



MEMO

To: The Honorable Mayor and City Council

THROUGH: Bert Lumbreras, City Manager
Stephanie Reyes, Assistant City Manager

FROM: Rebecca Ybarra, Director of Destination Services

DATE: April 20, 2021

RE: Lights Out for Migrating Birds – Light Out, Texas!


This memo is to provide an update on an initiative that is being explored locally and implemented statewide in an effort to reduce the impact of light pollution on migratory birds.

The City of Fort Worth recently implemented a 'Lights Out' plan for the spring and fall to save migrating birds by convincing city officials and high-rise owners to turn out their decorative lighting every night for several weeks as part of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Lights Out campaign. This is a coordinated effort to reduce light pollution and disruptions to migratory patterns. Each year, between 365 million and 988 million birds are killed when they collide with buildings, according to studies cited by Cornell. Throughout the spring and fall migration periods, the city's skyline will dim between midnight and 6 a.m., March 8 through May 31 and August 15 through November 30, when more than 1 billion birds travel through Texas on a migratory superhighway moving south.

Lights Out Texas has grown at a rapid pace since last fall, with campaigns planned this spring in Houston, Austin, San Antonio and El Paso. In 2020, the City of Dallas issued a proclamation encouraging residents and businesses to turn out non-essential lights for a week during the fall migration period. Texas Parks and Wildlife is also supporting Texas cities with their Lights Out, Texas! Campaign, and this is a component of their Dark Skies and Bird City, Texas Programs.

Jo Korthalls, who recently led the charge in applying for the Bird City, Texas designation, brought this idea forward requesting staff to consider turning off the city managed lighting on the top of downtown buildings. Currently, the lights around the square are malfunctioning which allowed staff to turn them off for the past two weeks.

Due to the short time frame – the CVB does not meet in April – we can move forward as an all-city building movement and propose this as a Resolution for the fall and future years (spring and fall). We will add this to the May CVB agenda for a Resolution to submit to City Council for consideration. We will also work with the Communications Team in addition to Community Services, Parks and Recreation, and Keep San Marcos Beautiful to share the message with our community to volunteer to help protect migrating birds this spring by turning out all non-essential lights from 11 p.m. – 6 a.m. through June 15, especially during the peak migration period of April 19 – May 7.

 **Texas Parks and Wildlife** •
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📢 **CALLING ALL TEXANS!** Help protect migrating birds this spring by turning out all non-essential lights from 11 pm - 6 am through June 15, especially during the peak migration period of April 19 - May 7.

Spread the word to help protect the approximately 1 BILLION birds that travel through the Lone Star State. Learn more at bit.ly/LightsOutTexas

#LightsOutTexas

