Nightscape

DarkSky #125 | September 2026

STAR TREK 60

DarkSky celebrates 60 years of Star Trek as an official nonprofit partner.

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Strange dark worlds: Sci-fi and dark skies

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Capture the Dark 2026 photo contest winners

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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

"Moonlanding" by Stefano Pellegrini

PHOTO LOCATION
Belluno, Italy

"I wanted to transform the iconic Tre Cime di Lavaredo into a lunar landscape. Reaching the viewpoint meant climbing the steep Paterno via ferrata carrying nearly 30kg of gear: camera equipment, camping gear, and a homemade astronaut suit. More than once, I considered turning back. After spending the night on the summit, I photographed the Milky Way before dressing as the astronaut and carefully climbing onto a narrow ledge for repeated attempts. Every element in the final image is real, making it one of the most physically demanding photographs I have ever created."

TECHNICAL DETAILS
Nikon D850 | Lens: Tamron 15/30 | Aperture: f/2.8 | ISO: 6400

FOLLOW
Instagram: @pels_photo
Website: www.pels.it/photo

Nightscape

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From the

Executive Director

My first taste of science fiction came from a crackling radio in a small, parochial corner of **Britain**: a serialized comedy about hitchhiking across the galaxy that promised to explain life, the universe, and everything. It expanded a small childhood mind to the very edge of the universe.



Ruskin Hartley

Ruskin and Dr. Sarah Lohmann, featured in this issue.

Every year, **Capture the Dark** reminds me why images matter more than statistics. A single photograph — **Orion** glowing behind **Turret Arch**, fireflies threading a **Carolina** creek — can do the same thing: move someone to care about a night sky they have never troubled to look up at.

This year, though, our photographers are also documenting what threatens that view. Astrophotographers have grown remarkably resourceful at erasing the streaks left by passing satellites, using AI tools like **Cosmic Clarity** that hunt down a **Starlink** trail frame by frame. I admire the ingenuity.

But increasingly, some are choosing not to erase the trails at all. One winning image, "Artificial Comet," shows a freshly launched Starlink train streaking across the frame, precisely because it should not be edited away. The casual stargazer cannot escape it either, and neither should we.

That tension, between the sky we wish to see and the sky we are given, is why I found myself back in science fiction this summer, arguing for two days with science fiction scholar **Dr. Sarah Lohmann** at a workshop on space sustainability in Zurich, about which future orbit we are actually building toward. Her thinking is in this issue's Q&A on page 6. Science fiction has always painted the future before we build it: ***Blade Runner***'s neon glare, or ***Star Trek***'s boundless curiosity. I know which one I want. I choose hopeful.

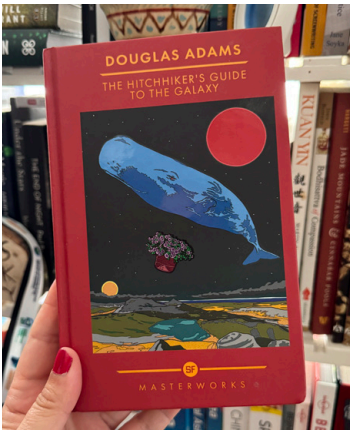
None of this — the photographs, the advocacy, the arguments about who owns the sky — happens without you. Thank you for standing with us.



For the night,
Ruskin Hartley
ruskin@darksky.org
Tucson, Arizona, U.S.

From the

Editor



Megan Eaves



Left: The Editor's copy of *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*. Below: The Very Large Array telescope featured in the 1997 film, *Contact*.

Megan Eaves

As a child of the '80s and the daughter of a science fiction geek, I grew up on a steady diet of sci-fi. ***Star Trek: The Next Generation*** was on in our house every week, and I was introduced to ***Star Wars*** at a very early age. Similarly to DarkSky's Executive Director, **Ruskin Hartley**, I too picked up a tattered paperback copy of ***The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*** that my dad left lying around and was immediately in love with the wild travels of **Arthur Dent** and **Ford Prefect** (I suspect this also influenced my choice to eventually become a travel journalist).

In 1997, I went to the cinema to see a film called ***Contact***, starring **Jodie Foster** — exciting because it was filmed at the **Very Large Array** radio telescope, not far from where I lived in New Mexico. Based on the book by astronomer **Carl Sagan**, the story blew my mind and opened me to a whole new way of thinking about how the universe works. It instantly became one of my favorite films, and I've watched it dozens of times since.

Imagination is the foundation for humanity's connection to the cosmos. This year marks the 60th anniversary of ***Star Trek***, a series that inspired generations to look toward the stars with curiosity and optimism. Science fiction encourages us to imagine the future and can inspire science, innovation, and exploration. It reminds us that the choices we make today, and the mindset we carry, shape the world, the environment, and the skies that future generations will inherit.

That imagination also runs through this year's **Capture the Dark** photo contest. The winning images, featured in this issue, use extraordinary technical skill to reveal the beauty and ecological importance of natural darkness and a starry night sky. They invite us to pause, look more closely, and perhaps imagine what is beyond the stars.

In this issue, there is also an interview with researcher **Dr. Sarah Lohmann** on the relationship between science fiction and the dark sky movement, plus inspiring highlights from across our DarkSky community.

Long-time readers may also notice that DarkSky's annual report is not present, as it has been in past September issues. This year, the report will be a digital-only publication — stay tuned to **DarkSky.org**.

Writers, artists, poets, and filmmakers are just as essential to the dark sky movement as scientists. I invite you to share your favorite works of science fiction with us on social media or by email, or even to make your own creative work to help inspire the world to look up.



