

WINTER

Despite reluctance to drag a telescope out into the cold, winter is often regarded as the best stargazing time of the year. The sky darkens around 6 p.m., and the air is crisp, granting sharp views through telescopes free from dew. Popular deep-sky objects, like the Great Nebula in Orion (M42), are high in the sky. For

many, winter summons the “first light” of a new telescope unwrapped from under a tree. The new year welcomes an abundance of objects waiting to be explored, but thanks to short days and long winter nights, many autumn targets can still be seen before they sink below the western horizon.

