

Meteor Activity Outlook for February 1-7, 2025



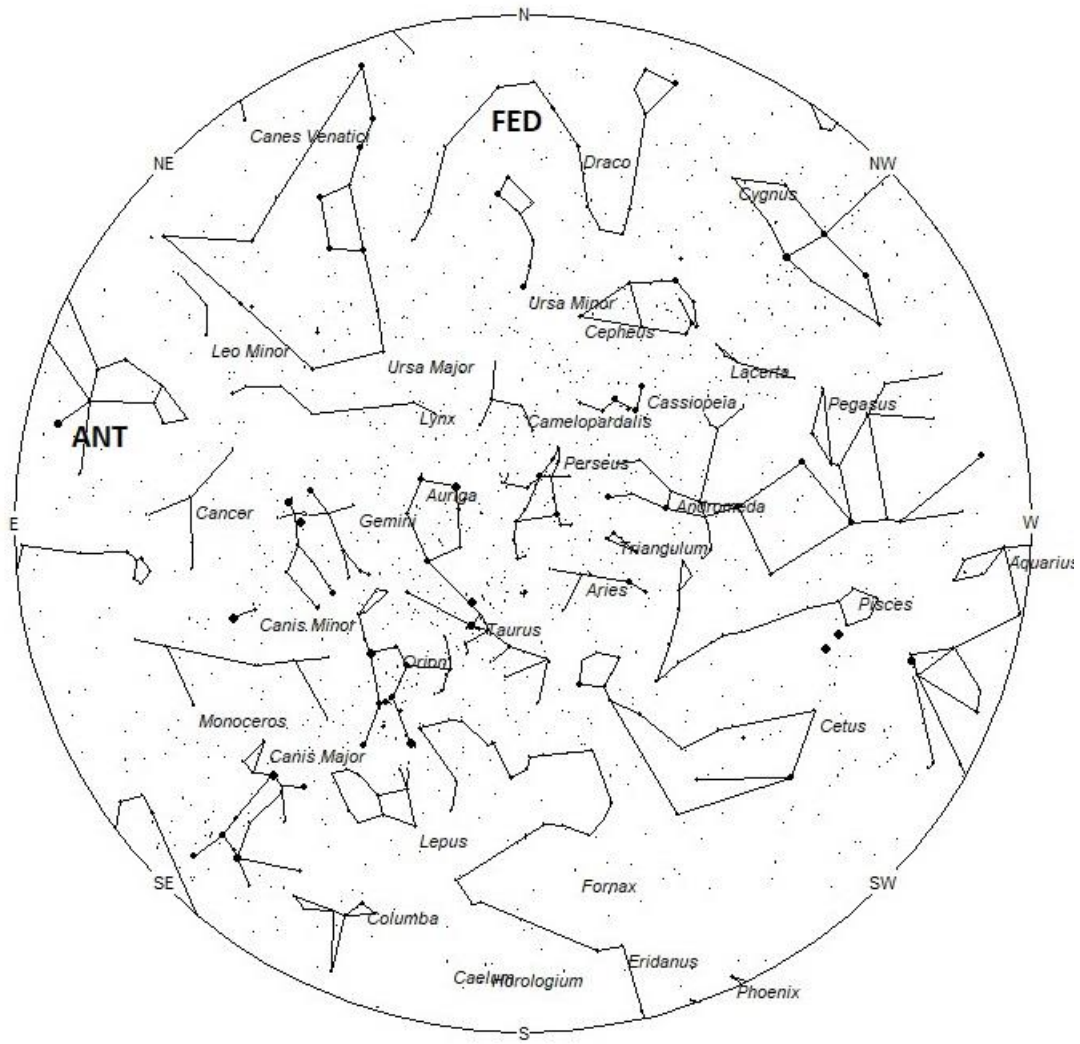
Dee Hayman captured this nice fireball while photographing an aurora display on September 24, 2024, at 2250 PDT (05:20 UT on 9/25) from Selah, Washington, USA. ©Dee Hayman

February offers the meteor observer in the northern hemisphere a couple of weak showers plus falling sporadic rates. This may not seem too exciting, but you never know when surprises are in store. An errant earthgrazer from the Centaurid complex may shoot northward. Better yet, a bright fireball may light up the sky. February is the start of the evening fireball season, when an abundance of fireballs seems to occur as seen from the northern hemisphere. This lasts well into April. Sporadic rates are near maximum for those viewing from the southern hemisphere. There are no strong showers this month, but sporadic rates are in excess of 10 per hour as seen from mid-southern latitudes.

