



The Astronomical League's Binocular Messier Club



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by John Wagoner

American Association of Amateur Astronomers



The Astronomical League is pleased to introduce its Binocular Messier Club. The Binocular Messier Club 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 AL's telescopic Messier and Herschel certificates, will enjoy the new perspective binocular observing gives them as they pull back from an object and observe the area surrounding 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.

RULES AND REGULATIONS

To qualify for the AL's Binocular Messier Certificate, you need only be a member of the Astronomical League, through either an affiliated club or as a member-at-large, and observe 50 or more Messier objects using only binoculars. Any 50 of the 110 recognized Messier objects may be observed. You may use any pair of binoculars, but we recommend those with objectives between 20MM and 80MM in diameter.

To record your observations, you may use the log sheets found in the back of the Astronomical League's manual **Observe: A Guide to the Messier Objects**, or any similar log sheet. Your own log sheets should include: object, date, time, power, seeing, type of binocular, and observing notes. Order the Observe manual through *Astronomical League Sales, PO Box 572, West Burlington, IA 52655-9998*. The price is \$10.00, including postage. Or you can order on-line at www.astronomicalguesales.com

To receive your Binocular Messier Certificate, simply send your observations along with your name, address, phone number, and club affiliation to your club's Awards Coordinator, or to: *Mike Benson, AL Binocular Coordinator, 2116 Crystal Dr., Nashville, TN 37210-3333. Phone (615) 883-6571. E-mail: ocentaurus@aol.com*. Upon verification of your observations, your certificate will be forwarded either to you or your club's "Awards Coordinator," whomever you choose.

If you need to become a member of the Astronomical League as a Member-at-Large, contact *Jackie Beucher, AL Executive Secretary, 11305 King Street, Overland Park, KS 66210-3421. (913) 469-0135. E-Mail: M31@sky.net*.

AAAA Members: If you have completed an AL observing project, submit your observations directly to the AAAA for certification. Be sure to send COPIES only. Do NOT send original photographs or observing logs.

THE APPENDICES

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. *Appendix B* is for binoculars between 56MM and 80MM 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 objects.

Easy objects are those that appear large and bright in the field of view, and are easily located.

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 identify.

You'll notice that in the small binocular category (*Appendix A*), 42 objects are classified as easy. You need only choose 8 of the objects in the tougher category to receive your certificate. For larger binoculars (*Appendix B*), all 50 objects needed to receive the certificate can be chosen out of the easy category. The point is that anyone, with any pair of binoculars, no matter what their size, shape, condition, or cost, can do serious astronomy, and acquire a Binocular Messier Club certificate. To prove that point, all 76 objects in *Appendix A* (Easy, Tough, and Challenge objects) were observed with a pair of 7x35 Tasco binoculars purchased at Wal-Mart for \$19.00.

Appendix C is for reference purposes, listing all 110 of the Messier objects, the times when they are best observed, and in constellation sequence. So, if you are wondering what is the best time of the year to observe a Messier object, refer to *Appendix C*. *Appendix C* tells by season each object's coordinates, their NGC numbers, the constellation they are located in, and their sizes and magnitudes. *Appendix C* also lists all of the Messier objects in the exact same order as the Astronomical League's Observe manual **Observe: A Guide to the Messier Objects**, in case you are using that as an observing aide.

I think you will find that the Binocular Messier Club is a fun and worthwhile project that will not only give you a whole new perspective on the universe in which we live, but a more comfortable feeling for the night sky that we all enjoy so much.

Good luck, clear skies, and good observing.



