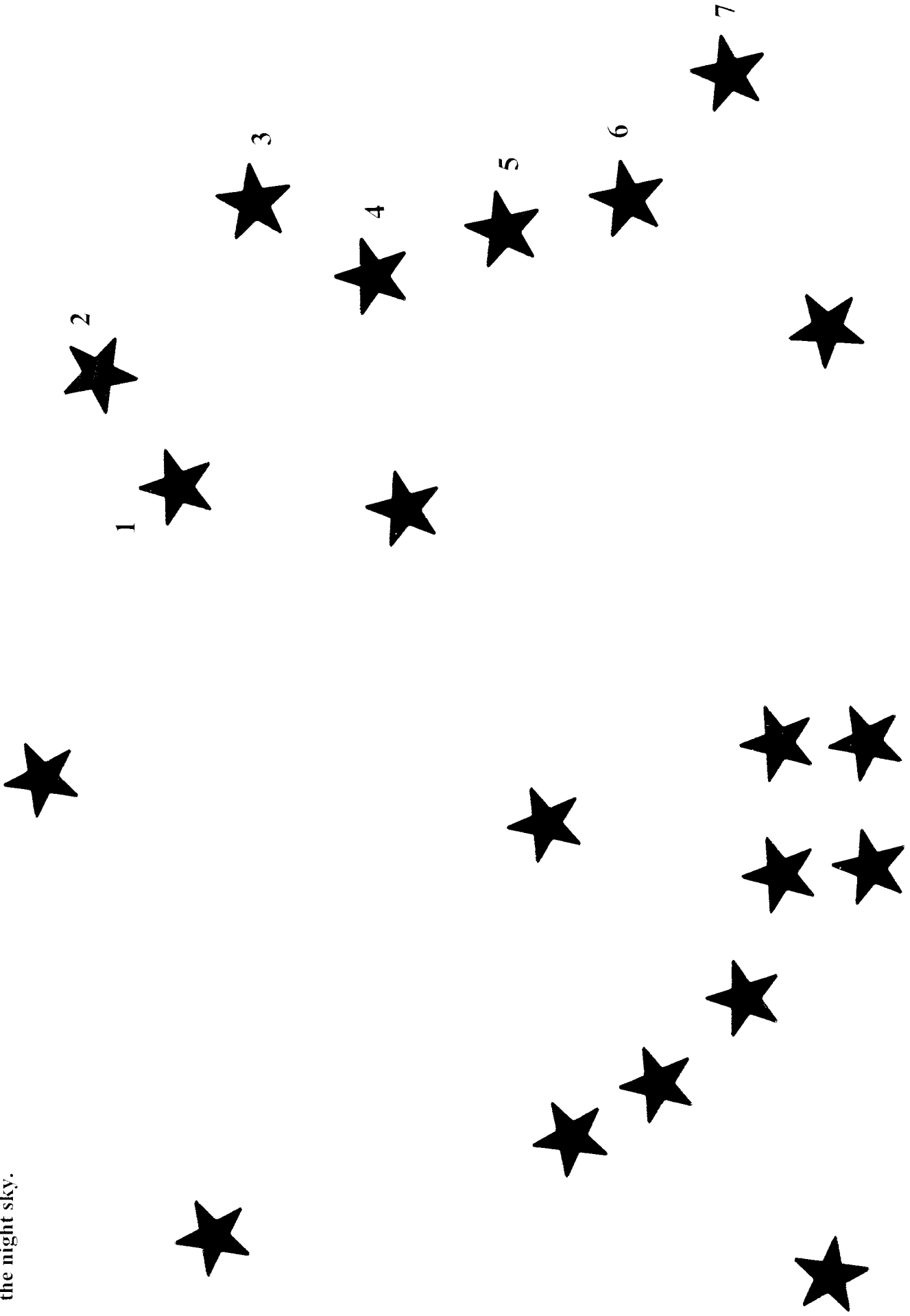
*Reviewed by: Ali Snedden, Graduate Student in Astrophysics, University of Notre Dame.*



**4-H Cloverbuds**  
OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

## Find the North Star

Connect the numbered stars to find the Big Dipper. Then, use stars 1 and 2 to find the North Star. Hint: The line between stars 1 and 2 points to the North Star. Circle the North Star. The North Star is the last star in the Little Dipper's handle. Challenges: Connect the stars that form the Little Dipper. Go outside. Locate the Big Dipper, North Star and Little Dipper in the night sky.



## Find the North Star - Answer Sheet

Connect the numbered stars to find the Big Dipper. Then, use stars 1 and 2 to find the North Star. Hint: The line between stars 1 and 2 points to the North Star. Circle the North Star. The North Star is the last star in the Little Dipper's handle. Challenges: Connect the stars that form the Little Dipper. Go outside. Locate the Big Dipper, North Star and Little Dipper in the night sky.

