

# Nightscape



DarkSky

#123 | March 2026

COVER STORY

## Caught in the glare

How are bright headlights affecting nocturnal species?

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Introducing the  
DarkSky One concept car

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Dark Sky Places

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# DarkSky

We restore the nighttime environment and protect communities from the harmful effects of light pollution through outreach, advocacy, and conservation.

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## On the cover

**“Milky Way Over Hawks Nest Highway”**

**by Mike Carroll**

**New York, U.S.**

“The dark skies in Sparrow Bush, New York, present some interesting possibilities. With a Bortle 4 sky, I was able to capture the Milky Way along with car headlight trails along the very popular Hawk’s Nest Highway. This famously scenic, winding stretch of New York State Route 97 near Port Jervis offers dramatic views of the Delaware River. This was a very challenging image to capture, which I achieved by taking a single foreground shot and stacking the sky to reduce noise.”

#### TECHNICAL DETAILS

Single foreground, stacked sky | Sony A7R V | Lens: Sigma 24mm f/1.4 DG DN Art | Aperture: f/2.2 | Exposure: 5 sec | ISO 3200

#### FOLLOW MIKE

Instagram: [@jerseyportraits](https://www.instagram.com/@jerseyportraits)

Facebook: [@mikecarrollphoto](https://www.facebook.com/@mikecarrollphoto)

## Nightscape

#123 · March 2026

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# From the Executive Director



## Designing for the night

We spend a remarkable amount of time trying to defeat the night.

In transportation, in public space, and increasingly in our skies, darkness is treated as a problem — something to overpower with brighter, whiter, more aggressive light. Nowhere is this more apparent than on our roads, where ever-brighter headlights promise safety but too often deliver glare, discomfort, and lost visibility.

This issue of *Nightscape* asks a different question: what happens when we design with the night instead of against it?

That question is at the heart of **DarkSky One**, the first vehicle designed with nighttime driving as a starting point rather than an afterthought. What has struck me most since introducing this concept is how quickly people understand it. Bad lighting is universally annoying. Its impacts are widely felt. And once we stop equating “more light” with “better light,” the solutions feel surprisingly straightforward.

Good lighting helps us see better, not just more. It preserves contrast, minimizes glare, and respects darkness as a functional

part of the visual environment. This is not a technological leap so much as a design correction, and one that is entirely within reach.

As we begin 2026, there are reasons for optimism. In northern **Chile**, **AES** has withdrawn its proposal to build a major industrial facility near one of the world’s most important astronomy sites. In **Maine**, a new statewide outdoor lighting policy, based on DarkSky’s templates, has translated principles into durable protections. These wins matter because they show that thoughtful design and policy can prevail.

The threats are real. Brighter headlights, expanding infrastructure, and even proposals to illuminate the night from orbit. But the future of the night is not predetermined.

When we design with intention, change is possible and often faster than we expect.



For the night,  
**Ruskin Hartley**  
[ruskin@darksky.org](mailto:ruskin@darksky.org)  
Tucson, Arizona, U.S.

# From the Editor

Over the last quarter, I attended several dark-sky-related events. First, I travelled to **Westport, Co. Mayo, Ireland**, where the biennial **Artificial Light at Night**



Megan Eaves

**Conference** drew light pollution researchers, advocates, policy experts, and scientists from all over the world. Along with several other attendees, DarkSky's CEO, **Ruskin Hartley**, and I enjoyed an

evening at a local pub with traditional Irish music, and we joined a nighttime field trip to **Mayo International Dark Sky Park**, where we gazed at the Milky Way through remarkably cloudless Irish skies.

Then, in December, I travelled to **Vienna** to attend the **UN/SKAO Workshop on**



Megan Eaves

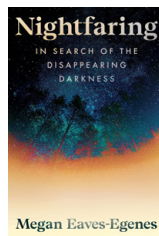
**Dark and Quiet Skies for Science and Society.** Gathering at the **United Nations Headquarters** in Vienna, dark sky advocates met with government officials and the commercial

space sector to discuss policy and mitigation strategies around satellite infrastructure.