Megan Eaves
nightscape@darksky.org
London, U.K.

Advocate highlights

News snippets from our network of DarkSky Advocates around the world




VnExpress.net

VN EXPRESS

VnE-GO Thời sự Thế giới Kinh doanh Khoa học công nghệ

Thứ sáu, 1/5/2026, 09:10 (GMT+7)

Đêm đầy sao giá bao nhiêu?

Nguyễn Hoàng Trung
Nhà hoạt động môi trường

Nghỉ lễ 30/4 năm 2022, tôi lần đầu tận mắt thấy và tự

Ngân Hà.

A Vietnam

Advocate Trung Nguyen wrote an opinion essay for ***VnExpress***, Vietnam's most-read online newspaper, highlighting the rapid growth of light pollution in Vietnam and calling for smarter outdoor lighting to protect dark skies, wildlife, human health, and emerging astronomy tourism. Read it: bit.ly/3TvYZEm

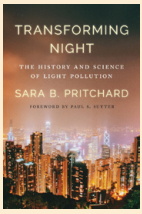
B India


Minu Agarwal

DarkSky Delegate Minu Agarwal conducted an undergraduate summer school on light pollution in the high-elevation desert state of **Himachal Pradesh**. A group of 15 students tracked light pollution across three locations using photography and data from **Globe at Night** and did a field survey of outdoor lighting in a hill town.

C U.S.

DarkSky Advocate Sara Pritchard released a non-fiction book, ***Transforming Night: The History and Science of Light Pollution***, exploring how artificial light has reshaped the night environment, tracing the history of light pollution while examining its impacts on astronomy, wildlife, environmental justice, and the growing movement to protect darkness.



University of Washington Press


Abolfazl Joudaki

D Iran

Amid the ongoing Iran–U.S. war, **Iran Delegate Mohammad Saleh Timar** and local dark sky advocates organized two astronomy trips to the deserts of Iran and held six evening gatherings in **Tehran** on astronomy and the night sky, even despite hearing bombs and explosions. At their key site in **Touran National Park**, they recorded the area's highest-ever SQM reading (21.73 mag/arc sec^2).

Q&A

Strange dark worlds

This year marks the 60th anniversary of the science fiction series ***Star Trek***. We spoke with **Dr. Sarah Lohmann**, a science fiction scholar at ETH Zürich in Switzerland, about how science fiction has influenced the dark sky movement.

Still from *Blade Runner*, 1989, directed by Ridley Scott



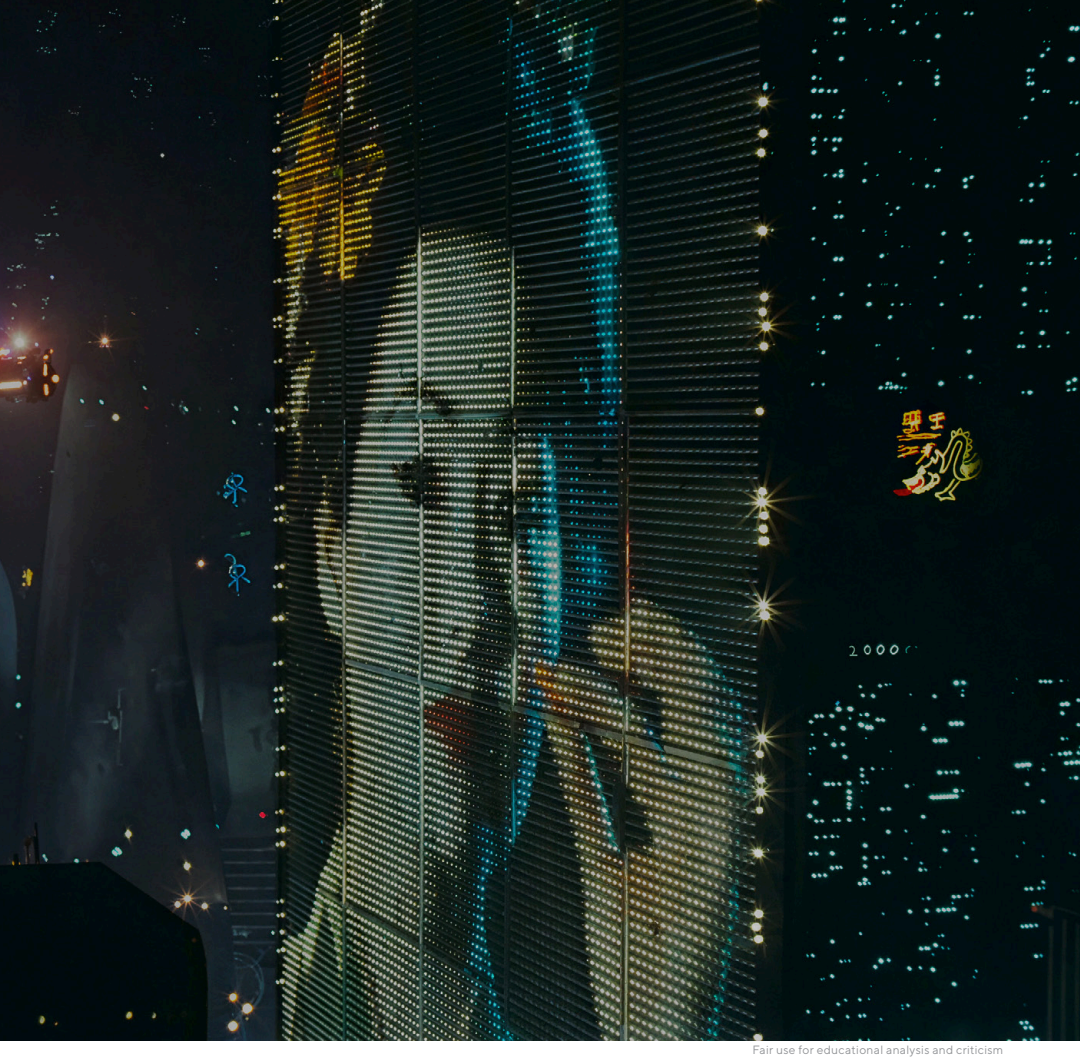
Dr. Sarah Lohmann specializes in feminist utopias and climate fiction. She is the co-founder and chair of the Zurich Science Fiction Network (ZSFN).

