

Two NC Cities Go Dark for Birds, Thanks to Audubon Chapters

Migrating birds will find safer passage through Greensboro and Asheville beginning this spring

The night skies over two of North Carolina's biggest cities will be darker and safer for migrating birds this spring, after local Audubon chapters finalized new Lights Out programs with their city councils in recent weeks. In Greensboro, the city announced a new Lights Out partnership with T. Gilbert Pearson Audubon Society and local businesses earlier this month. A week later, the city of Asheville launched a similar program, with support and advocacy from UNCA Asheville Audubon and Blue Ridge Audubon Chapter. In the wake of the announcement, chapter leaders thanked city officials and reiterated the importance of Lights Out programs.

"We were fortunate to have had wonderful cooperation from city officials, who were a pleasure to work with on this important effort to help prevent bird deaths during spring and fall migrations," said Lynn Moseley, T. Gilbert Pearson Audubon board member.



Ruby-throated Hummingbirds and many other migratory bird species migrate at night and navigate using the stars. Turning off bright building lights helps prevent building collisions during migration. Photo: Heidi Piccerelli, Audubon Photography Awards

By making the night skies darker, the cities will help prevent birds from becoming disoriented during their nocturnal migration flights. Many migrating species travel only at night and use the moon and stars to navigate. Bright city lights can confuse them, leading to fatal collisions with buildings. Studies estimate a billion birds die from window collisions each year. But studies have also shown that turning off unnecessary lights at night go a long way toward reducing bird fatalities during migration.

In Asheville, the push for a new Lights Out initiative started when UNC Asheville students Sarah Branagan and Paulina Jones began researching fatal bird window collisions on campus. Paulina did an undergraduate research project surveying campus buildings and found 150 fatalities over the course of a year. Spurred by these findings, they brought the issue to Blue Ridge Audubon. Branagan is on the board of UNC Asheville Audubon and Blue Ridge Audubon. With support from both chapters and co-leadership from Danielle Lenaway, Blue Ridge Audubon board member, they reached out to potential partners in the community and formed the Coalition for a Bird-friendly Asheville. The group brought a proposal to the city's Energy and Environmental Working Group, and ultimately gained support from the city council.

"The working group had separate energy reduction goals they wanted to meet, so this ended up being a surefire partnership to both reduce light

pollution for bird and meet city energy goals," Branagan said. The city's formal proclamation sets aside March through May and September through November as "Bird Migration Awareness Months." As part of this effort, the city and the coalition have launched a Lights Out program, encouraging businesses, residents, and building managers to turn off non-essential lighting from 11 p.m. to 6 a.m. during these months, and doing the same for city-owned buildings.

"This simple step will not only benefit birds, but also help reduce the city's energy use and carbon emissions," Mayor Esther Manheimer said in a statement. "We encourage all commercial and residential building owners and managers to turn off or redirect excess lighting."

In Greensboro, elected leaders were inspired to start the program after seeing Wake Audubon's work with the city of Raleigh for a Lights Out commitment last fall, and getting encouragement from Greensboro's Rep. Pricey Harrison. When local Audubon volunteers reached out to the city of Greensboro with more information, city staff responded quickly.

"When the damage that's caused to bird populations by building strikes was brought to the city's attention, the response was pretty much automatic, which was great to see," said Jack Jezorek, T. Gilbert Pearson Audubon Society board member.

The new program will take place annually March 15 through May 31 and again from September 10 to November 30. As part of the program, the city and the Audubon chapter are asking building owners and managers to turn off or block as many external and internal building lights as possible from 11 pm to 6 am. The city previously launched an initiative to ensure nonessential lights are turned off in municipal buildings.

"Our proactivity with this issue hopefully has also – and will continue to – save the lives of migrating birds and reduce light pollution in the Greensboro sky, especially with the help of our local business partners," Greensboro Deputy City Manager Chris Wilson said.

With the Greensboro and Asheville announcements, three of North Carolina's ten largest cities have formal Lights Out programs. Five buildings in Winston Salem have been turning out lights earlier for birds since 2012, in partnership with Forsyth Audubon and Audubon North Carolina's Bird-Friendly Communities program. The owners of the Duke Energy Center in Charlotte, the city's second tallest building, also turn off lights for birds during migration.

You can help by getting involved with your local chapter (nc.audubon.org/centers-and-chapters) and by reporting dead or injured birds you find, at your home or out on the town. Learn more about Audubon's Lights Out program at audubon.org/lights-out-program.

NCWorks Online Youth Services

The North Carolina NCWorks Youth Services website (ncworks.gov/bosnet/youth.aspx) contains links to information of interest to Youth

looking for jobs, or are interested in continuing education beyond high school. Information on this page contains a variety of websites that have job postings and helpful information specifically geared to young people.

This page also contains information about:

- career exploration
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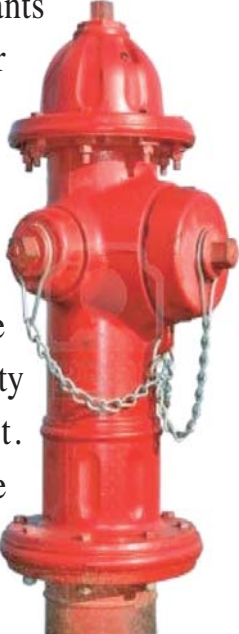
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Saturday April 30th at 9:00 AM

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The Bearcat Pride 5k run/walk will help support the AMS PTO by raising funds to support students & staff. The AMS PTO gives parents and teachers the opportunity to work together to supplement and enrich the educational experience. The PTO builds an effective partnership of home and school. It provides financial assistance where needs are identified within the school, it fosters a community atmosphere, and supports the mission and vision of the school and school district.

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Course map can be found at the link below:
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