At each of these events, I was fortunate to meet individuals from all over the world who are using their own channels of research, communication, science, or policy to shift the status quo on light pollution. Sometimes, this road feels long and slow, but it reminds me how crucial every member of our community is. Often, the most important work we do is in our everyday lives: discussions with friends, family, and neighbors about the importance of natural darkness and the easy fixes we can make at home.

We begin 2026 driving in a new direction, as you'll read about in this issue, which confronts the issue of vehicle headlight glare and introduces DarkSky's bold new campaign: a concept car called **DarkSky One**. You can read more about this innovative idea on page 6. We also spoke to ecologists **Kevin Gaston** and **Jolyon Troscianko** about the impacts of vehicle headlights on biodiversity (p.16).

In closing, I wanted to offer a small reminder that my book, **Nightfaring: In Search of the Disappearing Darkness**, comes out on March 31 in North America and is out now in the U.K. Part travelogue, part personal memoir, it follows my search to understand the fragile night and humanity's relationship with darkness. I hope you enjoy it.



Grand Central Publishing



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# Advocate highlights

News from DarkSky Advocates around the world



## A México

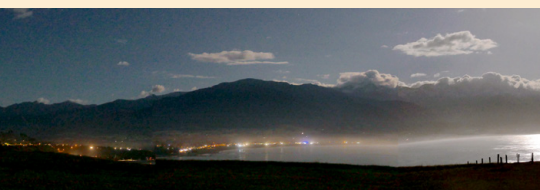


Secretaría de Cultura, Ciudad de México

**DarkSky Delegate Sergio Montúfar** brought **Guatemala's** ancient skies to **México City** in a striking public photo exhibit, ***Estrellas ancestrales: Monumentos y sitios sagrados de los mayas en Guatemala***. Installed outdoors along **Paseo de la Reforma**, the display featured large images of **Mayan** ceremonial sites under starry night skies, celebrating Indigenous astronomical heritage and the need to preserve dark cultural landscapes.

## B New Zealand

Advocates of the **Kaikōura Dark Sky Trust**, including **DarkSky Award** winner **Larry Field**, successfully upgraded the lighting in the town of **Kaikōura** on **New Zealand's South Island** in December. Dark-sky-friendly lights were retrofitted



Kaikōura Dark Sky Trust

along State Highway 1 and have been welcomed as a crucial step toward the town achieving **DarkSky certification**.

## C U.S.

In October, **Advocates on Washington's Olympic Peninsula** collaborated with the **Washington State Audubon Conservation Committee** on a **"Lights Out" policy**, which was unanimously adopted as a statewide resolution. The resolution promotes shielding outdoor lights, public education on light pollution, and lighting switch-offs during bird migration periods.

## D Canada

**Youth Advocate Siddharth Patel** was featured in articles in **Canada's** national press for his work to protect dark skies. In the interviews, the 12-year-old Advocate from **London, Ontario**, talked about his citizen science projects combining stargazing, community engagement activities, and advocacy, and shared his hopes and challenges in advocating for the night. Read more: [bit.ly/3NikHBZ](https://bit.ly/3NikHBZ)



Siddharth Patel

CONCEPT CAR

# DarkSky One: Built for darkness

T H E D A R K

It's a familiar moment. You're driving at night, eyes adjusting to the road ahead, when a pair of oncoming headlights crests a rise and floods your field of vision. For a split second, everything disappears — lane markings, verge, landscape — all replaced by glare.

Most drivers shrug it off as an annoyance, a modern inevitability. But that fleeting loss of vision is a flag that something about the way we light our roads, and the vehicles that move along them, is fundamentally misaligned with how humans see at night.

