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## Book Review: The Observing Guide to the Messier Marathon: A Handbook and Atlas

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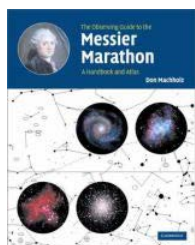
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## The observing guide to the Messier marathon : a handbook and atlas



Machholz, Don. Cambridge, 2002

157p, 0-521-80386-1 \$25.00

LC Call Number: [QB64](#)

Machholz offers an excellent historical reference on the celestial objects that Charles Messier feared could be mistaken for comets about 200 years ago. The hook of the book is its how-to approach for observing all of the Messier objects on a single night--the so-called "Messier Marathon." Original credit for the idea is arguable, but readers will find in Machholz's book a plausible history of the concept. Basically, the distribution of Messier objects in the sky is not uniform, leaving open the possibility that all can be observed when the sun is in the part of the sky least populated by Messier objects. This book is in large format, with plenty of margin space for observing notes. It also includes charts and data tables for all the objects in Messier's original list, along with many useful references. The charts are a bit of a disappointment; they were made with commercial software that most amateurs probably already have and therefore do not add much value to an otherwise good reference. The book will be most useful to amateur astronomers and will take its rightful place among several other existing references on the Messier objects.

Summing Up: Recommended. General readers; lower-division undergraduates; two-year technical program students.

Reviewer: [T. D. Oswalt](#), Florida Institute of Technology

Recommendation: Recommended

Readership Level: General Readers, Lower-division Undergraduates, Two-Year Technical Program Students

Interdisciplinary Subjects:

Subject: [Science & Technology - Astronautics & Astronomy](#)