

CARMA Memorandum Series #61

CARMA 2011 VLBI Calibration

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ABSTRACT

In March/April 2011 CARMA participated in a 1mm VLBI experiment organized under the auspices of the Event Horizon Telescope. Other stations participating were the Arizona Radio Observatory Submillimeter Telescope on Mt Graham, Arizona; and the Submillimeter Array, the James Clerk Maxwell Telescope, and the Caltech Submillimeter Observatory, all on Mauna Kea, Hawaii.

Left circularly polarized signals in two 480 MHz wide bands, centered at 229.089 and 229.601 GHz, were recorded at all sites. During this experiment CARMA was treated as a ‘double’ VLBI station – signals were recorded on separate VLBI recorders for 2 separate CARMA telescopes, which then were treated as independent VLBI stations. In this way, the flux densities measured on the CARMA-CARMA VLBI baseline could be compared with flux densities measured with the local CARMA correlator. For some of the observations, the signals from 7 CARMA telescopes were phased together in a beamformer and sent to one of the VLBI recorders.

This document describes the calibration of the CARMA data for this experiment, including the absolute flux calibrations, computation of the system equivalent flux densities for single telescopes and the subarray of phased telescopes, and estimates of the phasing efficiency.

Change Record

Revision	Date	Author	Sections/Pages Affected
	Remarks		
1.0	2011-Dec-22	R. Plambeck	all Memo completed, sent to collaborators.
2.0	April 1, 2013	R. Plambeck	Abstract Added Abstract, submitted to CARMA memo series for future reference.

1. Flux Calibration

The absolute flux calibrator was Uranus, which was observed following the VLBI scans on day90 (31mar), day91 (01apr), and day92 (02apr). Figure 1 shows the Uranus visibilities vs baseline length for day90 and day91 after amplitude selfcalibration; day92 data were useless because of high atmospheric turbulence. Miriad program `bootflux` was used to transfer the Uranus gains to the other sources. For SgrA, only baselines longer than 20 klambda were used to avoid confusion from extended emission. The measured source flux densities were as follows:

source	S-31mar (Jy)	S-01apr (Jy)	avg (Jy)
0854+201	4.39		4.39
3C273	5.98	6.38	6.18
M87	1.64	1.69	1.66
3C279	13.34	14.33	13.83
1633+382		3.09	3.09
3C345		2.14	2.14
NRAO530	3.34	3.29	3.32
SGRA	3.18	2.93	3.06
1749+096		3.98	3.98
1921-293	5.19	5.63	5.41
MWC349	1.97	2.11	2.04
BLLAC		3.19	3.19
3C454.3	11.42		11.42

MWC349 was included as a secondary flux standard. It was observed at high elevation, before sunrise, whereas the Uranus calibration was done at about 30 degrees elevation, after sunrise. The flux density we obtained for MWC349, 2.04 Jy at 225 GHz, is higher than the value ~ 1.9 Jy that is commonly assumed, but it is the typical value measured by CARMA.

2. SEFD calculation

The goal of the calibration procedure is to compute the system equivalent flux density (SEFD) time-averaged for each scan. The SEFD is the system noise power expressed in Jy:

$$\frac{S}{SEFD} = \left\langle \frac{T_A}{T_S} \right\rangle, \quad (1)$$

where S is the source flux density and T_S is the (single sideband) system temperature scaled to outside the atmosphere.

For a phased array of telescopes, the source antenna temperature T_A is obtained by adding the signal voltage

