



DARK SKIES

1. Learn
2. Determine if your outdoor lighting is useful
3. Direct light only to where it is needed
4. Ensure lights are not overly bright
5. Control the light
6. Certify

1. LEARN

Billions of birds, including sparrows, warblers, thrushes, grosbeaks, and tanagers, migrate during the fall and spring, with most navigating by the night sky. Skyglow, the brightening of the sky due to outdoor lighting, disorients these birds, causing them to waste valuable energy as they fly in confusion and call out. In their disoriented state, birds are more likely to collide with buildings and windows or become exhausted, increasing their vulnerability. Artificial light also disrupts the timing of bird migration, causing them to migrate either too early or too late in the season, which can lead to missing essential climate conditions for nesting and foraging. The threats posed by skyglow make dark and safe nighttime spaces crucial for migrating birds.

2. DETERMINE IF YOUR OUTDOOR LIGHTING IS NECESSARY

All outdoor lighting should have a clear purpose. Determine if the light is needed and how it will impact the area. If the light is deemed unnecessary, remove or disable it so they are not accidentally turned on.

Consider using reflective paints or self-luminous markers for signs, curbs, and steps instead of adding light.

3. LIGHT ONLY THE OBJECT OR AREA INTENDED

Use shielding and careful aiming to target the direction of the light beam so that it points downward and does not spill beyond where it is needed.

4. LIGHT ONLY TO THE BRIGHTNESS NEEDED

Use the lowest light level required. Be mindful of surface conditions as some surfaces may reflect more light into the night sky than intended. Excessively bright light can contribute to glare, making it HARDER to see objects. If the lighting around your home is too bright, change the bulb to one that has lower lumens or install a new fixture that allows for a lower lumen value.

5. CONTROL THE LIGHT

Light should be used only when it is useful. All outdoor lighting should be connected to a light switch, timer, and/or motion sensor so ensure that they are only used when needed.

MOTION SENSORS:

- Set to time intervals of 5 minutes or less
- Ensure that the sensor triggers are set appropriately so that they light the area only when people are present.
- Dusk-to-dawn sensors are strongly discouraged as they release light when it is not necessarily needed.

6. CERTIFY YOUR DARK SKIES-APPROVED HABITAT

Once you have completed your habitat, email urbanhabitats@tucsonbirds.org to receive your certification sticker.



RESOURCES

- International Dark-Sky Association: darksky.org
- Bird Cast: birdcast.info/science-to-action/lights-out

