



CITY OF ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

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PRESS RELEASE

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SAFE PASSAGES GREAT LAKES DAYS: MARCH 15 TO MAY 31, 11 PM TO 6 A.M. CALL TO TURN OFF LIGHTS ON 5TH FLOOR AND ABOVE

ANN ARBOR, Mich., March 2, 2010 — During seasonal peak bird migration, residents and property managers are reminded to close shades or turn out lights between 11 p.m. and 6 a.m. (or dawn) on tall buildings from the 5th floor and above. This action assists birds to maintain their natural night navigation patterns and helps prevent the unnecessary death of migrating birds from becoming disoriented and flying into lighted tall buildings. A 2009 State of Michigan proclamation designates the periods of March 15 to May 31 and August 15 to October 31 as Safe Passage Great Lakes Days.

Starting in Chicago, Ill, New York City, Toronto, Ont., and other cities, Safe Passages actions have resulted in significant reductions in migratory bird deaths. The campaign came to Michigan in 2009 with resolutions passed by the State of Michigan, and the cities of Ann Arbor, Detroit, Southfield, and Jackson.

“More than 250 species of night-migrating birds, including warblers, thrushes, and tanagers, fly over Michigan during their spring and fall migrations,” explains Will Weber of the Washtenaw Audubon Society. He adds that the deaths of millions of birds each year has been tracked to the apparent effect of tall building lighting, which interferes with the navigation systems of migrating birds flying nearby, causing them to repeatedly circle the illuminated buildings until they either die from exhaustion or from colliding into windows.

Property owners of tall buildings are encouraged to join the Safe Passages Great Lakes efforts by turning off their lights or closing window shades and drapes at night. Individuals can help by turning off lights when they leave an office or a residence, and to raise awareness of the fatal light problem by discussing it with family, friends and colleagues. Roof-top airplane navigation beacons required by the FAA are exempt from the resolution.

Individuals who live or work at night in buildings with five floors or higher and who wish to minimize fatal light problems can also help.



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- Use blinds and curtains to conceal lighted areas if working after 11 p.m. during Safe Passages Great Lakes days;
- Use desk lamps and task lighting to minimize perimeter lighting;
- Re-schedule night work, such as arrange for custodial services in tall buildings to work from the top down so the upper floor lights are off from 11 p.m. to 6 a.m. (dawn); and
- Establish interior working areas for night activities.

Ann Arbor Environmental Coordinator Matt Naud notes that turning lights off from the fifth floor and up will not only protect the lives of many birds that fly over our city at night, but will save money, conserve energy, and reduce pollution as well. This strategy may be useful to consider for year-round implementation, where feasible.

A copy of the resolution and more information on the Safe Passage Great Lakes project are posted on the City of Ann Arbor's Web site at <http://www.a2gov.org/government/publicservices/fieldoperations/NAP/birds/Pages/SafePassage.aspx>.

RESOURCES

Washtenaw Audubon's Safe Passage program
<http://washtenawaudubon.org/safepassage.htm>

Ann Arbor's Safe Passages Great Lakes Days Web page:
<http://www.a2gov.org/government/publicservices/fieldoperations/NAP/birds/Pages/SafePassage.aspx>

Detroit Audubon's Safe Passage Program:
http://www.detroitaudubon.org/safe_passage.html

New York's Bird Safe Buildings guidelines (see especially sections on Lights-out program):
<http://www.nycaudubon.org/home/BirdSafeBuildingGuidelines.pdf>

Ann Arbor has 114,000 residents, spans 27.7 square miles, and is frequently recognized as a foremost place to live, learn, work, thrive and visit (www.a2gov.org/news). To keep up with City of Ann Arbor information, subscribe for e-mail updates (www.a2gov.org/subscribe), follow us on Twitter (<http://twitter.com/a2gov>) or become a city fan on Facebook (www.facebook.com/thecityofannarbor). The city's mission statement reads: The city of Ann Arbor is committed to providing excellent municipal services that enhance the quality of life for all through the intelligent use of resources while valuing an open environment that fosters, fair, sensitive and respectful treatment of all employees and the community we serve.

March 15 – May 31

Safe Passages Great Lakes – During peak spring bird migration, residents and property managers are reminded to close shades or turn out lights between 11 p.m. and 6 a.m. on tall buildings from the 5th floor and above. This action assists birds to maintain their natural night navigation patterns and avoids the unnecessary death of over 250 migrating bird species from becoming disoriented and flying into lighted tall buildings. Details: www.a2gov.org/green. # # #