

NGC2264 - Christmas Tree Cluster in H-Alpha

NGC2264 is the official designation for the Christmas Tree Cluster and the Cone Nebula. Both are located in the constellation Monoceros. Also associated with this designation are the Snowflake and Fox Fur Nebulas. All can be seen in this image, plus other extended nebula. The Cone Nebula is in the upper left. The bright star in the center of this image is at the center of the "tree trunk." The bright star just to the right of the Cone is the "tree topper." The Fox Nebula is located just below the "tree trunk" star. The Snowflake Nebula is just to the right of the "tree topper" star. This narrowband H-alpha image was captured completely from our rear deck in Clayton, NC. I acquired 7 hours of data and ended up using 6 hours. All data was acquired on three clear nights on the 11th, 13th and 14th of November. I used my Stellarvue SV 90TBV (f=5.3), ST-8 camera on the G-11 mount. The image size is approximately 90 x 60 arc-minutes (3.9 arc-sec / pixel at full scale) and celestial north is toward the left and slightly down in this image. I was guiding with the internal chip. Total exposure time used was 360 minutes (18 x 1200 seconds 6nm Ha binned 1x1). All data was captured with CCDAutoPilot v4 controlling CCDSoft Version 5, FocusMax and The Sky 6. All processing was performed in CCD Stack and Photoshop CS3 (Mac).