

**Patrick Matozzo**  
Executive Director  
Corporate Real Estate Management Division

**Metro Hall**  
55 John Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor.  
Toronto, Ontario M5V 3C6

Tel: 416-392-9158  
[Patrick.Matozzo@toronto.ca](mailto:Patrick.Matozzo@toronto.ca)  
[www.toronto.ca](http://www.toronto.ca)

**Date:** March 26, 2024

**TO:** City of Toronto: Divisions, Agencies, and Corporations

**FROM:** Patrick Matozzo, Executive Director, Corporate Real Estate Management

**SUBJECT:** IE9.10 - Reducing Bird Deaths by Turning off Lights during Migration

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The City of Toronto, through Council Decision IE9.10, has committed to implementing a bird-life-saving practice of switching off non-essential lights on City property during the two bird migration periods of April 1 to May 31, and September 1 to October 31 each year. All properties operated by City Divisions, Agencies, and Corporations should follow this practice annually. Non-essential lighting refers to lighting that is not necessary for meeting property standards or is not intended for safety or security purposes after business hours, as well as during weekends and holidays. Exceptions are allowed for lighting during special events or critical operations as required.

Every year, an estimated 25 million birds die due to collisions with windows in Canada. This is because the city is in a crucial stopover area at the shoreline of Lake Ontario for many migratory birds travelling along two significant North American migration routes. Most of these birds migrate at night, guiding themselves with natural cues from the moon and stars. However, light from urban areas interferes with these cues, disorienting the birds and drawing them into the city, where they often get trapped and collide with windows they cannot see. By turning off non-essential lights in buildings, Toronto can be a leader in reducing the number of bird collisions and saving countless bird lives while reducing energy costs.

**Key Points:**

- Action Required: Turn off non-essential lights on city property during bird migration periods
- Who: All properties operated by City Divisions, Agencies, and Corporations
- When: Every year from April 1 to May 31, and from September 1 to October 31, after business hours as well as during weekends and holidays
- Non-essential lighting: Lighting that is not necessary for meeting property standards or is not intended for safety or security purposes
- Exceptions: Special events or critical operations as required

For more information, please visit the “Lights Out Toronto” webpage on the City of Toronto’s public website.

Sincerely,

Patrick Matozzo  
Executive Director, Corporate Real Estate Management