## **Making the invisible visible**

That misalignment sits at the heart of DarkSky One, a project unveiled in January as part of an am-

bitious public-awareness campaign that DarkSky developed through Purpose, Produced, an initiative from Kevin Bacon's SixDegrees.org and Advertising Week. As part of the campaign, DarkSky was chosen as one of just six small, grassroots nonprofit organizations to be paired with a world-class advertising agency to create pro bono, evergreen ad campaigns that would turn heads and amplify their mission. For DarkSky International, the partnership

# DARKSKY ONE

offered something unusual: a chance to step outside traditional advocacy and enter a cultural conversation where light pollution is rarely named, but constantly experienced.

Through Purpose, Produced, DarkSky was paired with the New York-based creative agency Bray &

Co. The brief was deceptively simple: help make light pollution visible to people who rarely think about it. For Peter Bray, Executive Creative Director at Bray & Co, that meant starting not with messaging, but with immersion.

“There’s this idea in advertising,”



Mock-up image of the DarkSky One shared by bloggers during the campaign.

Credit: Bray & Co

Bray said, “that a lot of what we try to do is make the invisible visible.” Light pollution, he quickly realised, fit that description perfectly. “It’s one of the fastest-growing environmental issues in the world. Yet no one or very few people talk about it, because most people rarely see it.”

### Rethinking darkness

Early conversations with DarkSky’s leadership team challenged some of Bray’s own assumptions. “It’s easy to think that DarkSky International is just about stargazing when you first encounter it,” he said. “We really wanted to get into the core of it.”

One moment in particular proved decisive. Bray recalls DarkSky Executive Director Ruskin Hartley showing him two images of the same house, one washed in bright exterior lighting, the other left unlit. The difference was stark.

“You could see so much more without the bright light,” Bray recalled. Those photos, followed by a flashlight demonstration, forced him to think more deeply about light pollution. “It dawned on me that the reality is that we need to change the paradigm of trying to overcome darkness and work with it, because when we try to overcome darkness, we’re using really clumsy methods.”

To push the idea further, Bray asked his team to immerse themselves in the dark by trying a brainstorming session very late at night. The exercise was transformative. Walking through the dark, away from artificial light, the team noticed how their vision slowly expanded as their eyes adjusted.

“We realised that darkness isn’t something to be afraid of,” Bray said. “It’s degrees of absence of light that can help you see more.”

From that experience, the cam-





Mock-up image of the DarkSky One shared by bloggers during the campaign.

ampaign’s central insight emerged: darkness helps you see better. It’s a phrase designed to sound wrong at first before resolving into something intuitive. “That’s what we in advertising call an *insight*,” he said. “We’re fighting against centuries of people being afraid of the dark.”

### Why a car?

The next challenge was how to carry the idea into the public sphere. Traditional advertising, Bray felt, would fall flat.

“If we’d just done a ‘think about your lighting’ campaign, that doesn’t create a breakthrough,” he said. Instead, the team looked for a place where light pollution intrudes into everyday life, even for people unfamiliar with the term. The answer was obvious to anyone who has driven at night.

“The only time most people think about it is when a car comes at you

driving down the road, and you think they have their high beams on,” Bray said. “But the reality is...they don’t.”

Cars offer a rare intersection between cultural fascination and environmental consequence.

“People like cars,” he said. “You can’t ask people to stop driving their cars or not to buy a car. That’s never going to work.” Bray’s team reasoned that, given the automotive world was a major contributor to excessive nighttime illumination, perhaps it could also be the site of a provocation.

“What if we come up with a car?” Bray said. “Design a completely new car, and disrupt the automotive industry from within?”

### Introducing DarkSky One

The result was DarkSky One: a concept car designed for nighttime first. In the automotive world, a concept car is a speculative design built

to explore ideas and provoke discussion rather than to be manufactured. It is not a product for sale, but a thought experiment rendered with the visual language and seriousness of the auto industry itself.

Crucially, DarkSky One was not imagined as a gadget or a lighting tweak.

