

Star Data on SAO 14573 in Ursa Major

There are virtually a countless number of stars in the night sky. The task of compiling detailed information on all of them will probably never be completed. Some of the basic information known about the star SAO 14573 is listed below.

Common Name:	Muscida
Star:	SAO 14573 Omicron-Ursa Major
Magnitude:	3.50
Spectral Type:	G0
RA:	8h 30' 14.9"
Dec:	60d 43' 5" N

Astronomers have a system of cataloging stars. As with any system of cataloging, stars need some sort of identifier, and that's what the SAO number refers to. SAO is an acronym for "Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory," and most of the stars observable from Earth have an SAO catalogue number. If the star is one of the brighter ones, it may also have a common name. This is the case with SAO 308 which we commonly know as Polaris, the North Star.

The stars all have different levels of brightness. This observable brightness is a function of the stars' distance from Earth, the size of the star etc., and this is why we see bright stars and dim stars when we look at the night sky. Astronomers refer to this brightness as Magnitude. The Magnitude scale defines the brightness of the star. The scale runs sort of backwards to what one might expect...the lower the number, the brighter the star. A star with an apparent magnitude of 1, is 100 times brighter than a magnitude 6 star. Each magnitude is 2.512 times brighter than the next one. Our sun has a magnitude of -26.8. Sirius, the brightest star in the night sky, has a magnitude of -1.4. The North Star Polaris, which is dimmer than Sirius, has a magnitude of 2.04.

The Spectral classification, groups stars into varying temperature ranges. The types are O, B, A, F, G, K, R, N, and S. These types are further divided numerically from 0 to 9. Our sun is a G2 star, which means it is closer to being a G star than it is to being a K star. A star with a spectral type of ++ is typically unknown, or undocumented.

The Right Ascension (RA), and Declination (Dec) indicates the position of a star in the sky. RA units are given in Hours, Minutes and Seconds, and Dec. units are given in Degrees Minutes Seconds. This coordinate system is similar to the Latitude and Longitude coordinate system we use to locate points on the surface of the Earth.