



Matariki

*Ka ara mai a Matariki ka ara mai a Puanga, ka mānawatia a Puanga, ka mānawatia a Matariki.
Matariki rises, Puanga rises, celebrate Puanga, celebrate Matariki.*

Matariki

Te Kokotā

Puanga

Tautoru

Hinetakurua

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Matariki and Puanga

Across different regions, iwi may acknowledge different stars to signify the Māori New Year. For some regions Matariki marks the new year. For others, Puanga is that star.

While Puanga and Matariki are both associated with the Māori New Year, they are not the same. Matariki is a star cluster also known as the Pleiades that appears in the New Zealand sky in late May or early June. Puanga, also known as Rigel, is a bright star in the Orion constellation that is visible in the pre-dawn sky during the winter months. It's important to understand that accepting one cluster to mark the new year doesn't disregard the other, as both Matariki and Puanga are important.

Many iwi from the west – including those around Whanganui, Taranaki, and parts of Te Tai Tokerau and the South Island – look to Puanga to mark their new year, mostly due to geography. As the stars rise, Puanga, which is situated higher in the sky, can be seen around the same time from the west as Matariki can be seen from the east.

Next time you are looking at the night sky, try to locate both Matariki and Puanga. Understanding their positions will also help you understand how several regions maintained the same timing for the changing of the Māori year.