



Dr Rangi Mataamua

Māori Astronomy

In the last ten years Aotearoa has witnessed a rapid resurgence in the celebration of Matariki and the recognition of the Māori New Year. In particular there has been an explosion of various events to celebrate Matariki as a time of togetherness, reflection and planning. Yet during this time of celebration there is often little acknowledgment of the astronomical background to this event, or any discussion about the fascinating and wonderful field that is Māori astronomy.

In traditional times tohunga kōkōrangī (astronomers) would cast their eyes towards the heavens, tracking the movements of the cosmos while searching for meaning within the sky. Māori astronomy is indeed a mixture of astrology, science and observation, and every tribe had their own unique star lore complete with stories, traditions, names and events. Unfortunately much of this knowledge has been either lost to time or surpassed by a western scientific view of astronomy. This presentation will look to present a traditional Māori view point of astronomy, and discuss how vastly complex and interconnected Māori astronomy was to the environment and the activities of the people. Furthermore this presentation will look to bring Māori astronomy into a modern context, discussing how a Māori view of the astronomy might be connected to a more clinical scientific understanding. Finally this lecture will look to spark interest in Māori star lore, and perhaps encourage people to follow the footsteps of our ancestors and turn our heads to the sky.

Dr Mataamua has gained reputation for his extensive experience in Research and Critical Analysis. He has a wide list of research publications and is engaged frequently to provide research services in Management and Māori development issues.