

International Amateur Observatory Association

Members of the International Amateur Observatory (IAS) Association enjoy access to high quality telescopes under optimum viewing conditions for best visual or photographic astronomical observation and scientific work.

The IAS was founded in 1999 and now runs two observatories in Namibia. In addition to the upgrading and support of the two observatories, the IAS promotes many astronomical activities like:

- Astrophotography / Comet Photography
- Observing and discovering minor planets
- Variable star observing
- Spectroscopy
- Observing binary stars



The members report their work in astronomical magazines and are on hand for special classes in astronomy for school teachers, pupils and students.

Today the association has around 80 members of all ages and professions, everyone

joined by their common passion for astronomy and the wonders of the universe.

Interested? New members and sponsors are always welcome! Every six months the IAS has a convention, where you can get further information. Or, you can receive more information from the secretary (for address and email see next column) .

The IAS is recognized as a non-profit organization. Gifts for supporting the IAS and member fees, are tax exempt (in Germany).

IAS

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www.ias-observatory.org

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Observatory Hakos

16° 21' 42" E / 23° 14' 11" S / 1834 m above sea level

Guest Farm Hakos
P.O. Box 5056
Windhoek
Namibia
Phone / Fax: +264 (0) 62-57 21 11

www.natron.net/tour/hakos

mailto: hakos@mweb.com.na

Observatory Code #221 of the Minor Planet Center at
Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory in Harvard

Observatory Gamsberg

16° 13' 28" E / 23° 20' 30" S / 2364 m above sea level

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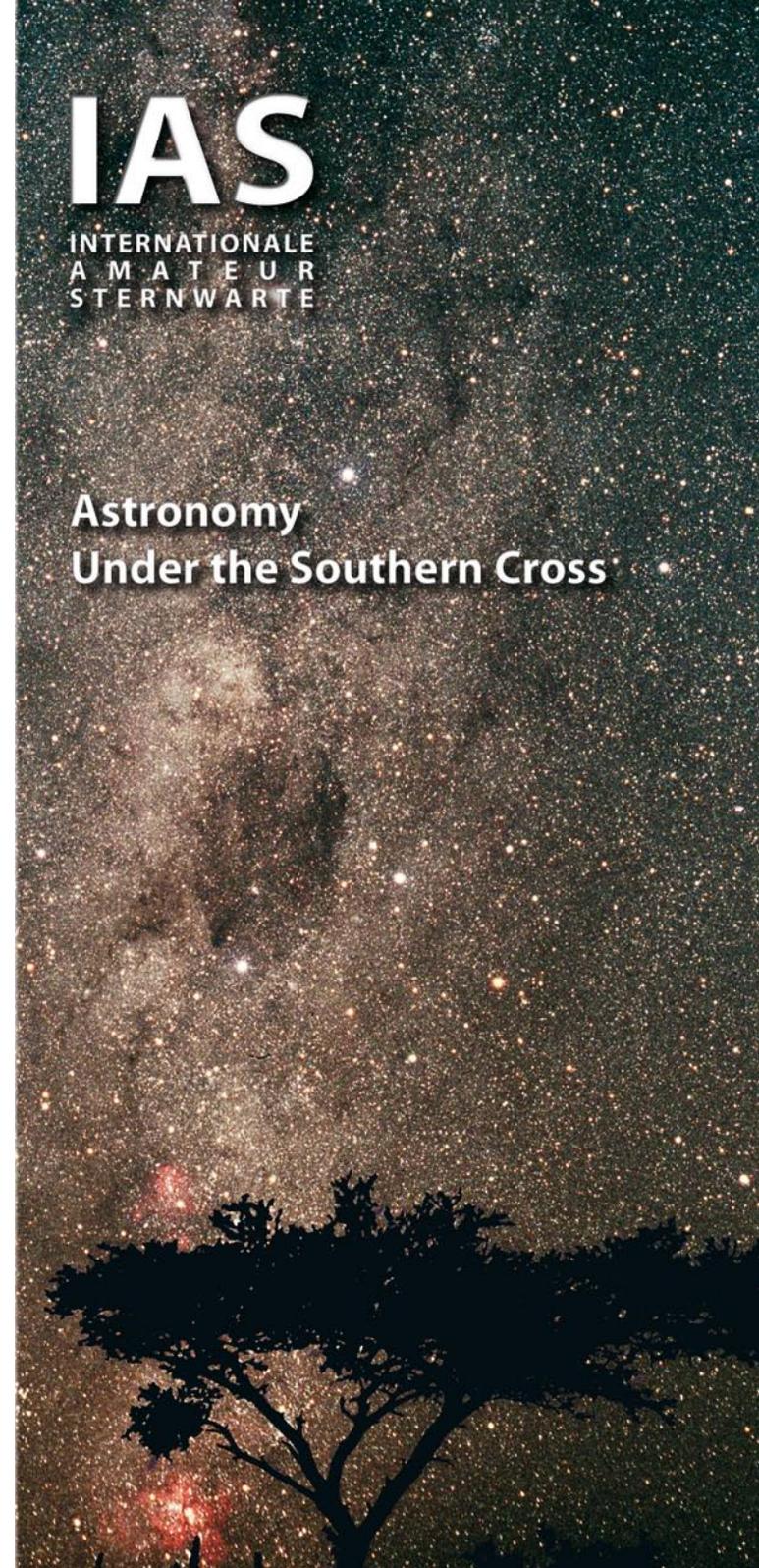
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Picture Credits: Hermann von Eiff (1: Milky Way and Camelthorn tree), Werner Roßnagel (2: Constellation Crux), Herbert Haupt (3: Observatory Hakos with Gamsberg, 4: 20" Cassegrain and Farm Hakos), Lutz Bath (5: Group of Oryx), Carsten Jacobs (6: Omega Centauri)

