

Watch Uranus in retrograde and direct motion near the Pleiades in 2025-2026

Two charts accompanying this article show, for the current apparition of Uranus, the entire track of its retrograde motion, from Sept. 6, 2025 through February 4, 2026, and the subsequent observable direct motion, from February 4, 2026 until it sets shortly before the end of evening twilight at the end of April.

After February 4, 2026, direct or eastward motion of Uranus will be observable until the end of the apparition, around May 1, 2026, when the planet will set near the end of evening twilight.

On the Uranus finder chart, the 2.9-magnitude star Alcyone, or Eta Tauri, the brightest member of the Pleiades, is labeled with its lower case Greek letter. Several other stars are labeled with their Flamsteed numbers. Most of the stars plotted are in Taurus, except for a few in Aries, near the right edge of the area covered by the chart.

Tick marks with date labels are provided for planet positions on the first day of each month during the interval of retrograde motion.

Uranus in retrograde motion, 2025-26 apparition

Note, in the lower portion of the chart, the stars 13 Tauri (of mag. 5.7) and 14 Tauri (slightly fainter, at mag. 6.1). They are 21' (arcminutes) or 0.35° apart, with 14 Tauri to the east and slightly south of 13 Tauri. The pair is readily spotted through binoculars 4.5° to 4.6° SSW of 2.9-mag. Alcyone (Eta Tauri), brightest member of the Pleiades star cluster. Uranus, similar to 13 Tauri in brightness, retrogrades a total of 4.0° in nearly five months, Sept. 6, 2025 to Feb. 4, 2026, and is also an easily target through binoculars, about 4°-5° from the Pleiades throughout the interval. On the evening of December 4, 2025, in order from west to east, the stars 13 and 14

Tauri and Uranus lie in a nearly straight line, spaced at almost equal intervals of 21' to 22'. On evening of Dec. 13, Uranus passes within 7' SSE of 6.1-mag. 14 Tauri. Passing south of the pair of stars over ten evenings, Uranus forms an isosceles triangle with them, 15' from each, on evening of Dec. 19. On evening of Dec. 22, Uranus passes just over 13' SSE of 5.7-mag. 13 Tauri. On Dec. 31, another isosceles triangle is formed, this time with 13 Tauri at the vertex, 21' NE of Uranus and 21' west and slightly north of 14 Tauri. Uranus continues retrograde until the evening of Feb. 3, 2026, when it is 0.8° SW of 13 Tauri, 1.1° WSW of 14 Tauri, and 5.1° SSW of Eta Tauri of the Pleiades.

Uranus in direct motion, through close of 2025-26 apparition

For the next few years, Uranus appears very close to the ecliptic, or plane of Earth's orbit. So, in the next twelve weeks after Uranus resumes direct motion on Feb. 3, 2026, until it sets around the end of evening twilight in late April, watch the planet closely retrace its path of recent months, but this time going east. Using binoculars, watch for these events: (13 and 14 Tauri are 21' apart, 4.5° to 4.6° SSW of 2.9-mag. Eta Tauri, brightest member of the Pleiades.) On March 17, 2026, Uranus passes within 12' SSE of 5.7-mag. 13 Tauri. On March 20, Uranus forms an isosceles triangle with 13 and 14 Tauri, about 14' from each. On March 26, Uranus passes 5' SSE of 6.1-mag. 14 Tauri. On April 1, 2026, Uranus will be 4.5° from Eta Tauri of the Pleiades, and will be the easternmost member of a straight lineup with 13 and 14 Tauri, nearly 38' long. Uranus will be 17' from 14 Tauri and 38' from 13 Tauri. Uranus continues east in Taurus, but sets around the end of evening twilight in late April, ending the 2025-26 apparition. When you can start seeing it again at the start of morning twilight in late June 2026, it will have moved nearly 4° farther east against background stars.