

The Forest of Bowland is a stargazer's paradise - one of England's darkest areas making it a great destination both by day and night.

The Milky Way arches majestically across the sky on clear autumn evenings and star clusters sparkle like diamonds on black velvet. It is a breath taking scene that adds so much to the unspoilt character of the area and provides the stuff of holiday memories.



Dark Sky Discovery Sites

We have four Dark Sky Discovery Sites in Bowland at Beacon Fell Country Park, Crook O'Lune Picnic Site, Slaidburn and Gisbrun Forest Hub – places that provide good access to view Bowland's night skies at their best. For further information visit:

www.darkskydiscovery.org.uk/dark-sky-discovery-sites/map.html



Events

The AONB has been working alongside local, amateur astronomer Robert Ince who is running several events in Bowland throughout the year. Have a look at the events page and book directly there:

<http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/robert-ince-7214874047>



Stargazing through the seasons

Spring

A great time to view brighter galaxies and planets like Jupiter and Saturn are also well placed. Nights are still long and the weather is warming up so it's a great time to observe. The constellation of Leo dominates the southern sky.

Summer

You will see fewer stars around mid-summer, but watch out for ghostly noctilucent clouds high in the sky. You will also see tantalising glimpses of the Milky Way to whet appetites for the months ahead. Watch out for August's Perseid meteor shower – one of the year's best.

Autumn

Together with the spring this is a prime viewing time. Nights are properly dark and the Milky Way is overhead in the evening, resembling a shimmering river of stars. Star clusters also look fantastic. Meteor showers like the Leonids can put on a good show in November.

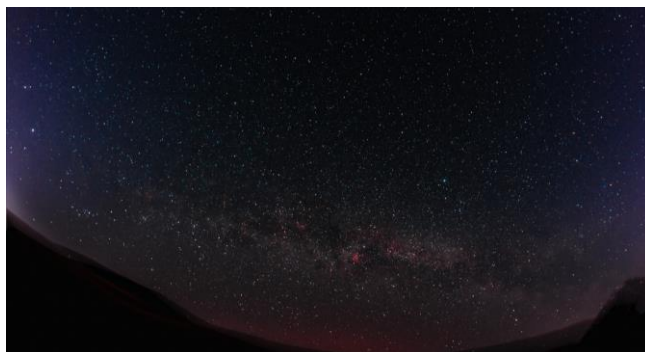
Winter

The season of sparkling skies! The sky is often at its most transparent as temperatures dip. Glittering star clusters and magnificent constellations like Orion grace the sky, along with bright nebula. Wrap up warm and the rewards can be amazing.

Apps

There are many astro apps for iPhones, smartphones and tablets running Android and Windows that can help you understand the night sky and keep up with events.

- **Sky Week** – regularly updated digest of what's in the sky - www.skyandtelescope.com/observing/ataglance
- **Pocket Universe** – plenty of features and star maps - <http://pocketuniverse.info>
- **Google Skymap** – identifies the stars using GPS when you hold up the phone to the sky (Android)
- **Meteor Shower Calendar** – tells you which showers are due and whether the moon will spoil the show
- **ISS Detector** and **ISS Spotter** – both will alert you when the ISS is due to pass overhead - Detector (Android) and Spotter (Apple)
- **Aurora Alert** – predicts possible Northern Lights displays (Android)



Images by Robert Ince