This year marks the 60th anniversary of *Star Trek*. How has science fiction shaped the way people think and feel about the night sky?

Science fiction has expressed and catalyzed our attitudes to the night sky from 17th-century "lunar romances" to *Star Trek* going "boldly where no man has gone before," and present-day gender-bending space operas like Ann Leckie's *Imperial Radch* series. It is a genre that allows us to imagine what lies beyond — aliens, strange worlds, or wonders of technology (ours or others').

Has science fiction also helped normalise the idea that technological progress should mean brighter cities and more artificial light?

Partially. Science fiction often cele-



Fair use for educational analysis and criticism

brates innovation. Scholar Roger Luckhurst says electricity was a condition for the genre's emergence as a literary genre. Bright cities and light accordingly feature often, like in Larry Niven's *Ringworld*, with its vast patches of sunlight-reflecting sunflowers, *Blade Runner*'s neon dystopia, and William Gibson's adlit *Neuromancer*, which helped popularize the image of futuristic cities filled with neon signs, advertising, and artificial light.

Science fiction followed the Enlightenment's tradition of treating light as a symbol of knowledge and progress, and darkness as something to be overcome. For example, "dark ages" are often averted or stopped in science fiction, such as in Isaac Asimov's *Foundation* series and L. Sprague De Camp's *Lest Darkness Fall*. One of the earliest science fiction novels, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, was written after the real-world eruption of Mount Tambora plunged Europe into an unusually cold, dark year. The novel reflects a fear that humans may be replaced by beings better suited to a world changed (and darkened) by natural catastrophe and critically engages with the idea that science and reason could save humanity in such a world. Even Ursula K. Le Guin called reason "the language of daylight."

Why is darkness so important in science fiction? Can science fiction help people imagine a

future in which darkness and the night sky are protected?

Darkness is essential for recovery, imagination, and new possibilities, making it a natural setting for science fiction. As a genre, it encourages us to see the world in new ways and imagine different futures. Despite its fascination with futuristic technology, science fiction often questions the idea that progress means eliminating darkness. In E. M. Forster's "The Machine Stops," dependence on a fully lit underground world proves fatal. In Isaac Asimov's "Nightfall," the society living on a planet with six suns has become so unfamiliar with darkness that an eclipse leads to disaster. And in Daniel F. Galouye's *Dark Universe*, survivors living in underground caves abandon sight and come to worship light. These stories reflect the idea that light and darkness both have an important role in human survival.

In my own work, I see some climate science fiction presenting darkness and the unknown as essential for a thriving future. Darkness allows us to imagine completely different and more sustainable ways of living, including through perspectives that have often been overlooked. Afrofuturist and Indigenous futurist writers such as N.K. Jemisin and Cherie Dimaline point the way, as do the "critical utopias" of the 1970s and '80s by Joanna Russ, Marge Piercy, and Ursula K. Le Guin. In these stories, so-called



Photo still of the USS Enterprise (NCC-1701) — the legendary starship from the *Star Trek* franchise.

"dark ages" turn out to be highly advanced and sustainable societies in possible futures. In Le Guin's *Always Coming Home*, the protagonist, North Owl, learns through a "dark pool" that not everything needs to be fully understood for people to live sustainably. Like International Dark Sky Places, science fiction can use darkness to encourage different ways of understanding the natural world.

Has science fiction made a real contribution to the dark sky movement, or has its influence been more indirect?

Overall, science fiction allows us to question many popular assumptions, including the notion that "enlightened" progress always means more artificial light and that it is a good idea in the first place. Science fiction often shows us how light, and forced control of nature more broadly, can damage our future. While it's difficult to fully link the genre's contribution to the dark sky movement as a whole, it has certainly changed many minds on what progress means. And it has inspired at least one science fiction author (Lydia P. Brownlow, author of *Vermilion Sunrise*) to join the movement, and at least one science fiction scholar (me) to do likewise — alongside doing all I can to help spread the word on the critical importance of darkness in both our actions and collective imaginations. ✦

Photo still from Star Trek — Courtesy of CBS Studios



DarkSky's Capture the Dark photo contest

2026 First Place winners

To view all winners, visit darksky.org/photo-contest



Every journey through the cosmos begins with an act of imagination. Science fiction has long invited us to picture ourselves among the stars, while night photography reminds us that the real universe is every bit as extraordinary. These winning images celebrate the beauty of naturally dark skies, the impact of light pollution, and the places that still inspire wonder, curiosity, and the desire to protect what makes those views possible.

