



DarkSky

NEW MEXICO CHAPTER

<http://nmdarksky.org>

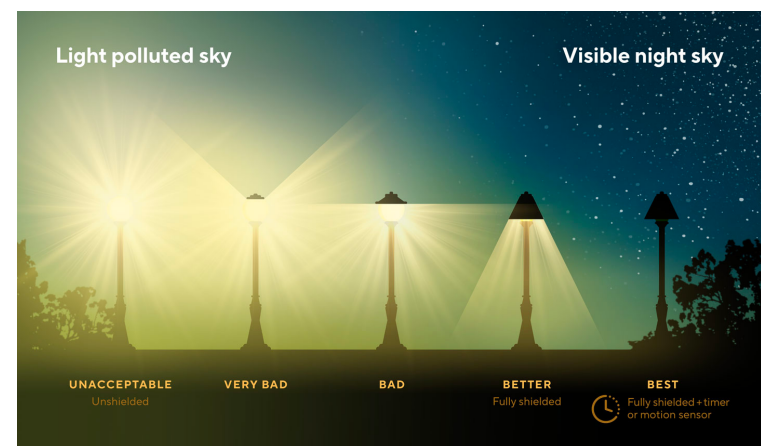


FACT SHEET #lightpollution

What is light pollution?

Light pollution is the human-made alteration of outdoor light levels from those occurring naturally.

When we over-light, fail to use timers and sensors, or use the wrong color of light, we can negatively affect many parts of our world, including migratory birds, pollinators, sea turtles, and mammals, including humans.



What can I do about it?

The good news is that light pollution, unlike many other forms of pollution, is reversible, and each one of us can make a difference! Just being aware that light pollution is a problem is not enough — we need to take action.

- Use only fully shielded, DarkSky Approved fixtures for all outdoor lighting, so lights shine down, not up.
- Use only the right amount of light needed. Too much light is wasteful and harms wildlife.
- Install timers and dimmer switches and turn off lights when not in use. If you must have security lighting, use motion sensors.
- Turn off lights in office buildings and homes when not in use.
- Use only lighting with a color temperature of 3000 K and below to reduce the blue cool light that's more harmful to many animal species.
- Work with your neighbors and local governments to ensure outdoor lighting isn't harming the wildlife in your area.



LIGHT POLLUTION FACTS

Components of light pollution

- Glare — excessive brightness that causes visual discomfort
- Sky glow — brightening of the night sky over inhabited areas
- Light trespass — light falling where it is not intended or needed
- Clutter — bright, confusing, and excessive groupings of light sources

Harmful effects of light pollution

A growing body of evidence links the brightening night sky directly to measurable negative impacts on:

- Wildlife and ecosystems
- Human health
- Energy and climate change
- Crime and safety
- Night sky heritage
- Scientific research

The problem is growing

Research indicates that light pollution is increasing at a global average rate of ten percent per year.