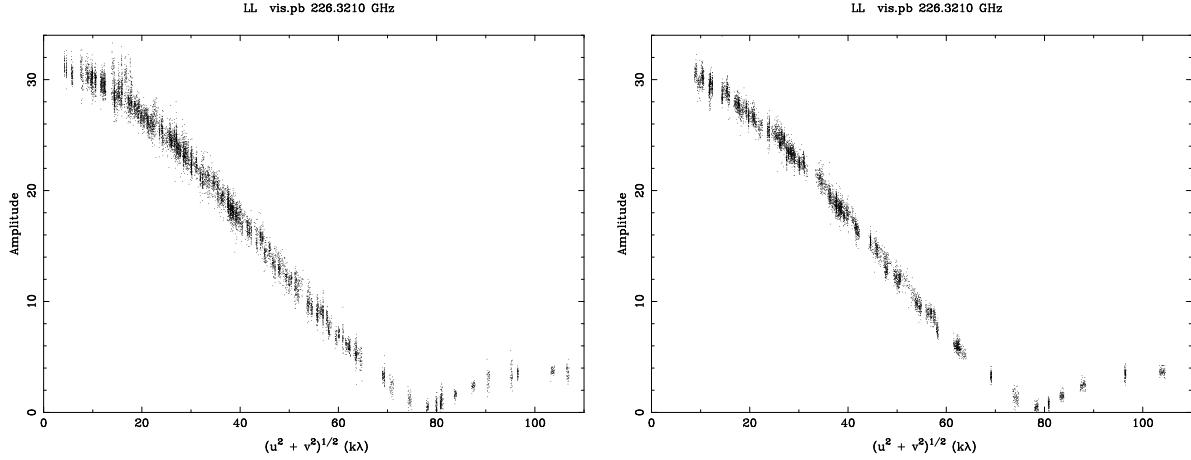


Fig. 1.— Visibility amplitudes (Jy) vs. baseline length (klambda) measured on Uranus after selfcalibration, for 31Mar (left) and 01Apr (right).

vectors, then squaring the result. The signal voltage vector from antenna i (expressed in units of \sqrt{K}) is

$$\mathbf{V}_{Si} = \frac{\sqrt{S}}{g_i \sqrt{C_i}} \quad (2)$$

where C_i is the nominal Jy/K conversion factor, and g_i is the (complex) voltage correction coefficient obtained from an amplitude selfcal solution. C_i is 65 Jy/K for the 10.4-m telescopes and 145.3 Jy/K for the 6.1-m telescopes, corresponding to nominal aperture efficiencies of 0.50 and 0.65 respectively. For VLBI data, g_i are computed on a record-by-record basis, every 10 seconds, assuming that the true source fluxes are the average values in table 1. Then, for N phased telescopes,

$$\left\langle \frac{T_A}{T_S} \right\rangle = \left\langle \frac{|\sum_N w_i \mathbf{V}_{Si}|^2}{\sum_N w_i^2 T_{Si}} \right\rangle \quad (3)$$

where w_i is the voltage weighting factor. Note that the voltage correction factor g_i hidden inside \mathbf{V}_{Si} takes into account imperfect phasing of the antennas. For the CARMA beamformer the voltages were given equal weight, so that $w_i = 1/\sqrt{T_{Si}}$ (see Thompson, Moran, & Swenson, 2nd Edition, page 372). Combining equations 1-3,

$$SEFD_{phased} = N \left\langle \left(\sum_N \frac{1}{g_i \sqrt{C_i} \sqrt{T_{Si}}} \right)^{-2} \right\rangle \quad (4)$$

In the case where $N=1$, this reduces to $SEFD = |g_i|^2 C_i T_{Si}$.

System temperatures are measured at the beginning of each scan using the chopper wheel method, then are updated continuously during the scan under the assumption that the receiver gain is constant. In the Miriad data, system temperatures are reported separately for each of the 16 spectral windows (LSB and USB for each of 8 correlator bands). In computing the SEFDs, we used the value of T_S appropriate for the 500 MHz

window sent to the VLBI recorder (lo-band = band 5 USB = window 13, hi-band = band 7 USB = window 15); gain correction factors g_i were, however, derived from the vector averaged visibilities across all 16 correlator windows, after applying a passband correction.

Gain corrections g_i are available for the ‘comparison’ antenna C1 and the ‘passthrough’ antenna C4 only in pre- or post-scan data. Phase switching and lobe rotation were disabled for these two antennas during the VLBI scans, so no CARMA correlator data are available for them during the scans.

3. Explanation of tables

The SEFDs for each scan are given in Appendix A. Columns 1-5 are self-explanatory.