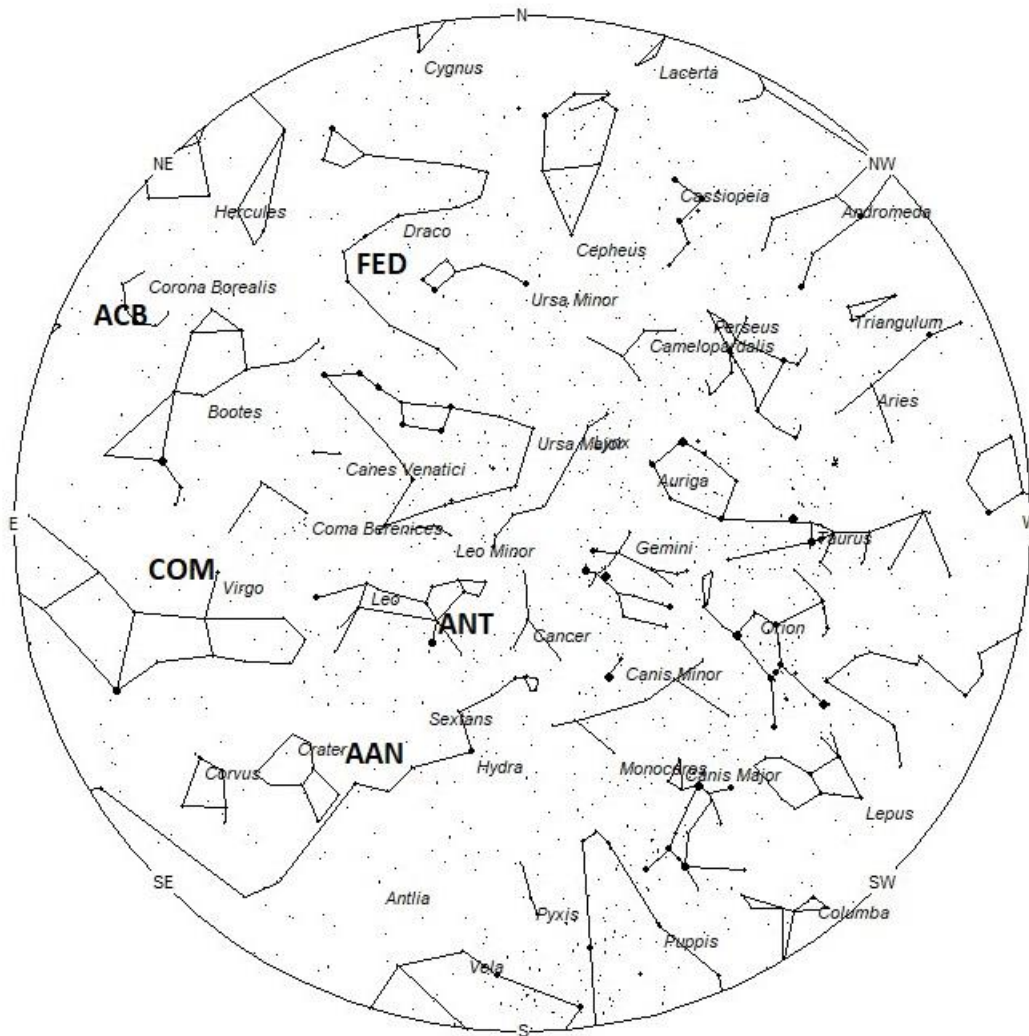
During this period, the moon reaches its first quarter phase on Wednesday February 5th. On that night the moon will be located 90 degrees east of the sun and set near 01:00 local standard time (LST). This weekend the waxing crescent moon will set during the early evening hours and will not interfere with meteor observing during the more active morning hours. The estimated total hourly rates for evening observers this weekend should be near 2 as seen from mid-northern latitudes (45N) and 3 as seen from tropical southern locations (25S). For morning observers, the

estimated total hourly rates should be near 10 as seen from mid-northern latitudes (45N) and 14 as seen from tropical southern locations (25S). The actual rates seen will also depend on factors such as personal light and motion perception, local weather conditions, alertness, and experience in watching meteor activity. Evening rates are reduced due to moonlight. Note that the hourly rates listed below are estimates as viewed from dark sky sites away from urban light sources. Observers viewing from urban areas will see less activity as only the brighter meteors will be visible from such locations.

