Uranometria 2000.0's Open Cluster Database

This atlas plots 1,617 open clusters, including those in the Magellanic Clouds. They are shown as dotted open circles, with objects larger than 5′ drawn to scale on the main charts.

True open clusters are relatively young objects scattered throughout the disk of the Galaxy. A familiar example is the Pleiades, found on Chart 78. These objects are also known as Galactic clusters, since all but those nearest the Earth are found near the plane of our Galaxy (Chart 8 shows twenty-seven). Over time many objects cataloged as clusters have been proven to be just chance groupings or apparent groupings of unrelated stars. Many of these objects have NGC or IC designations and are well established in the literature. We have chosen to include them as clusters here. The companion DSFG provides specifics.

In the very youngest cases, the remnants of the gas from which they formed are visible as nebulae in the surrounding field. In fact, a small number (78) of open clusters share a single designation with their nebulae. An example is IC 1396 on Chart 19, which is listed as both an open cluster and a bright nebula in the respective sections, has two separate symbols on the chart, and is listed twice in the Index.

The number of stars in these objects ranges from only a few to thousands. In appearance they vary from rich, compact, easily distinguished objects, to a few stars so loosely grouped that they are hardly discernible from the surrounding star field. Many of the latter require experimentation with different apertures and magnifications to be seen. Small telescope users will probably be able to view a larger percentage of open clusters than other types of deep-sky objects.

The principal source used for data on these objects is the book *Star Clusters* by Brent Archinal and Steven Hynes, in press, to be published by Willmann-Bell. This atlas uses a subset of that data which was selected by a review of the entire catalog by direct inspection of the DSS images by DSFG co-author, Murray Cragin. His criteria were general visibility and the likelihood that the object could be seen by amateurs.