Presented by Visit Tucson, Celestron, and Visit Utah, Capture the Dark 2026 received nearly 2,300 submissions from photographers worldwide. The images were judged by an international panel of talented astrophotographers and dark sky advocates.

We are pleased to feature the winning photographs from the contest's ten categories:

- Nightscapes
- Nighttime Adventures
- Creatures of the Night
- Deep Sky Observations
- Quality Lighting and Design
- The Impact of Light Pollution
- International Dark Sky Places
- Mobile Nighttime Photography
- Young Astrophotographers
- People's Choice



↑ "Razorback" by Paul Wilson

PHOTO LOCATION

Quorn, South Australia, Australia

"Captured from Razorback Lookout in South Australia's Flinders Ranges, this panorama spans the entire southern night sky. The Milky Way arches overhead while the Large and Small Magellanic Clouds hang to the south and zodiacal light rises in the east, all visible in a single winter night. It celebrates the remarkable clarity of Australia's dark skies, where multiple celestial phenomena can be experienced together above an iconic outback landscape."

TECHNICAL DETAILS

Tracked panorama | Canon R5 | Lens: 28mm Sigma Art | Aperture: f/2.5 | Shutter speed: 30s | ISO: 3200

CATEGORY

Nightscapes — These photos capture the magic of darkness, from glowing auroras to expansive starlit skies above scenic locations and urban cityscapes.

↓ "Aurora over the Prince Christian Sound" by Dennis Lehtonen

PHOTO LOCATION

Aappilattoq, Kujalleq, Greenland

"The aurora forecast was promising, so I spent several hours jumping from one ice-covered rock to another, looking for an ideal photo location. Luck was on my side as the lack of wind also allowed for some reflections."

TECHNICAL DETAILS

Single exposure | Sony A7IV | Lens: Sony FE 14mm | Aperture: f/1.8 | Shutter speed: 2.5s | ISO: 2000

CATEGORY

Nighttime Adventures — These images celebrate the unbreakable bonds forged in the heart of the night — the thrum of adrenaline and the pull of the wild through scenes of shared grit.







↑ "The Great Bear and the Rainbow Bridge La Grande Ourse et le pont arc-en-ciel" by Ethan Keller

PHOTO LOCATION

Morinville, Alberta, Canada

"As a young Canadian fascinated by ancient folklore, I've grown up learning of Indigenous stories in which the aurora borealis represents the spirits of ancestors. I believe this image reflects those legends, depicting the constellations of Ursa Major (the Great Bear) and Canes Venatici (the Hunting Dogs) surrounded by the vibrant mosaic of the northern lights."

TECHNICAL DETAILS

Single Exposure | Canon EOS REBEL T4i | Lens: Canon EF-S 18-55mm | Aperture: f/3.5 | Shutter speed: 30s | ISO: 400

CATEGORY

People's Choice — A special recognition for the image that received the highest number of public votes, celebrating photography that resonates most with viewers around the world.



↑ "The Chasm" by Tom Rae

PHOTO LOCATION

Waitomo, New Zealand

"These images were captured after rappelling over 100 metres (330 ft) straight down into a vast cave system in New Zealand's North Island at night. The cavern was alive at night with glow worms and fragile ecosystems, an otherworldly show hidden deep in a landscape shaped over millions of years. Photographing this environment at night was incredibly challenging. The extreme humidity, subtle light from the glow worms, and long exposures pushed my skills to the limit."

TECHNICAL DETAILS

Tracked panorama | Nikon Z8 + Z7IIA | Lens: Nikkor 20mm F1.8 + Sigma 40mm 1.4 | Aperture: f/1.8 | Shutter speed: 180s/30s | ISO: 6400/1600

CATEGORY

Creatures of the Night (Flora and Fauna) – Celebrates the rich biodiversity of nocturnal life, from glowing fireflies to flowers that bloom by moonlight, showcasing the importance of protecting nocturnal habitats around the world.



↑ "Window to Orion" by Kat Lawman

PHOTO LOCATION

Arches National Park, Utah, U.S.

"This self-portrait frames Orion within the natural window of Turret Arch. Standing alone beneath the arch, I wanted to convey the scale of both the landscape and the cosmos. Using an astro-modified camera and blended H-alpha data, I revealed the delicate hydrogen clouds surrounding Orion, including Barnard's Loop and its glowing nebulae. The image celebrates the importance of preserving dark skies, where the universe can still be experienced in remarkable detail above one of Earth's most spectacular desert landscapes.."

TECHNICAL DETAILS

Blended | Sony A7iii & Sony A7IV | Lens: Sony 20mm F1.8 | Aperture: f/2.2 sky; f/8 foreground | Shutter speed: 30s foreground; 60s 9-frame stack sky on Astro mod; 11-frame Ha filter Barnards Loup Nebula | ISO: 5000 foreground; 800 sky | ISO: 3200 sky; 800 foreground; 1600 Ha frames

CATEGORY

International Dark Sky Places — Photos taken in one of DarkSky's more than 266 certified locations around the world — places committed to protecting the night.



↑ "Little Mt Hoffman" by Ross Steensland

PHOTO LOCATION

Little Mount Hoffman Lookout, California, U.S.

"Perched atop a cinder cone volcano, this small lookout at Little Mount Hoffman, California, offers sweeping views in every direction. From the warmth of a cozy wood stove, you can watch a sky filled with stars or the Moon rise behind Mount Shasta through panoramic windows."