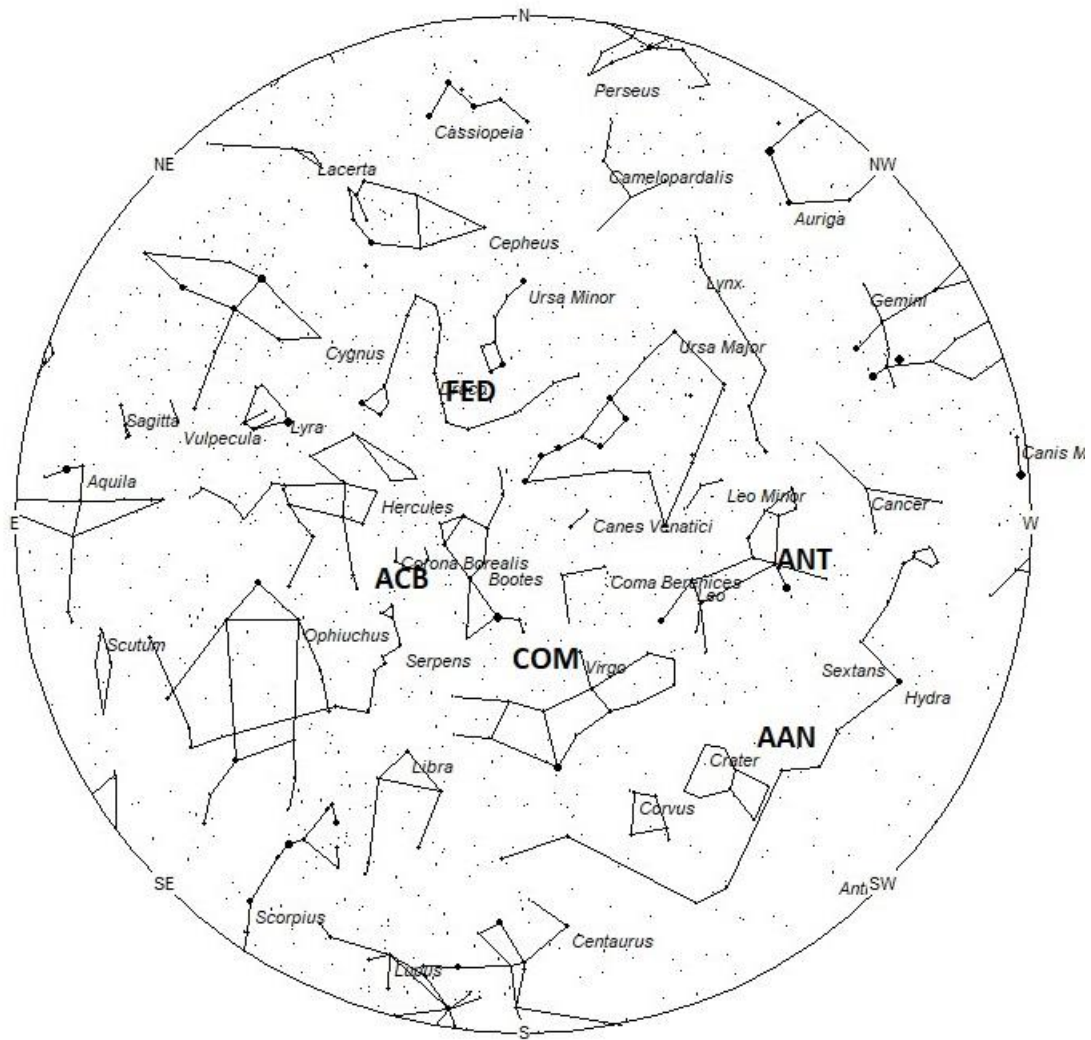
The radiant (the area of the sky where meteors appear to shoot from) positions and rates listed below are exact for Saturday night/Sunday morning February 1/2. These positions do not change greatly day to day so the listed coordinates may be used during this entire period. Most star atlases (available online and at bookstores and planetariums) will provide maps with grid lines of the celestial coordinates so that you may find out exactly where these positions are located in the sky. I have also included charts of the sky that display the radiant positions for evening, midnight, and morning. The center of each chart is the sky directly overhead at the appropriate hour. These charts are oriented for facing south but can be used for any direction by rotating the charts to the desired direction. A planisphere or computer planetarium program is also useful in showing the sky at any time of night on any date of the year. Activity from each radiant is best seen when it is positioned highest in the sky, either due north or south along the meridian, depending on your latitude. Radiants that rise after midnight will not reach their highest point in the sky until daylight. For these radiants, it is best to view them during the last few hours before dawn. It must be remembered that meteor activity is rarely seen at its radiant position. Rather they shoot outwards from the radiant, so it is best to center your field of view so that the radiant lies toward the edge and not the center. Viewing there will allow you to easily trace the path of each meteor back to the radiant (if it is a shower member) or in another direction if it is sporadic. Meteor activity is not seen from radiants that are located far below the horizon. The positions below are listed in a west to east manner in order of right ascension (celestial longitude). The positions listed first are located further west therefore are accessible earlier in the night while those listed further down the list rise later in the night.



