SIGHTING OPPORTUNITIES

On February 8, 2008, the space shuttle Atlantis, flying mission STS-122, was delivering the European Space Agency's (ESA) Columbus Laboratory module to the International Space Station (ISS). This momentous event brought the ESA's Columbus Control Center in Oberpfaffenhofen, Germany online for the first time. Coincidentally, the Progress P28 supply ship had just arrived from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan the previous day to replace Progress P27 which was then de-orbited to burn up in the earth's atmosphere. The sighting opportunities listed below show not only the ISS and Atlantis, but also a last glimpse of Progress P27 before final re-entry.

ONLY DAYS WITH SIGHTING OPPORTUNITIES ARE LISTED

THE FOLLOWING SHUTTLE SIGHTINGS ARE POSSIBLE FROM FRI FEB 08 TO SUN FEB 24

SATELLITE	LOCAL DATE/TIME	DURATION (MIN)	MAX ELEV (DEG)	APPROACH (DEG-DIR)	DEPARTURE (DEG-DIR)
SHUTTLE	Fri Feb 08/07:17 PM	< 1	24	18 above WNW	24 above NW

ONLY DAYS WITH SIGHTING OPPORTUNITIES ARE LISTED

THE FOLLOWING PROGRESS SIGHTINGS ARE POSSIBLE FROM FRI FEB 08 TO SAT FEB 16

SATELLITE	LOCAL DATE/TIME	DURATION (MIN)	MAX ELEV (DEG)	APPROACH (DEG-DIR)	DEPARTURE (DEG-DIR)
PROGRESS	Fri Feb 08/07:14 PM	1	48	20 above WNW	48 above NNW

THE FOLLOWING ISS SIGHTINGS ARE POSSIBLE FROM FRI FEB 08 TO WED FEB 20

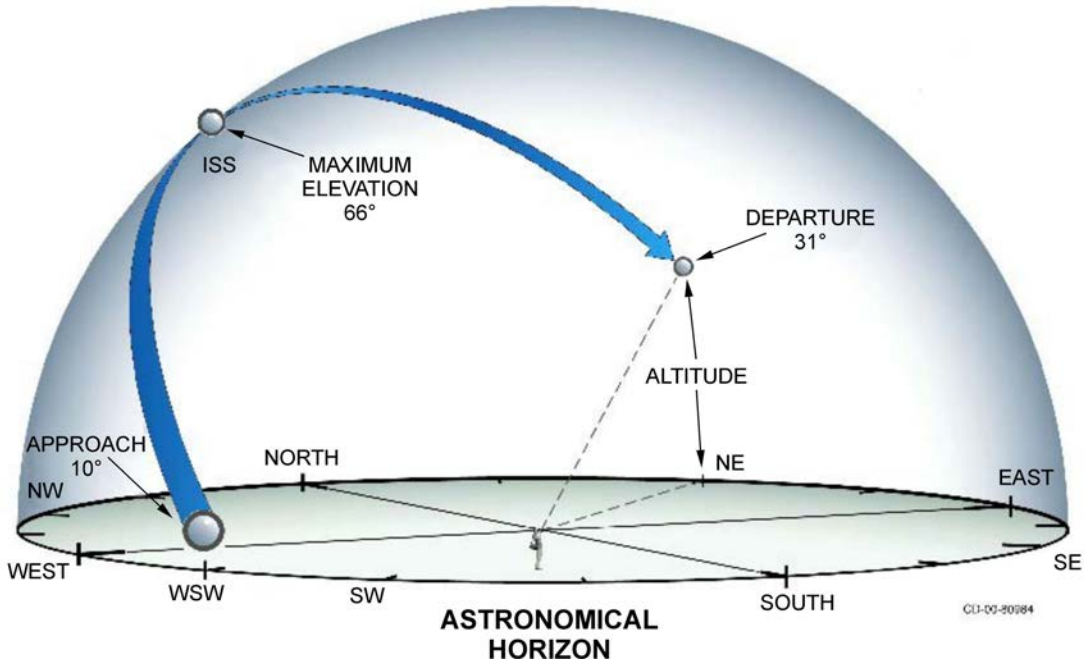
SATELLITE	LOCAL DATE/TIME	DURATION (MIN)	MAX ELEV (DEG)	APPROACH (DEG-DIR)	DEPARTURE (DEG-DIR)
ISS	Fri Feb 08/07:04 PM	2	51	20 above WNW	51 above N

HUMANSPACEFLIGHT: Sighting Opportunities by NASA, 2003. Retrieved February 8, 2008, from http://spaceflight.nasa.gov/realdata/sightings/

Figure V-1 Sighting Opportunities

Unofficial convenience copy of A-CR-CCP-803/PF-001, cached 2026-11-08 from https://app.cadets.gc.ca/cadet-publications/A-CR-CCP-803-PF-001/A-CR-CCP-803-PF-001.pdf.
Verify against the official publication.

SATELLITE	LOCAL DATE/TIME	DURATION (MIN)	MAX ELEV (DEG)	APPROACH (DEG-DIR)	DEPARTURE (DEG-DIR)
ISS	Tue Nov 14/06:22 AM	4	66	10 above WSW	31 above NE



HUMANSPACEFLIGHT: Sighting Opportunities by NASA, 2003. Retrieved March 1, 2008, from http://spaceflight.nasa.gov/realdata/sightings/GIF/large_sighting.jpg

Figure V-2 Morning ISS Sighting

Viewing Tips

For best results, observers should look in the direction and at the elevation shown in the second column at the time listed. Telescopes are not practical because of the speed of the orbiting vehicles. However, a good pair of field binoculars may reveal some detail of the structural shape of the spacecraft. On a regular basis, the space shuttle must get rid of excess supply and waste water by dumping them overboard through water spray nozzles. Viewing the shuttle at these times through binoculars or a telescope can reveal an even more spectacular view of the spacecraft and the ice crystals that form as the water is sprayed overboard. Although you can sometimes use a flight timeline to find out when scheduled dumps occur, NASA TV is more accurate. Check the sightings list to see if a sighting opportunity and water dump overlap.

Shuttle/station docking missions provide an exciting opportunity to see a double pass. On the day or two days before docking and after undocking, the shuttle and station will appear to be chasing each other across the night sky. They will follow the same flight path varying by only a few minutes. If the distance is close enough, they will actually appear in the sky at the same time.

Unofficial convenience copy of A-CR-CCP-803/PF-001, cached 2026-11-08 from https://app.cadets.gc.ca/cadet-publications/A-CR-CCP-803-PF-001/A-CR-CCP-803-PF-001.pdf.
Verify against the official publication.