

# Bloomfield Messenger



Bloomfield's own weekly newspaper

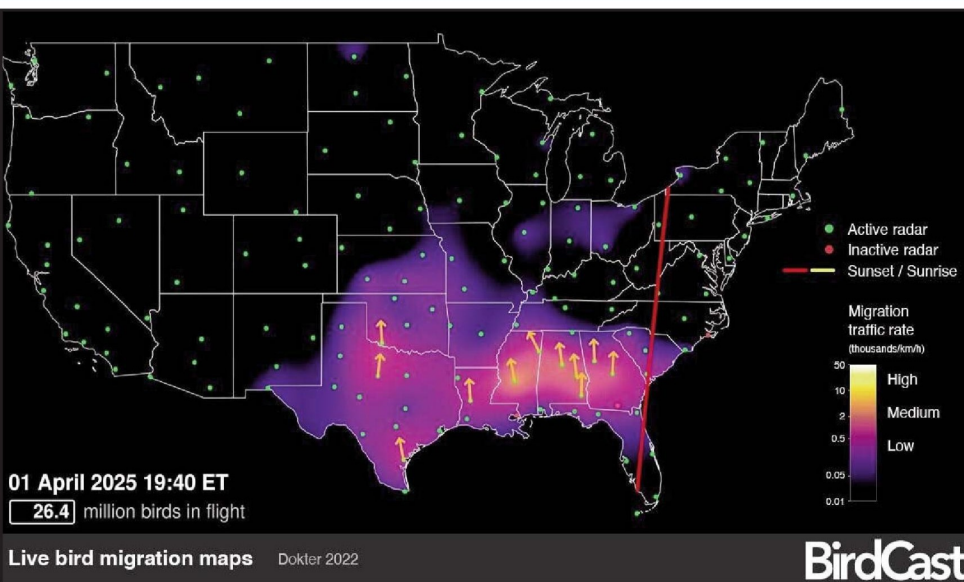
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[www.BloomfieldMessenger.com](http://www.BloomfieldMessenger.com)

Priceless 12 pages

## GREEN LIFE

### SAVE SOME BIRDS WHILE SAVING SOME BUCKS – TURN OUT THE LIGHTS!



By Paula Jones

Chair Bloomfield Conservation Energy & Environment Committee

The arrival of spring in Connecticut is marked by bird-song as our migratory birds return from their wintering areas down south. Birds can travel a few hundred miles or a few thousand miles in their annual migrations. One of my favorite long-distance travelers is the Bobolink, a listed Species of Concern here in Connecticut. (Bloomfield's Bobolinks should be returning in mid-to-late May.) These remarkable birds winter east of the Andes in the grasslands of southwestern Brazil, Paraguay, northern Argentina, and central Bolivia. They fly roughly 12,000 miles round-trip to and from South America each year; it's exhausting just thinking about it! Try to imagine the challenges they must overcome.

Peak spring migration season (April 1st to May 31st) is now just beginning. While Connecticut is the final destina-

The birds are coming! To see bird migration forecasts and live bird migration maps for the continental U.S. (as well as for specific locations like Hartford County) go to <https://birdcast.info/migration-tools>

tion for some migrating birds, others will continue further north to their summer breeding grounds. **We can help birds get there by turning off unnecessary outdoor and indoor lighting from 11p.m. to 6 a.m. during April and May.** And we can help them on their fall return trip south by doing the same from August 15th to November 15th.

Why is turning off the lights so critical? Migratory birds that travel at night navigate using cues in the night sky. Artificial lighting can disorient these birds, attracting and luring them off track into unsafe areas where they are at higher risk of exhaustion, predation, and building collisions.

One dramatic example that made headlines was the impact of the National 9/11 Museum and Memorial's "Tribute of Light" on birds during fall

migration. A 2017 study (published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*) found that 1.1 million birds(!) were endangered by this exhibit between 2008 and 2016. In response, "Radar Ornithology" is now being used to detect bird density above the Tribute of Light beams. When the number of birds detected by radar above the beams gets too high, the beams are turned off for twenty minutes. This allows the disori-

ented birds to "escape" the light and get back on their migration route. We can all help our feathered friends during their semiannual migrations – and lower our electric bills, too. Turn off unneces-

sary lights from 11 p.m. to 6 a.m. from April 1st to May 31st in the spring, and from August 15th to November 15th in the fall. Take the "Lights Out CT Pledge" at

[www.lightsooutct.org](http://www.lightsooutct.org)