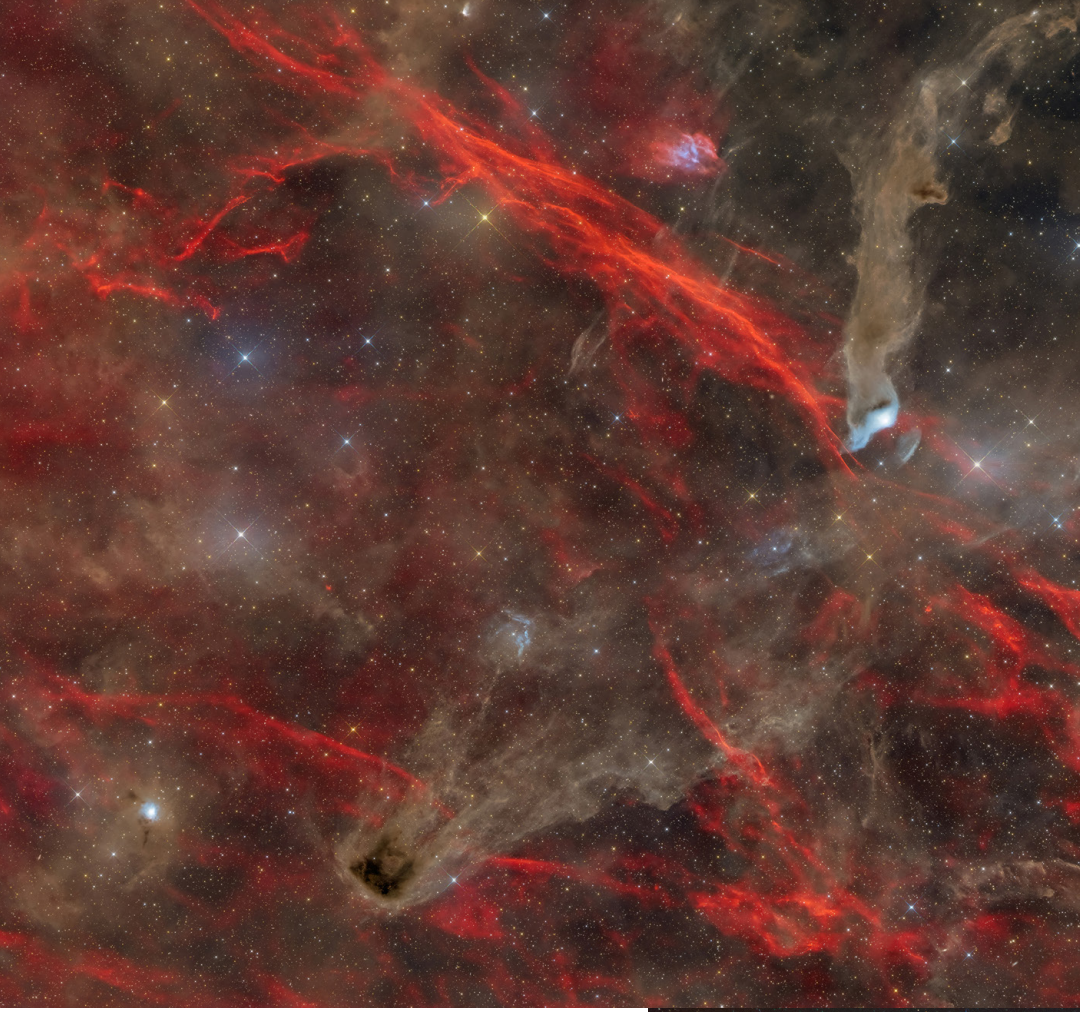
TECHNICAL DETAILS

Stacked | Astromod Sony A7III | Lens: Sigma 24mm F1.4 | Aperture: f/1.4 | Shutter speed: 13s | ISO: 6400

CATEGORY

Quality Lighting and Design — This category highlights light fixtures and architectural designs that protect the night by following the Five Principles of Responsible Outdoor Lighting at Night. To be approved, photographs must show lighting that applies these principles in practice — meaning it is fully shielded, carefully targeted, low-level, and uses a warm color temperature.





→ "Artificial Comet" by Kouyu Wang

PHOTO LOCATION

Jiang'an Sumu, Siziwang Banner, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, China

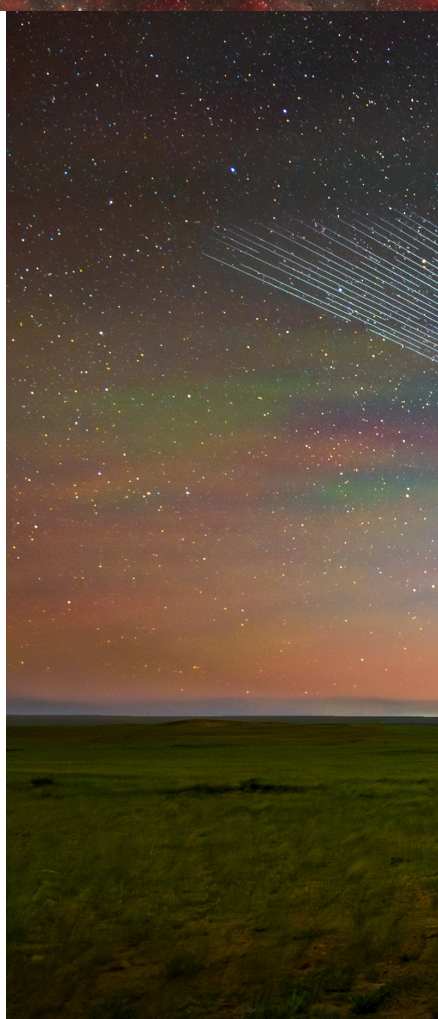
"This frame captures a newly launched Starlink satellite group. In time-lapse footage, they appear as short lines. The stacked images show their orbital drift and reveal the impact of satellite constellations on the night sky."