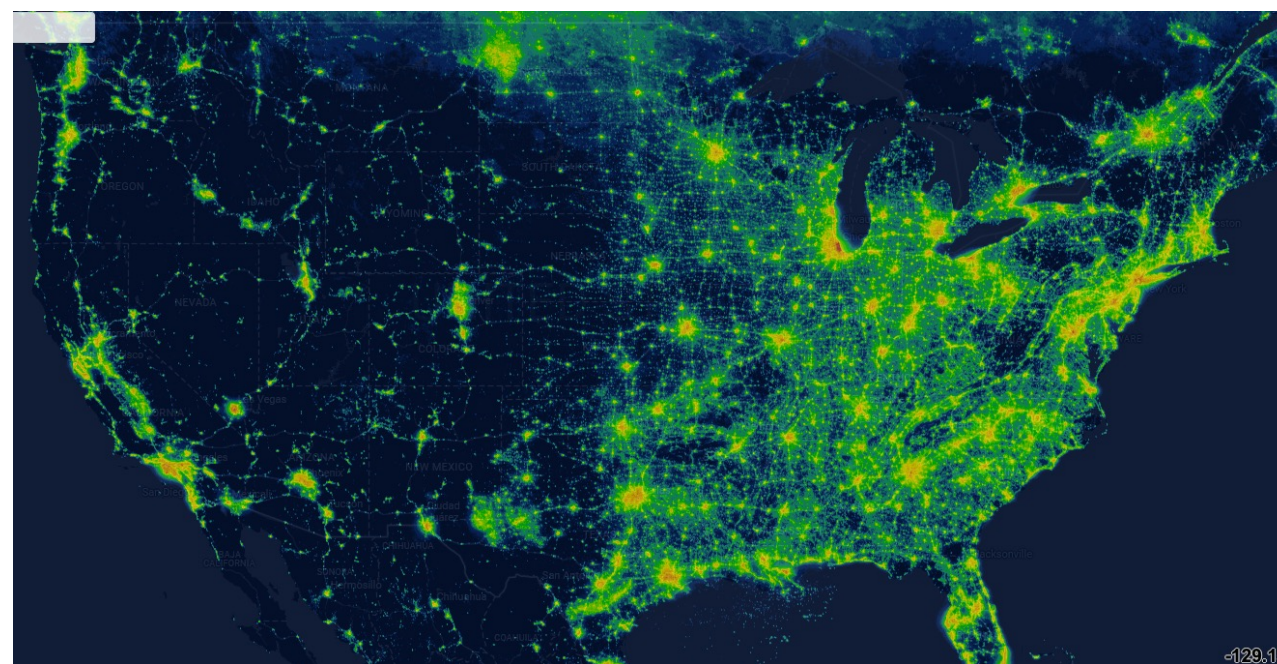


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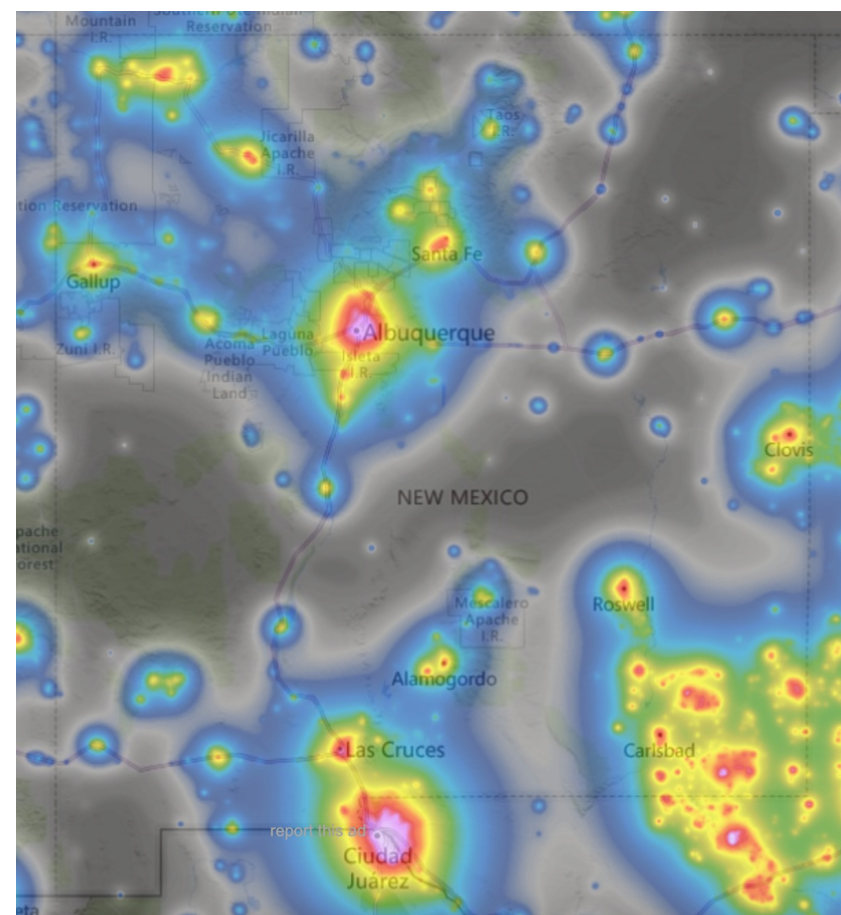
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Map shows brightness of the US at night. Much of the US population doesn't see dark skies! Dark skies are a New Mexico resource



Map shows brightness of New Mexico at night. Darkest regions are shown in black, with blue, yellow, red, and white representing increasing night sky brightness. Note the main areas of light at night: Albuquerque/Santa Fe, El Paso/Juarez/Las Cruces, and the SE and NW parts of the state, but also the large areas of dark skies!

