THE

FLINT RIVER OBSERVER

NEWSLETTER OF THE FLINT RIVER ASTRONOMY CLUB

An Affiliate of the Astronomical League

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Club Calendar:
FRAC Meeting:
Dr. Schmude will be our speaker in January and will be bringing news and insights on Jupiter. I know you don't want to miss this meeting and even ask those questions you were always thinking about.

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FRAC T-Shirts
FRAC T-shirts are still available! They are $20 at all FRAC gatherings.

Club dues ---- Please turn in ASAP if you have not already done so. $15 by cash, check or by Venmo to Mark Sutton. Make check out to Flint River Astronomy Club sent to Mark's address or at the meeting, or pay through Venmo@fracmoney24 (search for a business account)

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FRAC meeting:

Last night, December 11, 2025, was the last club meeting for the year. Great food, drinks and fellowship. The gift exchange was very well received by everyone plus Carlos continued his annual Astronomy gift giveaway with a face value total of around $1000 or more in great items for club members. And we had a new visitor to stay with us last night but was a little shy, a cute flying squirrel dropped in, literally, and stayed for the entire meeting. Attendance was great with 24 members present.

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Classifieds:

If you have something you would like to buy, sell, or trade, email the specifics, including your contact information to stneckel@gmail.com

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Here's a list of notable celestial events to look for in **2026**:

Event	Date	Details
Quadrantid Meteor Shower	January 3-4	One of the first significant meteor showers of the year, with peak activity expected.
Lunar Eclipse	March 14	A total lunar eclipse will be visible in North America, providing a great viewing opportunity.
Mercury at Greatest Western Elongation	April 26	Mercury will be visible in the morning sky, appearing brighter than usual.
Annular Solar Eclipse	June 21	An annular solar eclipse will occur, creating a "ring of fire" effect; best viewed in parts of the eastern U.S. and coastlines of South America.
Perseid Meteor Shower	August 12-13	This popular meteor shower is anticipated to produce a high rate of meteors, with the

		potential to see up to 60 meteors per hour.
Marshall Islands Meteor Shower	September	A more minor meteor shower that has gained attention, with potential visibility from the Pacific region.
Total Lunar Eclipse	November 7	This total lunar eclipse will be visible across much of the Americas, Europe, and Africa, offering another chance to see a blood moon.
Geminid Meteor Shower	December 13-14	One of the year's most impressive meteor showers will peak with the possibility of seeing over 120 meteors per hour.

Important Observations

- **Planetary Conjunctions**: Multiple conjunctions of planets will occur throughout the year, providing fantastic opportunities for skywatching.
- **Various Launches**: Notable space missions may feature events like spacecraft launches towards Mars or the Moon.

Bortle 2 spots in Georgia

Tallulah Gorge State Park	Offers stunning views and dark skies, especially away from park facilities.
Cloudland Canyon State Park	Provides high elevations and remote areas with minimal light pollution, making it excellent for astronomy.
Amicalola Falls State Park	Located in the North Georgia mountains, this park has spots with clearer, darker skies suitable for stargazing.
The Cohutta Wilderness Area	A remote area with accessible trails offering minimal light interference, ideal for astronomy enthusiasts.
Chattahoochee National Forest	Many parts of this expansive forest, especially those away from towns, fall into the Bortle 2 category, providing good stargazing conditions.

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Heading out on vacation and also taking time to check out the heavens.

Here are some of the **darkest sky locations in the Southeast USA**, ideal for astronomy and stargazing:

Location	Details
Big Bend National Park, Texas	Though not in Southeast USA, it's noteworthy for its exceptionally dark skies, ideal for astrophotography and observations.
Congaree National Park, South Carolina	Offers vast wilderness with minimal artificial light, providing incredible views of the Milky Way.
Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Tennessee/North Carolina	Several spots in this park provide dark skies, especially at higher elevations away from developed areas.
Hunting Island State Park, South Carolina	A coastal park with limited light pollution, offering great views of the stars over the ocean.
Black Rock Mountain State Park, Georgia	The highest state park in Georgia, it features dark skies thanks to its elevation and distance from urban light sources.