- (col 6) τ_{au} is the 230 GHz opacity reported by a tipper
- (col 7) path is the rms atmospheric path variation, in microns, from the CARMA phasemonitor
- (cols 8,9) $C1\text{-}lo$ and $C1\text{-}hi$ are the lo- and hi-band SEFDs for the ‘comparison’ antenna, C1; note that all these SEFDs were derived from pre-scan or post-scan data; asterisks indicate that no pre- or post-scan data were available, so the nominal antenna gain was assumed
- (col 10) $C4\text{-}lo$ is the lo-band SEFD for the ‘passthrough’ antenna C4, except for a few scans on day90, when the beamformer output was used
- (col 11) $CP\text{-}hi$ is the hi-band SEFD for either the ‘passthrough’ antenna C4 (days 88,90), or for the beamformer output CP (most scans on days 91,92,94). Antennas C2,C3,C5,C10,C11,C12,C13 were phased for days 91 and 92; C9 replaced C10 on day94.
- (col 12) ph-eff is the phasing efficiency calculated relative to the hypothetical case where the antennas were perfectly phased (all vectors in a line); note that this limit is not the ideal case where the voltage weighting factors w_i are chosen to be proportional to $\sqrt{\text{gain}}/T_S$; -1 indicates a passthrough scan where the signal from C4 was sent to the recorder
- (col 13) $CD\text{ amp}$ is the predicted lo-band amplitude $10^4 S/\sqrt{SEFD_{C1\text{-}lo} SEFD_{C4\text{-}lo}}$ for comparison with Haystack results
- (col 14) $FD\text{ amp}$ is the predicted hi-band amplitude $10^4 S/\sqrt{SEFD_{C1\text{-}hi} SEFD_{CP\text{-}hi}}$ for comparison with Haystack results

4. Phasing efficiency

Figure 2 shows the cumulative phasing efficiency for days 91,92,94. As in the tables, the phasing efficiencies are relative to the case where the phasing was perfect, but the voltage weights for all telescopes were equal.

The SEFD corresponding to 100% phasing efficiency, for three 10-m and four 6-m telescopes, is 4.6 times smaller (better) than the SEFD for a single 10-m telescope, shown by the vertical dashed line. On day 92 the phasing efficiencies are abysmal because of high atmospheric turbulence. For the other two days the median phasing efficiency was 70%, better than a factor of 3 improvement over a single 10-m telescope.