IAS

INTERNATIONALE
A M A T E U R
S T E R N W A R T E

Astronomy Under the Southern Cross



Astronomy under the Southern Cross

The Southern Cross – officially the constellation Crux – guided early explorers and sailors on their explorations to the south. From those times to today, for astronomers and all interested in the night sky, the Southern Cross is a symbol of the fascinating southern sky.



The International Amateur Observatory (IAS – from German „Internationale Amateursternwarte“) is an association of amateur astronomers, who wish to study the splendid night sky far from any light pollution and at one of the best places for observing in the southern hemisphere.

Gamsberg Observatory

The Gamsberg mountain in Namibia is 2364 m high (just over 7.700 feet) and is one of the „Top Ten“ places in the world for astronomical work, matching well known professional sites such as the Atacama desert in Chile and Mauna Kea in Hawaii.



The IAS, supported by the Max-Planck-Institute for astronomy in Heidelberg, Germany has built and maintains an observing station at Gamsberg where all association members can enjoy the best conditions for visual observations and photographic work.

The portable instruments now in use at the observatory will be extended in the near future with a 71 cm (28 inch) Newtonian telescope on a massive fork mount. For amateurs this offers the biggest reflecting telescope in Africa.

Hakos Observatory

In sight of the Gamsberg the Hakos farm is located, which offers very good guest facilities, and is a base station for the Gamsberg observatory. Here the IAS operates another observatory with excellent equipment. Seeing conditions at Hakos are also very good, nearly as fine as on the Gamsberg.

The Hakos observatory has a twin observing building which is equipped with a 20-inch Cassegrain telescope plus an 18-inch Bath-astro-camera and a 4.2-m dome with a 16-inch Cassegrain plus some smaller scopes and mounts. Additional scopes can be installed on permanent piers outside the buildings. A 17.5-inch Dobsonian telescope is ready to use for visual observers.



Besides telescopes and mounts the observatory provides a complete equipment set for the observing astronomer with essential accessories. Visitors save on weight penalties and air luggage costs.

Walter Straube is the host at the Hakos farm, supported by his daughter Waltraud and her husband, Friedhelm Hund. Hospitality is very important for them, and astronomers and their families are looked after very well.

For astronomers, and non-astronomers alike, there are many opportunities for walks and exploration in the nearby Hakos Mountains with its rich fauna such as zebras, antelopes and birds.

Namibia

Namibia is a fascinating land of monumental deserts and beautiful mountain landscapes, diverse and exotic animals and breathtaking night skies.

Namibia is double the area of Germany but because of the low density of population there is almost no light pollution away from the towns. The very dry air contributes to the extremely clear, transparent and still night sky.

Winter in the southern hemisphere, during June and July is the best time for astronomical observations. The centre of the Milky Way in Sagittarius is directly overhead in the zenith and the star light is so bright that



it casts shadows. Since its independence from South Africa in 1990, Namibia is politically stable and a favorite destination for tourists. The capital of Windhoek is in reach by non-stop flights from several European airports.

The difference to Central European Time is only one hour. English is the common language and many people also speak German.

The climate is dry and warm and special vaccinations are not necessary. Only when taking trips to the very north of the country during the rainy season a Malaria prophylaxis is recommended. As always, visitors should first consult their doctor well before their travel date.

Namibia offers many objects of interest and offers a warm welcome to visitors, but is not spoiled by mass tourism. An ideal destination for astronomers and their families!

More information at: www.ias-observatory.org