

Lalande 21185: The Brightest Red Dwarf for the Rest of Us

Although Lacaille 8760 is the brightest M dwarf in the night sky, it is visible only from fairly southerly latitudes. For mid-northern observers looking to hunt down the brightest red dwarf in their own skies, the sure bet is Lalande 21185. This dim, 7.5-magnitude dwarf in Ursa Major was cataloged by Lacaille's young colleague Joseph-Jérôme de Lalande in 1801. Much like Lacaille 8760, its proximity to the Sun was first apparent from its extreme proper motion (4.8 arcseconds per year). Over the next 1,000 years, that steady clip will translate to more than 1° of motion across the sky. Located 8.3 light-years away at R.A. $11^{\text{h}} 03.2^{\text{m}}$, Dec. $+35^\circ 58'$ (equinox 2000.0), it's an easy binocular target. Lalande 21185 is the third brightest red dwarf in the sky, topped only by Lacaille 8760 and Lacaille 9352 in Microscopium's neighboring constellation, Piscis Austrinus.

— David Tytell

