

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



For information contact:

Dottie Head, Director of Membership & Communications, dottie@atlantaaudubon.org, or 678-973-2437 (office) or 404-388-8538 (cell)

LIGHTS OUT ATLANTA AIMS TO REDUCE BIRD DEATHS AND POWER BILLS

(Atlanta, Ga.) March 16, 2017 – Atlanta Audubon Society is launching **Lights Out Atlanta** this spring to help reduce bird deaths caused by building collisions. 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. This spring, Atlanta Audubon Society will partner with programs such as the Atlanta Better Buildings Challenge (ABBC), to launch **Lights Out Atlanta** to make Atlanta a more bird-friendly community.

Lights Out Atlanta 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. Participants pledge to reduce non-essential lighting during peak migration periods of March 15 to May 31 (spring) and August 15 to November 15 (fall). The pledge is available on the Atlanta Audubon website at www.AtlantaAudubon.org/lightsoutatlanta.

Partnering with the ABBC for outreach was a natural fit since the 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.

Atlanta Audubon Society has been studying collision-related bird deaths through its **Project Safe Flight Atlanta** Program for the past two years. **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 in fall 2015, more than 500 birds of 70 different species have been collected.

Modeled after other successful programs in Toronto, New York City, and Minneapolis, **Lights Out Atlanta** 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 Atlanta** has an additional benefit of reducing energy usage and cost to help properties achieve their sustainability goals.

"Birds tend to 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," says Adam Betuel, Conservation Director for Atlanta Audubon Society. "The 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. Atlanta Audubon encourages building and homeowner to join this effort to make Atlanta a more bird-friendly community."

Why Participate in Lights Out Atlanta?

- Minimize unnecessary bird deaths
- Save money by reducing energy usage
- Satisfy your building's sustainability goals
- Receive recognition for sustainable, bird-friendly practices
- Be recognized as a regional and national leader in sustainability and bird conservation

- Make Atlanta a bird-safe community

How to participate:

- Sign the pledge at <http://www.atlantaaudubon.org/lights-out-atlanta>
- Turn off exterior decorative lighting during peak migration season
- 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

While all unnecessary lighting should be reduced, exterior decorative lights and lighted upper stories should be prioritized as they are most harmful to migrating birds.

For more information or to participate in **Lights Out Atlanta**, please visit www.atlantaaudubon.org/lights-out-atlanta

The mission of Atlanta Audubon Society is to protect Georgia's birds and their habitats through conservation, education, and advocacy.

###

Media Note: Photos to accompany these article and a MS Word version of the press releases are available for download at <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/y3l9s32oktcs94e/AADL4n1VHbxzzwGhN455VJ-fa?dl=0>.