



## Preface

Astronomy is one of the few sciences where the amateur can still make a valuable contribution to real science. Today there are a growing number of professional-amateur collaborations where professional astronomers rely on amateurs to collect and process data. By observing the sky themselves, amateurs can still discover or make an extremely useful contribution to making new discoveries.

Like any relationship, successful astronomical observing takes some level of learning, commitment, communication and investment in both time and effort. Only by doing this will you get the very best out of our fabulous hobby and that intimate partnership to mature properly.

As a person who is interested in astronomy, do you feel that you could get involved yourself? If not, why not? Is this because you don't have enough knowledge? Or is it because you don't feel you just do not have enough experience?

There is really only one way to get the knowledge and experience needed, and that's to get out there and keep observing yourself.

Much as the term "stargazer" is much loved around the world, the term "amateur astronomer" does sound far more professional, but at the same time intimidating.

Within these pages you will take a long hard look at where you currently lie along your path of discovery. It will clear the way along this path, helping to steer your journey with the least pain, or at least help you to avoid some of the major pitfalls.

You will also find lots of hints and tips as well as sources of information so that your knowledge and observing confidence matures and flourishes.

By the end of the book, you really will feel that you too consider yourself an amateur astronomer, rather than a stargazer.

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From Casual Stargazer to Amateur Astronomer

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