

A Suggested Messier Marathon Search Sequence

Compiled online by Hartmut Frommert, using the work of Don Machholz. This list should be good for northern latitudes 20 to 40 degrees. Depending on geographic location, it may be impossible to find them all, and may be better to slightly modify this list. In case of doubt, consult Don Machholz's book.

1	M77	2	M74	3	M33	4	M31	5	M32	6	M110	7	M52	8	M103	9	M76	10	M34
11	M45	12	M79	13	M42	14	M43	15	M78	16	M1	17	M35	18	M37	19	M36	20	M38
21	M41	22	M93	23	M47	24	M46	25	M50	26	M48	27	M44	28	M67	29	M95	30	M96
31	M105	32	M65	33	M66	34	M81	35	M82	36	M97	37	M108	38	M109	39	M40	40	M106
41	M94	42	M63	43	M51	44	M101	45	M102	46	M53	47	M64	48	M3	49	M98	50	M99
51	M100	52	M85	53	M84	54	M86	55	M87	56	M89	57	M90	58	M88	59	M91	60	M58
61	M59	62	M60	63	M49	64	M61	65	M104	66	M68	67	M83	68	M5	69	M13	70	M92
71	M57	72	M56	73	M29	74	M39	75	M27	76	M71	77	M107	78	M12	79	M10	80	M14
81	M9	82	M4	83	M80	84	M19	85	M62	86	M6	87	M7	88	M11	89	M26	90	M16
91	M17	92	M18	93	M24	94	M25	95	M23	96	M21	97	M20	98	M8	99	M28	100	M22
101	M69	102	M70	103	M54	104	M55	105	M75	106	M15	107	M2	108	M72	109	M73	110	M30

Harvard Pennington, in his book, *The Year-Round Messier Marathon Field Guide*, uses a slightly different order. He does not number them, as in the table above, but this is the order in which they appear on the pages of his book, arranged by constellation:

1-M74, 2-M77, 3-M31, 4-M110, 5-M32, 6-M33, 7-M34, 8-M76, 9-M79, 10-M42,
11-M43, 12-M78, 13-M50, 14-M47, 15-M46, 16-M41, 17-M93, 18-M52, 19-M103, 20-M1,
21-M45, 22-M36, 23-M37, 24-M38, 25-M35, 26-M48, 27-M44, 28-M67, 29-M65, 30-M66,
31-M95, 32-M96, 33-M105, 34-M3, 35-M53, 36-M64, 37-M85, 38-M51, 39-M101/M102, 40-M106,
41-M40, 42-M81, 43-M82, 44-M97, 45-M108, 46-M109, 47-M102(Alt.), 48-M63, 49-M94, 50-M68,
51-M83, 52-M104, 53-M61, 54-M49, 55-M58, 56-M59, 57-M60, 58-M84, 59-M86, 60-M87,
61-M88, 62-M89, 63-M90, 64-M91, 65-M98, 66-M99, 67-M100, 68-M13, 69-M92, 70-M56,
71-M57, 72-M71, 73-M27, 74-M29, 75-M39, 76-M5, 77-M10, 78-M12, 79-M107, 80-M9,
81-M14, 82-M11, 83-M26, 84-M16, 85-M17, 86-M18, 87-M6, 88-M7, 89-M19, 90-M62,
91-M4, 92-M80, 93-M8, 94-M20, 95-M21, 96-M23, 97-M24, 98-M25, 99-M22, 100-M28,
101-M54, 102-M69, 103-M70, 104-M55, 105-M75, 106-M15, 107-M2, 108-M72, 109-M73, 110-M30.

Pennington has a whole chapter (Chapter 5) on learning the constellations and their "signposts", to make it easier for you to locate the Messier objects in those constellations. As I said previously, practice, practice, practice ahead of time, so you are familiar with the objects and where to find them. He also emphasizes that you should locate the easy objects first, and stay in order, so you don't forget or skip any. In Chapter 8 he explains the types of objects you will be looking for: galaxies, globular clusters, open clusters, nebulae of various types, double stars, asterisms, and possible "Messier mistakes", and a duplication.

Some Final Hints and Tips

Here are some final suggestions for a successful Messier Marathon. Pick the right date, avoid the moon, and plan alternate dates in case of bad weather. Bring warm clothes, food, extra batteries and pens or pencils and log sheets for logging your finds. Prepare for dew with a lens hood or (better) a dew heater. Know when twilight occurs, both evening and morning. Allow time to locate each object; don't spend so much time on one object that you miss finding others.

And to add to the realtor's emphasis on location, location, location, I'll add (again), practice, practice, practice. Get prepared for a challenging Messier Marathon, and have fun!