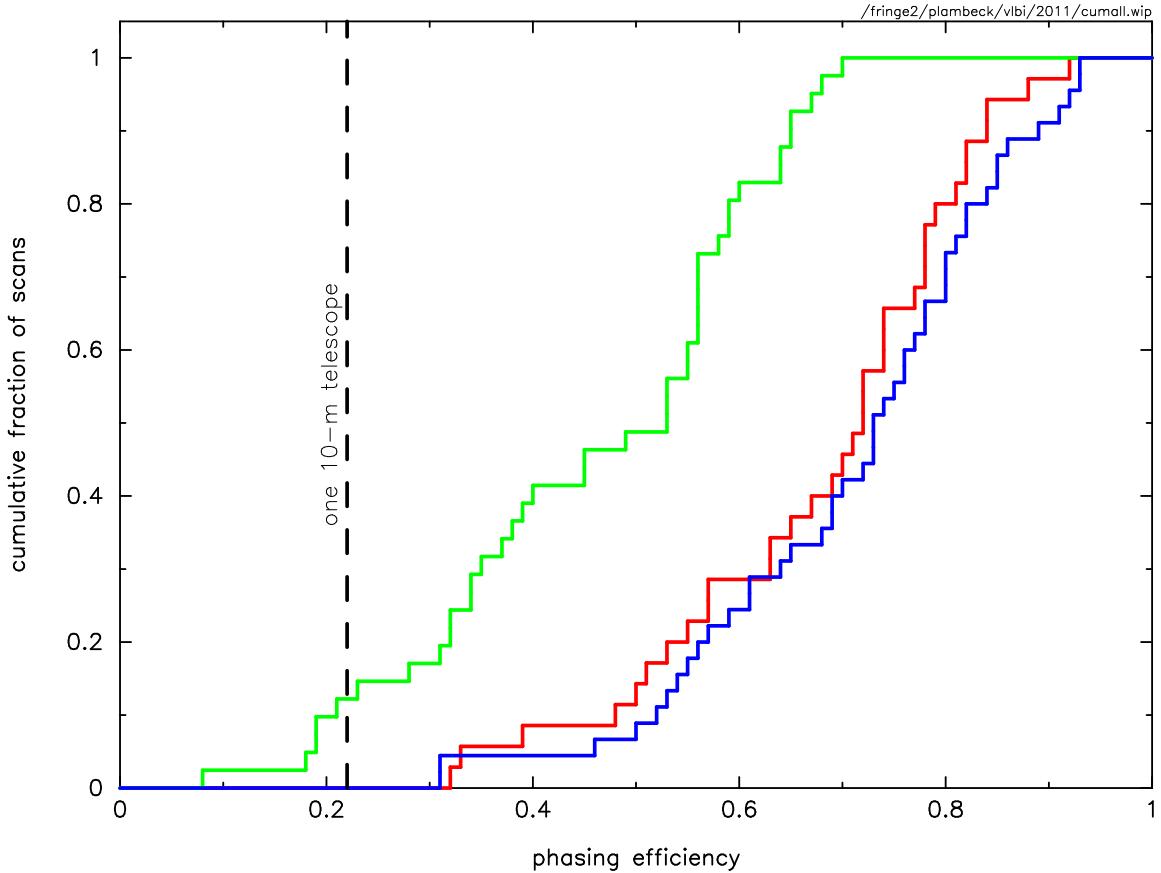


Fig. 2.— Cumulative distribution of phasing efficiencies for day90 (red), day92 (green), and day94 (blue). Each curve shows the fraction of scans with phasing efficiency less than or equal to the abscissa.

5. Comparison with VLBI amplitudes

The histograms in Figure 3 compare the amplitudes derived from the CARMA SEFDs (columns 13 and 14 in CARMA-cal.dat) with those obtained at Haystack from VLBI cross-correlations. The agreement is reasonable, although there is a disturbing tendency for the VLBI amplitudes to exceed the CARMA amplitudes.