“Better lighting isn’t just about a light bulb,” Bray said. “It’s about an entire design, an entire philosophy.” Research conducted during the project revealed something surprising, even to the design team: in the history of automotive design, no car had ever been designed for darkness first. Nighttime visibility had always been treated as an afterthought.

### Designing for night

To give the idea credibility, Bray & Co partnered with Phiaro, a Tokyo-based automotive design firm known for high-level concept work. According to Phiaro, Japanese vehicle design already considers glare reduction from both regulatory and design perspectives, but these

efforts remain limited compared with other night sky protection initiatives. Working on DarkSky One highlighted just how constrained existing vehicle-based countermeasures still are.

Phiaro approached the project through questions rather than instructions. Bray & Co’s brief consisted of prompts like: What if a car were designed for nighttime driving first? What shape should the windows be? How do we reduce glare?

Phiaro responded with iterative designs that aimed to reduce glare and help drivers see more clearly at night. For example, its lights automatically adjust their brightness and direction depending on what’s ahead, and it has a LIDAR sensing system that detects the surroundings without relying on bright headlights. The windows, body surfaces, and even the car’s matte black finish reduce reflectivity and absorb stray light, helping protect night vision and making more of the surrounding landscape visible after dark.

### From disruption to conversation

DarkSky One made its public debut at the Detroit Auto Show in January, where it was presented not as a curiosity, but as a serious intervention. The automotive industry responded in kind. The show offered a prominent booth space for free, and several major media outlets and technology partners donated support. For Bray, that response mattered.

“The automotive industry has invited us into the tent, which is incredible,” he said. The goal, however, was never to stop at a show-floor

### Purpose, Produced

In 2025, DarkSky was selected to participate in Purpose, Produced, a groundbreaking initiative amplifying the voices of six nonprofits driving real change in their communities.



Purpose, Produced is a collaboration between SixDegrees, a nonprofit founded by actor and philanthropist Kevin Bacon, and the global Advertising Week conference.

# DarkSky One concept car

Designed to reveal the darkness, every line, surface, and proportion of the DarkSky One is shaped so the night can slowly unfold landscapes, depth, and movement once lost to glare. Your eyes adjust, the world widens, and what passes beside you comes quietly into focus. It is not bright vision, it is truer vision, an evolution in car design where visibility is not created by overpowering light, but discovered by working with the dark.

1

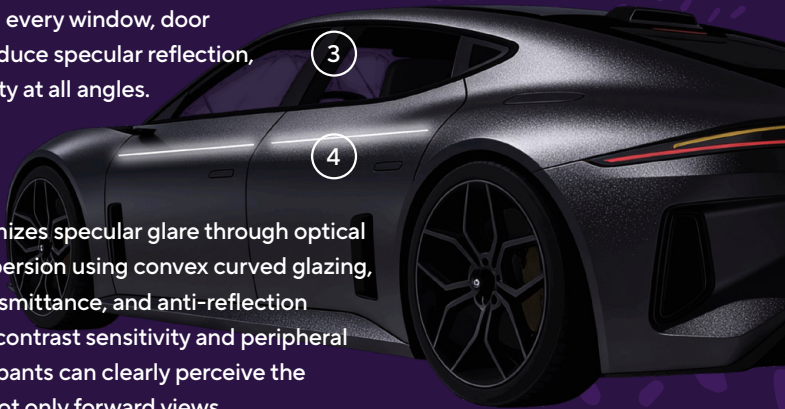
1. Intelligent LIDAR driven features adjust to the environment and illuminate your path forward without interference.



2

2. All Beam Adaptive Driving Light (ABADL) technology changes brightness on a sliding scale relative to object distance as the DarkSky One approaches, reducing excess light and glare, as well as curve adaptation and optimized light distribution.

3. Polarization and reflection physics have been incorporated in every window, door and body angle to reduce specular reflection, maximizing viewability at all angles.



3

4

4. Side lighting minimizes specular glare through optical control and light dispersion using convex curved glazing, high visible light transmittance, and anti-reflection coatings, increasing contrast sensitivity and peripheral visual acuity so occupants can clearly perceive the passing landscape, not only forward views.