Ochlockonee River State Park, Florida	This park has minimal surrounding light and offers good visibility of the night sky.
Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, Georgia	A vast swamp area with minimal development around it, providing dark skies for astronomical observations.
Fort Mountain State Park, Georgia	Located in the northwestern part of the state, it has remote areas ideal for stargazing amidst nature.
Cohutta Wilderness Area, Georgia	Remote wilderness offering very dark skies and a great opportunity for observing celestial events.

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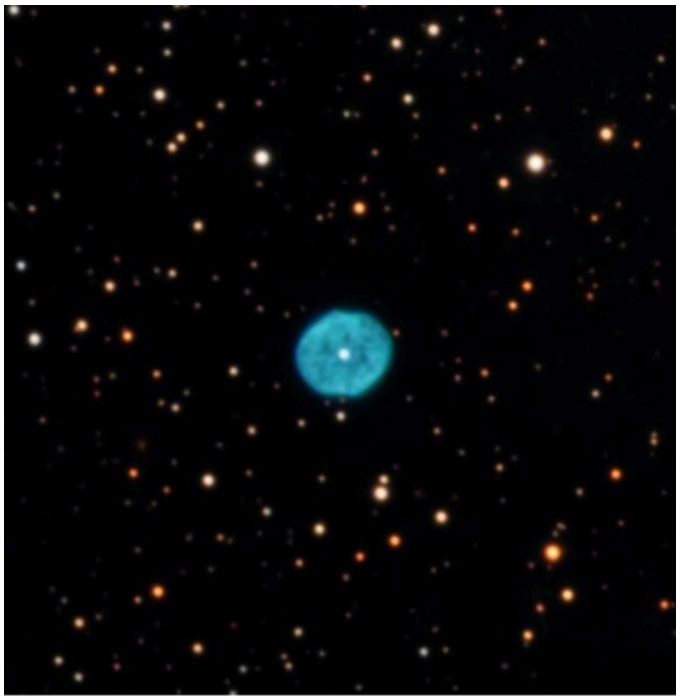
NGC 1501, Oyster Nebula
Photographed 11/14/25 by
Alan Pryor

NGC 1501, also known as the Oyster Nebula, is a planetary nebula in the constellation of Camelopardalis. Perhaps the name comes from the fact that its central star is bright enough to resemble a pearl. It is also known as the Camel's Eye Nebula. Its magnitude is 11.5, and it should be observable with an 8" telescope. With larger scopes you may be able to see the blue-green color. There is structure within the nebula's cloud. The central star is a variable star, and its brightness cycles about every half of an hour.

NGC 1501 is a fine December target. You can find it by looking at the east-most star in Cassiopeia's "W", Segin. Assuming it is at zenith you then slew about 15 degrees east, and you should find the nebula.

This photo was taken with a 14" scope with 9 sets of 5-minute red, green and blue frames. There were also 17 luminance frames at 5 minutes each giving a total exposure time of 3 hours and 40 minutes. A wide field of view image can be seen at: https://photos.google.com/share/AF1QipPHM-e11TX3CD5ZO2Pvjbz4K3xkq-ZTqCWcJXv020FQQatVSzoKchd0d_rMFzSamg/photo/AF1QipOIn8_72JNMiN-xPVJ-xbuDogjY67VQP1uEj7gS?key=RldwVkU0TkZOQkxGa0JvcGNzSDNhcjF5T1VYQXVn



This is Comet 2025 K1 Atlas. Of note is that the comet has broken into 3 pieces as it went through perihelion. That has created the non-circular head on the comet. I found the comet using an eVscope using the coordinates of the comet. I found the coordinates for the comet on Theskylive.com. Using the coordinates, I did a manual search of the vicinity and after multiple attempts succeeded in locating the comet.

Larry Dove

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UNISTELLAR - 11h 7m 3.24s/+30° 30' 36.8" - 4min. - 33°N 85°W - NOV 15 2025

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