



Back in 1994, lights went out in Los Angeles as a result of an earthquake. The local observatories received several phone calls from worried citizens regarding "unusual" light phenomena in the sky, not realizing that what they saw was actually the Milky Way and stars.

Light pollution is a growing problem. Not only does it have detrimental effects on our views of the night sky, but it also disrupts the natural environment, wastes energy, and has the potential to cause health problems.

Artificial light at night has been shown to affect the mating, migration, and predation behaviors of many different species and, consequently, the ecological community as a whole. For instance, lighted towers and tall buildings can confuse migrating and local birds so that they collide with other birds or structures or circle the lights until they die of exhaustion. Trees, plants, pollinators, sea turtles, humans - even algae - are, according to several studies, also victims of light pollution.

Until 11 April we're celebrating International Dark Sky week.

Lighting is responsible for one-fourth of all electricity consumption worldwide. The [International Dark-Sky Association](#)

estimates that one-third of all lighting in the U.S. is wasted, at an annual cost of about 30 million barrels of oil and 8.2 million tons of coal—a total of about U.S. \$2 billion.

Today, Hong Kong is believed to be the world's worst city for light pollution, with levels in the popular tourist shopping area of Tsim Sha Tsui, 1,200 times brighter than a normal dark sky. Unlike other world cities - including London, Frankfurt, Sydney and Shanghai - Hong Kong has no laws to control external lighting.

Combating light pollution does not mean that we would have to stumble around in darkness. It only means directing light downwards, where it's actually useful.

For more information, see also the [Global Assessment On Light Pollution](#) .

*Written by Nordic Desk*