5

5. Matte black paint with patent pending micro-textured DS1 pattern absorbs stray light, suppresses glare, reduces contrast washout, and preserves dark adaptation, allowing eyes to remain sensitive to subtle detail in low light to ensure darkness can be fully embraced.



reveal. “This is just the start of the conversation,” he said. “The DarkSky One is not disappearing.”

DarkSky aims for the project to ripple outward into conversations with automakers, designers, policy-makers, and the public about what it means to design with the night in mind. In conventional roadway design guidance, factors like pavement reflectivity, glare, and lighting are already studied and standardized, largely to support driver visibility, safety, and consistency in engineering practice. But these frameworks are not typically concerned with light pollution or the wider ecological and environmental impacts of illumination at night.

DarkSky One doesn’t claim to solve those problems. Instead, it reframes them.

As Bray put it, “We need to change the paradigm of trying to overcome darkness and instead work with it.” He also pointed to what could lie ahead for the automotive industry. As driverless cars become more common, long-held assumptions about headlights and nighttime visibility may begin to shift. If cars no longer depend on a human driver’s eyes in the same way, it raises broader questions about how much light is truly needed – on vehicles, roads, and the spaces around them.

By treating darkness not as an obstacle but as a condition worth designing for, DarkSky One asks us to consider: what might our roads, vehicles, cities, and built environment look like if seeing more didn’t mean lighting more? ✦



Adaptive headlight technology changes brightness relative to an object’s distance, reducing excess light and glare.



The DarkSky One features intelligent LIDAR that adjusts to the environment, and polarization on windows, doors and body angles to reduce reflection.



# Go Dark

International **Dark Sky** Week

April 13-20, 2026



# International Dark Sky Week 2026

**International Dark Sky Week is a worldwide celebration of the night.**

From the darkness needed for a restful night's sleep to the activities we enjoy beneath the stars, the night is filled with wonder and importance. Dark nights sustain critical wildlife ecosystems, strengthen the well-being of our communities, enable scientific discovery, and preserve shared cultural knowledge and traditions.

Join us this April as we "go dark" to explore the night and take action to protect dark skies through events and activities happening around the globe.



Learn more at [idsw.darksky.org](https://idsw.darksky.org)

## Get involved



### Host or attend a Dark Sky Week event

DarkSky encourages our community of Advocates, Chapters, and Dark Sky Places to organize events during this week of nighttime discovery. From guided hikes and star parties to dark sky brews and trivia nights, explore suggested activities and our community map of planned events.

[idsw.darksky.org/activities](https://idsw.darksky.org/activities)



### Request a proclamation or letter of support

Looking to turn awareness into community action? Introducing a proclamation is a great way to start relationships with local officials and get people thinking about the importance of dark skies.

[idsw.darksky.org/actions](https://idsw.darksky.org/actions)



### Become a DarkSky Advocate

The DarkSky Advocates Network is a global community united in its efforts to protect the night from light pollution. Anyone, anywhere can be a DarkSky Advocate!

[darksky.org/who-we-are/advocates/](https://darksky.org/who-we-are/advocates/)

COVER STORY

# Caught in the headlights

Over the past few years, drivers around the world have been complaining that car headlights seem brighter, with media reports and public petitions calling attention to this new form of light pollution. Biodiversity scientists **Kevin J. Gaston** and **Jolyon Troscianko** from the University of Exeter in the U.K. explain how vehicle headlights might affect wildlife.

**Dr Kevin J. Gaston,**  
Emeritus Professor  
of Biodiversity and  
Conservation



Estimates suggest there are more than 1.6 billion vehicles on roads worldwide. Their headlights are designed to direct light horizontally, illuminating long distances for drivers to see. This light reaches places we might not think of as experiencing light pollution, such as rural roads and countryside tracks. As a result, vehicle headlights introduce light pollution over a much larger extent than streetlights or urban lighting.

