



Southern Delta Aquariid Meteor Shower Paves Way For Perseids

THE SOUTHERN DELTA AQUARIID meteor shower shares summer's slow-and-easy vibe. Active from mid-July to late August, this display is expected to max out with around 25 medium-fast meteors per hour **on the night of July 30-31**. The luminous streaks appear to emanate from a radiant in southern Aquarius, about 3° west of 3.3-magnitude Delta (δ) Aquarii. That's 16° below the celestial equator, which means observers in the tropics and Southern Hemisphere have the best view. However, northern meteor watchers will still see some activity, though at a reduced rate.

Be on the lookout as early as 10 p.m. for *earthgrazers* – meteoroids that strike the atmosphere at a very shallow

angle and take several seconds to completely vaporize as they cross the sky. The peak viewing time occurs from 11 p.m. until around 2 a.m. local daylight time, when the waning crescent Moon rises in Taurus.

One of the benefits of watching the Southern Delta Aquariids is the chance to also catch some early Perseids, which are active at the same time. You may want to tally meteors from both showers to see which display comes out ahead. They'll be easy to tell apart – Perseids point back to Perseus in the northeastern sky, while Aquariids point back to Aquarius, in the south. As far as which way to face, I'd say pick the direction that's darkest and has the least amount of light pollution.***