Radiant Positions at 19:00 Local Standard Time



Radiant Positions at Midnight Local Standard Time



Radiant Positions at 05:00 Local Standard Time

These sources of meteoric activity are expected to be active this week.

The large **Anthelion (ANT)** radiant is currently centered at 09:40 (145) +14. This position lies in western Leo, 6 degrees northwest of the 1st magnitude star known as Regulus (alpha Leonis). This radiant is best placed near 01:00 local standard time (LST) when it lies on the meridian and is highest in the northern sky. Rates at this time should be near 3 per hour as seen from the southern hemisphere and 2 per hour as seen from south of the equator. With an entry velocity of 30 km/sec., the average Anthelion meteor would be of slow velocity.

The **alpha Antliids (AAN)** were discovered by D. P. Galligan and W. J. Baggaley by using the Advanced Meteor Orbit Radar in New Zealand*. This very weak display is active from January 22 through February 6 with maximum activity occurring on February 1st. The radiant currently lies at 10:35 (159) -10. This position lies in southern Sextans, 7 degrees northwest of the 3rd magnitude star known as nu Hydrae. I'm not certain why these meteors were called alpha Antliids as this position lies 20 degrees north of the constellation of Antlia. These meteors are best seen near 0200 LST when the radiant lies highest above the southern horizon. At 44 km/sec. the alpha Antliids produce meteors of medium velocity. Expected rates this week are less than 1 per hour no matter your location.

*Gary Kronk, Meteor Showers-An Annotated Catalog, 2nd Edition Page 45

The last of the **Comae Berenicids (COM)** are expected this week from a radiant located at 13:21 (200) +11, which places it in northern Virgo, 4 degrees east of the 3rd magnitude star known as Vindemiatrix (epsilon Virginis). These meteors would be best seen near 05:00 LST, when the radiant lies highest in the southern sky. Current rates should be less than 1 per hour no matter your location. At 63km/sec., these meteors would produce mostly swift meteors.

The **alpha Centaurids (ACE)** are an irregular shower that does not seem to be active every year. The International Meteor Organization list this shower as active from February 3-20, with maximum activity occurring on February 9th. Yet recent video data from the southern hemisphere has yet to identify any such radiant. This situation should become more clear as more data is received from south of the equator. I would suggest that potential observers monitor the southern skies though February 20th for any signs of these meteors. The radiant is predicted to be located at 13:28 (202) -56. This position lies in southeastern Centaurus, 4 degrees south of the 2nd magnitude star known as epsilon Centauri. Due to the southern declination of this radiant, these meteors are not seen north of latitude 30 north. Current hourly rates are expected to be less than 1 no matter your location. These meteors are best seen near 05:00 LST when the radiant lies highest above the southern horizon. At 56 km/sec. the alpha Centaurids would produce mostly swift meteors.

The **alpha Coronae Borealis (ACB)** was discovered by British researcher John Greaves (2012) using data from the SonotaCo. These meteors are active from January 26 through February 5th, with maximum activity occurring on January 27th. The radiant is located at 15:37 (234) +26, which lies on the border of Corona Borealis and Serpens Caput, 1 degree southwest of the 4th magnitude star known as gamma Coronae Borealis. These meteors would be best seen in the southern sky during the last dark hour prior to dawn. At 57km/sec., these meteors would produce mostly swift meteors.