**How bright are modern headlights compared with natural night light, like the moon, and why does that difference matter for wildlife?**

Moonlight is commonly less than 0.3 lux. Though dim, it still has important impacts on wildlife, such as varying activity according to lunar cycles. Ve-

hicle headlights produce light that is orders of magnitude brighter than this — measurements at roadsides commonly reach hundreds of lux, and large areas are illuminated at levels much greater than moonlight. This triggers multiple biological responses, the severity of which is often related to the intensity of the light.

**Headlights only pass by for a moment. Why can those brief flashes of light still cause real problems for animals?**

Most of us have experienced the ‘blinding’ effect of the headlight glare, as it takes our eyes time to adjust between low and bright light. The same is true of many other animals; their vision systems often take longer than ours to adjust, disrupting their activities, such as the ability to detect and avoid predators.

**What do you think will happen to nighttime ecosystems if headlights continue to get brighter?**

Two things will happen. First, the size of the area that experiences light pollution from vehicles and its consequences will increase. Second, where those effects are increased by the intensity of the lights, they will also get progressively worse.

## Dr Jolyon Troscianko, Associate Professor of Sensory Ecology & Evolution



**Your research looks at how animals perceive light. Why are modern LED headlights especially difficult for nocturnal insects like moths?**

Modern LEDs have shorter (blue) wavelengths, and a wide range of research suggests that these wavelengths are more disruptive to moths than “warmer” lights. We aren’t certain why shortwave light is more problematic for moths, but possibly it’s because it’s closer to natural sunlight, confusing processes in animals that expect darkness at night. Our work has shown that light simulating a “cool” LED headlight causes 80% more harmful flight behaviors in a wide range of moth species compared to “warm” LED light of the same intensity.

**In your moth study, you found that insects can be affected even after a car has passed. What makes it hard for them to recover from that brief burst of light?**

Daytime light levels are often 1–100 million times brighter than at night, so all visual systems have

ways to shield themselves from intense daylight and become more sensitive at night. In humans, our pupils can constrict and then dilate again in about a second to deal with changes in lighting, as they do when a car passes at night. The equivalent process in moths involves the slow movement of pigments in their eyes over many minutes. So passing headlights could trigger this slow process and leave moths blinded at night, when their eyes are unshielded by this protective pigment.

**Many people assume that moving lights are less harmful than permanent ones. What does the science suggest about that assumption?**

Moths’ eyes are so sensitive that they can see under starlight alone, with no eyelids and no ability to hide from light. They had no reason to evolve such mechanisms because the night was dark until very recently. Adults of these species might only be active for an hour or two on a few nights, and if light pollution interferes with their vision or activity, it could make them prey for bats or prevent them from finding flowers, mates, or places to lay their eggs, eventually leading to long-term species decline.

There are also spatial and ecological concerns. Roadside verges are valuable habitats for insects, and in the U.K. they make up more than twice the area covered by natural or semi-natural grassland. License-plate bug splatter data between 2021 and 2024 showed a 63% decline in flying insects on U.K. roads. We can’t say whether head-



Moths' eyes are very sensitive because they have no eyelids and no ability to hide from light.

lights are contributing to this decline in insects, largely because no one has yet studied the connection.

**Which part of headlight design matters most for wildlife: brightness, color, or how the light is aimed?**

Light intensity is almost certainly the most important factor, because a headlight's color and where it's aimed are effectively subsets of its intensity (at specific wavelengths or angles). However, our research suggests that shifting to warmer colored lights can reduce harmful effects across a wide range of moth species. This would be easy to implement with almost no vehicle production cost differences or safety concerns.