TECHNICAL DETAILS

Stacked | Nikon D750 | Lens: Sigma 14mm Art | Aperture: f/2.0 | Shutter speed: 20s | ISO: 2000

CATEGORY

The Impact of Light Pollution — This category illustrates how artificial light negatively impacts nocturnal habitats, neighborhoods, communities, and our ability to see the stars.





← "The Dementors of Cepheus (LBN 528 & LBN 532), Wardens of a Dead Star (SNR G110.3+11.3)" by Julien De Winter

PHOTO LOCATION

Rockwood, Texas, U.S.

"This rich region of Cepheus showcases multiple stages of stellar evolution through dust clouds, reflection and dark nebulae, a planetary nebula, and an ancient supernova remnant. LBN 532, LDN 1221, vdB 152, and LBN 528 reveal the intricate interplay of light, dust, and stellar winds, while PNG 111.0+11.6 represents the peaceful death of a low-mass star. Together, these objects form a striking portrait of cosmic birth, transformation, and stellar death."

TECHNICAL DETAILS

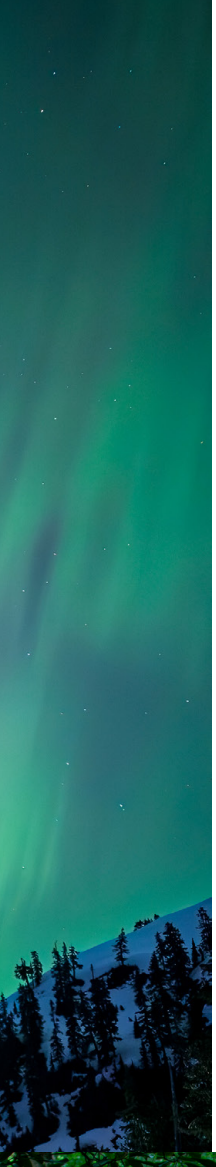
Stacked | ASI 6200 MC | Telescope: Takahashi 180ED | Filter: No Filter and Antlia 3nm Narrowband H-alpha 50 mm | Mount: JTW Astronomy Trident GTR | Frames: 237 (no filter) + 218 (filter Halpha) | Exposure: 29h35 | ISO/Gain: 100 | Software: Pixinsight, Photoshop

CATEGORY

Deep Sky Observations — This category is for those who use long focal lengths to capture deep sky objects and the wonders of space and time.







← "Aurora Over Mount Shuksan" by Enrique Barquet

PHOTO LOCATION

Mount Shuksan, Washington, U.S.

"Captured with a mobile phone during the geomagnetic storm of May 10–11, 2024, this image shows the aurora spreading above Mount Shuksan. The snow-covered mountain reflects the green and magenta light, turning a familiar landscape into something completely different. It was one of those rare nights when simply being outside and paying attention was enough to witness an extraordinary scene."

TECHNICAL DETAILS

Single exposure | HONOR Magic 6 Pro | Aperture: f/1.4 | Shutter speed: 5s | ISO: 1600

CATEGORY

Mobile Nighttime Photography — This category celebrates images taken with mobile devices (cell phones and GoPros), proving that some of the best moments happen when we are simply paying attention.

↓ "River of Light" by Norah Swann

PHOTO LOCATION

Waynesville, North Carolina, U.S.

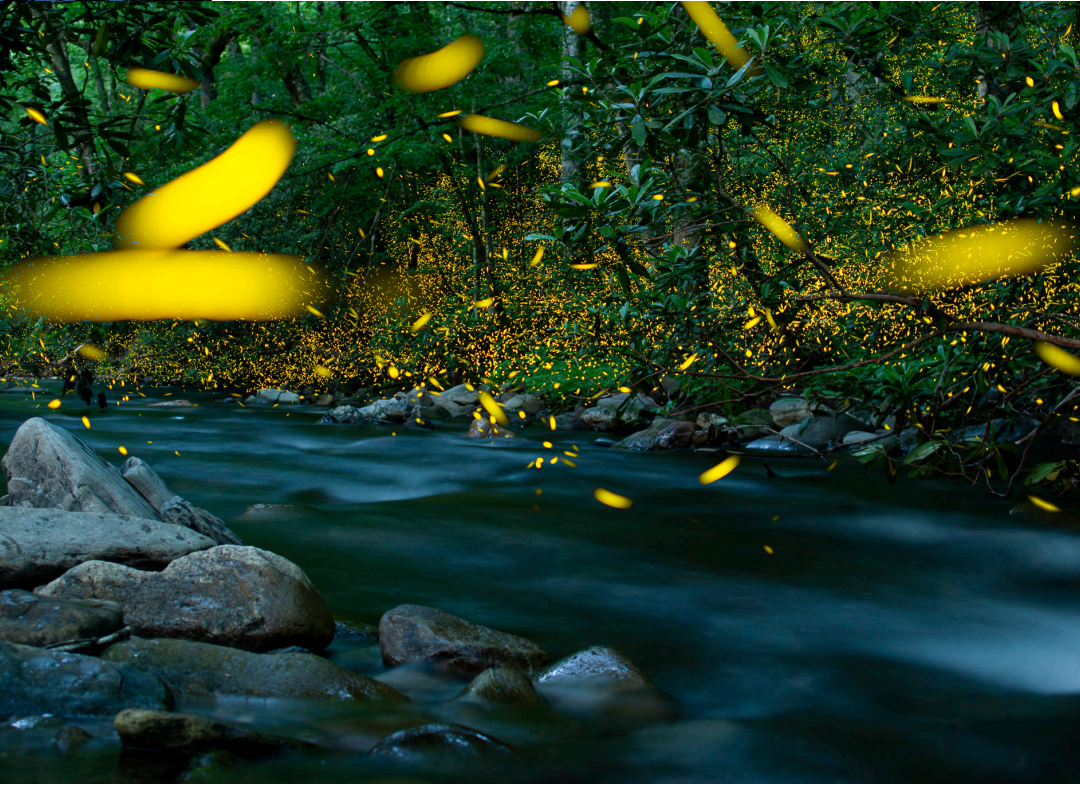
"This photo captures synchronous fireflies over a creek. It shows how darkness is essential for the survival of nocturnal creatures."

