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Book Review: Visually Observing Comets

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Visually observing comets



Seargent, David A. J. Springer, 2017

276p indexes, 9783319454344 \$34.99, 9783319454351 \$24.99

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Few astronomical events are more impressive than a bright new comet. Such a spectacular show occurs irregularly—about once a decade. However, a dozen or so comets that can be observed with small telescopes or binoculars appear each year. Seargent, a former part-time lecturer in philosophy at the University of Newcastle, Australia, makes the convincing case that any individual can make valuable observations with little more than a commitment to learning about comets and how to properly document what is observed. His book begins with a very readable history of comets, their anatomy, and their behavior. Next, he describes the observations one can make, how these can be documented, and what one should do if a discovery is made. The final part of the work outlines how to observe 20 periodic comets that will return within the next ten years. Other than being fun and exciting, Seargent indicates that visual observations have high scientific value. For example, how else are scientists to compare comet observations made before the advent of photography or digital cameras with those made today? If one is interested in comets, get out there and take this book along!

Summing Up: Recommended. All readers.

Reviewer: T. D. Oswalt, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University

Recommendation: Recommended

Readership Level: All Readership Levels

Interdisciplinary Subjects:

Subject: Science & Technology - Astronautics & Astronomy

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