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APPENDIX A

for 7x35, 7x50, and 10x50 BINOCULARS

I. EASY MESSIER OBJECTS:

2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 22,
23, 24, 25, 27, 29, 31, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 41, 42,
44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 50, 52, 55, 67, 92, 93, 103

TOTAL = 42

II. TOUGHER MESSIER OBJECTS:

14, 19, 28, 30, 33, 40, 49, 53, 62, 63, 64, 78, 79, 80,
81, 82, 83, 94

TOTAL = 18

III. CHALLENGE MESSIER OBJECTS:

1, 9, 26, 32, 51, 54, 56, 65, 66, 68, 71, 75, 97, 101,
104, 106

TOTAL = 16

GRAND TOTAL = 76

APPENDIX B

for 11x80 BINOCULARS

I. EASY MESSIER OBJECTS:

2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18,
19, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 34, 35,
36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 50, 52,
53, 55, 62, 67, 71, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 92, 93, 94, 103

TOTAL = 58

II. TOUGHER MESSIER OBJECTS:

1, 9, 33, 49, 51, 54, 56, 60, 61, 63, 64, 65, 66, 68, 75,
77, 83, 87, 97, 101, 102, 104, 106

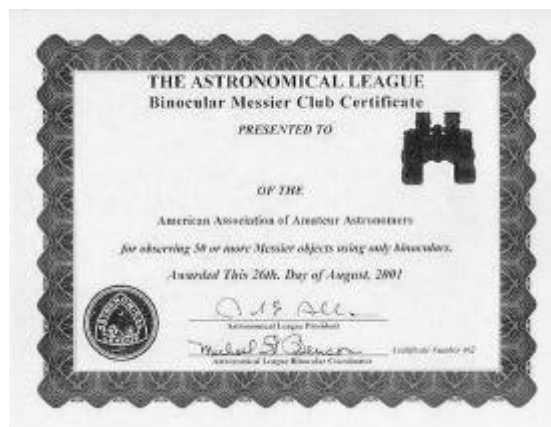
TOTAL = 23

III. CHALLENGE MESSIER OBJECTS:

20, 58, 59, 69, 70, 72, 84, 85, 86, 88, 89, 90, 95, 96,
99, 100, 105, 107, 108, 109, 110

TOTAL = 21

GRAND TOTAL = 102





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APPENDIX C The Messier List

I. THE WINTER GROUP

NGC#	R.A.	Dec	Mag	Typ	Con	Size	Messier
224	0 42.8	41 16	4.5	Gal	And	178'	31
221	0 42.8	40 52	10.0	Gal	And	8'x6'	32
205	0 40.4	41 41	10.0	Gal	And	17'x10'	110
598	1 33.9	30 40	7.0	Gal	Tri	73'x45'	33
7654	23 24.2	61 35	8.0	OCI	Cas	13.0'	52
581	1 33.2	60 42	7.0	OCI	Cas	6.0'	103
1039	2 42.0	42 47	6.0	OCI	Per	35.0'	34
650	1 42.4	51 34	12.0	PIN	Per	163"xl 07"	76
1952	5 34.5	22 01	9.0	PIN	Tau	6 x4'	1
1432	3 47.0	24 07	1.4	OCI	Tau	110.0'	45
1960	5 36.1	34 08	6.5	OCI	Aur	12.0'	36
2099	5 52.4	32 33	6.0	OCI	Aur	24.0'	37
1912	5 28.7	35 50	7.0	OCI	Aur	21.0'	38
1976	5 35.3	-5 23	5.0	DfN	Ori	85'x60'	42
1982	5 35.5	-5 16	7.0	DfN	Ori	20'x15'	43
2068	5 46.8	0 04	8.0	DfN	Ori	8'x6'	78
1904	5 24.5	-24 33	8.5	GCI	Lep	8.7'	79
2168	6 08.9	24 20	5.5	OCI	Gem	28.0'	35
2323	7 03.2	-8 20	7.0	OCI	Mon	16.0'	50
2287	6 47.0	-20 44	5.0	OCI	CMa	38.0'	41
2437	7 41.8	-14 49	6.5	OCI	Pup	27.0'	46
2422	7 36.6	-14 30	4.5	OCI	Pup	30.0'	47
2447	7 44.6	-23 05	6.5	OCI	Pup	22.0'	93

