

# Constellation Discovery Series: Capricorn

**Translation:** Horned Goat

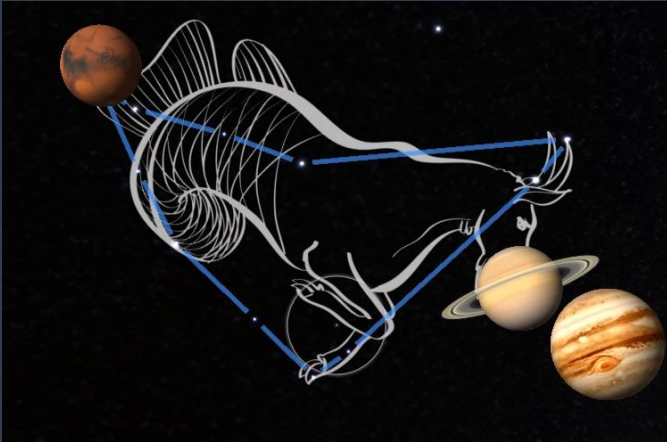
## Visibility:

- Capricornus can be seen in both the southern and northern hemispheres, but it is more often associated with southern hemisphere constellations.
  - It is among the faintest constellations, just slightly brighter than Cancer.
  - Best seen in the northern hemisphere between July and November.
- Capricornus sits among the other constellations of the water genre, including the water-bearer Aquarius and the fishes Pisces. If you can find either of these then you can search nearby for Capricornus.
  - You can also use the Summer Triangle to find this constellation.
- Starting at the star Vega, found in the Lyra constellation, you create a line south, following through the star Altair, found in the Aquila constellation, to find Capricornus.

## Additional Facts:

- Capricornus, more commonly referred to as Capricorn, is one of the 12 Zodiac constellations identified by the Greek astronomer Ptolemy in the 2nd century.
- In astrology, Capricorn is the 10th sign of the Zodiac and represents those born between Dec. 22 and Jan. 19.
- According to astrology, those born to this Zodiac tend to be ambitious, organized, practical, goal-oriented, and they do not mind hard work.

## Examples:



## Myths:

Capricorn is one of the earliest constellations and has passed through the ages virtually unchanged, depicting the front half of a goat and the tail of a fish.

### **Greek Myth 1:**

This constellation is also associated with two mythical creatures from Greek legends: the deity Pan, who had the legs and horns of a goat, and the goat Amalthea, who nursed Zeus when he was very young.

Zeus placed Pan's image in the sky, in gratitude for his coming to the other gods' rescue on several occasions.

During the gods' war with the Titans, Pan helped scare the Titans away by blowing his conch shell, which released pure panic and scared them away for a time. He later warned the gods that Typhon, a monster sent by Gaia to fight the gods, was approaching.

In the myth, Pan also eluded Typhon by jumping into the river Nile and turning the lower part of his body into that of a fish. Zeus eventually defeated Typhon with his thunderbolts.

In reference to the myth, Capricornus is still often depicted as a goat with the tail of a fish.

## **Greek Myth 2:**

In the other story, Capricornus is identified as Amalthea, the goat that acted as a foster mother to Zeus when he was an infant, hiding from his father Cronos.

Cronos, after hearing a prophesy that one of his children would over throw him, decided to devour his children. However, since they were gods they were still alive inside his stomach.

Knowing of this prophesy, Zeus' mother tricked Cronus into swallowing a rock and gave Zeus to some sea nymphs with instructions to take him to a far-away place where Cronus could not find him and raise him there.

However, sea nymphs cannot produce milk, and so they brought a very special goat, Amalthea, to nurse him.

As Zeus grew older, Amalthea also became his playmate. One day, Zeus was playing with Amalthea and broke off one of her horns on accident. Zeus took this as a sign that he was supposed to break off his relationship with Amalthea and the sea nymphs and go fight his father, Cronus.

Zeus gave the horn to the sea nymphs and Amalthea telling them that as they had always provided for his needs, so now this horn, which was now a magic horn, would always provide all the food and drink they would ever need.

Zeus then left them to go and fight Cronus, his cruel father. Zeus defeated Cronus and freed his siblings. Zeus was now the king of the gods and one of his first acts was to place the constellation Capricorn in the heavens in honor of Amalthea and the sea nymphs who had hidden him and taken such good care of him.