The **February eta Draconids (FED)** were discovered by Dr. Peter Jenniskens and Peter Gural using cameras from CAMS in 2011. These meteors are active from February 2-6, with maximum occurring on the 3rd. The peak only lasts a few hours so one needs to be in a favorable location in order to catch any of this activity. The peak is predicted to occur near 19:00 Universal Time on February 3rd, which favors locations in Asia. On the morning of the 3rd, the radiant is located at 15:57 (239) +62, which places it on the central Draco, 3 degrees west of the 3rd magnitude star known as Athebyne (eta Draconis A). This area of the sky is best placed in the northern sky during the last dark hour prior to dawn. At 35km/sec., these meteors would produce mostly medium velocity meteors. Due to the high northern location of this radiant, these meteors are only visible from the southern tropics and locations northward.

Sporadic meteors are those meteors that cannot be associated with any known meteor shower. All meteor showers are evolving and disperse over time to the point where they are no longer recognizable. Away from the peaks of the major annual showers, these sporadic meteors make up the bulk of the activity seen each night. As seen from the mid-Northern Hemisphere (45N), one would expect to see during this period approximately 7 sporadic meteors per hour during the last hour before dawn as seen from rural observing sites. Evening rates would be near 1 per hour. As seen from the tropical Southern latitudes (25S), morning rates would be near 11 per hour as seen from rural observing sites and 2 per hour during the evening hours. Locations between these two extremes would see activity between these listed figures. Evening rates are reduced due to moonlight.

The list below offers the information in tabular form of the showers that I feel are within reach of the visual observer to discern. Hourly rates are often less than one, so these sources are rarely listed as visual targets in most meteor shower lists. If you are like me and wish to associate as many meteors as possible with known sources, then you will appreciate these listings. Before listing meteors from class IV showers, you should attempt to prove these meteors belong to them and are not chance alignments of sporadic meteors. You can note parameters such as duration, length, radiant distance and the elevation of each meteor to help compute the probability of shower association. It should be remembered that slow meteors can be seen from fast showers, but fast meteors cannot be produced from slow showers. Slower showers are those with velocities less than 35/km per second. Slow meteors can appear from fast showers when they appear close to the radiant or low in the sky. The table located on page 22 of the [IMO's 2025 Meteor Shower Calendar](#) is a big help in aiding in the identification of meteors. If you record the length and duration of each meteor, you can use this chart to check the probability of the meteor belonging to a shower of known velocity. If the angular velocity is similar to the figure in the table, then your meteor probably belongs to that shower. Rates and positions in the table are exact for Saturday night/Sunday morning.

SHOWER	DATE OF MAXIMUM ACTIVITY	CELESTIAL POSITION	ENTRY VELOCITY	CULMINATION	HOURLY RATE	CLASS
		RA (RA in Deg.) DEC	Km/Sec	Local Standard Time	North-South	
Anthelion (ANT)	-	09:40 (145) +14	30	01:00	3 - 2	II
Alpha Antliids (AAN)	Feb 01	10:35 (159) -10	44	02:00	<1 - <1	IV
Comae Berenicids (COM)	Dec 19	13:21 (200) +11	63	05:00	<1 - <1	II
alpha Centaurids (ACE)	Feb 09	13:28 (202) -56	56	06:00	<1 - 1	III
alpha Coronae Borealis (ACB)	Jan 27	15:37 (234) +26	57	06:00	<1 - <1	IV
February eta Draconids (FED)	Feb 03	15:57 (239) +62	35	07:00	<1 - <1	IV

You can keep track of the activity of these meteor showers as well as those beyond the limits of visual observing by visiting the [NASA Meteor Shower Portal](#). You can move the sky globe to see different areas of the sky. Colored dots indicate shower meteors while white dots indicate sporadic (random) activity. The large orange disk indicates the position of the sun so little activity will be seen in that area of the sky.

Class Explanation: A scale to group meteor showers by their intensity:

- **Class I:** the strongest annual showers with Zenith Hourly Rates normally ten or better.
- **Class II:** reliable minor showers with ZHR's normally two to ten.
- **Class III:** showers that do not provide annual activity. These showers are rarely active yet have the potential to produce a major display on occasion.
- **Class IV:** weak minor showers with ZHR's rarely exceeding two. The study of these showers is best left to experienced observers who use plotting and angular velocity estimates to determine shower association. These weak showers are also good targets for video and photographic work. Observers with less experience are urged to limit their shower associations to showers with a rating of I to III.