



Matariki is the Māori name for Pleiades, an open star cluster within the constellation of Taurus. For many Māori, the eastern pre-dawn appearance of Matariki in the winter sky, during the last quarter of the lunar month of Pipiri, marks the beginning of the Māori New Year (also known as te mātahi o te tau). The rising of Matariki launched the most significant celebration in the traditional Māori calendar, and its appearance continues to be honoured today with ritual and ceremony. Matariki marks a period of reflection and remembrance, celebration and festivities, and focus on the promise of a new season. Matariki is part of an environmental calendar system that includes the position of the sun, heliacal rising of stars, lunar phases, and regional ecological events. All of these factors inform a Māori environmental-driven division of time.

Some tribal groups use the heliacal rising of other stars as their marker of the Māori New Year, in particular the star Puanga (Rigel). Other tribal groups and regions also have variations regarding when and how the Māori New Year is observed and celebrated.

**Matariki is guided by the following 3 major principles:**

- remembrance: honouring those who have died since the last rising of Matariki:
- celebrating the present: gathering together with family and friends:
- looking to the future: looking forward to the promise of a new year.

**Matariki is also underpinned by key values, most significantly—**

- aroha—love and respect for one another:
- whakamaharatanga—remembrance:
- kotahitanga—unity:
- manaakitanga—caring:
- tohatoha—sharing:
- mana taiao—environmental awareness:
- hākari—feasting:

- wānanga—discussion:
- noho tahi—coming together:
- atawhaitanga—kindness:
- whakanui—celebrations:
- tuakiritanga—identity.

Matariki is a time to gather, to acknowledge those who have passed, to celebrate the present, and to plan for the future. Matariki is the star of the Māori New Year.