Enjoy and Protect the Dark Skies of New Mexico! New Mexico is one of only a few states with legislation that recognizes the value of dark skies: the Night Sky Protection Act. However, the Act is in need of updating and strengthening! Learn more and help!



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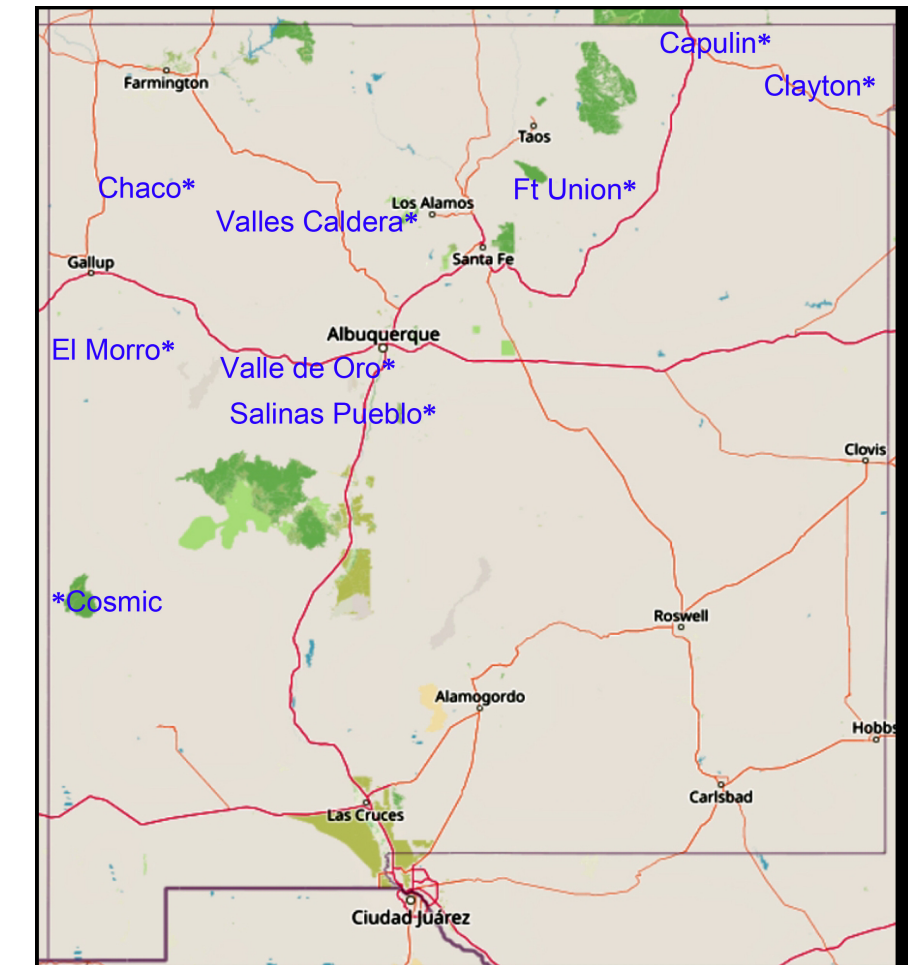
To promote stewardship and preservation of the night sky and to protect the nighttime environment, communities and wildlife from the harmful effects of light pollution, through community engagement, advocacy, and conservation

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<http://nmdarksky.org>

DarkSky Places in New Mexico



New Mexico's Dark Skies

- Clayton Lake State Park
- Capulin Volcano NM
- Fort Union NM
- Salinas Pueblo NM
- Valle de Oro NWR
- Valles Caldera NP
- Chaco Culture NHP
- El Morro NM
- Cosmic Campground

To date, eight locations in NM have been designated as dark sky places, and one as an urban dark sky location; see map above. Effort is ongoing to get more designations!