**If headlights were redesigned with wildlife in mind, what kind of changes would make the biggest difference?**

Currently, we're only seeing lights get more intense and blue. Ideally, future designs would look at reducing light intensity for wildlife while balancing the need for human safety. Eliminating unnecessary stray light, switching to warm-white colored lamps, and more nuanced features, such as ensuring that dipped or full beams only focus light where it is needed, even as roads twist, rise, and fall. Hopefully, future driverless cars will only need low-intensity headlights to warn others of their presence because they use invisible infrared to "see" the road. ✦



# Newly certified International Dark Sky Places & Lodgings

Announced since November 1, 2025



260

International Dark Sky Places around the world

39

Countries and territories represented

6

Continents represented

214,915+

Square kilometers of protected land and night sky

Jiang Yuebin / Huanglong National Scenic Area Administration



## DARK SKY PARK

### Huanglong National Scenic Area

Sichuan, China

7.29 km<sup>2</sup>

The first dark sky place on the Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau, home to golden snub-nosed monkeys, alpine meadows, and travertine pools, with a dark core zone at an elevation of 4,000 m (13,120 ft).

Chase Fountain / Texas Parks and Wildlife Department



## DARK SKY PARK

### Caprock Canyons State Park

Texas, U.S.

61.97 km<sup>2</sup>

State park in the Texas Panhandle, known for red-rock canyons, bison herds, bat caves, and open-prairie skies with sweeping views of the Milky Way.

3

Holly Hasenbühler



DARK SKY PARK

## Chimney Rock National Monument

Colorado, U.S.

19.13 km<sup>2</sup>

Double rock formations sacred to ancestral Puebloans are surrounded by piñon and juniper woodland, ponderosa forest, and wildlife like elk and peregrines.

4

Abdul Majied



DARK SKY PARK

## Sharaan National Park and Wadi Nakhlah Nature Reserve

AlUla, Saudi Arabia

6,146 km<sup>2</sup>

Two new desert reserves added to AlUla's network, forming one of the largest connected Dark Sky Parks in the world.

5

Chyenne Winchester / Utah State Parks



URBAN NIGHT SKY PLACE

## Snow Canyon State Park

Utah, U.S.

29.95 km<sup>2</sup>

Lava flows, sandstone cliffs, desert animals and rare plant species define this canyon on the edge of the fast-growing city of St. George.

6

Adrian Bradley Strom



DARK SKY PARK

## Black Mesa State Park

Oklahoma, U.S.

9.6 km<sup>2</sup>

Remote mesa where shortgrass prairie meets Oklahoma's highest elevations, with diverse wildlife and stark basalt rock formations.

7

Mohammed Alnazi



DARK SKY PARK

## AlNufud ITBA

Hail province, Saudi Arabia

13,416 km<sup>2</sup>

Wind-sculpted red dunes, fossil-rich sandstone, and remote, arid terrain define the Tabah Protected Area, which is one of the oldest deserts on Earth.

8

Elke Schulz



DARK SKY COMMUNITY

## Río Hurtado

Coquimbo, Chile

2,117.2 km<sup>2</sup>

Andean commune with 22 villages, the Monte Patria and Obstech El Sauce observatories, and ancient petroglyph sites.

9

Kyritz-Ruppiner Heide



DARK SKY PARK

## Kyritz-Ruppiner Heath

Brandenburg, Germany

118 km<sup>2</sup>

Once a military training ground rewilded into open heath in the Stechlin-Ruppiner Land Nature Park, it is also protected as a European Natura Habitat.

# News & notables

News from the global movement promoting responsible outdoor light at night

## Proposed orbital illumination system raises unprecedented threat

**Reflect Orbital** has proposed using satellite-mounted mirrors to reflect sunlight onto Earth at night. **DarkSky** has issued a statement of concern and is inviting members and supporters to **sign the open letter** urging the company to reconsider. The project is expected to undergo U.S. regulatory review. Sign the letter here:

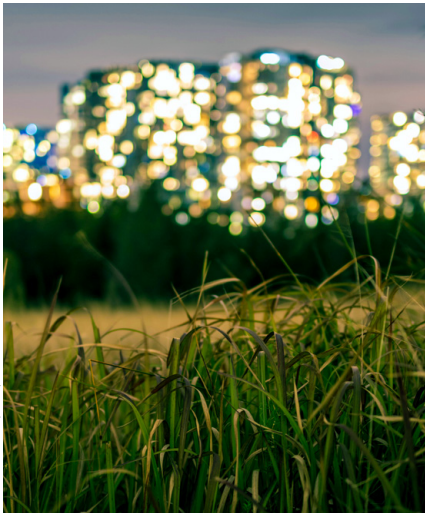
[darksky.org/orbital](https://darksky.org/orbital)



Megan Eaves

## DarkSky leaders attend UN Dark & Quiet Skies workshop

**DarkSky** CEO **Ruskin Hartley** and Editor **Megan Eaves** joined international delegates at a December **UN** workshop in **Vienna** focused on protecting the night sky from **satellite interference**. Co-hosted by the **UN Office for Outer Space Affairs** and the **SKA Observatory**, the event emphasized collaboration between astronomers, the space industry, policymakers, and governments to address night sky protection.



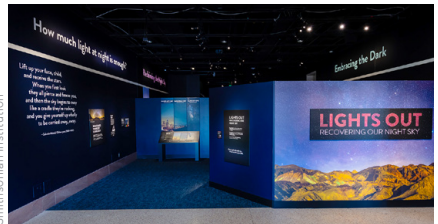
David Gilbertson/Unsplash

## Study finds ALAN causes plants to release more carbon dioxide

Research published in the journal **Nature Climate Change** has found that artificial light at night increases plant respiration across 86 grassland sites, causing them to release more carbon dioxide and undermining their role as carbon sinks. The findings suggest that light pollution may worsen climate change by shifting the carbon cycle.

[bit.ly/4k3dRTP](https://bit.ly/4k3dRTP)

## Smithsonian “Lights Out” exhibit extended to December 2026



Smithsonian Institution

The “**Lights Out**” exhibit at the **National Museum of Natural History** in **Washington, D.C.** was previously set to end in December 2025 but has been extended through December 2026. With more than 100 photographs, interactive experiences, tactile models, and a theater program, it beautifully shows why dark nights matter.

[naturalhistory.si.edu/lights-out](https://naturalhistory.si.edu/lights-out)

## England's Lake District to install more light pollution sensors

Spearheaded by **DarkSky Advocate Jack Ellerby**, a new initiative will see **England's Lake District National Park** expand its **network of sky quality sensors** to better track light pollution. The data will support long-term efforts to protect rural landscapes and biodiversity, particularly invertebrates and crucial pollinators, by taking sky brightness measurements every minute.

[bit.ly/4btTLjz](https://bit.ly/4btTLjz)



Museco

**IN CASE YOU MISSED IT**

## Reducing light pollution at marine ports

In August, **DarkSky International** launched its **Port Marine Terminal Lighting program**, offering best-practice guidance to reduce light pollution at working waterfronts. The initiative addresses a gap in lighting standards for ports, aiming to protect coastal ecosystems, migratory species, and nearby communities from the effects of excessive artificial light.

[bit.ly/darkskyports](https://bit.ly/darkskyports)



## Join us for International Dark Sky Week in April

Running April 20–26, **International Dark Sky Week** is a global celebration of the night. Visit DarkSky's website to discover ten ways to take part, including attending a night sky event or inviting your local government to issue a proclamation. Find the full list and join the movement:

[bit.ly/IDSW2026](https://bit.ly/IDSW2026)



## Wear your support this International Dark Sky Week

Get ready for IDSW 2026 by with DarkSky-themed apparel and designs, including hats, totes, and more.

[darksky.org/shop](https://darksky.org/shop)



## Support DarkSky's programs – make a gift today

DarkSky depends on the generosity of our members and supporters to grow our programs and advocacy efforts, which protect dark skies around the world. Let's reach for the stars together.



[bit.ly/3ZQ4IcN](https://bit.ly/3ZQ4IcN)