TECHNICAL DETAILS

Stacked | Nikon D3500 | Lens: Nikon AF-S NIKKOR 35mm | Aperture: f/1.8 DX | Shutter speed: not provided | ISO: not provided

CATEGORY

Young Astrophotographers — This category showcases work by photographers 17 or younger, offering young people a chance to showcase their work, learn about the importance of dark skies, and grow their skills as the next great photographer.





STAR TREK 60

DarkSky is proud to join *Star Trek 60* as an official nonprofit partner, celebrating the 60th anniversary of one of the world's most beloved sci-fi franchises.

Science fiction and dark skies have long inspired one another. The stars have fueled stories of exploration and discovery, while those stories have inspired millions to step outside, look up, and develop a deeper appreciation for the night sky.

To celebrate the anniversary and this shared spirit of curiosity, DarkSky introduced a special *Star Trek 60* category as part of the Capture the Dark nighttime photography contest, inviting participants to capture the wonder of a star-filled sky.

Set a course for adventure. Follow @StarTrek for more.

FIRST PLACE

← **"In View" by Monika Deviat**, Banff National Park, Alberta, Canada





SECOND PLACE

↑ **"Waiting for 2063" by Rositsa Dimitrova**, Tyulenovo, Bulgaria

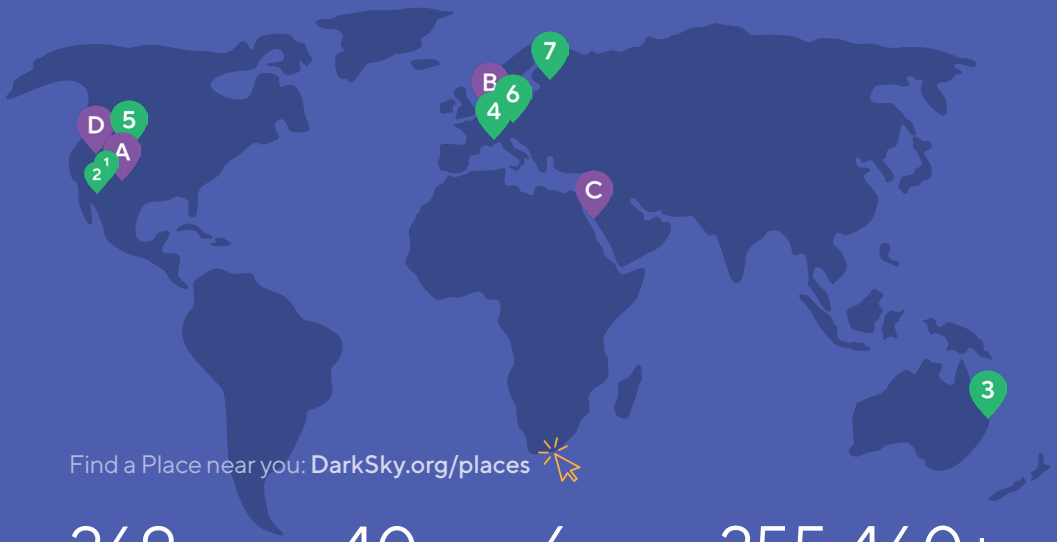
THIRD PLACE

↑ **"Live Long and Prosper (In that order)" by Ken Lee**, Joshua Tree National Park, California, U.S.

Newly certified

International Dark Sky Places, Sports Lighting, Lodging & Resorts

Announced since May 1, 2026



Find a Place near you: **DarkSky.org/places**

269
International Dark Sky Places around the world

40
Countries and territories represented

6
Continents represented

255,460+
Square kilometers of protected land and night sky



City of Apache Junction / Casey Olson

URBAN NIGHT SKY PLACE

Apache Junction Municipal Complex

Arizona, U.S. 0.161874 km²

Municipal campus at the base of the Superstition Mountains, with a public library, multi-generational center, and open desert setting.



B. Whitford

DARK SKY PARK

Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument

Arizona, U.S. 1,335 km²

Sonoran Desert home to the northernmost organ pipe cactus population and ancient Indigenous archaeological sites.



Dr. Ken Wishaw

DARK SKY RESERVE

Sunshine Coast

Queensland, Australia 873 km²

UNESCO Biosphere Reserve home to the Blackall Range where seven towns have a shared lighting management plan.



Steremn Poupard

DARK SKY RESERVE

Alpes Azur Mercantour

France 3,700 km²

First International Dark Sky Reserve to expand its boundaries, now encompassing all of Mercantour National Park and 92 municipalities.