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Bright lights do not equate to greater safety.



Lighting up the nighttime environment does not necessarily increase safety and security. Effective lighting that helps people be safe — not just feel safe — is a win-win situation for everyone.

Busting the myth of bright lights and safety.

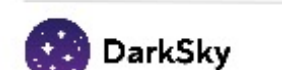
- At home: Poor lighting can create a false sense of security.** Poorly designed outdoor lighting can backfire on safety. Bright and misdirected lights create shadows for criminals to hide, and some crimes, like vandalism, thrive in well-lit areas. Floodlights, for example, may highlight potential targets.
- In town: Light for light's sake doesn't equal increased safety.** While towns, cities, and businesses aim to enhance safety with lighting, poorly aimed and inadequately shielded lights can attract criminals. A Chicago study identified a correlation between increased crime and overly bright alleyways.
- On the road: bad lighting creates unsafe driving conditions.** Inadequate roadway lighting causes glare, contributing to accidents, especially affecting older individuals. A 2015 Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health study revealed that streetlights don't effectively prevent accidents or crime but they do cost a lot of money.

WHAT CAN I DO?



Make your home safer with smart lighting choices.

- Use fully shielded, dark-sky friendly fixtures so light shines where it's needed and does not create glare or extreme contrasts.
- Only use lights when and where needed. Install timers and dimmer switches, and turn off lights when not in use. If you must have security lighting, use motion sensors.
- Use the right amount of light. Too much light is wasteful and impairs vision.
- Use long-wavelength lights with a red or yellow tint to minimize negative health effects.
- Work with your local government to improve lighting conditions along roadways and shared spaces. Cities and towns can also restrict the use of bright signs and flashing lights near roadways.



Learn more about light pollution, crime, and safety.

darksky.org/resources/what-is-light-pollution/effects/safety



FACT SHEET #lightpollution

Light pollution harms our health and wellbeing.



Over the past 100 years, humans have transformed the night, erasing the natural darkness with which we evolved. While artificial light at night is crucial to our modern world, it comes at a cost. Increasing scientific research indicates that artificial light at night has detrimental effects on human health and well-being.

WHAT CAN I DO?



Live a healthy life in a world filled with artificial light.

- Use fully shielded outdoor light fixtures to minimize the light that streams into your home.
- Use indoor light bulbs that emit warm white light with a color temp. of 3000K or lower.
- When it's time for bed, keep your bedroom dark by using blackout curtains and covering all light sources such as clock radios and charging stations.
- If you need a nightlight, use one with dim red or amber light. Red light is least likely to be disruptive.
- Try not to use devices with screens 30-minutes prior to sleeping. If you must use devices at night, install a color temperature app that reduces blue light levels.
- Work with your neighbors and local government to reduce light pollution in your community.

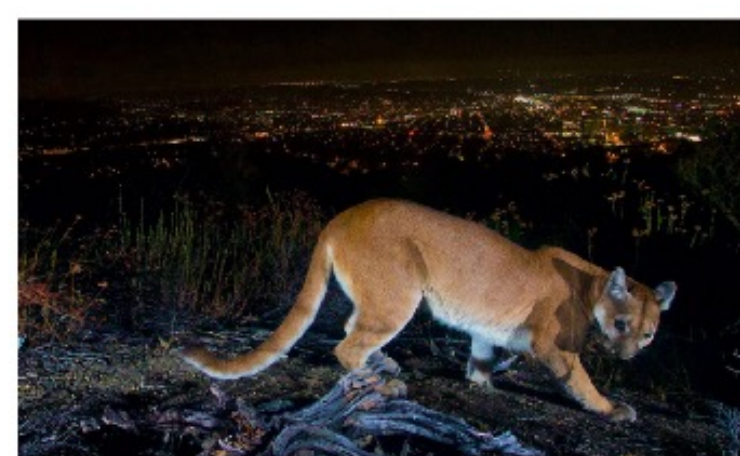


Learn more about light pollution and human health.

