



Lights Out Georgia Communications Toolkit

For more information contact:

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Overview

Georgia Audubon launched **Lights Out Georgia** in March 2017 to help reduce bird deaths caused by Building Collisions. The Atlanta Better Buildings Challenge (ABBC) has joined in partnership with Georgia Audubon to promote this program.

This partnership with ABBC is a natural fit since the ABBC Program's goal to reduce energy and water use in commercial buildings by 20% by 2020 already encourages participants to turn off any unnecessary nighttime lighting.

The goal of **Lights Out Georgia** is to make Atlanta a more bird-friendly community.

Lights Out Georgia is a voluntary program encouraging building owners and residential homeowners to turn off or reduce lighting from midnight to dawn during the peak bird migration periods of March 15 to May 31 (spring) and August 15 to November 15 (fall).

Georgia Audubon has been studying collision-related bird deaths through its **Project Safe Flight** Program since fall of 2015. **Project Safe Flight** volunteers patrol selected routes during peak bird migration periods collecting birds that have died or been injured after colliding with buildings. Since the program launch, more than 1,700 birds of 112 different species have been collected. Ruby-throated Hummingbirds are the most frequently collected species.

Modeled after other successful programs in Toronto, New York City, and Chicago, **Lights Out Georgia** is working with building owners, property management companies, tenants, local governments, and homeowners to make Atlanta safe for passing birds. Studies have shown that bird deaths during peak migration periods can be dramatically reduced when exterior architectural and unnecessary lighting is turned off. **Lights Out Georgia** has an additional benefit of reducing energy usage and cost to help properties achieve their sustainability goals. To date, 17 commercial properties and nearly 400 homeowners have signed up for the program pledging to turn the lights out for migrating birds.

Most birds migrate at night in order to avoid predators and to take advantage of the cooler temperatures. Artificial nighttime lighting can be a major obstacle for migrating birds since they use the moon, stars, and magnetism from the earth for guidance. Nighttime lighting from houses and buildings can disorient birds, who then crash into buildings or become trapped in beams of lights causing them to die of exhaustion.

For additional information or to download a reproducible Lights Out Georgia Fact Sheet, please visit www.georgiaaudubon.org/lights-out-georgia. For more information on the Atlanta Better Buildings Challenge, please visit <http://atlantabbc.com>.

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For information contact:

(INSERT COMPANY NAME) SIGNS ON AS LIGHTS OUT GEORGIA PARTICIPANT

(Atlanta, Ga.) DATE – The (INSERT COMPANY NAME) recently signed on as a participant in the Lights Out Georgia Program to help reduce bird deaths caused by building collisions. **Lights Out Georgia** was launched in March 2017 as a joint project between Georgia Audubon and the Atlanta Better Buildings Challenge (ABBC).

“Georgia Audubon is delighted to welcome (INSERT ORGANIZATION NAME) to the Lights Out Georgia program, and we appreciate their commitment to making our state a safer place for our migratory and resident birds,” says Adam Betuel, Georgia Audubon director of conservation. “The goal of the Lights Out Georgia Program is to reduce collision-related bird deaths and make our state more bird friendly.”

[QUOTE FROM ORGANIZATION REPRESENTATIVE ABOUT WHAT PROMPTED THE ORGANIZATION TO SIGN ON AS LIGHTS OUT GEORGIA PARTICIPANT]

Each year, an estimated 350 million to 1 billion birds die in the United States after colliding with buildings. The problem is particularly bad during spring and fall migration. **Lights Out Georgia** is a voluntary program encouraging commercial properties and homeowners to turn off or reduce lighting during peak bird migration periods, March 15 to May 31 (spring) and August 15 to November 15 (fall), between the hours of 12:00 midnight and 6:00 AM.

Studies have shown that bird deaths during peak migration periods can be dramatically reduced when exterior architectural and unnecessary lighting is turned off. **Lights Out Georgia** has an additional benefit of reducing energy usage and cost to help properties achieve their sustainability goals.

Lights Out Georgia Commercial Participants Pledge to:

- Turn off exterior decorative lighting
- Extinguish spot and flood-lights
- Substitute strobe lighting where possible
- Reduce lobby and atrium lighting where possible
- Turn off interior lighting, especially on upper floors
- Substitute task and area lighting for workers staying late
- Down-shield exterior lighting or limit to ground level

(ABOUT ORGANIZATION NAME)

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Sample Social Media Posts

Twitter:

- Excited to join #LightsOutGeorgia with @GeorgiaAudubon and @SouthfaceEnergy to protect birds. <http://www.georgiaaudubon.org/lights-out-georgia>
- @Companyname has joined #LightsOutGeorgia to reduce energy consumption and help migrating birds. <http://www.georgiaaudubon.org/lights-out-georgia>
- Partnering with @GeorgiaAudubon and @SouthfaceEnergy to protect birds and save energy through #LightsOutGeorgia. <http://www.georgiaaudubon.org/lights-out-georgia>
- @Companyname helping protect migrating birds through #LightsOutGeorgia. <http://www.georgiaaudubon.org/lights-out-georgia>

Facebook:

- It's (spring/fall) bird migration season. COMPANY NAME has joined #LightsOutGeorgia and committed to turn out building lights at night to

reduce bird-building collisions. If you need to work late, draw the blinds or use task lighting instead of overhead lighting. The birds will thank you.

<http://www.georgiaaudubon.org/lights-out-georgia>

- COMPANY NAME is proud to join @GeorgiaAudubon and @southface.energy in #LightsOutGeorgia to save energy and protect migrating birds.

<http://www.georgiaaudubon.org/lights-out-georgia>

Sample Paragraph for Building Newsletter:

COMPANY NAME has joined **Lights Out Georgia** to save energy and protect migrating birds during peak migration season in spring and fall. Sponsored by Georgia Audubon and the Atlanta Better Buildings Challenge, Lights Out Georgia participants pledge to turn out non-essential and decorative building lights between the hours of 12:00 midnight and 6:00 AM during peak bird migration periods of March 15 to May 31 (spring) and August 15 to November 15 (fall). Most birds migrate at night in order to avoid predators and to take advantage of the cooler temperatures. Artificial nighttime lighting can be a major obstacle for migrating birds since they use the moon, stars, and magnetism from the earth for guidance. Nighttime lighting from houses and buildings can disorient birds, who then crash into buildings or become trapped in beams of lights causing them to become exhausted.

What you can do? Turn off building lights at night. And, when you need to work late, draw the blinds or use task lighting instead of overhead lighting. You can also sign up to participate at home. For more information or to sign the homeowner pledge, visit <http://www.georgiaaudubon.org/lights-out-georgia>.

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