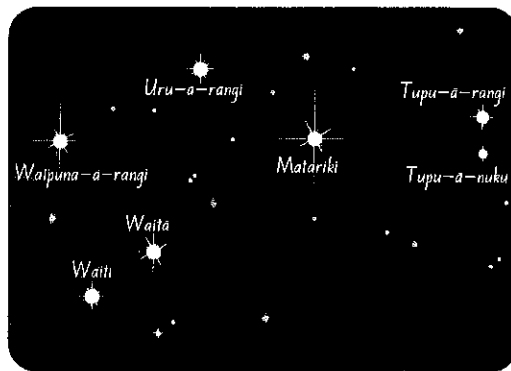


The Celebration of Matariki

Matariki is the name for a star cluster that includes the star Matariki. There are eight other stars that can be seen in the cluster. The cluster is known by other names around the world. One of these names is the Pleiades. Matariki is first seen in New Zealand skies between late May and early June. This marks the start of the Māori new year. The timing of celebrations differs amongst different iwi. Some start Matariki from the rising of the star Matariki. For other iwi, celebrations are started with the sighting of the star Puanga. The first full moon after Matariki marks the start of the new year in some areas. Still others start from the first new moon following Matariki's appearance. The cluster disappears from New Zealand skies during autumn. This signals the time to harvest crops and fill the storehouses. As such, when Matariki could be seen once again, stocks would be full and celebrations and feasts could be held.



Traditionally, Matariki was a time for whānau to gather together. It was a time to remember and celebrate. It was also a time to share knowledge of the land and traditions. Matariki forms part of the Māori lunar calendar called Maramataka. The stars were used as a guide to the seasons. If the stars were bright, then a productive season lay ahead. When this happened, crops would be planted in September. When the stars were hazy or dim, planting would be put off until October. The dimness of the stars meant a cold winter lay ahead.



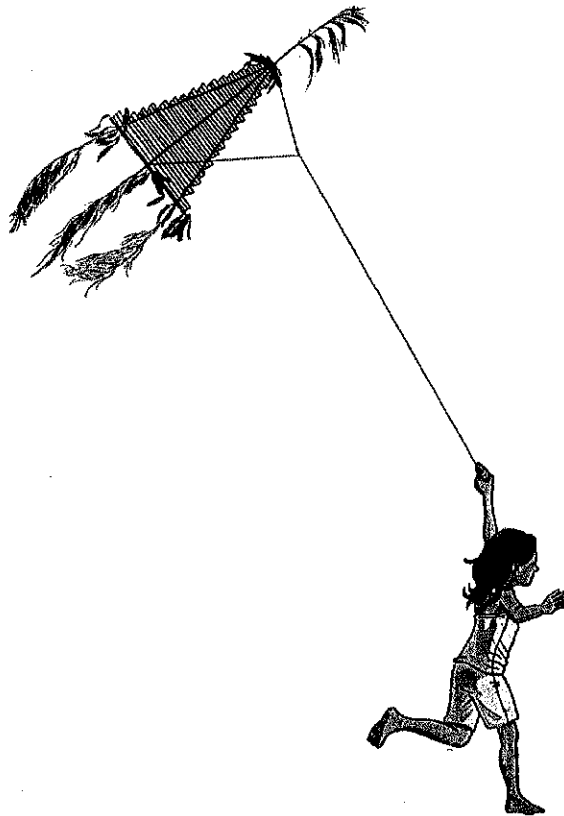
Within the cluster, each star held a special meaning. The stars were connected to areas of the land, nature and the past. Matariki was a time to remember whakapapa and those who had been lost both recently and in the past.

Today, Matariki is celebrated with a mix of traditions that have been handed down and modern practices.

Modern celebrations centre around being together, sharing food and connecting with the past. Celebrations look different for each community. Activities might include:

- Concerts, with traditional and modern waiata and dance.
- Art exhibitions celebrating Matariki, te ao Māori and Māori artists.
- Storytelling, the sharing of traditional legends and myths as well as reading modern books and texts.
- Astronomy workshops.
- Plantings, symbolising new beginnings, rejuvenating native species and nurturing our world.
- Hangī and feasts.
- Family days, which may involve a mix of all of the above.

Matariki has become an opportunity to celebrate all things Māori.



The Celebration of Matariki Questions

1. How many stars are visible in the Matariki cluster?

- 8
- 9
- 1
- 12

2. Which of these names is the Matariki cluster also known as?

- Puanga
- Maramatanga
- Orion
- Pleiades

3. Fill in the missing words from the paragraph below.

Matariki is first visible in New Zealand skies between late _____ and early _____. This marks the start of the _____ new year. The timing of celebrations differs amongst different tribes. Some start Matariki from the rising of the star _____. For some iwi celebrations are started with the sighting of the star _____. The first full moon after Matariki marks the start of the _____ in some areas. Others start from the first new moon following Matariki's appearance. The cluster disappears from New Zealand skies during _____.

4. Match the beginnings of the following statements with their endings.

Sentence beginning
By the time Matariki could be seen again,
Traditionally, Matariki...
If the stars were bright,
When the stars were hazy or dim,

Sentence ending
then a productive season lay ahead.
storehouses would be full and feasts could be held.
planting would be put off until October.
was a time for whānau to gather together.

5. Find and copy a Māori word in the text that refers to the lunar calendar.

6. Chose from the options below to finish this sentence.

Matariki was a time to:

- move to a warmer location for the winter.
- remember whakapapa and those who had been lost, both recently and in the past.
- celebrate the summer and plant new crops

7. Why do you think the brightness of the stars was used to indicate the conditions of the seasons ahead? Explain your ideas.

8. Today, Matariki is celebrated with a mix of traditions and modern practices. Give three examples of activities that might form part of modern celebrations.

