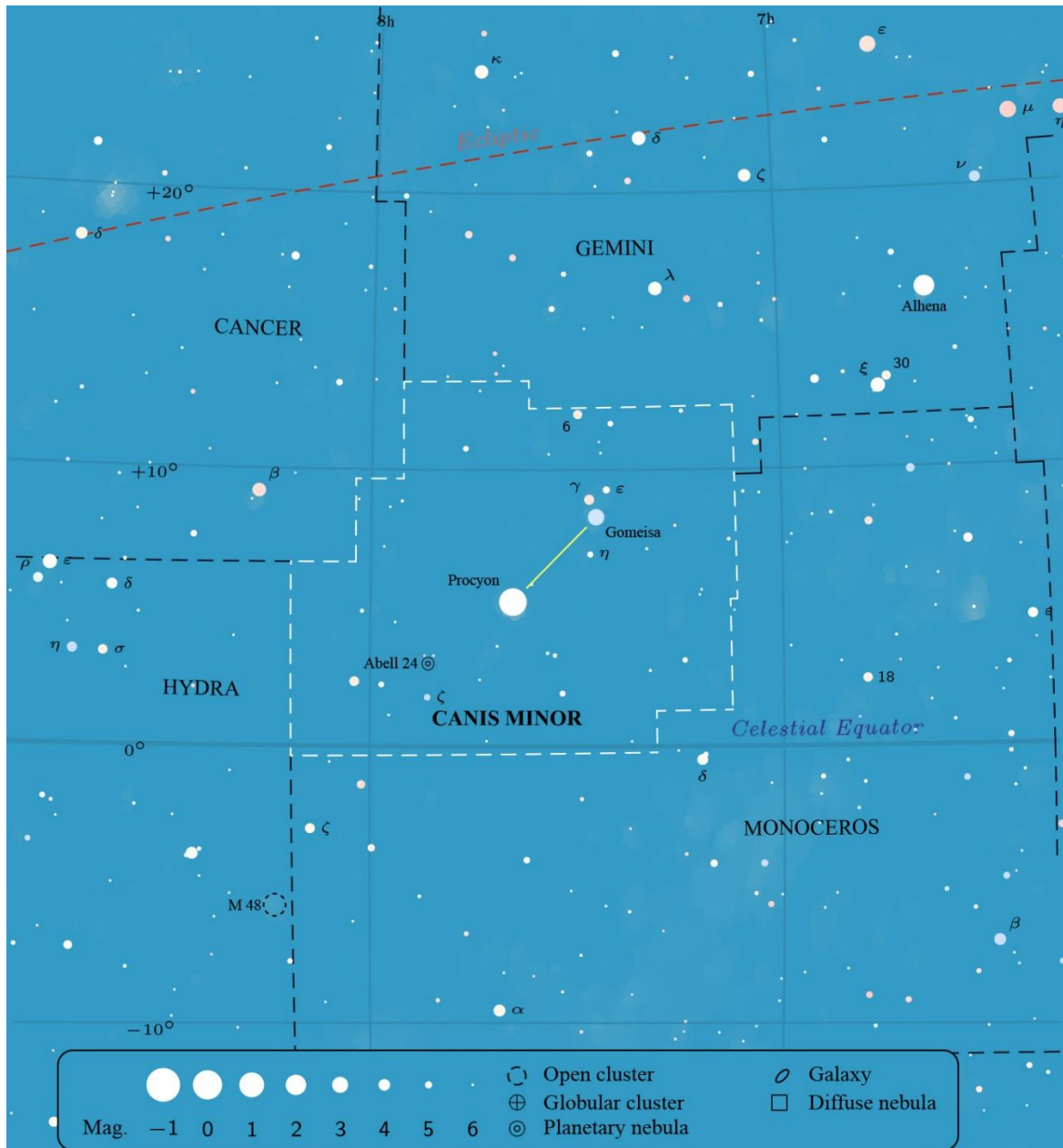


CMI

CANIS MINOR

CANIS MINORIS



Canis Minor, the Little Dog, represents the smaller of Orion's two hunting dogs. It is one of the original 48 constellations listed by Ptolemy in the 2nd century AD. The leading star of Canis Minor is Procyon – the 8th brightest star in the night sky.

Canis Minor is situated just north of the celestial equator and east of Orion. It is best seen during evenings in late winter. Despite its vicinity close to the Milky Way – there are no bright deepsky objects within its borders. However, a line drawn from Gomeisa through Procyon points towards the open cluster M 48 in neighbouring Hydra.

STARS

α Canis Minoris (**Procyon**, mag. +0.3) is a yellow-white main sequence star albeit one that is evolving into a subgiant as the core hydrogen runs out. Procyon is one of the nearest stars to the solar system – just 11 light-

years away. Procyon is a binary system and its companion is a white dwarf star of magnitude +10.7. They orbit one another with a period of 41 years. The angular separation is currently just under 5 arcseconds.

β CMi (**Gomeisa**, mag. +2.9) is a blue-white main-sequence star about 190 light-years away.

γ CMi (mag. +4.3) is a spectroscopic binary consisting of a pair of orange giant stars. The distance to the pair is about 320 light-years.

DEEPSKY OBJECTS

Abell 24 (mag. +13) is a planetary nebula situated about 4 degrees southeast of Procyon. This is one for the astrophotographers or the owners of large (14 inch or more) telescopes. The disk measures about 6 arcminutes and the central star is 17th magnitude. The distance is estimated to be 1,700 light-years.