

Lights Out TWIN CITIES

Save Birds • Save Energy • Save Money

Making cities safer for birds

Migration has evolved as an essential survival tactic for many kinds of birds, but it is also very hazardous. Among the numerous dangers migrating birds face are the many human-built structures in their path. Millions of birds are killed every year in collisions with tall, lighted buildings during migration.

Why Lights Out?

Most birds migrate at night and can be drawn off course by tall lighted structures in their flight path. People who study birds aren't sure why this happens but it may be because birds use the stars to navigate and skyscrapers with lighted windows confuse them. Many birds are killed or injured in collisions with buildings or drop from exhaustion after circling them, reluctant to fly out of the light.

What kinds of birds collide with buildings?

Over 250 species of birds migrate through Minnesota, many of them small songbirds such as warblers, thrushes, tanagers and hummingbirds that travel at night. Some of them are threatened species whose populations already show steep declines.

Migration is an incredible feat of endurance and athleticism: A small songbird flies out of the tropics in March, heading for its nesting grounds in northern Minnesota. Along the way the bird, weighing less than 2 ounces, navigates through storms and darkness, avoids numerous predators and forages for adequate food to fuel each night's journey. The songbird handles all the perils of the natural world but is defeated by an unnatural one – the lights in a tall building in a city not far from its goal. With one simple step we can make migration safer for this intrepid bird and other migrants.

Safe for birds and safe for people

The upper stories and exterior lights present the greatest danger to birds. Lights in lower stories do not appear to be as crucial. However, dimming or turning off bright atrium and lobby lights does help birds that survive and end up at ground level. Street and security lights should be left on as needed for safety.

How can you become involved in Lights Out?

Just turn out the lights! And let us know:

To add your name to the list of participants, for more information and/or to volunteer, contact:
Audubon Minnesota at www.mnaudubon@audubon.org or call 651-739-9332

Turn off the lights to save birds!

Here's how to help:

Building owners, managers and employees can save birds and energy by turning off unnecessary lights during spring and fall migration. It's easy and the savings are there for everyone!

What can you do?

- Turn off exterior decorative lighting
- Dim lobby and atrium lighting
- Turn off interior lights - especially upper stories

When should you do it?

- Between midnight and dawn
- Spring: From March 15 to May 31
- Fall: From August 15 to October 31

Cities like Toronto, Chicago, New York and Detroit already have successful **Lights Out** programs. Join them and help save birds!