II. THE EARLY SPRING GROUP

NGC#	R.A.	Dec	Mag	Typ	Con	Size	Messier
2632	8 40.1	19 59	4.0	OCI	Cnc	95.0'	44
2682	8 50.4	11 49	7.5	OCI	Cnc	30.0'	67
2548	8 13.8	-5 48	5.5	OCI	Hya	54.0'	48
3031	9 55.6	69 40	8.5	Gal	UMa	21'x10'	81
3034	9 55.9	69 41	9.5	Gal	UMa	9'x4'	82
3587	11 14.8	55 01	12.0	PIN	UMa	202"xl96"	97
3556	11 11.6	55 41	11.0	Gal	UMa	8'x1'	108
3992	11 57.6	53 23	11.0	Gal	UMa	7'x4'	109
5457	14 03.3	54 22	8.5	Gal	UMa	22.0'	101

II. THE EARLY SPRING GROUP (continued)

NGC#	R.A.	Dec	Mag	Typ	Con	Size	Messier
WIN4	12 20.0	58 22	9.0	Dbl	UMa	49"	40
3623	11 18.9	13 06	10.5	Gal	Leo	8'x1.5'	65
3627	11 20.2	13 00	10.0	Gal	Leo	8'x2.5'	66
3351	10 43.9	11 42	11.0	Gal	Leo	4.4'x3.3'	95
3368	10 46.7	11 49	10.5	Gal	Leo	6'x4	96
3379	10 47.8	12 35	11.0	Gal	Leo	2.0'	105
5272	13 42.2	28 23	7.0	GCI	CVn	16.2'	3
5194	13 30.0	47 11	8.0	Gal	CVn	11'x7'	51
5055	13 15.8	42 02	8.5	Gal	CVn	10'x6'	63
4736	12 50.9	41 08	9.5	Gal	CVn	7'x3'	94
4258	12 18.9	47 19	9.5	Gal	CVn	19'x8'	106

III. THE LATE SPRING GROUP

NGC#	R.A.	Dec	Mag	Typ	Con	Size	Messier
4472	12 29.8	8 01	10.0	Gal	Vir	9'x7.5'	49
4579	12 37.8	11 50	11.0	Gal	Vir	5.5'x4.5'	58
4621	12 42.1	11 39	11.5	Gal	Vir	5'x3.5'	59
4649	12 43.7	11 34	10.5	Gal	Vir	7'x6'	60
4374	12 25.1	12 54	11.0	Gal	Vir	5.0'	84
4406	12 26.3	12 57	11.0	Gal	Vir	7.5'x5.5'	88
4486	12 30.9	12 24	11.0	Gal	Vir	7.0'	87
4552	12 35.7	12 34	11.5	Gal	Vir	4.0'	89
4569	12 36.9	13 10	11.0	Gal	Vir	9.5'x4.5'	90
4303	12 22.0	4 29	10.5	Gal	Vir	6'x5.5'	61
4594	12 39.9	-11 37	9.5	Gal	Vir	9'x4'	104
5024	13 12.9	18 10	8.5	GCI	Com	12.6'	53
4826	12 56.7	21 41	9.0	Gal	Com	9.3'x5.4'	64
4382	12 25.5	18 12	10.5	Gal	Com	7.1'x5.2'	85
4501	12 32.1	14 26	11.0	Gal	Com	7'x4'	88
4192	12 13.9	14 55	11.0	Gal	Com	9.5'x3.2'	98
4254	12 18.9	14 26	10.5	Gal	Com	5.4'x4.8'	99
4321	12 23.0	15 50	10.5	Gal	Com	7'x6'	100
4548	12 35.5	14 30	11.5	Gal	Com	5.4'x4.4'	91
4590	12 39.5	-26 45	9.0	GCI	Hya	12.0'	68



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IV. THE MID-SUMMER GROUP

NGC#	R.A.	Dec	Mag	Typ	Con	Size	Messier
5236	13 37.1	-29 52	8.5	Gal	Hya	11'x10'	83
5904	15 18.6	2 05	7.0	GCl	Ser	17.4'	5
5866	15 06.5	55 45	10.5	Gal	Dra	5.2"x2.3'	102
6205	16 41.7	36 28	7.0	GCl	Her	16.6'	13
6341	17 17.1	43 08	7.5	GCl	Her	11.2'	92
6333	17 19.2	-18 31	9.0	GCl	Oph	9.3'	9
6254	16 57.1	-4 06	7.5	GCl	Oph	15.1'	10
6218	16 47.2	-1 57	8.0	GCl	Oph	14.5'	12
6402	17 37.6	-3 15	9.5	GCl	Oph	11.7'	14
6273	17 02.6	-26 16	8.5	GCl	Oph	13.5'	19
6266	17 01.2	-30 07	8.0	GCl	Oph	14.1'	62
6171	16 32.5	-13 03	10.0	GCl	Oph	10.0'	107
6121	16 23.6	-26 32	7.5	GCl	Sco	26.3'	4
6093	16 17.0	-22 59	8.5	GCl	Sco	8.9'	80
6405	17 40.1	-32 13	4.5	OCl	Sco	15.0'	6
6475	17 53.9	-34 49	3.5	OCl	Sco	80.0'	7

