



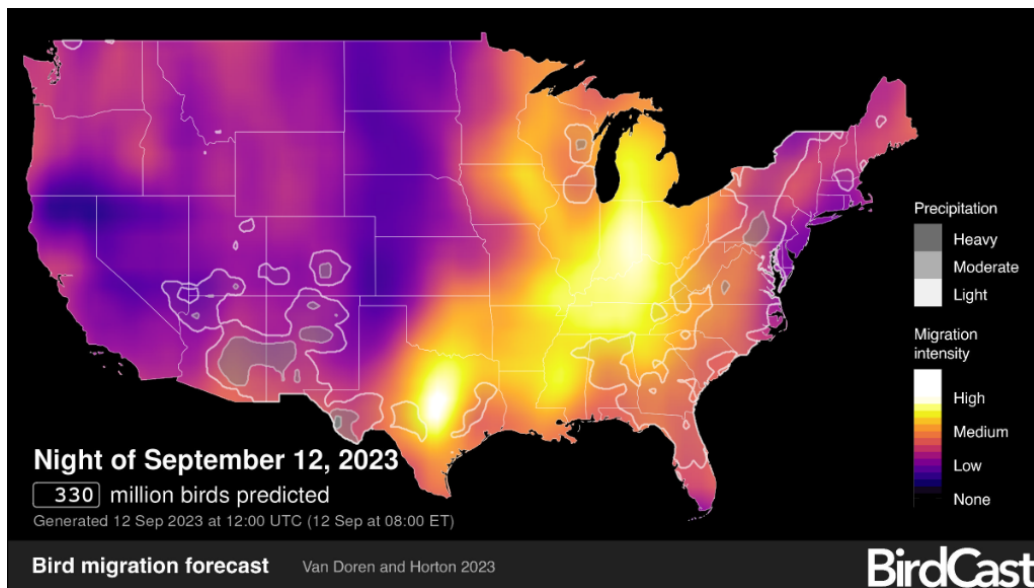
IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Wildlife Diversity News

Conservation and Recreation

September 12, 2023

Fall migration is in full swing and hundreds of millions of songbirds are predicted to pass through the Midwest over the next few nights (<https://birdcast.info/migration-tools/migration-forecast-maps/>). You can help these birds to migrate safely by turning off the lights at your home or business, especially between 11pm and 6am to help them migrate safely.



Cornell Lab of Ornithology's BirdCast predicts the volume of migrating birds each night in spring and fall based on past migration data and weather forecasts. Lots of birds are expected to move through the Midwest tonight and over the next few days.

Lights and Migrating Birds

Over 80% of North America's migratory birds migrate at night, and artificial light can impact their journey. Migrating at night has many advantages for a bird. Night skies are calmer and cooler than daytime skies which makes their very long journeys easier and lowers their risk of overheating. Nocturnal migrants are also better able to avoid predators. Many birds navigate using the stars and moon as a compass, but light pollution can interrupt this navigation. Light pollution from homes, business, sports complexes, and industrial areas often disorients birds or attracts them to the light, slowing their migration and threatening their survival. Light pollution is especially dangerous because it causes many birds to collide with buildings during migration, resulting in hundreds of millions of bird fatalities in North America each year. Light pollution is increasing by 2% each year, but citizens and their communities can help reduce light pollution and in turn protect migrating birds.



Feathers left behind after a bird collided with a window. If you find an injured bird, please reach out to a local licensed wildlife rehabilitator for assistance. List of licensed Iowa rehabbers: www.iowadnr.gov/portals/dnr/uploads/files/wildliferehab.pdf

How YOU Can Help!

Here are a few actions you can take to reduce light pollution and protect migratory birds:

1. Turn off non-essential nighttime lights and use timers or motion detectors on essential lights to keep the usage to a minimum. (This helps save energy and money too!)
2. Changing the color of your lights from cool (green and blue) to warm (red and yellow) has been shown to reduce disturbances to migrating birds. (Tip: Light color is measured in kelvins- the lower the number, the warmer the light.)
3. Diverting lights downwards using lighting shields can help stop excess light from leaking into the night sky.
4. Talk with your local government officials and community organizations and businesses about light ordinances or ways to reduce light pollution as a community, especially during spring and fall migration times.
5. Visit <https://www.audubon.org/lights-out-program> to learn more!