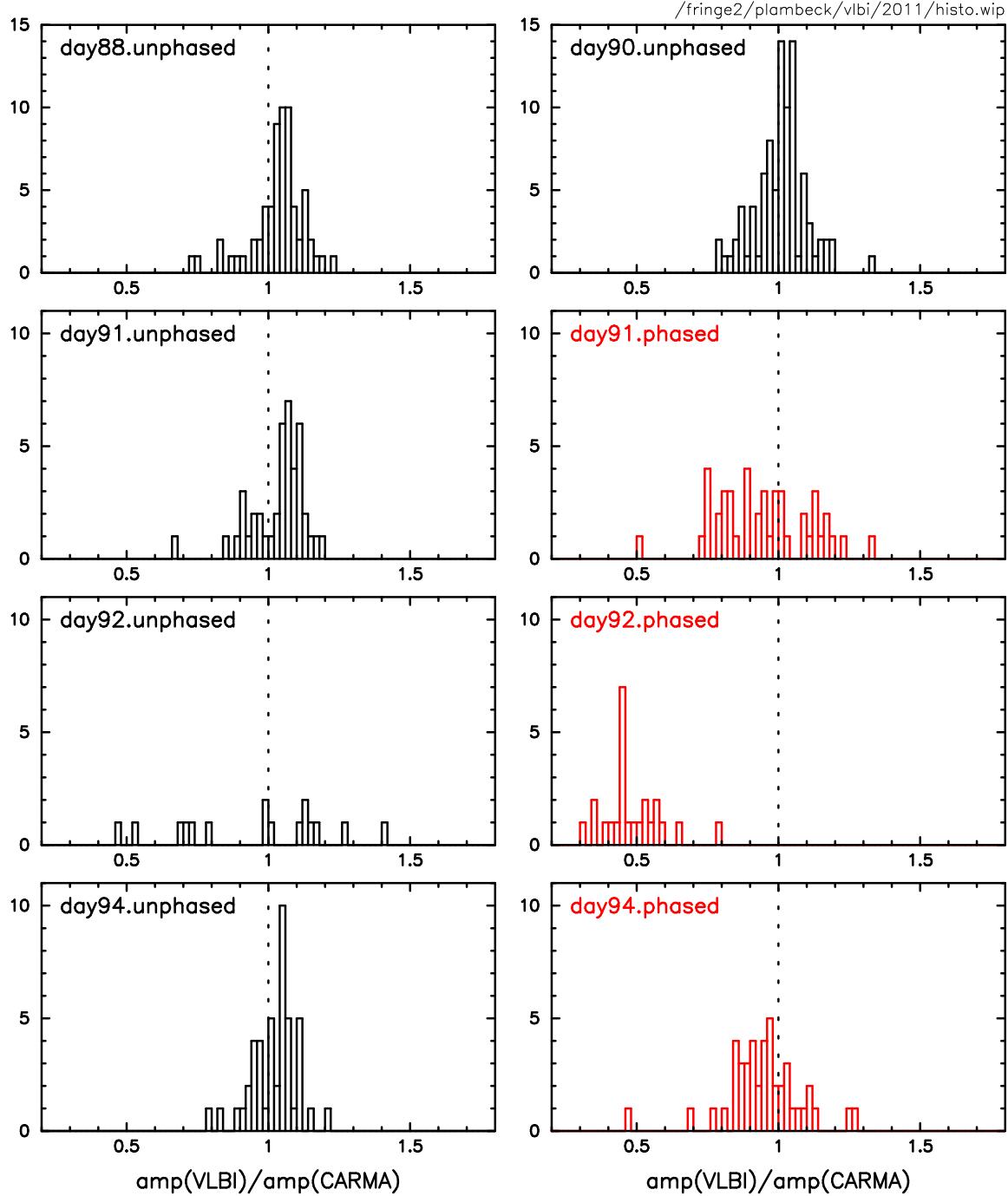


Fig. 3.— Histogram of VLBI/CARMA amplitudes. Single antenna results are in black, phased array results in red.

6. Appendix A

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#
# day88 (29mar) - no phasing; CP-hi = C4 in passthrough mode
#
#   scan    src    UTstart   UTstop     el   tau   path   C1-lo   C1-hi   C4-lo   CP-hi   ph-eff   CD      FD
#          deg        um      SEFD-Jy   SEFD-Jy   SEFD-Jy   SEFD-Jy   amp     amp
088-050000  missed  05:00:00  05:07:00   71  0.00    0    0*      0*      0*      0*      -1    0.000  0.000
088-051655  missed  05:16:55  05:25:00   46  0.00    0    0*      0*      0*      0*      -1    0.000  0.000
088-052955  missed  05:29:55  05:34:00   41  0.25  133    0*      0*      0*      0*      -1    0.000  0.000
088-054355  missed  05:43:55  05:54:00   51  0.24  160    0*      0*      0*      0*      -1    0.000  0.000
088-055955  missed  05:59:55  06:04:00   46  0.25  133    0*      0*      0*      0*      -1    0.000  0.000
088-061355  missed  06:13:55  06:24:00   56  0.24  177    0*      0*      0*      0*      -1    0.000  0.000
088-062855  missed  06:28:55  06:33:00   39  0.25  143    0*      0*      0*      0*      -1    0.000  0.000
088-064255  missed  06:42:55  06:53:00   60  0.25  114    0*      0*      0*      0*      -1    0.000  0.000
088-065755  missed  06:57:55  07:02:00   52  0.24  104    0*      0*      0*      0*      -1    0.000  0.000
088-071155  missed  07:11:55  07:22:00   63  0.24  114    0*      0*      0*      0*      -1    0.000  0.000
088-072655  3C279  07:26:55  07:31:00   45  0.24  111  31004   34361  33138  37169  -1  4.318  3.873
088-074055    M87  07:40:55  07:51:00   65  0.25  82   23178  25886  27595  31309  -1  0.656  0.583
088-075555  3C273  07:55:55  08:00:00   55  0.25  63   27685  30931  30697  34471  -1  2.120  1.893
088-081955    M87  08:19:55  08:30:00   65  0.27  123  25952   28778  29705  33286  -1  0.598  0.536
088-083455  3C279  08:34:55  08:39:00   47  0.26  152  34025   37380  37676  41910  -1  3.865  3.497
088-084855    M87  08:48:55  08:59:00   63  0.26  134  24836   27484  28405  31820  -1  0.625  0.561
088-090355  3C273  09:03:55  09:08:00   52  0.27  127  27677   30628  34270  38380  -1  2.007  1.803
088-091755    M87  09:17:55  09:28:00   59  0.27  132  26364   29286  30499  33981  -1  0.585  0.526
088-093255  3C279  09:32:55  09:37:00   44  0.28  108  31902   34980  39658  44117  -1  3.891  3.523
088-094655    M87  09:46:55  09:57:00   55  0.27  112  26852   29885  31993  35902  -1  0.566  0.507
088-100155  3C279  10:01:55  10:06:00   41  0.28  133  37207   40886  44400  49436  -1  3.405  3.078
088-101555    M87  10:15:55  10:26:00   50  0.28  154  30317   33458  34817  38961  -1  0.511  0.460
