

A Tour of SkyTools

www.skyhound.com/skytools.html

Mark Martin

Upcoming Events

- SkyTools Basics – Probably Saturday, Feb 19
Instructor: Mark Martin (Me)
- SkyTools Power Tips – Saturday, March 19
Instructor: Greg Crinklaw, Author of SkyTools
- General Meeting – Monday, March 21
Topic: Something other than SkyTools
Presenter: Greg Crinklaw

Greg's Goal

To satisfy requests like

"Computer, make me a list of every planetary nebula that will be visible in my 6-inch Newtonian from my favorite site before I go to bed at 1 AM tonight. They must be at least 30 degrees above the horizon, and unhindered by twilight or moonlight. Oh, and mark the planetaries that I have yet to observe. Now compute the optimum time to observe each object and sort the list in that order. Finally, print the list as well as a finder chart for each object, customized for my 6-inch scope."

SkyTools is designed to create, maintain, and utilize LISTS of astronomical objects.

The **heart** of SkyTools is an **extensive and unique database** of astronomical objects giving a *single* description of each object.

The Pro Edition has 522 million stars, down to mag 20

See www.skyhound.com/databases.html

Five Main Components

- **Nightly Planner** – observation planning
- **Current Events Tool** – events in near future
- **Special Events Tool** – historical or events in distant future
- **Ephemerides Tool**
- **Real Time Tool** – telescope/DSC/mount control

Current Events Tool

- ❖ Calculates **INTERESTING EVENTS** for the next several months
- ❖ Provides access to the **NIGHTLY EVENTS PLANNER** and the **EVENTS CALENDAR**

e·phem·er·is

1.a table showing the positions of a heavenly body on a number of dates in a regular sequence.

2.an astronomical almanac containing such tables.

– [dictionary.com](https://www.dictionary.com)

The **Ephemerides Tool** calculates an ephemeris for the chosen object. For a “fixed” object, this means the optimum viewing time for a sequence of nights.

Nightly Planner in Visual Observation Mode

- HELP!** – rightmost 4 buttons, tool tips, and groups.yahoo.com/group/skytools
- Blue Text** – hyperlinks to dialog boxes
- ✦ Night Bar ✦
- Observing Lists** – can only manipulate from Nightly Planner and Real Time Tool
- 👁 **Visual Sky Simulation** 👁
- Overhead View
- Naked Eye View
- Interactive Atlas** – provides access to **Context Viewer**
- Thumbnail Viewer**

Imaging Session Planner = Nightly Planner in Imaging Mode

- Imaging Info in Observing List – can configure list for different types of objects
- Exposure Calculators – 4 calculators for different types of objects
- Imaging Atlases – Visual Sky Simulation and Context Viewer in the Interactive Atlas help with camera positioning and simulate short exposures (when using Real Time Tool)

Real Time Tool

- Has most of the same functionality as the Nightly Planner
- Controls mounts and DSCs – through list or Interactive Atlas
- Prioritizes objects according to their current status instead of their optimum viewing time.
- Provides access to imaging atlases

The Standard Edition does not include

1. The Imaging Session Planner – This is the Nightly Planner in [Imaging Mode](#)
2. The Exposure Calculator
3. The Imaging Context Viewer
4. The full 522 million star database
5. A tool for interfacing with a GPS unit
6. A wider array of options for downloading images
7. The Power Search tool, including a minor planets and comets search facility
8. The Real Time tool ([can be purchased separately](#))

Items 1-4 are needed to fully use SkyTools to plan imaging sessions.

If you are an imager well-versed in the use of SkyTools
and would be willing to help teach the Basic class,
please let me know.

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Thank you very much!
Questions?