

Binocular Messier Observing Program

Introduction

The Binocular Messier Observing Program is for beginning observers as well as experienced amateurs. Beginning observers will find that it doesn't take an expensive telescope but only a simple pair of binoculars, no matter what size, cost or condition, to do serious astronomy. On the other hand, experienced amateurs, even though they may already have the PAA Telescopic Messier Certificate, will enjoy the new perspective binocular observing gives them as they pull back from an object and observe the area around that object as well as the object itself. Seeing the object and its relationship to the sky around it will put that object in its proper context in the sky.

Requirements and Rules

To qualify for the Binocular Messier Certification, observe all the Easy, all the Tougher or the Challenging Messier objects using only binoculars. Any pair of binoculars may be used, but those with objectives between 20MM and 80MM in diameter are recommended. To record your observations, you may use the log sheets.

The required information for each observation is:

The name of the object

Date and time

Latitude and longitude

An estimate of the seeing and transparency

The size and power of the binoculars used

A brief description of what you saw.

Submitting for Certification

To receive your Binocular Messier Observing Program Certificate, simply send your observations along with your name, emailing address, phone number to the PAA Education Director.

Upon verification of your submission and of your active membership in the PAA, your recognition certificate will be presented to you. Your name will also appear in an upcoming issue of the Reflector magazine.

Congratulations. Good luck with your next observing challenge.

Notes

For those of you who are uncertain as to which Messier objects to observe, or who need a formal program to follow, we have included Appendix A and Appendix B for your use.

Appendix A is for binoculars between 20MM and 50MM in diameter and Appendix B is for binoculars between 56MM and 100MM in diameter.

Each appendix lists the appropriate Messier objects that can be observed with that size instrument, and is divided into three categories: Easy, Tough, and Challenge. Easy objects are those that appear large and bright in the field of view, and are easily observed. Tougher objects are small and dim in the field of view and require identifying the fields around them with the help of some sort of star chart to verify their location. Challenge objects are those that are small and faint, sometimes requiring averted vision, and need to be pinpointed exactly on a good star atlas to locate, identify, and observe.

[Appendix A - 7x35, 7x50, and 10x50 Binoculars](#)

[Appendix B - 11x80 Binoculars](#)

Copyright ©2018 Astronomical League. All rights reserved. Used by Permission.