088-105455  missed  10:54:55  11:02:00   16  0.28  151    0*      0*      0*      0*      -1    0.000  0.000
088-110455  1749+096 11:04:55  11:10:00   49  0.28  153  32191*  35529*  34664*  38612*  -1  1.191  1.075
088-111255    SGRA 11:12:55  11:20:00   18  0.29  155  91434*  97594*  98205*  106162*  -1  0.336  0.312
088-112255  1749+096 11:22:55  11:28:00   52  0.28  722  30608*  33864*  33456*  37557*  -1  1.244  1.116
088-113255    SGRA 11:32:55  11:40:00   20  0.28  349  80236*  85846*  83448*  91698*  -1  0.389  0.358
088-114455  1749+096 11:44:55  11:50:00   55  0.28  72   35089  38829  36238  40380  -1  1.116  1.005
088-115455    SGRA 11:54:55  12:03:00   21  0.29  130  106599  113887  120547  131099  -1  0.281  0.260
088-120755  NRA0530 12:07:55  12:13:00   38  0.29  86   48774  53360  50349  55826  -1  0.670  0.608
088-121755    SGRA 12:17:55  12:26:00   23  0.29  70   83344  89746  94948  104462  -1  0.357  0.328
088-123055  NRA0530 12:30:55  12:36:00   39  0.30  91   45269  49160  47787  53001  -1  0.714  0.650
088-124055    SGRA 12:40:55  12:49:00   23  0.29  94   68487*  73810*  73969*  80973*  -1  0.447  0.411
088-125355  NRA0530 12:53:55  12:59:00   40  0.30  97   37989  41495  43571  48793  -1  0.816  0.738
088-130355    SGRA 13:03:55  13:12:00   24  0.30  77   68424  73333  79204  86988  -1  0.432  0.398
088-131655  NRA0530 13:16:55  13:22:00   40  0.31  79   40006  43744  47912  53310  -1  0.758  0.688
088-132655    SGRA 13:26:55  13:35:00   24  0.31  80   74570  80616  86643  95455  -1  0.396  0.363
088-133955  NRA0530 13:39:55  13:45:00   39  0.31  87   39152  42567  48609  54151  -1  0.761  0.692
088-141955    SGRA 14:19:55  14:28:00   22  0.32  72   89628  96027  98484  107703  -1  0.338  0.313
088-142955  1921-293 14:29:55  14:35:00   23  0.33  67   79128*  85916*  83486*  91170*  -1  0.666  0.611
088-143955    SGRA 14:39:55  14:47:00   21  0.33  73  112906  121471  109814  119190  -1  0.286  0.264
088-145155  1921-293 14:51:55  14:57:00   24  0.33  73   70572  75738  79596  87602  -1  0.722  0.664
088-150155    SGRA 15:01:55  15:09:00   19  0.35  82   143943  153576  156687  171016  -1  0.212  0.196
088-151355  1921-293 15:13:55  15:19:00   23  0.34  74   73945  79689  77784  85610  -1  0.713  0.655
088-152355    SGRA 15:23:55  15:31:00   17  0.35  87   275327*  296617*  292460*  316932*  -1  0.112  0.104
088-153555  1921-293 15:35:55  15:41:00   23  0.35  130  103111  111041  96553  105601  -1  0.542  0.500
088-154555    SGRA 15:45:55  15:53:00   15  0.37  304  406994  443693  515696  567180  -1  0.069  0.063
088-155755  1921-293 15:57:55  16:03:00   22  0.39  374  133524  141969  129441  141745  -1  0.412  0.381
088-160755    SGRA 16:07:55  16:14:00   12  0.39  343    0*      0*      0*      0*      -1    0.000  0.000

