



Save Birds, Save Energy, Save Money

The partnership to conserve energy & migratory birds in Cleveland

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## Turn off the lights in migratory season

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**The Challenge** - Ohio lies at the heart of two great flyways for migratory birds and twice a year millions of birds migrate overhead on their way to and from their breeding grounds, primarily at night. Urban centers can pose many threats to these birds including the danger of nighttime collisions with buildings and other tall structures located along migratory routes.

Exterior decorative lighting of tall buildings and lights shining through windows disorient birds and cause them to circle the lights or collide with the buildings under rainy or foggy conditions and under a low cloud ceiling. It is estimated that more than 100 million birds perish each year due to building collisions. In 2005, over 670 birds were recovered around the base of just one downtown Cleveland building.

These birds are vitally important to healthy ecosystems and their loss is both tragic and unnecessary.

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**The Solution** - **Turn off the lights!** Reducing building lighting during migration seasons can drastically reduce the hazard of building collisions.

Smart Light Safe Flight is a partnership that encourages building owners and tenants to turn off lights, and take other simple steps during the peak migration seasons of mid-March through the end of May and late August through mid-November to reduce the danger to migrants passing through. It consists of the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, Cleveland 2030 District, Cleveland Metroparks, Downtown Cleveland Alliance, Ohio Bird Conservation Initiative, and Sustainable Cleveland 2019 and is part of Ohio Lights Out.

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**What you can do** - Follow these three easy steps.

From March 15 until June 1 and from late August until November 15:

1. Turn off all exterior, decorative illumination from midnight until dawn.
2. Turn off all lights at night on unoccupied floors and spaces.
3. Keep light “inside” by using task lights instead of ceiling lights and by closing window shades.

These three steps will not only help protect migrating birds but will also reduce energy consumption, cut greenhouse gas emissions and reduce building costs.

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**The Impact** - By following these three steps, bird collisions can be reduced dramatically. In Chicago, for example, reducing the lighting of just one major building during migration saved over 8,000 birds annually, decreasing the number of dead birds found around the building by 80 percent. And in New York City, one 2.5 million square foot building reduced its energy costs by \$120,000 by embracing a lights out policy during bird migration.

At the Smart Light Safe Flight Partnership and Ohio Lights Out we believe it also the right thing to do. The loss of these migratory birds, that twice yearly undergo epic journeys to and from their breeding grounds, impoverishes our ecosystems and destroys extraordinary creatures that are a source of wonder and enjoyment for all.

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**For More Information** - Contact one of the following organizations for enrolling in the Smart Light Safe Flight Partnership.

Cleveland Museum of Natural History  
Harvey Webster, Director, Wildlife Resources  
216-231-4600 ext 3290; [hwebster@cmnh.org](mailto:hwebster@cmnh.org)

Ohio Bird Conservation Initiative  
Amanda Duren, Coordinator  
614-432-8489; [obcicoordinator@gmail.com](mailto:obcicoordinator@gmail.com)

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