

Light Pollution... what is it?

Light pollution is the man made excessive amount of light that is produced and escapes into the night sky, washing it out and blocking us from seeing stars, satellites, and constellations.

That's not all though. Light pollution not only hides the night sky, it also disrupts the natural patterns of animal migration, increases the carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, and disrupts human sleep.

Although some of you still may be saying "I can see the stars perfectly from my house, so why does it concern me?" But, can you really see as many stars as possible from your backyard?



This is the Bortle scale. It measures the night sky's brightness at different locations. For example, #3 is a rural city sky, #5 a suburban city sky, and #8 an urban city sky.

IS LIGHT POLLUTION A PROBLEM?

Have you ever wondered why the night sky isn't super dark, or noticed that you can't see many stars from your yard?

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HOW SERIOUS IS IT?

Light pollution may not seem like an important issue, but it actually is very serious and has significant effects. One of the most significant impacts of light pollution is on sea turtles and birds.

For birds that are migrating or even flying around their habitats, the excess light can cause confusion, disorientation, and exhaustion. This can lead to issues like the propensity to fly into sky scrapers or houses, injuring or killing them. Additionally, it can cause the birds to lose energy, leaving them too weak to successfully migrate.

When female turtles are trying to find a beach for nesting and laying eggs, artificial light can deter and confuse them from coming onshore. Something specific that female turtles look for when laying their eggs is a dark beach. So, when one is not available, it can risk the turtle's life as well as the her eggs. Additionally it can lead to extreme exhaustion of the female turtles during this breeding cycle.

HOW CAN I LEARN MORE?

If you would like to learn more about light pollution, the affects of light pollution, and what YOU can do to help, please visit scenic-texas.org to find more information. On our Scenic Texas website you can find the official dark sky areas/towns of Texas and much more information to answer any questions that you may have.



WHAT CAN BE DONE?

What to do at home

If you are interested in helping minimize light pollution, look around your home and try to follow these simple suggestions:

- **Timing lights:** If you time your lights to turn off at certain times, or simply turn them off when not in use, it can easily help the night sky to become darker.
- **Use night-safe lights:** If you use outside lights that are colored and face the ground, it covers the light from being exposed into the night sky. Look at the image to the left to see which types of light covers are the best.
- **Use different colored lights:** Warmer lights are better for the sky and are not as bright as they shine into the night sky. Blue or bright white lights are not acceptable try using red hued lights instead.

Educating Others

If you share your new-found knowledge about light pollution with others (family, classmates, or friends) it can help spread awareness and "illuminate" this important knowledge to others. This can make the issue more well-known and make more people interested in being part of the solution.

Reach out to local non-profits

Another way to help our cause is to reach out to local or national non-profit organizations that focus on light pollution to see if you can help. An example for those in Dallas, there is a non-profit called Light Out Texas, where they strive to protect the birds against light pollution.