

January 23, 2025

Senator Dale Patten
Energy and Natural Resources Committee

RE: SCR 4004 A concurrent resolution declaring April 21, 2025, through April 28, 2025, as "North Dakota Dark Sky Week," and urging the residents of North Dakota to partake in this event to observe, ponder, and support the natural dark sky resources of this state.

Dear Sen. Patten, Dale and Respected Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the thousands of members in Audubon who reside North Dakota, we support SCR 4004 and request this be included as a part of the public hearing record.

The National Audubon Society is a conservation organization focused on birds and their conservation, driven by the fact that we can improve our environment for the betterment of people when we observe how birds are impacted and respond to our changing world.

For most of Earth's existence, the majority of life developed to revolve around a diurnal cycle of light and dark. Today, light pollution is one of the fastest-growing forms of pollution on the planet. We evolved to gather, hunt, and move during daylight, and recover during the night, but many other creatures evolved to use the cover of darkness to hunt and migrate by starlight.

Migrating birds suffer in the face of blinding artificial light at night. According to the [National Audubon Society](http://NationalAudubonSociety.org), 80% of migrating birds do so at night. Here in North Dakota, common birds like the small Yellow-rumped Warbler is one of the first warblers to migrate through ND in spring *and* is one of the most frequently observed warblers involved in building collision mortalities in many Midwestern states. The Hermit Thrush is also one of the earliest migratory birds to arrive, and they calibrate their magnetic compass at dusk using sunset direction/light of sky overhead. In a recent collision study in New York, this was the 6th most frequently found species. Last, the beautiful Baltimore Oriole migrates at night and suffers when lights distract and disorient.

With artificial lights added to the landscape, it increases direct mortality with windows and buildings, and disorientation, injury, and exhaustion are also huge factors for nocturnal migrating birds. Many birds can get caught 'off-track' by light pollution, and all these risks go up if favorable migration conditions combine with inclement weather near major urban areas.

Yet of all the other environmental pressures facing birds, nighttime light pollution is one that has a relatively easy solution. We encourage support for SCR 4004, and thank you for your consideration.



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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kristal Stoner". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kristal Stoner

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