V. THE LATE SUMMER GROUP

NGC#	R.A.	Dec	Mag	Typ	Con	Size	Messier
6705	18 51.1	-6 16	7.0	OCl	Sct	14.0'	11
6694	18 45.2	-9 24	9.5	OCl	Sct	15.0'	26
6611	18 18.8	-13 47	6.5	C/N	Ser	7.0'	16
6618	18 20.8	-16 11	7.0	CIN	Sgr	11.0'	17
6613	18 19.9	-17 08	8.0	OCl	Sgr	9.0'	18
6603	18 18.4	-18 25	4.0	OCl	Sgr	2 deg.	24
6514	18 02.3	-23 02	5.0	C/N	Sgr	28.0'	20
6531	18 04.6	-22 30	7.0	OCl	Sgr	13.0'	21
6523	18 03.1	-24 23	5.0	C/N	Sgr	60'x 35'	8
6656	18 36.4	-29 54	6.5	GCl	Sgr	24.0'	22
6626	18 24.5	-24 52	8.5	GCl	Sgr	11.2'	28
6494	17 56.8	-19 01	6.0	OCl	Sgr	27.0'	23
4725	18 28.8	-19 17	4.9	OCl	Sgr	40.0'	25
6715	18 55.1	-30 29	8.5	GCl	Sgr	9.1'	54
6809	19 40.0	-30 58	7.0	GCl	Sgr	19.0'	55
6637	18 34.4	-32 21	9.0	GCl	Sgr	7.1'	69
6681	18 43.2	-32 18	9.0	GCl	Sgr	7.8'	70
6864	20 06.1	-21 55	9.5	GCl	Sgr	6.0'	75

VI. THE FALL AND EARLY WINTER GROUP

NGC#	R.A.	Dec	Mag	Typ	Con	Size	Messier
6779	19 16.6	30 11	9.5	GCl	Lyr	7.1'	56
6720	18 53.6	33 02	9.5	PIN	Lyr	85.6"x61.6"	57
6913	20 23.9	38 32	9.0	OCl	Cyg	7.0'	29
7092	21 32.2	48 26	5.5	OCl	Cyg	32.0'	39
6853	19 59.6	22 43	7.5	PIN	Vul	480"x340"	27
6838	19 53.8	18 47	8.5	GCl	Sge	7.2'	71
7099	21 40.4	-23 11	8.5	GCl	Cap	11.0'	30
7089	21 33.5	-0 49	7.5	GCl	Aqr	12.9'	2
6981	20 53.5	-12 32	10.0	GCl	Aqr	5.9'	72
6994	20 59.0	-12 38	9.0	OCl	Aqr	2.8'	73
7078	21 30.0	12 10	7.5	GCl	Peg	12.3'	15
628	1 36.6	15 48	10.5	Gal	Psc	10.2'x9.5'	74
1068	2 42.7	-0 02	10.5	Gal	Cet	7'x 6'	77

C/N - cluster and nebula

Dbl - double star diffuse nebula

Gal - galaxy

GCl - globular cluster

OCl - open cluster

PIN- planetary nebula





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Observing Log

Observer: _____ Location: _____ Page: _____

INDEX	Period - Instrument		Notes
Object	Date	Time	
	Power	Seeing	
	Type Instrument		
Object	Date	Time	
	Power	Seeing	
	Type Instrument		
Object	Date	Time	
	Power	Seeing	
	Type Instrument		
Object	Date	Time	
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