

The first list of deep-sky objects was created in 18th-century France by Charles Messier, an astronomer to the French Navy. The catalogue that bears his name now contains 110 of the most glorious clusters, gaseous nebulae and galaxies – plus one supernova remnant – for amateur astronomers to hunt down and observe

Messier originally created the list to avoid distracting targets 103 entries. Although he never added more objects to his list before his death in Paris on 12 April 1817, he did leave notes on several more he had found.

These observations were included in part of the Messier Catalogue. The rest of the other astronomers brought the total to 110 and also uncovered one duplicate. M102 is the second observation of the object M101 by Méchain, who confirmed this in a letter to Messier.

Some observers like to include a faint galaxy, NGC 6040, as Draco as a substitute for the missing M101.

Despite its title, the Messier Catalogue remains the first set of deep sky objects that interested astronomers view. Though he wasn't the least interested in these objects during his lifetime, it is for his catalog of them that he will always be remembered.