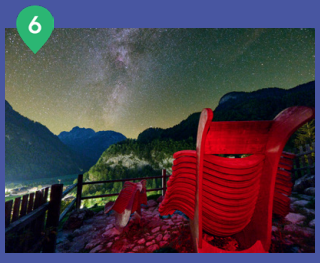
Teresa Hofer

DARK SKY PARK

Badlands National Park

South Dakota, U.S. 983 km²

Jagged buttes, pinnacles, and one of the world's richest vertebrate fossil beds define this national park on the lands of the Indigenous Oglala Lakota people.



Othmar Ortner

DARK SKY PARK & COMMUNITY

Weißbach Nature Park and Community

Austria 97 km²

Nature park and mountain village near the Seisenbergklamm gorge, with nocturnal wildlife walks and a conservation program.



Syrjävaara Dark Sky Center

DARK SKY PARK

Syrjävaara Dark Sky Center

Finland 0.9 km²

Farmstead on Finland's Karelian Ridge where the Milky Way is known as the "Birds Route," and the night inspires research on semi-arctic darkness.

A DARKSKY APPROVED LODGING

Kosmos Stargazing Resort

Colorado, U.S.

Luxury geodesic domes for glamping in the San Luis Valley, with guided stargazing, star parties, and plans for a dedicated Stargazing Park with a central telescope.

B DARKSKY APPROVED SPORTS LIGHTING

Sportanlage Kall-Sötenich

Kall, Germany

Community sports complex with a football field and tennis courts using fully shielded floodlights, adaptive controls, and amber sideline lighting to reduce glare and protect nearby wildlife.

C DARKSKY APPROVED RESORT

Desert Rock and Nujuma, The Red Sea

Saudi Arabia

A Ritz-Carlton Reserve helping set a new benchmark for regenerative tourism that preserves natural darkness, safeguards biodiversity, and also enriches the guest experience through connection to nature.

D DARKSKY APPROVED RESORT

Sun Valley Resort

Idaho, U.S.

One of DarkSky's first newly expanded Approved Resorts, featuring hotels, restaurants, golf courses, and a ski area, with year-round astronomy programs and guided stargazing.

News & notables

News from the global movement promoting responsible outdoor light at night



John Fowler / CC BY 2.0

International Dark Sky Places at risk

Mining proposals near **Minnesota**'s **Boundary Waters**, new oil and gas drilling around **New Mexico**'s **Chaco Culture National Historical Park**, and border wall construction at **Big Bend** in **Texas** are putting three **International Dark Sky Places** at risk and threatening some of the nation's darkest skies. Learn how to contact elected officials:

bit.ly/3TvACqw



Hal Bergman

DarkSky's new guidance for data center lighting

As AI drives rapid **data center expansion**, DarkSky has released a **statement calling for responsible outdoor lighting and careful site selection** to protect dark skies. Explore the recommendations and download a municipal template:

bit.ly/darksky-datacenters

FCC approves space mirror test



Josh Dury

The **U.S. Federal Communications Commission** has approved **Reflect Orbital**'s demonstration satellite despite objections from DarkSky and the astronomy community. The decision clears the way for a test of the company's plans to reflect sunlight to Earth at night, furthering concerns about light pollution and oversight of commercial activity in low Earth orbit. Learn more:

bit.ly/4fLRthj

State of the Science 2026 report published

In June, DarkSky published the **2026 report on artificial light at night**, reviewing the latest global research on light pollution's impacts on ecological, health, cultural, and technical aspects. This annual roundup is a vital tool for advocates with easy-to-understand summaries of peer-reviewed studies and emerging themes. Download it:

darksky.org/state-of-the-science-2026

Join us in November for Under One Sky

DarkSky's annual global conference is a 24-hour virtual event that brings together the brightest minds dedicated to protecting the night. Tune in for transformative talks and engaging panels, and participate in interactive workshops designed to inspire and equip you with the tools you need to combat light pollution. Register:

conference.darksky.org



Wear DarkSky merch during Under One Sky

Looking to show your support for DarkSky or find the perfect gift? Explore our online store for apparel and more.

darksky.org/shop

Help us protect low Earth orbit

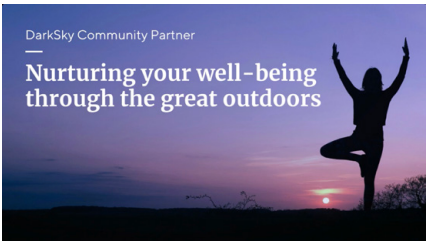
The night sky is undergoing rapid change. DarkSky's **Orbital Impact Fund** is fighting to ensure new space technologies are developed responsibly — not at the expense of the night sky or the well-being of communities around the world. Support the fund today.

darksky.org/ways-to-give

World's first DarkSky Approved Resort certification

DarkSky has expanded its **Approved Lodging** program with a new **Approved Resort** certification, recognizing large-scale destinations that protect natural night skies through responsible outdoor lighting. **Desert Rock** and **Nujuma, a Ritz-Carlton Reserve, at The Red Sea** are the first resorts to earn the designation. Learn more:

bit.ly/4q6r2GM



IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

Nurturing your well-being through the great outdoors

In our May **Community Partner webinar**, **Sydney Williams** of **Hiking My Feelings** explored how time outdoors can support mental and physical well-being, and how artificial light at night can disrupt sleep and our relationship with nature. Watch the recording:

darksky.org/we-were-never-meant-to-live-this-brightly



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