



Are you up for the challenge of the annual Messier Marathon

Each spring near the Spring Equinox it is possible to find all 110 objects in Charles Messier's Catalogue of Deep Sky Treasures during a single night. Hundreds of amateur astronomers turn their telescopes eagerly toward the sky searching for star clusters, nebula and galaxies hidden in the canopy of the night sky. The quest begins at dusk to catch the ones soon to set it the west. Then proceeds checking off the many objects of the winter and circumpolar sky. You'll need a power snack before tackling the vast denizens of Virgo cluster galaxies. Stave off drowsiness with numerous cups of coffee as the Summer Milky Way rises in the east after midnight. Only the most hardy observers preserve to catch the objects of the autumn sky before they are swallowed up by the brightening dawn.

The Messier Marathon is a night that club members get together to encourage each other to find as many of the Messier Objects as they can in a single night. Whether you find a few dozen or nearly 100 it's an experience all will enjoy.

The week or so prior to the March New Moon is great time to get started honing your observing skills. Choose a couple of the charts in the links below and try to locate all the objects on that chart. Many of them can be found from suburban skies. Try turning off your GoTo features and find them yourself using the star charts. Our [April 2021 Newsletter](#) has a good article explaining how to find the Field of View in your telescope eyepieces. Then "Star Hop" from a known star to locate your desired object. Just manually use your controls to move the scope until you find the Deep Sky object. Take a bit of time to look observe its details. Maybe even make a sketch of it. If you've never done the [Messier Certificate program](#) this is good time to start but you'll want to spend more time recording your observations for the certificate. Print Off Charts 3,4 & 5 in the link below and see how many you can find.

THE MESSIER MARATHON – extensive page of the history and objects of the marathon
<http://www.messier.seds.org/xtra/marathon/marathon.html> Bottom of the page has links to years.

Excellent Explanation and strategy for planning your observation Sequence

- Note- The resources at the end can now be found online.

<http://www.richardbell.net/marathon.html>

Single Page printout of the Sequence search list

http://www.richardbell.net/files/messier_list.pdf

Messier Marathon Packet - Made in 2016 – Object list works for any year in March

<https://okmcd.com/pub/MessierMarathonCharts.pdf>

Only the first or last M Objects may vary a bit.

Printable PDF charts or ones that can be stored on a computer.

7 pages of Log sheets to check off your progress arranged by sequence and Suggested times for conducting your search.

17 pages of detailed charts showing the location of each object. Identified by sequence number.

Three Page Log sheets -

<http://www.astunit.com/tonkinsastro/messier/messmara.pdf>

For observers using different instruments during the night

- this one has columns to identify which instrument