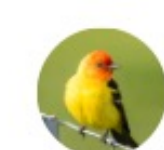
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FACT SHEET #lightpollution

Light pollution destroys critical wildlife habitat.



Plants and animals depend on natural light cycles to govern life-sustaining behaviors such as reproduction, nourishment, sleep, and protection from predators. Scientific evidence suggests that artificial light at night has deadly effects on many creatures, contributing to the decline of biodiversity worldwide.



Migratory birds

Artificial lights can cause migrating birds to wander off course towards dangerous nighttime landscapes and cities. Millions of birds die colliding with needlessly illuminated buildings and towers every year.



Sea turtles

Hatchling sea turtles find the sea by detecting the bright horizon over the ocean. Artificial lights draw them away from the ocean. In Florida alone, millions of hatchlings die this way every year.



And many more...

We are just starting to understand the devastating effects of artificial light on habitats. Every year, new research adds even more wildlife to the list of affected animals, including:

- Hummingbirds
- Wallabies
- Little penguin
- Zebrafish
- Sweet bees
- Songbirds
- Peahens
- Bats
- Owls
- Mice
- Seabirds
- Monarchs
- Atlantic salmon
- Zooplankton
- European perch
- Insects
- Geckos
- Fireflies

WHAT CAN I DO?



Protect wildlife through sensitive lighting choices.

- Get to know your neighborhood at night. It's hard to protect what you're not familiar with.
- Use only fully shielded, fixtures for all outdoor lighting, so lights shine down, not up.
- Use only the right amount of light needed. Too much light is wasteful and harms wildlife.
- Install timers and dimmer switches and turn off lights when not in use. If you must have security lighting, use motion sensors.
- Turn off office and home lights when not in use.
- Use only lighting with a color temperature of 3000K and below to reduce the blue cool light that is more harmful to wildlife.
- Work with your neighbors and local governments to ensure outdoor lighting isn't harming the wildlife in your area.



Learn more about light pollution and wildlife habitats.

darksky.org/resources/what-is-light-pollution/effects/wildlife-ecosystems

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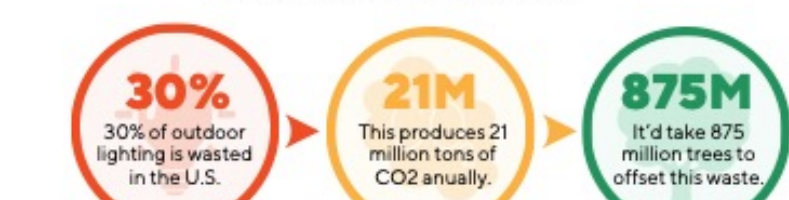
Light pollution wastes money and resources.



Lighting levels that are higher than necessary and light that shines when and where it's not needed is wasteful. Wasting energy on bad lighting design has huge economic and environmental consequences.

Tracking the cost of light pollution.

- Light pollution wastes billions of dollars.** DarkSky estimates that 30 percent of all outdoor lighting in the U.S. is wasted, mostly due to unshielded or excessively bright lights. This adds up to \$3.3 billion dollars wasted annually. Installing quality outdoor lighting could cut energy use by 60 to 70 percent, saving billions of dollars.
- Light pollution contributes to the growing climate crisis.** Artificial lighting at night and the energy required to produce it has a large carbon footprint. In the U.S. alone, unnecessary lighting produces 21 million tons of carbon dioxide each year! 875 million trees would need to be planted annually to offset this waste.



WHAT CAN I DO?



Maximize the efficiency of your home lighting.

- Outdoor lighting should be fully shielded and directed downward where it is needed. Fully shielded fixtures can provide the same level of illumination on the ground as unshielded ones, but with less energy and cost.
- Unnecessary indoor lighting — particularly in empty office buildings at night — should be turned off, preventing leakage of that light into the night sky.
- LEDs can help reduce energy use and protect the environment, but only warm-white bulbs should be used.
- Dimmers, motion sensors, and timers can help to reduce average illumination levels and save even more energy.



Learn more about light pollution and waste.

darksky.org/resources/what-is-light-pollution/effects/energy-climate