

ASSA: ASTROPHOTOGRAPHY SECTION ANNUAL REPORT (2020-2021)

THE STATE OF ASTROPHOTOGRAPHY AND IMAGING

The Astrophotography Section aims to coordinate and promote astronomical imaging technology and collect images created by amateur astronomers. In recent years, more Southern African amateur astronomers started contributing by using their imaging equipment to collect and provide data to professional astronomers globally. The quality of artistic astronomical images produced by both professional and amateur photographers in Southern Africa is improving continually.

ASTROPHOTOGRAPHY AND COVID-19

Even though many monthly Stargazing events and Star Parties ground to a halt during the lock-down restrictions, it is encouraging to note that Astrophotographers remained active during the past year. More people started imaging from home, which opened up new possibilities. There was a notable shift to the use of Light Pollution Filters and switching to Narrowband imaging, as it makes imaging from the city more feasible.

INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION

Clyde Foster's prolific contribution to Planetary imaging continues to inspire. Clyde has been recognised for his work by NASA, and his discovery on Jupiter was named "Clyde's Spot" in his honour.

MEMBER ACTIVITY

The Astrophotography Section continues to encourage the submission of photographic images to the image archive on Flickr. We link to the photos on the ASSA website in the Gallery section, grouped by photographer and subject. We only accept submissions from Southern African photographers or of images captured in Southern Africa. We do not require the photographer to be an ASSA member, nor do we refuse photo submissions based on quality. The main aim is to promote and encourage the art of Astrophotography.

INITIATIVES

An ongoing collaboration between the Astrophotography Section and the Deep-Sky Section, help us to get more members to submit their images for possible publication in Nightfall Magazine. Images submitted to the ASSA Flickr Gallery are eligible for possible publication in the annual ASSA Sky Guide.

CONJUNCTION OF MARS, VENU AND THE CRESCENT MOON COMPETITION

ASSA invited Southern Africa's Astrophotographers to submit photos of the event (observable from 11-13 July 2021). Chris Stewart (ASSA President) and Martin Heigan (ASSA Astrophotography Section Director) will pick the best three image submissions when the competition closes on 1 August 2021. Winning entries will be featured in the 2022 Sky Guide, and the photographers credited accordingly. Telescopium.co.za sponsored the competition, and the winners will also receive five copies of the 2022 Sky Guide with their published images.

SECTION DIRECTOR

The current Section Director is Martin Heigan.