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094-073100	M87	07:31:00	07:43:00	65	0.23	129	23999	26874	28411	8485	0.78	0.636	1.099
094-074700	3C279	07:47:00	07:50:00	47	0.23	150	28556*	31817*	31806*	8918	0.81	4.592	8.216
094-075700	M87	07:57:00	08:09:00	65	0.23	182	22877	25665	29138	8350	0.82	0.643	1.134
094-081300	3C279	08:13:00	08:16:00	47	0.23	131	32252	35976	40223	9279	0.80	3.843	7.575
094-082300	M87	08:23:00	08:35:00	63	0.24	187	24298	27144	29230	6804	0.93	0.623	1.221
094-083900	3C279	08:39:00	08:42:00	46	0.24	118	30305	33783	38495	8769	0.85	4.052	8.041
094-084900	M87	08:49:00	09:01:00	60	0.23	223	26042	29203	30676	9397	0.72	0.587	1.002
094-090500	3C279	09:05:00	09:08:00	44	0.23	265	35095	39173	42985	13924	0.61	3.563	5.926
094-091500	M87	09:15:00	09:27:00	57	0.23	303	28966	32499	35504	7970	0.82	0.518	1.031
094-093100	3C279	09:31:00	09:34:00	42	0.24	371	36296	40330	44436	8559	0.93	3.446	7.449
094-094100	M87	09:41:00	09:53:00	52	0.23	156	30836	34525	33691	8638	0.77	0.515	0.961
094-095700	3C279	09:57:00	10:00:00	39	0.23	160	43476	47824	49490	10530	0.85	2.984	6.167
094-100700	M87	10:07:00	10:19:00	48	0.24	109	32907	36503	39334	10136	0.75	0.461	0.863
094-102300	3C279	10:23:00	10:26:00	36	0.24	114	51602	56672	59932	15829	0.64	2.489	4.621
094-103300	M87	10:33:00	10:45:00	43	0.25	151	40215	44599	45521	16464	0.52	0.388	0.613
094-104900	3C279	10:49:00	10:52:00	32	0.25	190	63962	69990	75998	16029	0.74	1.985	4.132
094-105900	M87	10:59:00	11:11:00	38	0.25	228	51320	56533	59819	13626	0.76	0.300	0.598
094-113100	NRAO530	11:31:00	11:34:00	37	0.28	153	47053	51496	57553	18299	0.53	0.638	1.082
094-113900	SGRA	11:39:00	11:54:00	22	0.30	143	74818	80938	112888	24405	0.59	0.346	0.716
094-115800	NRAO530	11:58:00	12:01:00	39	0.30	196	46057	50665	56572	15515	0.65	0.650	1.184
094-120500	SGRA	12:05:00	12:20:00	23	0.31	173	67119	72303	99177	17358	0.73	0.390	0.898
094-122200	SGRA	12:22:00	12:37:00	23	0.32	131	62875*	68113*	69331*	16695	0.78	0.482	0.943
094-124100	NRAO530	12:41:00	12:44:00	40	0.33	134	43421	47552	56505	14068	0.76	0.670	1.284
094-124800	SGRA	12:48:00	13:03:00	24	0.34	110	65911	71309	85590	19276	0.69	0.423	0.858
094-130500	SGRA	13:05:00	13:20:00	24	0.36	117	73989*	79291*	84705*	22764	0.68	0.402	0.748
094-132400	NRAO530	13:24:00	13:27:00	38	0.36	127	53643	58609	69802	15501	0.84	0.543	1.101
094-133300	1921-293	13:33:00	13:36:00	22	0.37	126	107746	116327	138084	36217	0.57	0.444	0.833
094-134000	SGRA	13:40:00	13:55:00	23	0.37	99	86002	92876	98299	26295	0.69	0.346	0.643
094-135700	SGRA	13:57:00	14:12:00	22	0.38	106	88445*	95150*	102972*	36743	0.54	0.333	0.538
094-141600	1921-293	14:16:00	14:19:00	23	0.38	134	93277	100817	102241	36324	0.56	0.554	0.894
094-142300	SGRA	14:23:00	14:38:00	20	0.37	111	103618	111498	104991	45522	0.50	0.305	0.446
094-144000	SGRA	14:40:00	14:55:00	19	0.37	160	119280*	128791*	135597*	50766	0.55	0.250	0.393
094-145900	1921-293	14:59:00	15:02:00	23	0.36	158	105573	112979	103770	52702	0.46	0.517	0.701
094-150600	SGRA	15:06:00	15:16:00	16	0.36	121	179749	192109	123248	139623	0.31	0.214	0.194
094-152000	1921-293	15:20:00	15:25:00	22	0.36	114	130071	138693	104137	45909	0.61	0.465	0.678
094-155500	MWC349A	15:55:00	16:07:00	85	0.00	0	0*	0*	0*	0*	0.00	0.000	0.000
094-160900	MWC349A	16:09:00	16:21:00	83	0.00	0	0*	0*	0*	0*	0.00	0.000	0.000
094-162500	2015+371	16:25:00	16:30:00	77	0.00	0	0*	0*	0*	0*	0.00	0.000	0.000
094-163400	MWC349A	16:34:00	16:46:00	78	0.00	0	0*	0*	0*	0*	0.00	0.000	0.000
094-164800	MWC349A	16:48:00	17:00:00	75	0.00	0	0*	0*	0*	0*	0.00	0.000	0.000