

The Largest and Brightest Supermoon of 2024 Draws Audiences to New Castle

Crowds gather at the Great Island Common in New Castle NH to watch together the supermoon, known as the Hunter's Moon.

Makena Lee, Contributor

NEW CASTLE, N.H.—As the sun set behind the trees on Oct. 17 on the island town of New Castle, New Hampshire, families, and photographers gathered on the rocky coastline in anticipation of the largest and brightest supermoon of 2024, the Hunter's Moon.

When the sun had set at 5:56 p.m., the cotton-candy sunset was as vivid as it would get, yet there was no sight of the moon rising over the horizon. Twelve photographers waited at the Great Island Common with their cameras set upon tall tripods, pointed at the darkening blue sky. Families huddled together under blankets to keep warm, hoping that they would see the moon that they came for.

“It was supposed to rise at 5:56, but there might be too many clouds. Let's give it 15 more minutes,” said Dover photographer Mindy Marcouillier to her husband, both of them bundled in multiple layers of clothing and wearing New England Patriots pom-pom hats.

Marcouillier came equipped with a foot-long zoom lens attached to her Nikon Z6ii, and an open backpack full of other lenses ready to be used if needed. “This is such a popular spot to see the moon rise over the horizon, so I'm just trying to get a nice detailed photo of the moon tonight.”

At 6:10 p.m., a slight golden illumination began to show through the thick clouds. Every photographer turned on their camera and got into position, and phones were taken out of pockets in anticipation of the photo opportunity to come. Five minutes later, the moon became visible above the clouds, a beautiful, illuminated, golden moon.



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SuperMoon at Great Island Common

The crowd became giddy with excitement at the sight of the moon; photographers ran to their camera to make sure their settings were perfect, making their trip to the coast worthwhile. At the same time that the moon became fully visible, coming into the bay was a cargo ship and accompanying tugboat. "I have to get that shot!" Marcouillier exclaimed about the boats crossing underneath the moon and its reflection.

Lisa Rodgers, a Manchester-based photographer with over 40 years of experience came to the Common to fuel her love for landscape photography by photographing the moon.

"I haven't been able to do a lot of photography lately, so this is really a treat for me," Rodgers said.

Rodgers, like Marcouillier, had a foot-long lens attached to her Canon DSLR camera on a tripod taller than she was: "I was hoping to get the moonrise behind the lighthouses, and even though I didn't get that tonight, I'm still glad I came and was able to get some great photos," she said.

Joe Rao, a skywatching columnist for Space.com, explained the reason for the supermoon in an article two days prior to the event. Instead of a typical full moon, this specific full moon was considered to be a supermoon because it also arrived in perigee, "its closest point to Earth, at a distance of 221,938 miles (357,174 kilometers) away," according to the website.

Because of the perigee and the full moon phase, it resulted in "a 14 percent brighter-than-average full moon accompanied by unusually high and low tides later this week into the start of the weekend," said Rao in his column.

If you missed this supermoon, the Beaver Moon supermoon will occur in less than a month, on Nov. 15th, 2024.